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NORTHWEST ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER, FEBRUARY 1974

This is the Year of the Tiger. It is also the year the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society actively solicits membership involvement. Where before we were pretty much run by the Board of Trustees (who had either grabbed the glory or had it shoved off on it, depending upon your point of view), we are now reaching out for more membership involvement. We want to see you at our meetings, tours and plant sales. Learn with us. Help us do a better job. Let us hear your voice. Enlist new members. This is your Society, so please participate!

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Ellen Pennell, Program Chairman, has arranged three general lecture-meetings with accompanying horticultural displays for our interest, instruction and education. (Free to us, \$1.00 for our friends): Wednesday, February 27, 1974, Eames Theatre, Seattle Science Center, 10 a.m. to noon. Dr. Bastiaan J. D. Meeuse of the University of Washington Botany Department will talk to us on "Pollination and Seed Dispersal". It seems that nearly everyone who has ever heard Dr. Meeuse falls in love with him and his subject on the spot. He is that charming. Come and see and hear for yourself. To prepare for this lecture, Mrs. Pennell strongly recommends that you try to read Dr. Meeuse's book "The Story of Pollination." Here is an excerpt from its preface:

"Part of my youth was spent in West Java, a tropical paradise full of birds, flowers, and insects. Even before I could put my feelings into meaningful words, I was fascinated by the contrast between the splendid immobility of the flowers and the darting movements of the butterflies -- God's little magicians, as they have been called. This childhood experience has goaded me to share with others what knowledge I now possess about the wonders of pollination....In the first part of the book I have tried to present, in a more or less logical order, a number of principles--or at least matters of general importance--concerning the relationships between flowers and the animals that pollinate them. Thus, there is a chapter on the color vision of animals, one on the ways in which flowers produce their color effects, and a chapter on the honey-guides that lead the pollinators to the hidden nectar---Unashamedly, I have included in the latter half of the book chapters on the most important pollinators--bees, birds, butterflies, hawkmoths, flies, bats, and beetles."

On Wednesday, March 27, 1974, Isabel and Lawrence J. Pierce will discuss and illustrate "Species Rhododendrons in an Amateur's Garden". Eames Theatre, 10 a.m. to noon. The Pierces have a beautiful garden in which they have grown, cultivated and propagated many rhododendrons, "one of the finest in the country" according to Dr. David Leach, President of the American Horticultural Society. They enjoy and work their garden together and are most generous in sharing with others their garden and their experiences in the growing of rhododendrons.

Tuesday, September 24, 1974, Eames Theatre, 10 a.m. to noon. The Plant Sale Chairman will give us a preview of the October plant sale. A major horticultural display will be featured.

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The Fall Plant Sale itself will be held on October 1 and 2, 1974 at University Village.

Ann Ormsby is in charge of the May 15th Garden Tour day (details later).

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Sue Olson again will be chairman of the Fern Sale, to be held this year on June 19 at the Arboretum. Fern people are aggressive and shop early. Last year's fern sale was sold out almost before it opened for business.

In July (date and place, later) we will have a members only "Bring and Buy" plant sale. You are urged to start early -- pot up your material in a plastic pot, not earthenware (too hot). Skip those plastic bags too. Your stuff just won't survive handled that way. Also bring a "brown bag" lunch. Dorothy Hussey is in charge of this affair.

November 1974 brings our annual banquet and election of officers (date and place, later).

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Marty Trosper wants us to know we are all invited to the Seattle Garden Club's open meeting Thursday, February 21 at 11 a.m. in Bloedel Hall, St. Mark's Cathedral. Mrs. Pendleton Miller will give a talk "Why Green Turns Brown", and Mrs. Christa Little, Seattle Park Department Project Manager of the Central Freeway Park Project will speak on "LIDDING the Freeway." The meeting is free and open to the public.

And that isn't all. On Tuesday, March 19, at 10:30 a.m., at the Seattle Art Museum, the Seattle Garden Club will have another free open meeting. We're invited to that too. Mrs. Brian Mulligan will speak on being "Foot-loose in Europe".

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We know you will all agree that "it's about time" -- Brian and Margaret Mulligan are now honorary lifetime members of our Society. It's official, by action of the Board of Trustees. In the parlance of gardeners, the Mulligans are "rare gems."

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If you missed the annual meeting --

Mr. Joe Witt, Curator of Plant Collections at the Arboretum, appreciates the moral and financial support of the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society. He said so, at our annual meeting November 19, 1973, also saluting the volunteer efforts of the Arboretum Foundation Unit Council's annual "Work-and-Fun" Day, and clean-up and maintenance by a National Guard unit. A bright spot in the Arboretum's year was the "Work-a-thon" engaged in by a group of local young people, the Amigos de las Americas (a sort of junior-grade Peace Corps bunch). Boys and girls both pitched in. Pay was provided by their pledge-patrons.

The status of the Arboretum lease negotiations between the University and the City of Seattle (to this date, undecided) was reviewed by Dr. Dale Cole, Director of the Center for Ecosystem Studies, University of Washington College of Forest Resources. Despite the uncertainty related to the management lease, he spoke positively by introducing the possibility of a computerized plant record system. It would provide flexible filing, instant plant classification and complete recall. Such a system could cost from \$15,000 to \$25,000 and would enlarge the horticultural capabilities of the University. This system is something we may decide to contribute to when the time is right.

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The Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society (N.O.H.S.) is looking for an emblem to identify our newsletter. If you have an idea for a name and/or an appropriate sketch - here's your chance to get involved and compete for a prize plant. Awards will go to the three best ideas and to the top three sketches. Send yours to Sallie Allen, 18540 - 26th Ave. N.E., Seattle 98155. The members of the Board will judge the entries. You should put your name and address on back of your entries. The Judges promise not to peek. This is a "members only" competition.





John Putnam, President of the Arboretum Foundation; Paul Gibson, representing the Arboretum Coalition; and our President, Sallie Allen, were invited to testify before the University of Washington Board of Regents on January 18, 1974 on the Arboretum problem. This is what Sallie told the Regents:

"Mr. Phillips, Members of the Board of Regents:

Legally and technically the Arboretum property is owned by the City of Seattle. However, to create an arboretum it has taken years of professional expertise and devotion provided by the University of Washington, funds from the state legislature (about \$2-1/2 million since 1943), and thousands upon thousands of volunteer hours contributed by supporting groups such as the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society. These volunteers are not restricted to residents of the City of Seattle, as the appeal and value of the University of Washington Arboretum are recognized throughout the entire state.

The Arboretum, located as it is in this unique combination of geographic and climatic patterns, has the potential of being one of the outstanding arboreta in the country. This is a fact appreciated nationwide by experts in the field of botany and horticulture. In our opinion, this potential can be realized only through the management by the University, unencumbered by city politics.

If this potential is allowed to be developed, can you imagine the civic pride in having an outstanding arboretum of national and international reputation? Our Arboretum is a valuable resource for many departments of this University that so far have been only superficially explored. Benefits obvious to the layman, I am sure, are those derived from the soil and air pollution studies within the urban area. The results of the studies surely will be of great public benefit. One might hope that in this garden-oriented area, a department of ornamental horticulture would evolve within this University. The Arboretum with a fine herbarium, library, and superior plant collections should be the central resource facility for all junior colleges that include botany and urban horticulture in their curriculum. As a matter of fact it could and should be the center of information from kindergarten age to advanced degrees in institutions of higher learning throughout the country.

An important facet of education is the manner in which it can be used for the enrichment of all human life. Imaginative programs for the public could be initiated for the handicapped, the retarded, and the blind. For example, a garden area for the blind could be created where the senses of touch, smell, and sound were incorporated in the plantings.

For the children the possibilities are unlimited as they are eager to learn and fascinated by growing things. Nature walks could be encouraged further for organized groups such as Girl and Boy Scouts. Bits of vacant land in the immediate area could be used for kiddie "mini pea patches." We in the lay organizations have wanted to assist in the education of the children. Perhaps we could help here.

Let me go back to a statement I made. The State of Washington is strongly oriented toward ornamental horticulture. Individual garden clubs number in the hundreds with memberships in the thousands. I am not going to burden you with a reading of the list of general and specialized groups, but I shall mention a few that have great interest in the Arboretum and strongly support it.

Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society, 250 members

Arboretum Foundation, approximately 3000 members

Seattle Garden Club, 167 members

Lake Washington Garden Clubs, 5 units all with Arboretum representatives

State Federated Garden Clubs, 14 districts, 11,000 members



In addition, the entire page that follows is a list of both general and specialized garden groups that meet regularly. They all want to learn. Information is freely given by knowledgeable personnel at the Arboretum. This is a free public service to anyone who wishes to call the Arboretum office.

Practically speaking, ornamental horticulture is big business for the State of Washington. I am not going to deluge you with facts and figures; however I found information given to me by the State Department of Agriculture extremely enlightening. There are nearly 3000 licensed retail outlets for ornamentals in the state, through which \$25 million worth of business is done annually. They admitted that this figure was extremely conservative. One-third of this business is within our own region. We have a tremendous export business in bulbs and fruit trees, for which we have an international reputation for excellence. Great Britain is our largest market for bulbs. The State of Washington exports one-third of the world's supply of bulbs.

During the negotiations between the University and the city these past 18 months, a small verbal pressure group has succeeded in forcing our fragile, cherished Arboretum into the capricious political arena, where it has been exploited to personal advantage. Pending initiatives and all of the misinformation that has accompanied this and other questionable actions have reduced the stature of a valuable resource to a little in-city squabble and problem. As a result, the fate of our University of Washington Arboretum could be determined by the voters of the City of Seattle only. Since I live beyond the city limits, I highly resent the fact that I will have no vote in a decision to be made on something I believe in very strongly and have worked on very hard for 14 years. Among the executive committee and the board of directors of the Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society, 10 live within the city, 18 in suburban areas, and one in Tacoma. Our membership reflects the same distribution, and in addition we have out-of-state members.

The Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society originally was incorporated in the State of Washington as the Friends of the University of Washington Arboretum in 1966. We have grown from 13 founding members to approximately 250. Between 1966 and 1972 we turned over to the College of Forest Resources \$56,940.09 that was earned through public plant sales, public lectures, public horticultural classes, public garden tours, and memberships. We hold in savings and investments \$34,374.97 awaiting a determination to be made on the Arboretum. Many of us have fine rare plant material that we have obtained, researched, and propagated. We are holding propagations earmarked for a University of Washington Arboretum. In no way would we consider supporting a city-managed park even if they called it an Arboretum.

The Northwest Ornamental Horticultural Society (affiliated with the University of Washington Arboreta) by name and purpose is deeply committed to a University of Washington-managed Arboretum. We strongly urge the University to take firm and final action to resolve the Arboretum question, without compromising the principle of University management and adequate protection for all people and plants.

The prospect of developing the full potential of the University of Washington Arboretum is an exciting one for us. We would like to be a part of it. Let's get on with it.

Thank you for your kind attention.

(signature)

Mrs. Rodney B. Allen  
President"





