



Bonner County Gardeners Association Education ~ Community Service ~ Camaraderie

March 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.

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President's Message

Spring has sprung! Trees and shrubs are forming fat buds, bulb greenery is sprouting from the rich earth, and soon there will be charming sweet-faced pansies adding to our springtime joy.



Kingdom: Plantae
Order: Malpighiales
Family: Violaceae
Genus: Viola
Species: Viola x wittrockiana (faced pansies)

Pansies prefer and thrive in moist cool weather conditions. Pansies heartily tolerate late-season snows, occasional light frosts, and close to freezing temperatures. As temperatures warm pansies begin to decline. If they are given a trimming, moved into a cool moist shady spot to spend the warm days of summer, pansies tend to rejuvenate in time for the cool weather of fall. When happy, these beauties dress themselves in abundant colorful buds that open into spectacular flowers.

Chemical-free pansy leaves and flowers are edible and high in vitamin A and C. The tender young leaves make a tasty addition to salad greens. The flowers make colorful garnishes for salads, fruit compote, cookies, and cakes.

How can we resist their beckoning faces? Well, most of us have no desire to resist and neither did our ancestors. The diminutive wild violas delighted people and soon the cross-breeding began with astonishingly good results; bigger flowers, more colors, eye-catching markings, and in 1830 the first Viola x wittrockiana came into existence. After 9 years of refining, Medora, the first large-faced pansy was introduced to the English Horticulture Society to rave reviews.

The news spread fast. By 1850 pansies were popular in Europe and had reached the shores of North America. In 1888 a seed catalog company reported selling over 100,000 packets of pansy seed that year. That's a lot of seed!

Most pansies have been bred to bloom the first year from seed. Some start blooming nine weeks from sowing. Their color range includes shades of white, yellow, gold, orange, red, pink, purple, violet, blue

and near-black. Many sport frilled petals and exotic markings around their charming faces.

Pansies are easy care plants that add a pop of color and a touch of whimsy to our springtime gardens. Their popularity continues to grow as does the number of varieties available to bring us spring joy.

Jan



March Gardening To Do List

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



Zone 3

- Order seeds
- Sow seeds for hardy spring-blooming plants
- Remove mulch from early bulbs

- Cut back on feeding houseplants (do not feed dormant houseplants)
- Sow seeds for cool-weather vegetables
- Sow frost-tolerant perennials indoors

Zone 4

- Plant bare root trees
- Cut back on feeding houseplants (do not feed dormant houseplants)
- Sow seeds for cool-weather vegetables
- Sow frost-tolerant perennials indoors

Zone 5

- Plant dormant, hardy container and balled and burlapped plants
- Sow seeds of warm-season annuals indoors
- Remove winter mulch, lightly cultivate soil if thawed
- Prune out winter damage
- Apply dormant spray to fruit trees
- Plant or transplant frost-tolerant perennials
- Sow seeds for tender perennials indoors
- Plant bare-root roses
- Plant bare-root trees, shrubs, and vines
- Prune winter-blooming shrubs and vines just after bloom
- Plant bare-root perennial vegetables (asparagus, rhubarb etc.)
- Plant seedlings of cool-season vegetables
- Sow seeds for cool- and warm-season vegetables
- Protect tender plants from frost



BCGA Meeting Minutes

March 5, 2014

Members Present: Patti Pietron, Ann Warwick, Barbara Pressler, Gordon Fish, Butterfly Burke, Bob Blair, Penny Goodman, Jon Bair, Howard Fennimore, Marjory Clements, Janae Dale, Gray Henderson, Gail Swan, Penny Barton, Jenna Bertus, Mikey Haven, Jan Wilfert, Bonnie Pick.

President Jan Wilfert brought the meeting to order at 8:45 am.

February Minutes; motion: Bob Blair, second, Penny Goodman. Minutes approved by vote.

Treasurer's Report: Balance as of 2-28-2014: \$2914.14.

Between Meetings: President Jan Wilfert announced several items that occurred during February. Bob Baker donated a hot plate and ink cartridge for the printer. Sandra Gevurtz did a much needed cleaning under the Event Center kitchen sink in the office building. A question from Kathy Osborne at the Co-op regarding orchid buds was answered correctly by multiple members. The Sandpoint City Council voted on February 5, 2014 to approve the Beanstalk Bench to be installed at the Farmer's Market at Farmin Park on or before May 3, weather permitting. Valle Novak wrote an outstanding article for the Daily Bee listing and describing the upcoming Home Horticulture classes, and Ann Warwick wrote an article for the Coop Roundup. Both listed the class schedule. The committee for Spring Fundraiser Plant Sale, chaired by Mikey Haven, met to plan the event.

Idaho Gardeners Association, Boise: The IGA, Boise group has been in contact with President Jan Wilfert. They currently have 24 members, having split from the U of I. Projects include youth education with 4-H groups and landscaping projects with Habitat for Humanity (four completed out of 12). Their members are planning a visit to BCGA here in Sandpoint in June to learn more about how we conduct our organization, our projects, fund raisers, and to socialize. Potluck, anyone?

9am Visit by Jodie Corless, Pend Orielle Insurance: She explained our policy to the members present, answering questions about coverage, etc. Our general liability cost is \$470, and coverage of the board and officers is \$1088. The company is Philadelphia Insurance, which apparently specializes in non-profit organizations.

Office Sharing: The office will be used by Eric Jeffres for a Concealed Weapons class on Saturday, March

15, and the Bridge Club reserved the room for Saturday, June 21.

County Fair: The County Fair theme for 2014 is "The Land of Awes"....Committee chair is needed, and Bonnie Pick volunteered to co-chair. Thank- you to Bonnie!

Advertising for events: Alternatives discussed, free venues will continue, but paid for ads seldom pay off. Some events can be published in the City Parks and Recreation brochure of summer activities. If we pay \$25, BCGA can be listed in the Fair booklet. Motion by Ann Warwick, seconded by Patti Pietron, to approve the expenditure.

Farmers Market: Special event is in the planning stage for introducing the Beanstalk Bench on May 3, opening day. Farmer's Market chairs Sandra Gevurtz and Vicki Johnson will schedule the booth for Saturdays only.

Web Site: Gordon Fish has repaired the PayPal function on our web site. It is working well now. Thank you, Gordon.

BCGA ByLaws: The By-Laws have some flaws, such as referring to a document called "Job Descriptions", which apparently does not exist. Some changes to clarify the job descriptions of officers and board members need to occur, and the new clarification of Emeritus status, which has been proposed, needs to be voted on by the membership. The By-Laws and Procedures and Guidelines of the organization need to be available online.

Spring Home Horticulture Series: The classes begin on March 19, with an outstanding lineup of eight pertinent topics for spring. The brochures are out in various places, there is a listing both in the Bee by Vale Novak, and in the Co-op Roundup. There was discussion of giving discounts for couples, but upon discussion, it became a "can of worms." Motion by Gray Henderson, second by Janae Dale to keep price of \$10 per class per person. Motion passed.

Home and Garden Show: The event takes place on April 12 and 13. Volunteers needed to man the booth and give mini classes on various topics. Application complete and submitted. Plans coming along.

Beanstalk Bench: Plans are progressing. The booth will hopefully be located near the bench on May 3 for the dedication ceremony. BCGA needs member participation. All is approved and a "GO."

Spring Fundraiser: Mikey Haven, chair. The event will take place in the Bonner Mall on May 9 and 10. Members urged to start plants, especially veggies and herbs, for the plant sale. We will also have gar-

den glass art for sale. Ann and Janae will make signs. Members urged to save shallow boxes for packaging customers' purchases. Last year was a good sale. If many people donate plants, it can be even better.

Potlucks: Butterfly Burke will host a potluck on June 28, Saturday, at noon. Members who wish to host a potluck contact Ann Warwick to get a schedule filled in for the summer.

Emeritus Status: Gray Henderson has established language to alter the By Laws to define emeritus status and eligibility for nomination. Changes in By-Laws and/or Procedures and Guidelines needed. Vote by membership required.

Meeting adjourned, 11:05

Additional announcements: Master Naturalists starting new class in April. The group will be conducting a census of all species of creatures living in the area.

Bonnie Pick warns against using hornet spray on live electrical wires, as it can result in serious injury.

Signs of Spring

From Bonnie Pick

Last year, at the 2013 Fall Home Horticulture classes we learned we can plant our potatoes when the dandelions bloom, and to look for morels when the lilac buds are the size of a mouse's ear. I was curious, so I looked in my Old Farmer's Almanac, an interesting and fun source of gardening information. This is what I found.

Centuries ago farmers learned to time horticultural activities, such as planting, pest control, and harvesting, not by a date on the calendar, but by signs that nature provided. In fact, Phenology, the study of the timing of animal and plant cycles in relation to climate and seasonal changes, is still used today.

The signal events and their times may vary by location. Gardeners in certain regions might plant cool-season flowers when aspen and chokecherries leaf out; fertilize the lawn when forsythia and crocuses start to bloom; watch for Mexican bean beetles when foxglove flowers open; sow seeds of beets, lettuce, and carrots when dandelions appear; or set out tomatoes and pepper plants when lilies of the valley blossom.

For this technique to work most effectively, keep a journal. Note when plants bud, flower, and fruit. Keep track of animal and insect life cycles and activi-

ties, such as the emergence of Japanese beetles. Jot down daily weather conditions (temperature, sunlight, precipitation, wind, etc.) Examine each plant's site: Record the exposure to the elements, soil conditions, and any possible stress factors.

Review your notes periodically. You will begin to notice patterns that will help you schedule tasks, and you'll soon become as savvy as those gardeners of long ago.

Visit the Old Farmers Almanac at <http://www.almanac.com/>

Potlucks for 2014

BCGA potlucks are always fun, and the opportunity to visit each other's gardens is a priceless way of learning new tricks or techniques to take home to our own garden projects. We've had two potlucks so far this year; in January, we visited Bob Blair and Cindy Hayes' home, where some members hiked and the rest of us ate and visited. February brought a potluck at Deborah and Charlie Steffen's home, which was well attended.

Would you like to host a potluck? So far, we have one scheduled for June 28 at Butterfly Burke's home. If you would like to open your garden to the membership, contact Ann Warwick to schedule the event. We would like to schedule at least one potluck per month this year. They can be any day of the week, and can be any time of the day. BCGA supplies all plates, flatware and the like, and can also bring tables or canopies if necessary. Schedule early for your choice of dates.

PCBA Home and Garden Show

The annual Panhandle Building Contractors Home and Garden Show is coming up on April 12 and 13. This is a fun event, where we answer gardening questions and give a number of short talks on garden topics. If you would like to man the booth (two people per two hour shift) or give a talk, please contact Ann Warwick. We need about 14 volunteers for the booth, and seven people to provide the mini classes.

Booth shifts are: Saturday: 9 to 11 AM, 11AM TO 1PM, 1 TO 3PM, AND 3 TO 5PM. Sunday, 10am to 12 noon, 12pm to 2pm, and 2pm to 4pm.

We also need a few people to help set up the booth after 5pm on Friday, April 11, and to take the booth down after 4pm on Sunday.

Thank you all for volunteering.