

NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY



notes
SPRING 2015

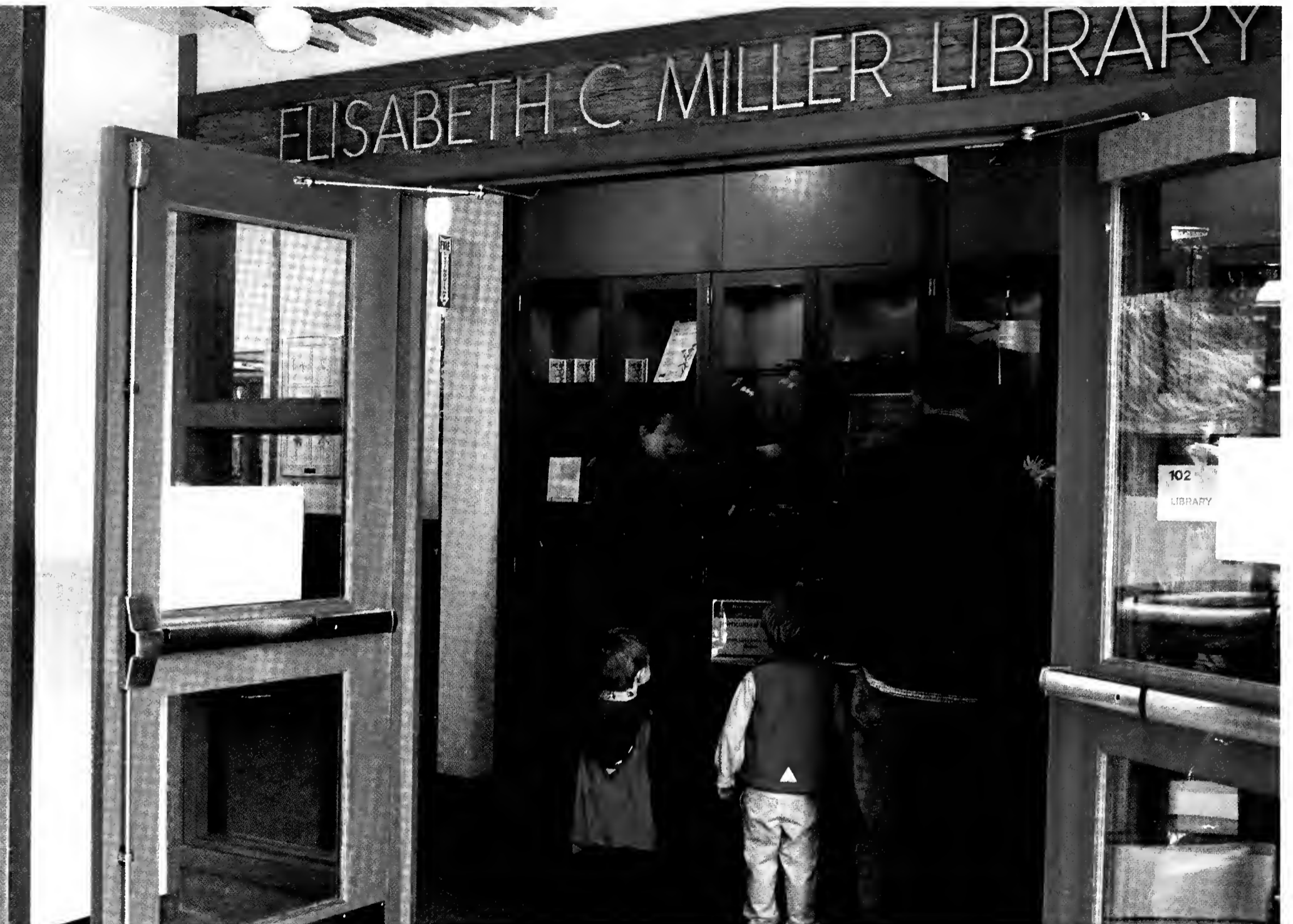
GARDEN



Dryopteris erythrosora
photo by Richie Steffen

TOO MANY BOOKS

Why I use the Elisabeth C. Miller Library



Story by Daniel Mount, photos by Richie Stephen and Daniel Mount

Before I left for the Island of Elba last fall, I was Googling my heart out trying to research the flora of the island. Unable to access the information, I took my search to the Elisabeth C. Miller Library (ECML). I knew the librarians there loved a challenge. As a member of the Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries, the library staff has access to many resources the Internet would not deliver to me.

Within days, staff members found *La flora vascolare dell'Isola d'Elba*, which

appeared in *Webbia*, a botanical journal from the University of Florence. They scanned copies of the nearly 300-page book of flora and emailed them to me. Long gone is my notion of the librarian with index finger over pursed lips hushing a book-filled room. The ECML librarians are cyberspace research warriors.

And all of them are passionate gardeners.

Volume and Volumes

Most of the research I do for my articles is much more hands on. I first leaf

through my numerous books at home, getting a feel for my subject, then head to the ECML to flesh the article out. With nearly 16,000 books available to the public, there are limitless directions you can go. I've pulled books on paleobotany and plant folklore, as well as monographs of specific genera, garden design, and pest control in the search for a story.

Sometimes I just randomly pull books from the shelves, letting serendipity be my guide. This lazy sort of research feeds many of my articles, though it is not always the most effective.

Librarians

That is where the six skillful librarians, with a cumulative 90 years of experience, come in. They have never failed me in my pursuit of horticultural knowledge, even when it veers off toward oddball floras. But you don't have to visit the library to get their help. From the comfort of your sofa, you can reach the Plant Answer Line by phoning (206)-UWPLANT or emailing hortlib@uw.edu.

I love to visit the library myself. I often feel more at home among the tidy stacks and comfortable furniture of the library than I do in my own messy living room. I can spend hours there reading, writing, or even chatting with the librarians—quietly, of course.

New Arrivals

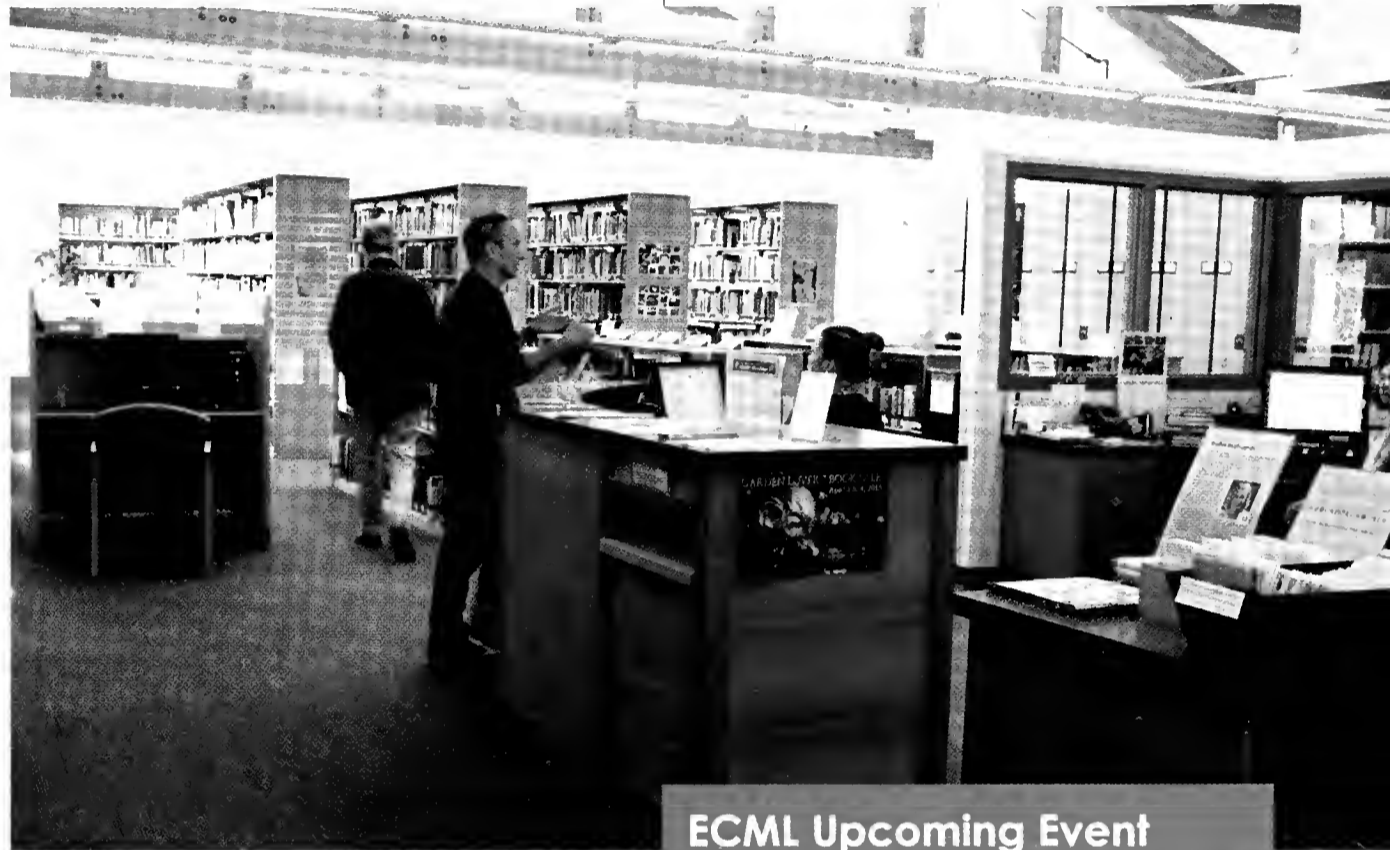
I also dive in for a quick perusal of the new books before every NHS meeting, when the library is open until 7:00 p.m. New books arrive on a monthly basis, many before they are available in bookstores or online. And I can't avoid the periodical shelves.

With 240 active subscriptions, you'll never need to go to the dentist office or the beauty parlor to read magazines again. Neither of those places would have *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, *The Pacific Daylily*, or *Garden Notes*, anyway.




Keep Your House from Collapsing

On my way to Elba, I had dinner with some botanists from the Pisa Botanical Garden. The guest of honor was Lucia Tongiorgi-Tomasi, an art historian specializing in botanical art. (Two of her stunning books, *The Oak Spring Herbaria* and *The Oak Spring Flora*, are in the ECML.) She divulged over dinner that she and her husband had to buy a second house, a lovely art nouveau



villa on the outskirts of Pisa, because they had too many books—thirty thousand, more or less. We all laughed at the idea of being forced out of our houses by our books. Then Lucia upped the ante telling us of a friend whose old Tuscan villa collapsed under the weight of their books.

I began wondering about our little house in the flood plain back in the States. Would the weight of books make our house slowly sink into those deep alluvial soils? What will I do when I return home from the Miller Library book sale this spring with even more books? Move out?

They say you can never be too rich or too thin, but it became obvious to me last fall that, just maybe, you can have too many books. Fortunately, you can never have too much access to books, which is why I use the architecturally-fortified Elisabeth C. Miller Library. 

ECML Library Hours

Regular Hours

Monday 9 – 8

Tuesday 9 – 5

Wednesday 9 – 5, except on NHS

Lecture series nights, open until 7

Thursday – Friday 9 – 5

Saturday 9 – 3

Summer Hours (July 1-Labor Day)

Saturday – closed

Monday – noon to 8

www.millerlibrary.org

ECML Upcoming Event

Mark your calendar for the Garden Lovers' Book Sale & Botanical Art Exhibit and Sale.

Wine and Cheese Preview Party and Book Sale

Friday, April 3rd from 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Tickets: \$25

Book Sale

Saturday, April 4th from

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.; Free Admission

Thousands of used gardening, horticulture, botany, and landscape design books will be for sale at ECML.

All proceeds of the sale are used to purchase the best and newest in horticultural books and journals.

The sale coincides with an exhibit and sale of new works by the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the American Society of Botanical Artists.



Ferns for Dry



Dryopteris affinis 'Crispa Gracilis'

Story and photos by Richie Stephen

One of our toughest gardening conditions in the Northwest is dry shade—the unfortunate norm under our native conifer overstory. Although it is a challenge for gardeners, it's not impossible to create an interesting and varied garden. Some of my favorite go-to plants to accomplish this are ferns. Fortunately, several will survive this harsh condition and, with time, become lovely additions to the landscape.

Native Ferns

When thinking about ferns for dry shade, it is best to start with natives. The workhorse of our woodlands is *Polystichum munitum*, the sword fern. This ubiquitous fern is so abundant here that we're often blind to its beauty. This fern can survive for decades with little attention growing slowly into a large gracefully arching mound reaching 3 to 4 feet tall with a spread of 4 to 5 feet. They're prolific, and young plants

can easily be dug and moved to drier areas in the garden.

Two other natives that are equally desirable, but less available, are *Asplenium trichomanes*, maidenhair spleenwort, and *Polypodium scolieri*, leatherleaf polypody.

Maidenhair spleenwort is a fantastic miniature fern. Mature plants seldom reach over 8 inches tall and wide. The evergreen fronds are very narrow and slender with a dark black stalk (fern fanatics call it a rachis). It loves growing in rocks but can easily adapt to a garden bed. If it likes where it is growing, it will cast spores about and reproduce.

The leatherleaf polypody is an epiphyte and can be found growing on the branches of trees and rocks along the West Coast ocean beaches where it tolerates salt spray and nearly non-stop winds. It's closely related to the licorice fern, but the fronds are thick and evergreen. It can adapt to garden conditions, and over time, the fronds can reach up to 12 inches and slowly form a patch as large as two feet across.

European Ferns

Several European ferns can add interesting texture to the dry shade garden. One of my favorites is *Polystichum setiferum*, the soft shield fern. This fern is often called Alaska fern in the Northwest due to confusion with the closely-spelled *P. setigerum*, which is native to Alaska and British Columbia. The soft shield fern was also a favorite of the Victorians. Over 300 cultivars were selected during the reign of Queen Victoria. Most of these have vanished, but a surprising number survive and are used in gardens today.

Two popular selections are *P. setiferum Divisilobum Group* and *Plumosomultilobum Group*. Both of these cultivars have finely divided foliage with *Plumosomultilobum Group* having a fluffy layered appearance. Despite their delicate look, these ferns are tough with the evergreen leaves remaining beautiful all year round.

For drama and size *Dryopteris affinis*, the golden-scaled male fern and *D. x complexa*, hybrid male fern are hard to beat. Both of these species can reach 3 to 4 feet tall over time.

Dryopteris affinis has several beautiful cultivars with one of the most popular being *D. affinis 'Cristata'* often referred to as "Cristata the King." This remarkable cultivar has strong upright dark green fronds with the tips of each leaflet delicately frayed and divided providing a frilly and elegant appearance. A second excellent cultivar is the diminutive *D. affinis 'Crispa Gracilis.'* Rarely reaching over a foot tall, the deep green



Polystichum setiferum Plumosmultilobum Group

Shade

fronds have congested and crinkled foliage with a rigid narrow upright vase shape. It is an excellent choice for containers, rock gardens, and dry shade beds.

Dryopteris x complexa is a stable hybrid with *D. affinis* and *D. filix-mas*. This large fern can reach 4 feet in height with a spread of 6 feet with a gracefully arching vase-shaped form. Few ferns can rival its toughness and impressive habit.

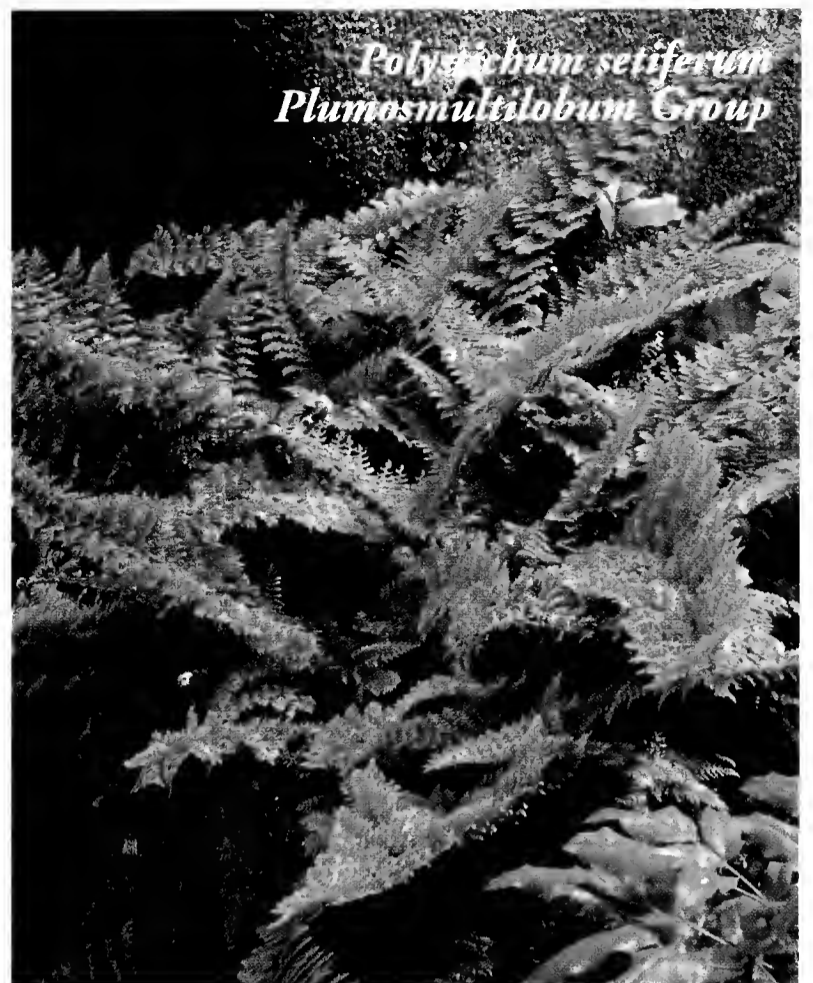
Use *D. x complexa* 'Stableri Crisped' for a smaller and more architectural plant. It will reach 2 to 3 feet in dry shade with a strongly upright form. The fronds are narrow and have an attractive wavy crinkled pattern. Both *D. affinis* and *D. x complexa* are semi-evergreen and can be cut back in midwinter once the foliage has collapsed.

A final selection for dry shade would be *Dryopteris erythrosora*, the autumn fern. It is tough, reliable, and persistent with evergreen foliage that will last through the winter and beyond. To keep this fern as vigorous as possible, I often wait until the new fronds start to emerge in the spring before cutting the old fronds back. This will also help show off the lovely bronzy-red new growth.

With all these choices, there is no need to fear dry shade. Just look to ferns.

Read more about these ferns and many others in Richie Steffen and Sue Olsen's new book *The Plant Lover's Guide to Ferns* from Timber Press. Richie will be talking about his book and his favorite ferns at a special NHS lecture on May 21, at the Washington Park Arboretum.

Richie Steffen is the Curator of the Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden.



Polystichum setiferum
Plumosmultilobum Group



Dryopteris erythrosora



Beneficial Beetles



By Diane Mettler

As the plants start to wake up in the spring, so do the bugs. Happily, most bugs aren't bad, and some we should welcome with open arms—specifically beetles.

Ladybugs

Most of us are familiar with ladybugs (or for you biology types, Coccinellidae), with their black-spotted red domes and voracious appetite for aphids (up to 50 a day) and other plant-eating insects. But did you know ladybugs lay their eggs (hundreds of them) in the colonies of aphids? When they hatch, the larvae immediately begin feeding. Each hatched larva will eat some 400 aphids before entering its pupal stage.

National Geographic says there are about 5,000 species of ladybugs, and their lifespan is about two to three years. Not all species are beneficial; a few, like the Mexican bean beetle and the squash

beetle will feed on—you guessed it—beans and squash.

Even though we find their appearance charming, a ladybug's coloring acts more like a Mr. Yuck sticker in the garden. Ladybugs secrete a foul-tasting fluid from their leg joints, and once a predator has experienced it, the red coloring becomes a warning label.

According to National Geographic, a threatened ladybug can also play dead and secrete the unappetizing substance to protect itself.

If you don't see any ladybugs in your yard, you can buy them at nurseries and garden centers, but they won't necessarily stay. Ladybugs are drawn to infestations (aka a food source), and if your neighbors have better dining, your ladybugs will fly next door.

Rove Beetles

Rove beetles (Staphylinidae) are also friends of the gardener. These guys look

a little like earwigs, minus the pinchers. They also have a scorpion-like tendency to rise up on the end of their bodies when confronted.

There are thousands of species of Staphylinidae with hundreds more identified each year. If you're into rove beetles, there's a site just for you (www.staphylinini.org) dedicated to the evolution and systematics of these little guys.

Rove beetles are predators and eat not only insects on plants, but also insects in the soil and on plant roots. Like ladybugs, both the adult and immature larvae eat insects.

If you run across any rove beetles, which could be on plants, mushrooms, decaying plant material, under stones, or on dung, it is not advisable to pick them up. They have strong jaws, and some bite.

This spring relax a little, and let the beetles do some of the work for you. 🐞

EVENTS

April 8, 2015

Of What Is Past, Or Passing, Or To Come

Iain Robertson

CUH Lecture 7:15 p.m.

Reception 6:45 p.m.

May 13, 2015

Travels to Inspiration – Journey to Your Garden

Marilee Khulmann

CUH Lecture 7:15 p.m.

Reception 6:45 p.m.

May 14, 2015

Designing Your Vegetable Garden

Marilee Khulmann

Dunn Gardens Lecture 10:00 a.m.

May 21, 2015

Fern Walk & Lecture

Richie Sreffen & Sue Olsen

Graham Visitors Center Washington Park Arboretum 6:30 p.m.

June 10, 2015

When Pretty Isn't Enough: Comparative Trials at Chicago Botanic Garden

Richard Hawke

CUH Lecture 7:15 p.m.

Reception 6:45 p.m.

Watch the website www.northwesthort.org for upcoming classes.

The Story of Plants

SERVICEBERRY

Photo and Story by Daniel Mount

In 1896, the small town of Republic, in the far northeastern corner of Washington, had a gold rush. But gold wasn't the only thing they found; there is a treasure trove of Eocene era fossils in the area.

Archeology

Layers and layers of fish, insects, and plants were trapped in the mud of the once numerous lakes, when that area was the edge of the continent. Like a photographic process in geologic time, they were preserved. For a few dollars paid to the Stone Rose Visitor Center, you can dig fossils for yourself on the outskirts of Republic.

I did.

As I gently chipped away at the shale—like pulling back the tab on an ancient Polaroid—I revealed a leaf that had seen no sunlight nor felt a breeze for 50 million years. Yet it was so familiar.

I had found a serviceberry (*Amelanchier* sp.) leaf.

Early Years of Serviceberry

I was surprised to learn that many of the plants that grew there then were not that different than what we find in modern Puget Sound gardens today. You can find katsura and ginkgo leaves, dawn redwood needles, and leaves of many members of the rose family, like serviceberry.

Although the dawn redwoods and ginkgoes eventually died out here, the

serviceberries became well established on this continent. You can find them growing in every state of the union except Hawaii.

Clearing up the Confusion

The genus is a confusion of naturally occurring hybrids and genetic variations that have even botanists scratching their heads. Though some are found in Asia and Europe, North America is their stronghold, in particular the Northeast.

There are two native genera in the Pacific Northwest. The most common is the widespread and diverse *A. alnifolia*. Forms of it can be found growing from above the Arctic Circle to northern Mexico. I grow a readily available dwarf cultivar called 'Regent'.

Regent is a scrappy little suckering shrub, which I relegated to the swamp at the back of our property. When it is a beautiful lacey dome of white flowers in spring, I wonder why I treated it so harshly, even though it thrives there.

Beautiful and Prodigious

In the garden, serviceberries are utterly affable, as if "invented" for the modern gardener. They are graceful in form and burst with elegant trusses of pure white flowers in spring. They are prodigious producers of sweet purplish-black tasty fruit, and to top it off, turn beautiful shades of red in fall. They are not terribly

picky about soils either—though they hate drought—and don't mind a bit of shade from other trees or houses.

It's no wonder they've lasted so long on the planet.

Most of the finer cultivars of serviceberry come from a naturally occurring hybrid of two East Coast species. Selected for its fiery red fall color, *A. x grandiflora* 'Autumn Brilliance' is the most popular and easy to come by. 'Cole's Select' adds distinctive dark green summer foliage to what is often considered the "best four-season plant."

Many of the straight species are fine plants too. *A. arborea*, the east coast native downy serviceberry, makes a lovely tree with silky-haired new foliage in spring. *Amelanchier ovalis*, the only European species, has the largest flowers in the genus. You can see fine examples of these in the Washington Park Arboretum.

When my eyes tire of my computer screen, I look at the fossil of the 50-million-year-old serviceberry leaf I keep on my desk. It has become a talisman to me, a silent reminder that beauty will outlast ecological disaster, mass extinctions, and human folly. ♪

Daniel is the owner of Daniel Mount Gardens. Read more of Daniel's articles on plants and gardens at www.mountgardens.com.



Realizing Rhodie Results



Rhododendron pachysanthum

Story by Greg Graves, photos by Richie Steffen

To be a gardener in the Northwest means you have dealt with Rhododendrons at some point. It is the state flower of Washington, so you know they are everywhere.

Unfortunately, many of us have rhodies planted right in front of our windows. Perhaps like me, you bought an older house and needed to figure out what to do with all those misplaced rhodies.

When I bought my 1930s house in the early 90s, the main landscape plant was Rhododendrons. Some were probably 50 years old or older. Several had been planted close together in one long row and had grown into each other. Others were standing alone but were very large. I could tell some were special, and the person who planted them probably

knew something about plants. I addressed each one as an individual plant to see what could be done, even if it meant removal.

Making Decisions

Fortunately, Rhododendrons (even older plants) have a fairly small root ball, so they're easy to work with. A few *Rhododendron rex* in our front yard were very tall—about 15 feet—so I cleaned out the deadwood in the center and arborized them to show off the beautiful bark. They looked great as small trees.

Some were rather spindly, so I cut them back hoping they would grow back, and they did. A few I gave to a friend, and I moved a few to other parts of the garden. When I was done, I had about two thirds of the original plants, but they looked like they belonged there, and the garden still felt like an old garden.

Learning to Love Rhodies

I didn't like Rhododendrons at first because many of the cultivars were cultivated for the flower color, so most of the plants looked alike with mid-green leaves, oval, and mounding.

When I started to work at the Miller Botanical Garden, I gained a whole new appreciation for the Rhododendron. There I got to see a whole range of Rhododendrons, many of them species I had never seen before. A big collector of the genus, Mrs. Miller grew many of the Rhododendrons in the garden for almost 50 years. She thought they needed to pull their weight in the garden and needed more than just one season of interest.

My very first job at the Miller Garden was to help deadhead a rather large *Rhododendron loderi* right by the road.

Rhododendron schlippenbachii

I appreciated how it had been arborized to accent the beautiful trunk, and its fragrance was a nice bonus.

I also fell in love with the big leaves of *Rhododendron macabeum* and *Rhododendron sinogrande*. Those large leaves gave the plant year-round interest.

I wasn't familiar with the deciduous rhododendrons, so *Rhododendron quinquefolium* and *Rhododendron schlippenbachii* became my new favorites. I especially liked the pale green of the new growth of *Rhododendron quinquefolium* lined with a red band. Both also had excellent fall color. Then there was *Rhododendron strigosum*, always the first to bloom with the most brilliant red color.

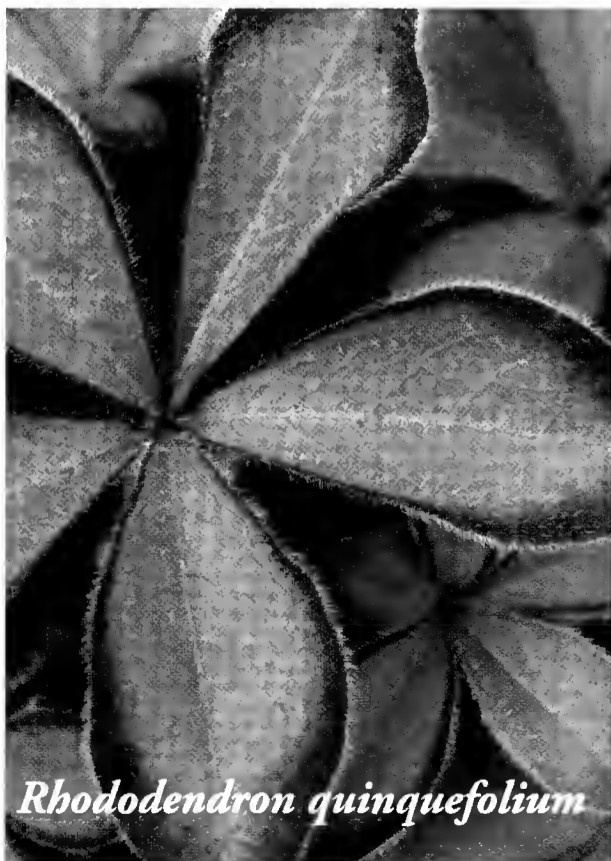
With dozens of different species and cultivars, it was hard to find ones I didn't like but with my preference for plants to have more interesting foliage, I was drawn to the Rhododendrons with good indumentum, which is a layer of fine hairs that cover the top or bottom or both sides of the leaf.

A few good selections of these were *Rhododendron* 'Sir Charles Lemon', *Rhododendron pachysanthum*, and *Rhododendron campanulatum* ssp. *aeruginosum*. These selections made you want to pet

them, in fact many people did. Some of the plants close to the path would have the indumentum rubbed off them from people touching them.

Choosing Rhodies for Home

When I bought my current garden about 10 years ago, I was able to put all these lessons to work. I planted *Rhododendron impeditum* as a small shrub along the borders, and I planted a *Rhododendron* 'Sir Charles Lemon' so that it would be back-lit at sunset, showcasing its beautiful indumentum.

*Rhododendron quinquefolium*

GARDENnotes

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I also incorporated *Rhododendron pachysanthum* along the long border so people can appreciate the indumentum, and yes, pet it. I bought one big leaf species each year from Chemicum Woods or the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden at the NHS plant sale and planted it as a stand-alone specimen plant.

I also added *Rhododendron quinquefolium* and *Rhododendron schlippenbachii* in sunnier spots for good fall color. I also moved a couple big specimen plants to the back of the border. I even planted *Rhododendron sinogrande* in a container that I drag in and out of the greenhouse just so I can enjoy the spectacular foliage. (It isn't hardy enough for my location.)

Now all I need to get is the *Rhododendron campanulatum* ssp. *aeruginosum* for its beautiful blue foliage, and I'll be set—until the next NHS plant sale. ☺



A Night for Nerds

By NHS

Calling all plant nerds...calling all plant nerds. Tickets for our third Plant Nerd Night go on sale May 1, 2015, at 8:00 a.m.

The event will once again be held at the Mountaineers Seattle Program Center in Sandpoint Magnuson Park. Proceeds support NHS's scholarship and grant programs. Tickets are \$45.00 and can be purchased from Brown Paper Tickets (www.brownpapertickets.com).

Do you remember the last Plant Nerd Night? On a beautiful summer evening in July, 400 participants leisurely shopped as they sipped their drinks and enjoyed the delectable eats.

Don't delay! Tickets sold out within a few short days for both the 2012 and 2013 events.

Fun, Food, and Merriment

This year's event features six fantastic Growers—Bouquet Banque Nursery, Chimum Woods, Gossler Farms Nursery, Hardy Fern Foundation, Naylor Creek Nursery, and Skagit Gardens. You will find tons of rare and choice plants, once-in-a-lifetime auction items, and Cajun country music by landscape designer Virginia Hand's Troupeau Acadian.

Master of Ceremonies is none other than the plant nerd himself, Richie Steffen. Our own TV and radio gardening show host, Ciscoe Morris, will be on hand to keep the party upbeat and exciting.

Scholarships & Grants

We appreciate all of you who attend, not only to enjoy the fun party atmo-

sphere and the camaraderie of fellow plant nerds, but also to make Plant Nerd Night a prosperous fundraiser.

Proceeds from the last two Plant Nerd Nights have provided scholarships to six graduate students at the University of Washington Botanic Gardens Center for



Urban Horticulture for special projects relating to their graduate research.

Your generosity has also allowed us to award \$20,500 in grants to local horticultural projects that further horticultural education in the northwest.

■ In both 2013 and 2014, grants were given to Garden Raised Bounty (GRuB), a program in Olympia that partners with low-income individuals and groups to give them the means and education necessary to establish backyard and community gardens (see page 12).

■ Grants were awarded to Lakewold Gardens to aid in the restoration of their Alpine Rock Garden and to Kruckeberg Botanic Garden Foundation to expand their hands-on horticultural workshops in this historic garden.

■ A grant was awarded to Friends of the Conservatory Volunteer Park to aid in the development of a mobile website and a portable, self-guided tour of the Conservatory.

■ As a result of a 2013 grant, the University of Washington Botanic Gardens was able to develop a new education series to engage both landscape professionals and local gardeners in monitoring for high consequence plant pests and diseases. With their recent 2014 grant, they will engage a UW Computer Science and Technology School Student to develop a smartphone application for the plants in the Arboretum.

■ With proceeds from Plant Nerd Night, we have also been able to continue our support of the Seattle Children's Play-Garden.

Plant Nerd Night would not be possible without the support of our sponsors.



Ravenna Gardens



Small Yard and Specimen Trees

Story by Sylvia Matlock, photos by Richie Steffen

No room in the garden for specimen trees? No problem. Plant these little wonders in containers and gift them later when they're ready to go in the ground.

These particular choices are attractive, and they also provide late winter color before spring has fully arrived.

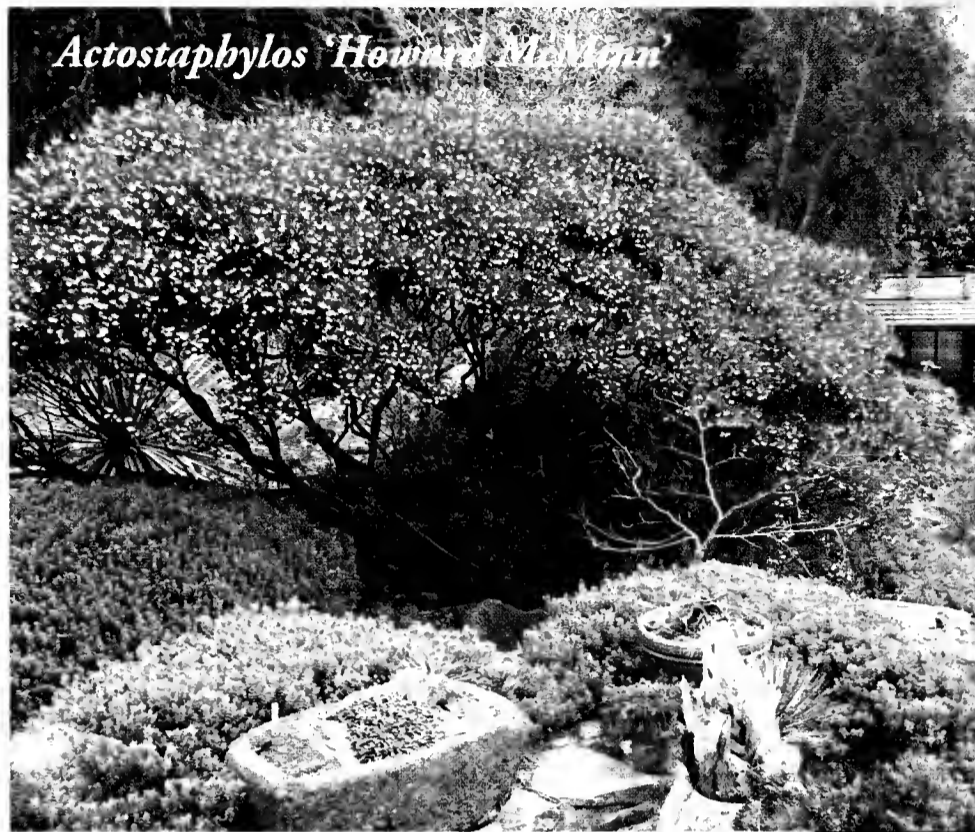
Pinus Chief Joseph

A nice example is the luminescent *Pinus* Chief Joseph. This pine is drought tolerant once it's established, and once mature is 4 feet tall and 4 feet across. It needs little fertilization and, like pines in general, needs full sun and well-drained soil. For extra color, skirt it with our native *Gaultheria procumbens* wintergreen.

Actostaphylos 'Howard McMinn'

Blooming late in winter, this beauty has stunning bark and intricate branching. Place found rocks and small treasures at the base for a little bling.

This specimen does quite well in containers for about three years; it should then be planted in fast-draining soil with full sun exposure. Reaching a



Actostaphylos 'Howard McMinn'

maximum of 6 feet tall and as much as 7 feet wide after several years, this evergreen shrub does well in rocky, sandy, and acid soils.

Acer circinatum 'Pacific Fire'

A spectacular native vine maple with deep coral bark makes a bold focal point perfectly placed in a black pot. This deciduous tree can thrive in sun and dappled shade and prefers well-drained soil. When mature, it can reach a height of 18 feet and a width of 15 feet.

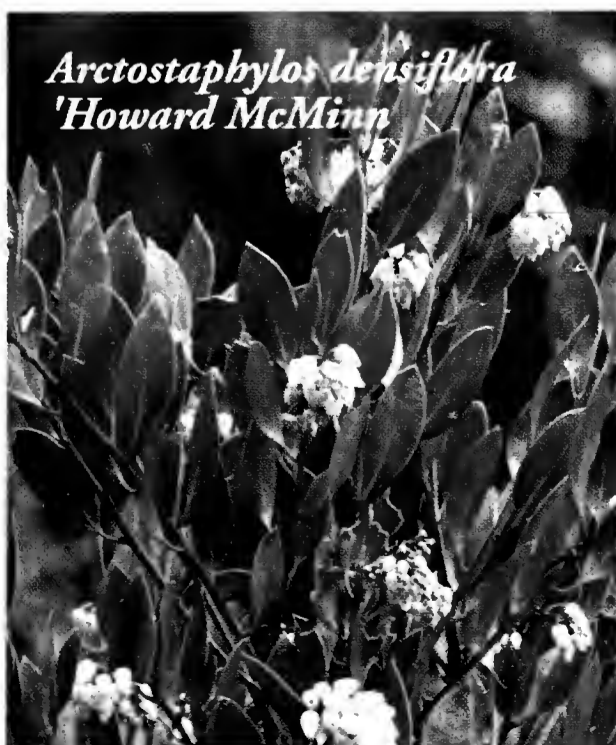
Garrya elliptica

Give this evergreen shrub a few years of growing time and it will reward you with a durable, elegant performance that only a handful of winter shrubs can match.

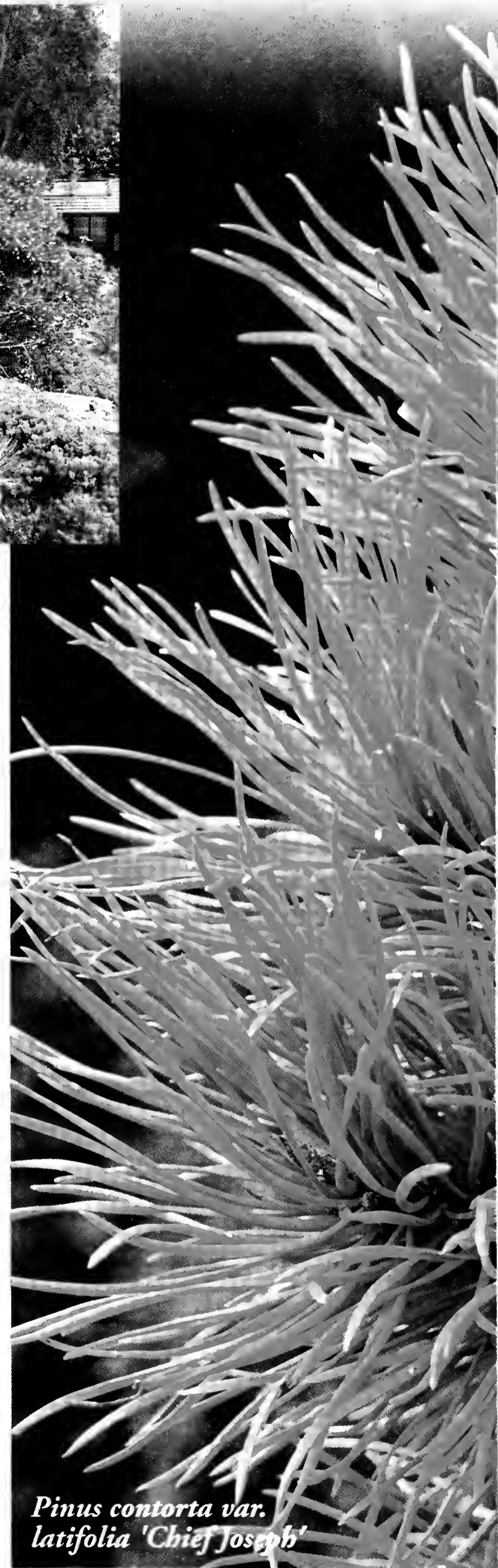
The extra long gray-green racemes, paired with the deep green roundish leaves, make for either a subtle container specimen or a long-term serene border or hedge. It can attain heights of 10 to 20 feet and does well in full sun to partial shade.

There is a world of great trees out there. Don't let your small yard keep you from enjoying them. ~

You can visit Sylvia Matlock and Ross Johnson at their nursery on Vashon Island. www.dignursery.com



Arctostaphylos densiflora 'Howard McMinn'



Pinus contorta var. *latifolia* 'Chief Joseph'



GOOD GRUB



By Katie Rains

I grew up in Trenton, New Jersey. My mother worked full time and did her best to make ends meet with little outside support. Money was always tight, making food choices limited. I clearly remember trips to the grocery store, my mother with calculator in hand. If only we had found an organization like GRuB.

GRuB is a community-based nonprofit organization with a mission to inspire and empower people to bring about positive change in their own lives and in their communities.

The first approach we take to address the needs of our community is through our work with disengaged youth. Through the GRuB School program, we work to educate/activate the potential for learning, self-sufficiency, and self-efficacy of high school students who are struggling in the traditional school setting.

The program model has been widely accepted by both students and educators and was recently adopted by the Olympia School District as a new addition to their curriculum.

GRuB's program of promoting excellence through non-traditional learning, by way of agriculture, speaks for itself in the following quote:

"I have personally watched students transform from disgruntled and angry to engaged and happy. Although it can be a roller coaster, I see GRuB's work as a catalyst for providing hope to many students who had previously lost hope. Their presence clearly has made a difference in the culture of our school." – Matt Grant, Olympia High School Principal.

We are now in the midst of working with a local legislator, Representative Chris Reykdal, to advocate for House Bill 1568, Drop-out Prevention through Farm-Based Engagement, so that more school districts around the state can adopt GRuB-like programs to better


meet the needs of students who are most likely to fall through the cracks.

GRuB's other community food solution approach to hunger-relief and community-building is the Kitchen Garden Project (KGP). KGP was originally inspired by the Home Gardening Project in Portland, Ore., founded by a Viet Nam veteran named Dan Barker.

KGP builds home vegetable gardens with low-income families to increase nutrition, health, and wellbeing and reduce dependence on emergency food. The purpose of KGP is to connect people through a sustainable food movement by providing access to the knowledge and resources needed to grow healthy foods.

Last year, GRuB built 75 backyard gardens serving more than 249 food-insecure individuals. Ninety percent of our gardener families indicated that they felt greater food security as a result of their garden.

As the old Chinese proverb states: *"Give a man a fish, he eats for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he eats for a lifetime."* GRuB extends our deepest thanks to the Northwest Horticultural Society for supporting our efforts to empower our community to eat well for a lifetime!

If you would like to learn more, I invite you to visit www.goodgrub.org or [facebook.com/GRuB.WA](https://www.facebook.com/GRuB.WA). 

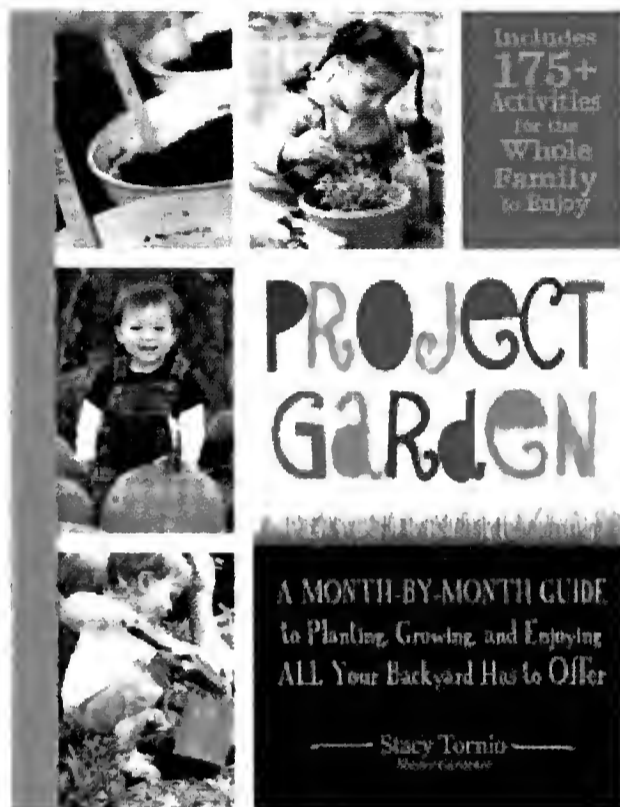
Katie Rains is the executive director of GRuB. GRuB was one of the NHS 2014 grant recipients.



A Children's Garden

By Brian Thompson

Did you know that “old golf balls can be converted into great garden caterpillars?” This was news to me, but the results look cool. If you haven't guessed, we're taking a look at the Miller Library's children's collection.



Project Garden

The new book *Project Garden* is full of many delightful activities that engage the whole family.

Author Stacy Tornio divides her projects into categories including Grow It, Plant It, and Eat It. The book is filled with lots of easy-to-follow planting guides and recipes. Carrot Pizza anyone? Some projects are just plain fun, like our caterpillar, but they still teach valuable lessons, such as it's OK to include artwork in your garden.

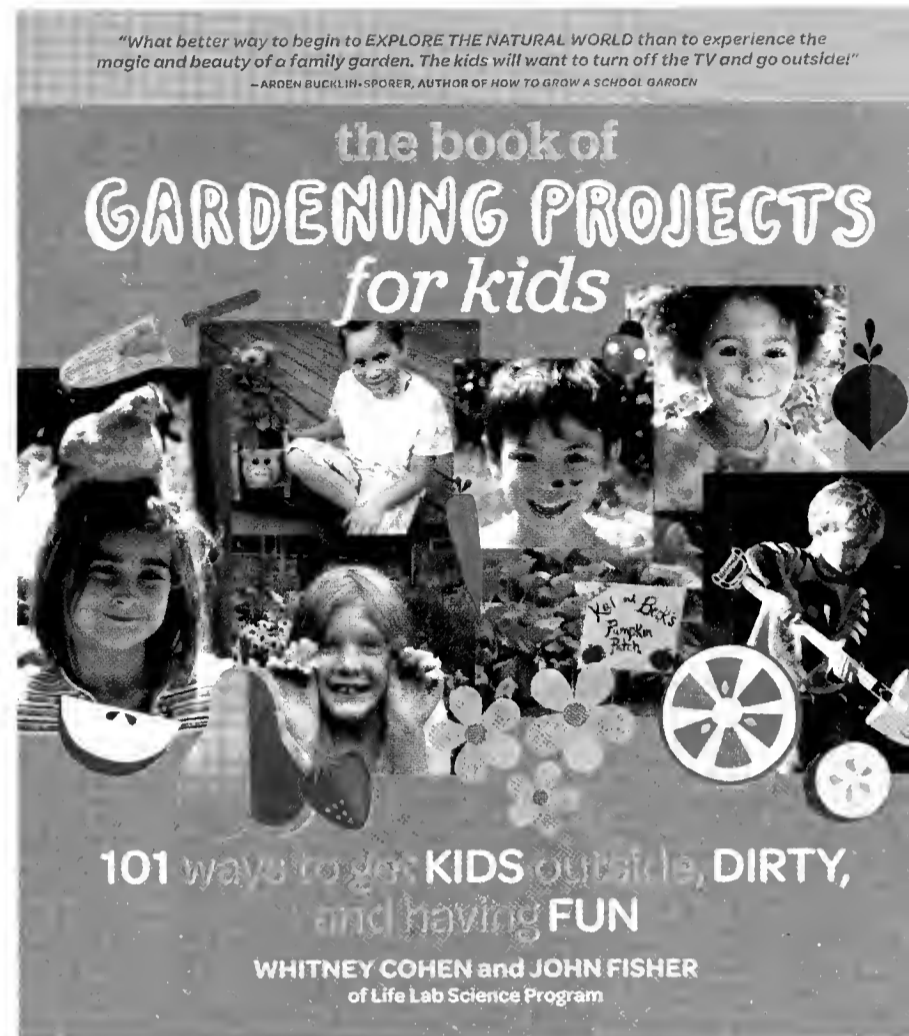
Project Garden can be found in the Parent/Teacher Resource Collection at the Miller Library. Originally funded by a grant from the NHS in 2007, this collection helps all adults who work with children from pre-school to high school. Together with the adjacent Children's Collection, these books introduce students to a broad range of basic gar-

dening skills, as well as botany and the natural ecosystems both inside and outside the garden.

The Book of Gardening Projects for Kids

The Book of Gardening Projects for Kids by Whitney Cohen and John Fisher promises “to get kids outside, dirty, and having fun.” Worm Bin Bingo is one way to do all three, and it gives both parents and children intimate knowledge of their compost.

This book includes an excellent selection of activities for older kids, like making hypertufa flowerpots or a bat box. Garden design is the important first chapter, helping you create a place that is engaging from a child's point of view, yet safe enough for a parent's peace of mind.

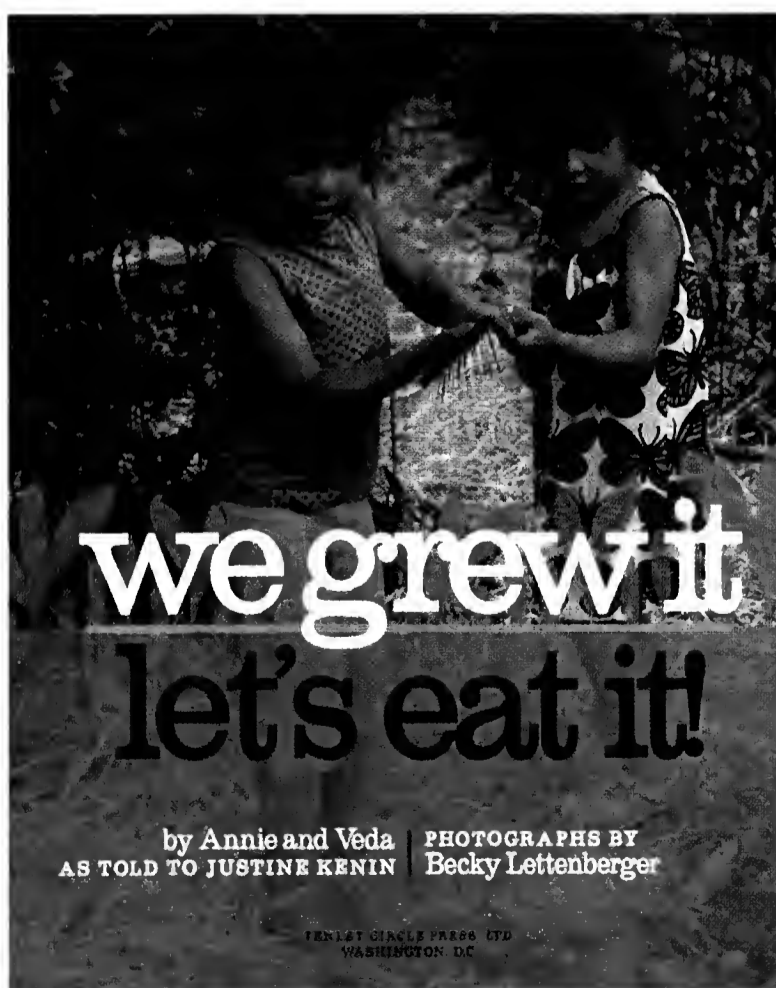


We Grew It, Let's Eat It!

My favorite new book in the Children's Collection is *We Grew It, Let's Eat It!* by Annie and Veda (as told to their mother, Justine Kenin), twin girls growing up in an apartment in Washington, D.C. Inspired by the White House vegetable garden, the girls are invited by a neighbor to help with her community garden plot.

Here they learn how to cage a tomato plant; that squash plants have both boy flowers and girl flowers; and deer are not good garden guests. “How do we un-invite deer?” asks Veda. If only it were so simple.

Brian Thompson is the manager and curator of horticultural literature for the Elisabeth C. Miller Library.



If Not This, Then What?



Sambucus nigra
'Eva' BLACK LACE

Story by Sue Goetz, photos by Richie Stephen

We've all done it, fell in love with a plant and had to have it in our garden. Just what our plant lust needed...until it became a thug, outgrew its space, or simply didn't perform as well as that lovely label implied.

Take a look further into plant varieties available on the market. You may discover a good substitute for that plant. Sometimes it's a dwarf form, an improved variety, or a different plant that does the same job but with more desirable attributes.

So, if not this, then how about that...

Size Matters

Many plants have dwarf or tidier forms of the species. Here are a few compact varieties of popular garden plants.

The commonly used Lily of the Valley shrub (*Pieris japonica*) is a good evergreen plant, but some varieties can get big and leggy. *Pieris j.* 'Cavatine' is a tidy, compact one that fits nicely in the middle layer of a mixed border.

Oakleaf hydrangeas are popular for their interesting leaf shape, vibrant fall color, and large white blooms. The challenge is they can quickly overgrow a space. Switch to the compact version *H. quercifolia* 'Sike's Dwarf' to get the attributes of the big version in a 3' by 3' plant.

Maiden grass (*Miscanthus*) adds drama to garden design; however, the drama really begins when it grows over six feet tall and three feet in diameter. Compact versions such as *M. sinensis* 'Adagio' or *M. sinensis* 'Yaku Jima' are nice additions to meadow plantings and small gardens because they won't take more than their fair share of space.

Nicer Siblings

Sometimes the choice is the same plant, just a different variety. Here are a few cultivars that give a nicer performance than their relatives.

Echinacea purpurea 'Kim's Knee High' is a selection of coneflower that won't flop over like taller varieties can.

Speaking of floppy, give up the love-hate relationship with shasta daisies that crash to the ground. Grow the stronger-stemmed variety *Leucanthemum x superbum* 'Becky' who stays perky and blooms like crazy.

Landscape roses are garden roses without all the fuss. There are many new varieties on the market, but a consistent performer with a traditional rose look is Double Knock Out © Rose (*Rosa 'Radtko'*).

Color for Color


Magic happens in a garden when there is a contrast of colorful foliage to set off verdant surroundings. Here are some

options to search out as replacements for common (and sometimes overused) choices.

Sick of burgundy-leaf barberries or done with their thorns? Try the deep foliage colors of Weigelas. *W. florida* 'Elvera' Midnight Wine is a tidy one whose burgundy leaves are a bolder color, with a bonus of vibrant fuchsia-colored flowers in the early summer.

Another burgundy foliage winner, fondly called the "poor man's Japanese maple" is Elderberry Black Lace (*Sambucus nigra* 'Eva'). Not a tree like a Japanese maple, but a large shrub with a deep colored lacy foliage that resembles the frilly palmate leaves of a maple.

Carex morrowii 'Ice Dance' used to be a darling of landscape designers, but it has become notorious for its aggressive, creeping habit. Plant *C. oshimensis* 'Everest' instead. You will still have the nice mounding habit and variegation without so much of a creep.

A simple switch from "this" to "that" can make all the difference. 

Sue Goetz, CPH, is owner of Creative Gardener and an NHS board member.



Miscanthus sinensis 'Adagio'

President's Message



By Jackie White, NHS President

One of my greatest rewards is taking part in the full lifecycle of a seed.

Each year I spend the rainy dark days of winter pouring over my favorite vegetable seed catalogs. I'm always in search of a new favorite veggie yet to be discovered. Before I place my order I must check my collection of vegetable seeds carefully harvested and safely

stored. You see, what you may not know is that I'm a passionate veggie, fruit, and herb gardener and, more importantly, a passionate cook. I love the entire process of growing edible plants from seed to harvest and masterfully creating an epicurean delicacy to share with my family and friends.

My passion took root at an early age when my grandmother first carved out a small section of her garden especially for me. Now I happily garden with my husband who shares my passion for growing food. We have an extensive vegetable and herb garden that fills most of the front garden area.

Speaking of edible gardening, NHS will be hosting a vegetable garden design lecture given by Marilee Kuhlman on May 14 at Dunn Gardens. Marilee is

the founder of Comfort Zones Garden Design, a Los Angeles exterior landscape design practice committed to sustainable principles. She will share her many ideas on how to use garden structures and lay out beds to create a vegetable garden that is not only productive and water-wise, but also beautiful.

Our NHS committees are working hard to come up with new and exciting ideas for 2015. Stay tuned for creative classes, workshops, and day tours that will be announced in the near future by visiting www.northwesthort.org.

However you choose to celebrate the return of spring, we hope you will join us as we learn from our fellow gardeners, designers, and plant nerds. We always encourage you to bring a friend to share your passion for gardening. 🌿

Thank you to our patrons. The Wednesday Evening Lecture Series would not be possible without the tremendous support of our patrons. Their generosity helps NHS provide an outstanding educational program for Northwest gardeners.

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Thanks to the volunteers at the 2015 NHS/HFF booth who left their gardens on the beautiful spring days during the show to sell memberships.



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