



Bonner County Gardeners Association Education ~ Community Service ~ Camaraderie

November 2014

Please contribute to *The Garden Gate*. Informational articles, garden tips, announcements, and digital photos are welcome. For questions or comments please email lauriebrown54@gmail.com When emailing, please put "MG" in the subject line.

In This Issue

President's Message
November & December Gardening To-Do Lists
Membership Renewals Due
November Meeting Minutes
Home Hort Classes
Advanced Education

President's Message

At the corner of 6th and Larch lives a magnificent American-smoke tree. Every spring, for well over 30 years, this showy shrub has enveloped itself in bountiful long-lasting clouds of apricot-pink 'smoke'.



Royal Smoke tree

Kingdom: Plantae
Order: Sapindales
Species: Anacardiaceae

Genus: *Cotinus*

Species: *cotinus obovatus* & *cotinus coggygria*

Cotinus obovatus (American Smoke-tree) is native to the Southeastern United States. Small pockets of these wild shrubs form an irregular band through Texas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Missouri.

The American Smoke-tree grows 20-30 feet tall with an equal width span. The leaves open a bright bluish-green flushed pink. The green deepens and the pink flush fades with age. When the myriad of small white flowers finish blooming, the 'smoke' emerges a vivid shade of apricot-pink that slowly fades to creamy buff. With the arrival of fall weather the hidden colors in the leaves begin to express themselves; vibrant long-lasting shades of yellow, orange, red, and purple.

Cotinus coggygria (Royal Smoke) is native to southern Europe and central Asia, growing in similar conditions as the American Smoke-tree.

Cotinus coggygria grows 15-20 feet tall with an equal width span and covers its branches in reddish-purple leaves with an olive-green underside. The flowers are a deep golden color. The 'smoke' created is a deep dusky purplish-pink that with time fades to buff. Fall weather first turns the purple leaves to red. Soon the other leaf colors begin to emerge; the same vibrant shades and blends that grace the American Smoke-tree.

Both varieties are hardy into zone 4. Their multiple-branching trunks grow in an open irregular manner. They prefer full sun, a well-drained somewhat infertile soil, a dry foot, and are drought tolerant. They will grow in clay soil as long as the drainage is good.

In late spring, both varieties clothe themselves in oval leaves. As their flowers fade, the colorful 'smoke' forms along billowy hairs attached to elongated stalks within the flowers. The 'smoke' surrounds the drupaceous fruits that develop. If conditions are right the puffs of 'smoke' will last for many months; sometimes through the winter.

In the fall, eye-catching designs and colors sometimes show up on some the leaves. These leaf spots are caused by various genera of fungi and rarely cause problems for the shrub.

Both varieties of Smoke-trees do well in Bonner County, as long as their basic needs are met. Once they are established they require little care from Us, they 'bloom' for many month, and they are deer resistant. In over 25 years I have never seen our deer herd noshing on either variety. Jan

Ed. Note: Due to the change from publishing the Garden Gate at the beginning of the month to mid-month, I am changing the To Do lists to that of the following month, so that you will have it available when the month begins. This means this month, when the lists are shorter, we have November and December's lists.

November Gardening To Do List

From Backyard Gardeners located at:
http://www.backyardgardener.com/Gardening_Montzonesep01.html



Zone 3

- Cut back on feeding houseplants (do not feed dormant houseplants)

Zone 4

- Cover perennial, vegetable, bulb, and strawberry beds for winter

- Plant winter- and spring-flowering bulbs
- Divide and replant crowded fall-blooming bulbs after leaves yellow
- Buy spring-blooming bulbs
- Cut back on feeding houseplants (do not feed dormant houseplants)
- Protect roses for winter

Zone 5

- Plant winter- and spring-flowering bulbs
- Divide and replant crowded fall-blooming bulbs after leaves yellow
- Buy winter- and spring-blooming bulbs
- Cut back on feeding houseplants (do not feed dormant houseplants)
- Protect roses for winter



American Smoketree in autumn

December Gardening To Do List

Zone 3

- Cut back on feeding houseplants (do not feed dormant houseplants)
- Water cymbidiums weekly until they bloom
- Water living Christmas trees (ice cubes work well)

- Prechill tulips and hyacinths for forcing indoors

Zone 4

- Cut back on feeding houseplants (do not feed dormant houseplants)
- Water living Christmas trees (ice cubes work well)
- Prechill tulips and hyacinths for forcing indoors

Zone 5

- Cut back on feeding houseplants (do not feed dormant houseplants)
- Water living Christmas trees (ice cubes work well)
- Prechill tulips and hyacinths for forcing indoors
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Membership Renewals Due

It is time to renew your membership in BCGA for 2015. Each member was sent a form verifying contact information and a list of volunteer opportunities. As of the November membership meeting 34 membership forms and dues (\$20 annually) have been received. If you have not yet renewed, please do so as soon as possible. Send dues and forms to BCGA, 401 Bonner Mall Way, Suite F, Ponderay, ID 83852. Thank you for your prompt replies. We love all our members and hope to see everyone at events in 2015.



American Smoke tree 'smoking'

BCGA Meeting Minutes – November 5, 2014

Members Present: Penny Goodman, Patti Pietron, Gray Henderson, Janae Dale, Deborah Steffen, Penny Barton, Jan Wilfert, Bonnie Pick, Bob Blair, Jon Bair, Howie Fennimore, Butterfly Burke, Barbara Pressler, Ann Warwick.

Meeting brought to order by President Jan Wilfert at 9:03 am.

October Meeting Minutes: Motion by Jan Wilfert, Second by Bonnie Pick and Butterfly Burke to accept October Minutes as written.

Treasurer's Report: Bob Blair, Treasurer. Balance in Checking Account as of 10-31-2014: \$6111.13.

Home Hort Classes: Janae Dale, Gail Swan, Don Childress, chairs. The Mushroom Class on October 23 drew 75 attendees, despite its not being on the brochure with the schedule. Valle Novak had an article with a great mushroom photo which brought many folks to the class. Otherwise the attendance at the fall classes has been somewhat disappointing. Ideas: Move some fall classes to spring. Conflict with Farmers Market on Wednesdays prevents FM vendors from attending. Better Marketing? Ideas welcome. Our booth at the Farmers Market could include more promotion of classes.

Membership Course: Penny Barton, chair. Three people have prepaid for the class, four more interested. Committee Meeting to be scheduled.

Brass Sign in Lobby: Bob Blair arranged to have our office listed on the brass sign in the building lobby.

Election: 26 ballots received, all nominations are unanimous, so far.

Electronic Disposal: We have a pile of old printer and computer screens, etc, the detritus of the electronic age, taking up office space. Need to dispose of it. Bob Blair generously volunteered to take care of it.

Membership Renewals: 34 received. Reminder to appear in Garden Gate.

BCGA Name Change: Gray Henderson, Jan Wilfert and Rob Lilley will take care of this task in the spring.

Ponderay Design Center Sign, outside of the Building: We must now await Spring installation, as warm weather is required.

Telephone Answering Machine: Our equipment is faulty, the recorder is inadequate to hear the message, and we have no caller ID to return calls that can't be heard. Gray Henderson moves to purchase new phone and answering system. Second, Bob Blair. Passed. Bob will purchase new machine.

Christmas Party: Takes place in Event Center on Saturday, December 13. Social hour from 5:30 to 6:30. Eat at 6:30. Members please bring an appetizer, salad, side dish or dessert. BCGA will purchase three entrees from the Pack River Store. Janae and John Dale have kindly volunteered to deliver them to the party. Those who wish to participate in the Gift Exchange please bring a wrapped gift. We're trying a little faster paced gift exchange this year. The gifts will remain wrapped until all gifts have been distributed.

School Garden: Janae Dale, Howard Fennimore, Gray Henderson. Garlic is to be planted soon. In October, the student gardeners, volunteers, and teaching staff convened for a lunch made from the vegetables recently harvested from the school garden at the Charter School. Summer maintenance remains an issue (common to all local school gardens.) They are considering how to start a summer garden club to keep the garden healthy. Janae Dale plans to meet with Michele Murphree, the school garden coordinator, to discuss improvements that could be made in the various school garden venues.

By-Laws, Procedures and Guidelines: Janae Dale, Gray Henderson, and Jan Wilfert. Meeting soon. The project is close to complete.

Advanced Classes/Field Trips. To be discussed for 2015.

Spring Fundraiser/Plant Sale: The event is a great fund raiser, and members willingly plant extra seedlings for the event. Needs one or two people to chair and plan it. This year, it was held the second weekend in May, Saturday and Sunday, Mother's Day weekend. (After the event, we discussed the possibility of making it one day to decrease complications of storing plants and protecting the display overnight).

Meeting adjourned, 10:55 am.



Tim Gerlitz presenting coral mushrooms as part of his wild mushroom presentation for BCGA Fall Home Horticulture class in October.

Home Horticulture Classes

The Home Horticulture committee will be doing a review of the classes held in the Spring and in the Fall. We are always looking for new topics that will be of interest to the public, as well as the membership, and would appreciate your input. Do you have any ideas for suggested topics for classes in the 2015 year? We would really appreciate your input.

Please send any ideas you have for class topics to Janae Dale or to Gail Swan.



Royal Smoke tree, fall color

Advanced Education

In years past we have held field trips and classes for the membership on a variety of topics. They have always been educational and fun! Would you be interested in helping with a committee to come up with ideas for advanced classes and field trips, help organize them, and set them up? If you would be interested in helping to get these going again, please contact Janae Dale.