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OPEN GARDENS sampler

some 2016 HPSO member open gardens and the Volunteer’s Picnic in Beth Hansen-Winter’s garden.

Garden photos by Laurie Bohls
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:  

Our Fall “Harvest” Issue

Dear Readers:

In this Quarterly, we celebrate the harvest season with these wise words:

Autumn repays the earth the leaves which summer lent it.*

Our writers already understand this simple truth as they have outdone themselves this issue with a collection of articles to inspire and celebrate giving back to the earth—Claudia Groth in Good Bug/Bad Bug with ways to help ladybugs snuggle in for winter, Kit Whittaker and the Two Rivers Study Group in their inspiring Million Pollinators Garden project, and the story of Jenn and Dan Ferrante’s garden by Darcy Daniels where luscious burgundies and dark chocolates stimulate the senses and a big oak tree is treated with respect.

Harvesting is treasuring and savoring what we have too, isn’t it? I know you will all be moved by Beth Hansen-Winter’s story of garden friends and dear memories in Why I Garden. There are other treasures to savor—the Portland Peninsula Rose Garden (in which you can learn which rose is the official rose of Portland), Pomarius in Nursery Focus, summer travels with Barbara Blossom and the lessons she gleaned, color in Bob Hyland’s masterful focus on orange in the garden. Of course, Tom Fischer never disappoints—learn why he chose an ugly duckling to feature in his plant profile! Savor it all!

Annette Wilson Christensen
Editor HPSO Quarterly

*Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742–1799), translated by Norman Alliston, 1908 (found on http://www.quotegarden.com/)

NEW IN THE LIBRARY by Carol Gaynor, HPSO, Library Committee Chair

HPSO is incredibly fortunate to have Andrea Wulf as our speaker for the Annual Meeting on October 22. Wulf has written three fascinating historical books involving nature and gardening throughout the centuries. In The Brother Gardeners (Knopf, 2009), she writes of the cross-oceanic interchange of plants between the United States and Europe, primarily the United Kingdom, in the 1700s. Founding Gardeners (Knopf, 2011) focuses on the influence of the American founding fathers and their gardening passions, as deeply ingrained as their passions for liberty. Wulf’s latest book, The Invention of Nature (Knopf, 2015)—which will be the topic of discussion at the Annual Meeting—reveals the amazing life of the German naturalist, Alexander von Humboldt. A worldwide explorer and famous scientist, von Humboldt lived from 1769 to 1859, discovered that nature and climate zones were interconnected globally, and influenced many great thinkers through his writings.

All three books will be available in the HPSO library and at the Annual Meeting.
Author Andrea Wulf to speak

The Hardy Plant Society of Oregon welcomes Andrea Wulf, author of *The Brother Gardeners*, winner of an American Horticultural Society 2010 Book Award, and *Founding Gardeners*, a New York Times bestseller, in her first appearance in Portland when she delivers the Marvin Black Lecture at HPSO's Annual Meeting, Saturday, October 22.

Andrea will speak on her latest book, *The Invention of Nature*, a biography of the Prussian geographer and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt, for whom 300 plants, more than 100 animals, and various mountain ranges, bays, waterfalls, and a rather significant current in the Pacific Ocean are named. According to Andrea, Humboldt “was the first to explain the fundamental functions of the forest for the ecosystem and climate” among many other discoveries. Her book was awarded the *LA Times* Book Prize 2016 and the Ness Award 2016 from the Royal Geographical Society. Another best-seller, it was selected by the New York Times as one of the “10 Best Books of 2015,” and in November 2016 it will receive the inaugural James Wright Award for Nature Writing (Kenyon Review in association with the Nature Conservancy). Born in India, raised in Germany, and resident in England, Andrea is the author of two additional books, as well as articles for a variety of publications. She has lectured around the world.

Election and Silent Auction

The Annual Meeting includes the election of HPSO officers and directors and other society business. A silent auction for choice plants and garden art raises money for HPSO’s grants and scholarship funds.
ORANGE epitomizes fall. Fields of ripe pumpkins ready for harvest; Japanese persimmons turning deeper orange as the weather cools; dahlias ruling the garden like my new orange favorite ‘Maarn’ with four-inch, pure orange pompons. ORANGE is optimistic, uplifting, and rejuvenates our spirit, particularly after a long, dry northwest summer.

I didn’t realize how much I favor orange flowers in our own garden until I sat down to write this article. Early in the season, it starts with *Papaver atlanticum* (Atlantic poppy) in single and double ‘Flore Pleno’ flower form. This delightful poppy reseeds freely on our hillside offering wave after wave of orange. The same goes for California poppy (*E. californica*). Another favorite orange-hued perennial is *Alstroemeria ‘Butterscotch’* gifted to me by Lucy Hardiman (with more plants purchased at Joy Creek Nursery). Its butterscotch and apricot tones seem to complement many companion plants on our hillside. It offers continuous mellow, pastel color points well into fall.

I am a big fan of late summer and fall-blooming *Agastache* (misleadingly called anise-hyssop or licorice mint) in all shades of orange. Among my favorite selections are *A. aurantiaca ‘Shades of Orange’, ‘Mandarin Dream’* (the color of Mandarin oranges), ‘Rainbow Sorbet’ (big, flared orange flowers that shift pink over several days giving a multi-color effect), and shorter compact selections like ‘Apricot Sprite’ (peachy apricot) and ‘Xera Flame’ (orange-red).

Another orange perennial that keeps trucking in our fall borders is *Kniphofia thompsonii var. snowdenii*. I favor spiky perennials that punctuate border designs and this poker is a showstopper. Rather than the regular congested arrangement of flowers, this Kniphofia sports widely spaced multicolored tubular flowers in candy corn orange and hints of yellow. Each flower stem rises to 4’ tall; new spikes repeat through fall and continually surprise.
Flower color is obvious, but don’t overlook orange fruit. I adore Japanese persimmon (*Disopyros kaki* ‘Fuju’) for the beautiful shape of its deep orange fruits that persist after leaf drop into early winter. The specimens in Portland’s Lan Su Chinese Garden is to die for!

Other favorite orange-fruited shrubs are *Viburnum setigerum* (tea viburnum) with heavy dangling clusters of orange-red fruits, perhaps the best fruit display of any of the viburnums, and species *Rosa rugosa* with cherry-tomato-sized hips in arresting orange-red. *R. rugosa* cultivars ‘Alba’ (single white), ‘Hansa’ and ‘Therese Bugnet’ (double pinks) and ‘Blanc Double de Coubert’ (double white) all produce colorful hips in gardens that I have designed.

For fall foliage with plays of orange, *Hamamelis x intermedia* ‘Diane’ (the cover photo) and *Parrotia persica* are hard to beat. Other standouts include Japanese maples, particularly selections like *Acer palmatum* ‘Orange Dream’ with its stunning orange new growth and yellow-orange fall color. Forever tucked in my mind is a beautiful dissected *Acer palmatum* ‘Waterfall’ which reliably shifts brilliant orange-red in the Japanese Hill-and-Pond Garden at Brooklyn Botanic Garden. That maple is now easily challenged by specimens in Portland’s acclaimed Japanese Garden.

Gardeners often forget that stem and bark color extend interest in the fall and winter. *Euphorbia griffithii* ‘Dixter’ glows with orange-red stems in our hillside borders during September and October. *Cornus sanguinea* ‘Winter Flame’ (and ‘Midwinter Fire’) offer brightly colored winter stems that flicker yellow, orange and red. *Acer griseum* (paperbark maple) is small tree standout for its exfoliating copper orange to cinnamon reddish/brown bark and showy orange-to-red fall color.

Since moving back to the West Coast five years ago, I have renewed my love affair with *Zauschneria* (now *Epilobium*) species and hybrids. My favorite upright forms (at least for now!) are *Zauschneria* ‘Bowman’ to 2 feet tall with vermillion-orange flowers and ‘Silver Select’ to 20 inches tall with silver foliage and bright orange flowers.

Remember to knit together plantings with *Carex testacea* (orange sedge)...and don’t forget annuals and vegetables that spread an orange glow in the autumn garden. Among my favorites are *Bulbine frutescens* ‘Hallmark’, *Calibrachoa Superbells* ‘Dreamsicle’, *Oxalis* ‘Copper Glow’, tomato ‘Sungold’ (yum!) and a new favorite from Xera Plants, *Antirrhinum* ‘Double Azalea Apricot’

I let orange float into winter with a metal hanging dish planter filled with *Hakonechloa macra* ‘All Gold’. The grass eventually shifts to a tawny hay color as it goes winter dormant, but the dish color is an ever-present, cheerful ORANGE.

Bob Hyland is a HPSO vice president and owner of Hyland Garden Design, hylandgardendesign.com

Photos by Bob Hyland, Hyland Garden Design

the view from our deck

Hakonechloa macra ‘All Gold’ in hanging orange planter

Agastache ‘Rainbow Sorbet’

Lagerstroemia ‘Natchez’
Jenn & Dan Ferrante’s Garden

by Darcy Daniels

In 1999, Jenn and Dan Ferrante acquired a corner lot in the North Portland neighborhood of Overlook. Looking at it today, a charming craftsman home, expertly tended, surrounded by lush gardens and artful details, it’s hard to imagine its humble beginnings. But they bought the house as a fixer-upper, when the exterior spaces were overgrown and unkempt.

When they moved to this lot, Jenn didn’t think of herself as an avid gardener. In fact, for the first several years, she and Dan spent much of their time and effort on renovating the house. Her interest in the garden came later, after she and Dan had made extensive interior updates and removed a dilapidated old garage, replacing it with a new, two-level structure that includes a garage beneath a studio apartment.

No strangers to construction by that point, the couple decided to tackle the stacked basalt wall that now frames the garden. Starting at the driveway, the wall runs the length of the property one side, wraps the corner, and continues along the full length of the other side that incorporates a front entry. They plugged away at it for two years; Jenn smiles as she says, “It got straighter and flatter as the project went on.”

The garden really got rocking in 2006 after a collaborative design process with Lauren Hall-Behrens of Lilyvilla Gardens helped solidify the layout of the garden hardscapes and foundational plantings. This design process and the resulting changes in the garden kick-started Jenn’s passion for plants, and she began to garden in earnest.

Before long, lush and varied plantings surrounded their home. A tile-setter by profession, and a glass artist by avocation, she was able to bring her attention to detail and pattern to bear on her plant choices. Selecting first for foliage and texture, she gravitates toward plants that emphasize her fundamental color scheme.

Throughout the garden, Jenn creates a sense of unity by repeating key signature plants: Hakonechloa macra ‘Aureola’, Eucomis ‘Sparkling Burgundy’, and the red form of Canna musifolia draw the eye from point to point, reinforcing that sense that each scene is part of an orchestrated whole. In other cases, she does this using similar, yet different varieties of the same plant. For example, hydrangeas and daylilies thoughtfully selected and carefully partnered to reinforce the underlying color story are a recurring element in the garden.

Jenn’s attentive execution and consistent deployment of underlying color themes imparts a sense of unity to the overall garden. The sunny garden areas are typified by rich, deep burgundy foliage and dark chocolate flowers that are cheered by their association with a continuing thread of sunny foliage. Major contributors in the dark

Eucomis ‘Sparkling Burgundy’, with its strappy bronze foliage, and several varieties of daylilies with burgundy flowers, are repeated elements in the garden. Pictured here is Hemerocallis ‘American Revolution’.

The red form of Canna musifolia, repeated in several areas of the garden, adds a touch of the exotic next to Hydrangea serrata ‘Preziosa’, whose flowers become more saturated as they evolve. The hydrangea’s foliage takes on burgundy tones as the season progresses.
This pleasing plant composition that includes mounds of golden foliage in varied textures, dotted with purple foliage and flowers, typifies the color palette Jenn Ferrante uses in her garden.

Simple and sophisticated foliage in shades of green: a fringe of evergreen mondo grass skirts the base of the wall; variegated foliage of Rhamnus alternifolius ‘Variegata’ adds a bit of sparkle; and the oakleaf hydrangea contributes an evolving display that includes summer blooms and fall color.

This cohesive and sophisticated planting composition has a purple, black, and white theme. Key contributors include Hosta clausa, selected for its more-saturated-than-your-everyday-hosta flower; Japanese painted fern (Athyrium niponicum var. pictum); Hydrangea macrophylla ‘Izu No Hana’; Hydrangea macrophylla ‘Nigra’; Cimicifuga simplex ‘Black Negligee’; and (present, but difficult to see) Brunnera ‘Jack Frost’.

The parking strip that wraps around the corner lot is both inspiring and instructive. During the initial garden creation phase, Jenn and Dan amended the native soil with rotted horse manure and used quarter-ten gravel as a moisture-retaining mulch, reapplying as needed. Many of the plants in the parking strip, including Iris pallida ‘Variegata’, Sedum ‘Matrona’, and Coreopsis ‘Zagreb’, are divisions from Jenn’s garden. Besides the obvious economic upside, this repetition reinforces the cohesive aspect of her garden. Jenn views the hill-strip plantings as a test case for low water tolerance; the plants here receive only occasional water, administered by hand, so the standard for self-reliance is high.

But there’s more to this story than pretty plantings. For example, the deck is a creative and artful solution to a challenging situation. During the garden renovation of 2006, this area was initially conceived of as three diagonally positioned, interlocking rectangles of grass; a paver patio was also considered. Both of those ideas were abandoned when it became clear that they could pose a risk to the towering white oak that dominates the southwest corner of the property. By recon-
ceiving this area as an above-ground deck. Jenn bypassed the need for irrigation or extensive excavation around the oak’s root system.

Plants under the drip line were selected for their ability to peacefully cohabit with the native Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*), which abhors summer water. Jenn has had success establishing plants under the canopy by judiciously delivering supplemental water to individual plants via a targeted drip system, but mostly tries to make selections that willingly forego summer water. Through trial and error, she’s been figuring out what will do well in this spot. And now, through careful planning and thoughtful plant selection, this potentially challenging situation has evolved into an area of the garden that honors and showcases the venerable giant. Enveloped on the far side by lush plantings along the house, buffered from the street by layers of foliage and flower, and sheltered by the high canopy of this wonderful tree, this section of the garden is now a wonderful place to be, especially in the afternoon, when it’s shaded.

Taken as a whole, Jenn’s garden offers delights for any serious gardener. Its impressive and effective use of hardscape to frame the garden and solve particular challenges, together with Jenn’s inspired and artful use of familiar plants to uncommon effect, create a remarkable garden refuge that rewards any time spent there.

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Jenn’s hell-strip garden gets supplemental water several times during summer, especially when we experience one of our spells of excessive heat. She used divisions of *Iris pallida* ‘Variegata’, *Sedum* ‘Matrona’, and *Stipa tenuissima* taken from other parts of her garden. The lush, mixed border of shrubs beyond, selected for foliage and seasonal flow, provides Jenn and Dan with a buffer from the street.

A composition of foliage and flower in the burgundy, purple, and yellow color scheme includes *Berberis* ‘Helmond’s Pillar’, *Eucomis* ‘Sparkling Burgundy’, and *Cornus* ‘Hedgerow’s Gold’, with *Clematis* ‘Royal Velours’ scrambling through.

Canna *musifolia* and *Calamagrostis* ‘Overdam’ positively glow when backlit.
When we think about South African plants, it’s natural to focus on flowers: only a gardener with a shriveled soul could fail to be seduced by the jewelike irises, radiant kniphofias, and sapphire agapanthus that have flowed into our gardens from that majestic country. Yet South Africa has also given us the most beautiful foliage plant that can be grown in the Pacific Northwest: *Melianthus major*.

There’s an irony here: in the wild, you probably wouldn’t give *M. major* a second glance. There’s nothing to suggest that the tangle of naked stems and dusty leaves sprawling in a ditch along the road could ever beautify a garden. It must have been a gardener of uncommon vision who imagined the swan that this ugly duckling could become. But given good garden conditions, with good soil and drainage, full sun, and adequate water, it is indeed a swan among plants.

Let’s look closely at those leaves. They’re enormous, up to two feet long, with as many as fifteen serrated leaflets. In color, they’re usually a soft blue green, though seed-raised plants will vary in their degree or blueness or greenness. (They smell a bit like peanut butter when bruised or crushed.) It’s a wonderfully friendly color that flatters any plant growing near it. Though technically a suckering shrub, *M. major* behaves more like an herbaceous perennial in our gardens, often cut to the ground by prolonged frost. In climates milder than ours, the leaves will overwinter and the plant can form a gigantic mound, eight to twelve feet tall and across; in the Pacific Northwest it doesn’t usually attain that size (which is probably a good thing). A mild winter will also encourage the development of the unusual, narrow flower spikes, which are a dark maroon and drip with nectar (hence the plant’s common name). In South Africa they attract iridescent sunbirds; here, hummingbirds do the job. (Note, however, that all parts of the plant are considered poisonous.)

Occasionally you hear complaints about *M. major*’s lack of hardiness. Paul Bonine, of Xera Plants, says the solution is to choose good-size, robust plants and to plant the crown a bit below soil level. Mulching for the winter with dry leaves is also a good idea, if you’re nervous. Mild winter or not, it’s a good practice to cut any dead or overwintering stems back almost to ground level in early spring—the plant will bounce right back and form a more pleasing, rounded shape.

Two selections of *M. major* are commonly offered. ‘Antonow’s Blue’ was found in the Washington garden of the late, renowned plantsman Steve Antonow, and named by Dan Hinkley. It’s a vigorous plant, with true powder-blue foliage. ‘Purple Haze’ was selected from a batch of seedlings at The Dry Garden nursery in Oakland, California, by Roger Raiche. It’s a smaller plant, with more finely serrated leaflets. The foliage color almost defies description—picture an opalescent blend of purple, pink, and greenish blue. Truly gorgeous. Many gardeners—myself included—have found it to be less hardy than other forms. I’ve lost it twice when planted in the open and now grow it in a large container that I protect in winter.

If you’re smitten with *M. major* and feeling adventurous, you may want to try other members of the genus. *Melianthus villosus* is said to be more compact than *M. major* (about three feet tall and wide); I’m growing it in my main border, so we’ll see. It’s a bit looser in habit than *M. major* and more sea green than blue green. The one I’m really eager to try is *M. pectinatus*, which has fine, almost fernlike leaflets and grows six to ten feet tall. (Both species are available from Annie’s Annuals and Perennials.)

As fun as it can be to experiment, I’ll always have a place for *M. major* in my garden. Once you’ve experienced that blue-green bliss, you’ll never want to let it go.
How does one express the value of a garden to one's soul? The value of working soil and putting your heart into creating life and beauty and growth? It is incalculable.

My beloved husband Peter died in May 2015. Losing him left me shell-shocked, heart-broken, and exhausted. At first I could do nothing. I could barely get out of bed. But gradually I returned to the garden and drew great solace from its beauty and promise. How can one not feel a lift of spirit when breathing in the scent of *Rosa ‘Just Joey’*? Admiring the swirl of the beautiful fern *Polystichum setiferum*? Squinting at the sun radiating through the glowing leaves of *Robinia pseudoacacia ‘Frisia’*?

Peter and I were together for 31 years. I started gardening 10 years after we met, and though our first date convinced us we would be together forever, somehow my life with him didn’t feel complete until I began my first garden. I didn’t know it at the time, but creating a garden filled my soul and allowed me to share my heart even more fully with the love of my life. How is it that playing in the dirt, watching plants grow, creating a tapestry of color and texture and form can make one so much more open to friendship and commitment? He was my ardent garden fan and many times over the years he shook his head and asked, “Aren’t you proud of yourself? Can you believe what you’ve created?”

Early on we lived in a converted mattress factory studio in the Mission District of San Francisco. The one square in the sidewalk (meant for a tree) that could have allowed for a Lilliputian garden had been used to dump used motor oil when the neighbor worked on his car. We didn’t even have windows in the warehouse, only skylights. I occasionally got calls from people trying to sell me new windows and when I told them I didn’t have any they’d scoff: “Yeah, right.”

In those days Peter was the “gardener” in the family. We had two 10-foot plants hanging from the rafters that he cared for. I always believed I had a black thumb since the only plants I ever tried to grow were houseplants, and I invariably killed them.

Then we moved to a country house in Petaluma in Sonoma County and my life, to not coin a phrase, changed forever. I had never paid much attention to flora. I do remember loving the native redbuds and dogwoods and spirea where I grew up on the bluffs of the Missouri River; I thrilled at the lavender “snow” under the jacaranda trees where I lived in Kenya;
I was awed by the bamboo forests in Japan and delighted in the starry patterns made by the leaves of the Japanese maples as I looked up through them at the Asian sky. But it never occurred to me that someday I would treasure plants so intensely that I would mourn the death of a dearly departed viburnum or hosta.

But after moving from the city and finding myself living in a world where there was actually grass outside the back door, I decided I needed to spruce up the huge concrete “patio” (I use the word advisedly: it was not in the best repair) behind the house. I couldn’t make permanent changes since we were only renting, so I started adding pots. Pretty soon the pots were five and six deep with the back ones on risers. By the time I reached five hundred containers and a spaghetti drip system that would have stretched to Minnesota, I was firmly and forevermore addicted. Peter was always nervous when I went to the store for a gallon of milk for fear I’d come home with another plant or two or ten. Every time I brought home another tree or pot or birdbath, his first response was “Where are you going to put it?” Sound familiar?

Eventually we made our way north to this wonderful, stunning, Eden-worthy corner of the world where gardens flourish and gardeners blossom. Here I could build a garden for us, not for a landlord. I continue to garden because it appears that compost nourishes my soul, chlorophyll makes my twigs strong, and water perks me up when I droop. The metaphor of a garden is profound.

Peter was an artist. I’m not. Wish I were. I wish I could make art the way he did, but my garden is my art.

When Peter was in the nursing home I spent every day with him. My two-acre garden was a mess; no winter cleanup had been done. Nothing had been done, in fact, in four months. I had spent no time out there at all, but I had optimistically scheduled an open garden in July. My friend Meredith decided I needed a work party. She sent out a notice asking anyone who was available to come out on a Monday morning in early April. Twenty-eight people showed up. Astonishing. I cried much of the day as one friend after another hugged me and offered their loving support. Without the garden I would not know these extraordinary people who give so much of themselves. That’s the best solace of all.

### Two varieties of Eucomis comosa with Nandina domestica 'Filamentosa' and Cotinus coggygria 'Golden Spirit'.

I have a thing for frogs.

The succulent garden, beautiful but dangerous!
I've always loved traveling with HPSO, but our trip to Vashon Island, Washington this August was the best ever. Our tour leaders Lucy Hardiman and Nancy Goldman guided us to a dozen stellar destinations. We stayed at The Lodges, an inviting group of contemporary, comfortable cottages, where we were pampered with delicious breakfasts in the community room. We enjoyed catered lunches and dinners in lovely gardens, and stopped for a lavish wine tasting one day and a pear cider tasting on another day.

Sighing with pleasure as I strolled through gardens of remarkable beauty, I scribbled notes and took photographs, especially circling ideas to implement in my own garden this fall.

“Best use of conifers in borders with perennials!” I noted about the garden of landscape designer Jonathan Morse. Blue-green and golden conifers gave the borders pops of permanent color and strong shapes, complementing the lilies and sneezeweed (Helenium autumnale) flowering in late summer. I promised myself to move some mature conifers out of their pots and into the borders.

In the same garden a variegated Azara was pruned skillfully into a small tree. I vowed to give my Azara back home a well-deserved haircut.

And I noticed that “less is more” doesn’t apply to a well-designed garden. Jonathan had framed an entryway arbor with a half dozen ‘Van Den Akker’ weeping Alaska cedars—a stroke of sheer genius.

Opulent repetition of dramatic Tasmanian tree ferns (Dicksonia antarctica) took my breath away in Pat and Walt Rehl’s magnificent stumpery, where dozens of cedar stumps formed the foundation for a forest of ferns. Those tall tree ferns with shaggy trunks, topped by wide-spread canopies, stood like sentries over a diverse gathering of lacier fronds.

“Start with four-foot ones if possible,” Pat advised. She wraps the trunks every winter with four-ply insulation, as the roots are in the trunk.

In this garden and several others, I noticed the benefit of sloping hillside gardens with winding trails, allowing me to discover the gardens slowly as I made my way down and then up again. Views down revealed the canopies, while views up emphasized the trunks and textures of trees. Although I don’t have a steep garden, I made a note to see if I could incorporate the Japanese technique of “hide and reveal” in my own garden.

In Mary and Whit Carhart’s amazing garden I enjoyed the way paths were flanked from time to time by twin shrubs, such as Berberis ‘Helmond Pillar,’ Cryptomeria ‘Sekkan-sugi,’ and golden hardy fuchsias. To make life more interesting, sometimes pairs of shrubs were staggered on either side of a path, one slightly downhill from the other, in a pleasing asymmetrical pattern. Note to self: “Buy pairs of shrubs instead of onesies.”
more Inspiration from Vashon Island gardens

Photos by Claus and Annette Wilson Christensen
Visit Peninsula Park Rose Garden in the heart of North Portland’s Piedmont neighborhood and you’ll be transported to a different time and place—perhaps to turn-of-the-century Paris. Designed by Emanuel Mische as a French formal garden, this 103-year-old beauty was the first public rose garden in the City of Roses. It’s elegant in design and rich in history. And of course there are more than seven thousand glorious roses to delight visitors with an Impressionistic landscape and wonderful fragrance.
Part of the Olmsted plan for Portland parks, the Peninsula Park site was acquired by the city in 1909 for $60,000 from a roadhouse owner known as Liverpool Liz. A two-and-a-half-acre rock quarry at the southern end of the park was designated for a garden that, in Mische’s words, was “to be distinctly a rose garden, with plants arranged for color and height.” A century later, the original design elements are largely intact, including four symmetrical quadrants of roses surrounding a graceful central fountain and bounded by six miles of boxwood hedge.

The garden’s design allows water vapor from the fountain to trap the fragrance of the roses and greet visitors as they descend to the garden floor. Most of the original hardscape elements are also intact, including patterned brickwork designed by Lawrence Ellis, lantern-style streetlights, and stone pillars and balustrades. An octagonal bandstand, designated as a Portland Historical Landmark in 1973 and also designed by Ellis, overlooks the north end of the garden. It is the last of its kind in the city.

Since opening in 1913, the garden has been a showplace for the city and, equally important, a place of shared experiences and common memories that knit individuals into a vibrant community. More than three hundred thousand people—twice the city’s population at the time—visited the garden in its first year. ‘Madame Caroline Testout’, Portland’s official rose, was cultivated there and four specimens bloom in the garden today.

Among the notable activities that have taken place here, the garden hosted the Junior Rose Court coronation and planting ceremony until it was discontinued. The bandstand has long been the site of summer concerts and, during both world wars, patriotic rallies. Today, the garden is full of visitors of all ages. Children play tag around the boxwood hedges, families picnic in the shade of the catalpa trees, artists set up easels, couples celebrate their wedding days and, whenever it snows, the stairs turn into sledding hills.

In 1999, a garden renaissance began with the rehabilitation of the central fountain. Handicap ramps, made possible by a donation from the Neil Kelly Company, were added in 2008. And early in 2012, Friends of Peninsula Park Rose Garden partnered with Portland Parks to begin a complete renovation of the roses, starting with a replanting of 1,500 new roses on the garden’s southwestern slopes.

With that successful replanting in mind and in anticipation of the garden’s 2013 centennial, our Friends group worked with Parks to remove all of the thirty-year-old roses from the garden floor. Thankfully, an abundance of weeds was removed along with the old roses. In the winter of 2013, Parks persuaded three commercial growers (Star, Weeks, and Baileys) to donate more than four thousand new disease-resistant roses while the Friends recruited more than two hundred volunteers from across the city to plant them. And the garden was reborn!

Today, the garden has more than sixty varieties of roses of all types—hybrid teas, floribundas, grandifloras, Knock Outs, shrubs, and climbers. Consistent with Mische’s original design, the roses in the four mirror quadrants are arranged by color and height. Viewed from the elevated entrances, the roses are a kaleidoscope of form and color. Looked at individually, varieties like ‘Elle’, ‘Sweet Fragrance’, and ‘Sally Holmes’, among others, are a testament to the enduring popularity of roses over centuries.

Volunteers are essential to the garden’s maintenance. When the Friends started in 2012, fifteen volunteers worked in the garden a few hours each week. By 2015, 120 volunteers contributed more than 2,200 hours to garden maintenance.

Also in 2015, the Friends and Portland Parks adopted a preservation strategy to provide the foundation for the garden’s next one hundred years. Our vision is to create a world-class garden of great beauty and rich historical legacy that generations of Portland residents and visitors seek for quiet reflection, social connection, education, and celebration.

To find out more about the garden and how you can help achieve the vision, visit our website, www.penrosefriends.org or find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/penrosefriends. You can also send a message to the Friends at penrosevolunteers@gmail.com.

And be sure to visit this hidden gem, especially during bloom season. You’ll find the roses in full glory when you arrive at the main entrance to the garden on North Ainsworth Street, between North Kerby and North Albina Avenues.

1 Emanuel Mische was dispatched to Portland by the Olmsted firm to work on the implementation of the Olmsted parks plan. He decided to stay and became Portland’s first Superintendent of Parks.
Are you tired of buying lady beetles, then watching them fly away to do combat in someone else’s garden? Keeping these and other pest-fighting insects in your yard mimics the natural world and its more well-rounded ecosystem.

Making little changes in your maintenance regime now—at the end of the season—can make a big difference all around the calendar.

How do you keep the beneficial insects happy and working hard up in the trees, through the borders, and out in the vegetable garden? The three main elements are food, protection from pesticides, and shelter. Growing a diversity of plants and spraying only when necessary, takes care of the first two. Building shelter into the garden means safe spots to overwinter for these valuable allies.

Our faithful lady beetles traditionally spend their winter, in the adult form, tucked into in rock crevices, under loose tree bark, and in the leaf litter of the forest. In the urban backyard, they make do with leaves raked into beds and layers of loose mulch, along with the eaves of homes or perhaps the attic. The voracious green lacewing (in its pupae form) appreciates a similar winter environment—protected, with little disturbance (raking, tilling, etc.). Look around your garden. Are there spots for these critters to spend the winter? Can you create some?

Another form of protection for beneficial insects is at the base of clumping grasses. With the popularity of ornamental grasses, this should not be difficult to provide. During the growing season, those fast-moving, black, ground beetles prey on caterpillars, a variety of beetles, slugs, and snails. Keeping them happy during the winter can make a big difference in summer. You could allow the grasses to stand a bit longer or to be trimmed a bit higher to maximize the shelter.

Farmers are able to construct brush piles that offer spiders undisturbed cover and shelter predator wasps that control a summer’s worth of aphids, beetles, and small caterpillars. In the city garden, large brush piles are likely less welcome, but small stacks of prunings hiding behind a shrub border might work.

Enter the insect hotel. It provides the desired pockets, large and small, but in a stylish design. Not all have to be this decorative. Use reeds, pine cones, straw, twigs or other such material. Wrap them in bundles or stuff them in tubes, then place them in an out-of-the-way spot for your beneficials to discover.

Our well-designed and curated gardens can also assist the natural pest fighters. Find spots here and there around...
There is a dynamic duo in the Hardy Plant Society of Oregon who never fail to attract attention. They fairly crackle with energy and vigor. Linda and Tom Carson in the house!

The “can do” attitude these two bring to the table is an enormous asset to the organization. Perhaps you have met them or observed them at Hortlandia, our biggest production of the year.

Linda is the Director of Volunteers, calmly managing over 200 ready helpers in dozens of job assignments for three days. Tom, seemingly everywhere, helps with the huge production of set-up and take-down, supervises plant load-out, and is one of the overall troubleshooters that make such a big event run like a top. Many years of experience with HPSO in these capacities have enabled them (and us!) to enjoy doing the other hard work and get a great sense of satisfaction for a job well done.

Both grew up on farms in Iowa and met in college, and they had professional careers in science and education. In addition to raising two daughters and working, Linda and Tom took on a 15-acre sheep farm in Iowa and completely restored the old buildings on the property. They built new barns and established pastures for the purebred Dorset business they began with 12 ewes. They created gardens, both edible and ornamental. Their talents clearly enrich the no-nonsense practical skills they bring to their volunteer efforts. “Can do,” indeed!

The Carsons arrived in Portland in 2004 after retiring, joining their two daughters and Linda’s sisters in the Willamette Valley. The couple purchased a six-acre parcel in Newberg and began the development of an acre-and-a-half, deer-proof garden that includes their favorite plants, katsura (Cercidiphyllum japonicum), clematis, hydrangea and rhodies. They also enjoy container gardening, where edibles and ornamentals share space. Kale and nasturtiums are a current favorite combination.

Linda credits Tom with “having a good eye” for siting plants, especially trees. She offered their front-of-the-property conifer garden as a good example, where texture, form and color have created a lovely landscape on a bare descending bank that had an open view to the road traffic above. Tom is also a great woodworker, creating fine furniture and the many decks, steps, railings and outdoor furnishings in their garden.

While talking about garden style, it became clear that Linda’s idea of design is sometimes the spontaneous wave of plant lust that overcomes one anywhere from Freddies to a fabulous specialty nursery (they’re close to Sebright!). Once the desired plant is in hand there comes the star-struck wandering around the garden looking for the best aspect, the right drainage, the view from the deck, etc. Another plant might have to relocate in the process. We laughed about “stream of consciousness gardening” and the emotional experience that is so satisfying.

Linda greatly admires the beautifully conceived and designed gardens seen everywhere, including many glorious gardens they have toured on trips all over Europe; but for their personal space, the immediacy of serendipitous choices trumps studied plans every time. Exceptions to the “go with the flow” attitude are very practical, solid disciplines like understanding pruning (Cass Turnbull’s book, Guide to Pruning, was recommended) and having and taking care of good tools.

When the Carsons are not gardening, participating in some HPSO event or tour, or tending their adorable grandchildren, they maintain an exercise regime to keep fit. Linda also makes exquisite quilts and knits in the winter months. Look for them at the next event, one of many HPSO “individual-plus-one” couples who garden together!

Want to know more?


Claudia Groth is an HPSO member, technical writer, and horticultural lecturer on soils, integrated pest management, and beneficial insects.
The Two Rivers Study Group Takes on the Million Pollinator Project

by Kit Whittaker

The question was out there: would the HPSO Two Rivers study group be up for a project? Something different, yet as interesting and exciting as our “usual” monthly visits to fabulous gardens, field trips to specialty nurseries, walks through wildlife corridors and waterfowl habitat, talks on landscape design, hostas, irises, small conifers . . . always followed by lunch together?

Yes, indeed! And the nationwide Million Pollinator Project seemed like just the right project. Its goal of creating more habitat for all those “beneficials” essential to the production of the food we grow and eat seemed just the perfect challenge for the 35 devoted gardeners of the Two Rivers study group. The fruits, nuts, seeds, and vegetables that feed the world are the result of pollinator visits to flowers, and reports showed that pollinators were in decline. According to the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization, 100 crop species provide 90 percent of the world’s food supply, and of those, 71 are bee pollinated. While there may be many reasons for pollinator decline, experts agree that one crucial factor has been the overall loss of their habitat and loss of the plants they rely on for food. This is the basis for the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge 2016. The Two Rivers gardeners enthusiastically took on the challenge!

At their May meeting, a small packet of buckwheat seeds was distributed to each member, along with a description of the Million Pollinator Project and encouragement to “Plant a Plot of Buckwheat (Fagopyrum esculentum)” and to also register our “challenge gardens” online at millionpollinatorgardens.org.

Why buckwheat? Lots of good reasons, it turns out.

As a food, buckwheat is energizing, nutritious, and delicious (think French buckwheat crêpes). Its seed (not a cereal grain, but related to rhubarb and sorrel) is ground into flour. Though used like wheat, it is gluten free and contains high levels of amino acids.

Also, buckwheat is a “smother crop” that shoots up fast and shades out weeds with its broad leaves, flowering in as little as six weeks, even in poor, though well-drained, soils.

But most of all, buckwheat attracts pollinators, supplying a steady source of pollen and nectar from summer up until harvest or frost. Buckwheat flowers are very fragrant and are attractive to bees that use them to produce a special, strongly flavored, dark honey. Of all the varietal honeys, it is reported to be the highest in vitamins and minerals.

How did the project turn out? It was a big success! Our buckwheat plots are in full bloom and the pollinators are loving it, along with all the other attractive plants in our gardens! Plus members of the HPSO Two Rivers Study Group have an increased awareness of the role and needs of pollinators in our lives and a deep satisfaction that we’re doing something to help out.

Some observations and comments from our Two Rivers members:

• Ruby planted the seed in a raised bed. “What fun it was to come home (from Italy) to the crop. Haven’t been home long enough to see the pollinators, but it is looking good.”
• Joby plans to plant her seed in a weedy area of her rural garden in the hope that it will grow quickly and smother competing weeds. Good luck!
• Kit’s wide row of buckwheat is in full bloom and is attracting a variety of pollinators, including native bees and mason bees in addition to honeybees.
• And this final warning from Teri: “I read that buckwheat seeds itself like crazy, so we should be careful to cut back flowers before they go to seed . . . or not, depending on our plans for next year’s garden.”
GARDEN CRAFTERS INTEREST GROUP:

Please join the Garden Crafters!

We explore our crafts, talk gardens, and enjoy coffee or visiting homes and getting to know each other for this relaxing, fun weekend special interest group.

We meet generally every 3rd Saturday of the month at 2:00 pm around the Portland metro area. Our crafts are portable—they include knitting, beading, crocheting, and more!

For more info email Shawna Floistad sfloistad@frontier.com

Welcome! TO THESE NEW MEMBERS
June - August, 2016

Many of you recently joined our ranks. We hope HPSO offers you the same gardening inspiration, guidance, and camaraderie that has sustained so many of our longtime members, and we look forward to meeting you at programs, plant sales, and open gardens.

Rebecca Barkin
Robin Bentley
Sean Bentley
Alan Bertin
Mike Boas
Bryon Boyce
Olivia Britz-Wheat
Kathy Brooks
Mary Burgess
Sharon Burt
Jerome Capers
Michelle Carlton
Mary Compton
David Compton
Chris Dickinsen
Kerry Drury
Caitlin Drury

Micki DuFort
Kris Duncan
Susan Dunigan
Sandra Easterly
Pam Elmore
Phyllis Elzea
Kathy Fives
Patty Franich
Marie Galyon
William Greene
Peter Herpst
Gail Huggett
Tom Huggett
Floyd Hutchins
Pamela Johnson
Alexa Johnson
Gail B Kahle
Mark Kuestner

Susan Langenes
Melissa Leady
Jeanne Maixner
Susan Marcus
Chris Matthews
Jerry McGhee
Robert Meadows
Cathy Mock
Randy Mock
Marilyn Morgan
Kathryn Park
Bill Park
Clayton Paulson
Anne Pope
Edward Reilly
Alex Rose
Carolyn A. Saba
Tom Schot

Allison Schreck
Ron Sharrin
Zizi Shaver
Gary Sloan
Elaine Sobel
Peggy Story

Robert Stutz
Teresa Sullivan
Rose Szapszewicz
Marta Torres
Stan Vernon
Paula Wade

Jennifer Waters
Tashiko Weinstein
Julie Weiss
Tom Willing
Wes Younie

HPSO now has over 2,500 members!
“I want people to slow down, be inspired by their surroundings, and enjoy life,” says Peter Lynn, referring to his European, artistic approach to design.

Be it the enchanting displays of unusual plants he curates for his nursery, Pomarius, or the outdoor table, hand selected for a client’s woodland garden, all elements of a well-lived life are carefully considered. It’s a rare combination of talents—dreaming up ideas and putting them into action—that gradually put Pomarius on the map as a beautiful little jewel on the edge of Portland’s industrial district. In early 2017, Lynn will open a retail shop on the same plot of land as Pomarius, featuring gifts perfect for plant enthusiasts, as well as a pleasing spot out of the elements for clients to discuss how to transform their own homes to better reflect a lifestyle that caters to the outdoors.

Sitting on a sixties-style chair that his creative director, Wes Younie, chose for the nursery, in front of a lush line of well-trimmed boxwood topiaries, Lynn traces his impetus for opening Pomarius back to his early life in Belgium. Growing up, he was surrounded by plants, gathering wild Muscari (grape hyacinth) and peaches from the orchards that surrounded his parents’ house. Local farmers taught him how to make a small garden with native plants he discovered in nearby woods. Meanwhile, at home, “We would often spend two hours over a meal in the company of friends and family—it was a very enjoyable pace of life” Lynn says.

Showing people how to cultivate a style of living that is both comfortable and honors their natural surroundings is important today. That is what he wants Pomarius to represent.

His approach extends to the way he and his wife, Karen, lived in France and later in Portland. “We always had chickens, geese, ducks, vegetable gardens. We kept bees and grew strawberries for the farmers’ market.” Lynn says of their penchant for living off the land a bit.

Crafting a distinct and authentic experience largely comes down to the details, especially those sweetly unexpected, like a gravel path designed to curve so you can view a gorgeous grouping of plants as you make your way around the bend, or the antique greenhouse tucked into Pomarius’s southwest corner with a perfectly ripe kiwi vine entwined in a tree nearby.
Visitors enjoy the open gardens of Meredith Hilderbrand, above, and Helen Wagner, below.

I want people to slow down, be inspired by their surroundings, and enjoy life.

Pomarius owner
Peter Lynn
The Hardy Plant Society of Oregon
828 NW 19th Avenue
Portland, OR 97209
www.hardyplantsociety.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

GEN(I)US PROGRAM
Trees for Northwest Gardens
with Sean Hogan
Sunday, October 2

ANNUAL MEETING
with Andrea Wulf
Saturday, October 22
(see page 3)

GEN(I)US PROGRAM
Daphne, Osmanthus & Vaccinium
with Roger Gossler
Sunday, November 6

SPECIAL WORKSHOP:
FACEBOOK FOR GARDENERS
Sunday, December 4

PLUS OPEN GARDENS
April to October. HPSO members can visit other member’s gardens from spring through fall.

for more program information visit www.hardyplantsociety.org

The Hardy Plant Society of Oregon is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose purpose is educational and whose mission is to nurture the gardening community.

The lush days of summer, from "Why I Garden," page 10

Melianthus major 'Antonow's Blue' with Tibouchina grandiflora, page 9.