Get ready: 2016 is the Year of the Begonia! Okay, so it’s 2021, but they were the plant of the year in 2016, and they just keep getting better and better!

About twenty years ago, begonias fell out of favor, partly because they were a victim of their own success. The most common species, *Begonia semperflorens* (Wax Begonia), is ridiculously easy to grow in sun or shade, and they bloom their little hearts out all summer long. As a result, they were planted in masses in parks, botanical and residential gardens, and even gas stations. People tired of the “bedding out” planting schemes.

There are more than 1,831 different species of begonias, and most are from the tropics and subtropics. They are in the family Begoniaceae and are the fifth most diverse class of plants. Even though they are classified as perennials, they are often thought of as annuals or houseplants. Technically, most are “tender perennials”—plants that could live for many years but will die when exposed to temperatures below their tolerance level. Conversely, annuals cannot live for more than one year.

The more than ten thousand recorded cultivated varieties of begonias—mostly of hybrid origin—present a mystifying array of forms and colors. In spite of this, there is a variety for everyone, whether they garden indoors or out or have sun or shade; however, it is important to pick the right kind of begonia for success. Here is a list to “demystify” the various species:

*Begonia semperflorens* (Wax or bedding begonias) are the most common—and among the easiest—of all varieties grown outdoors. Most are tidy, six-to-fourteen-inch mounding plants with green or bronze foliage, and they cover themselves with small blooms in shades of red, pink, or white. There are also types with small rose-like double blooms. A new interspecific hybrid has recently been introduced, *B. x benaratensis BIG® SERIES*, noted for its early bloom, large flowers, and vigorous habit, growing eighteen to twenty-four inches high and wide.

*Begonia x tuberhybrida* (Tuberous begonias) are sometimes regarded as some of the most spectacular of the genus for their dramatic, colorful flowers. They grow twelve to thirty-six inches high from irregular round, woody-like tubers that should be planted only slightly below the surface of the soil. Interestingly, they have male (single) and female (double) flowers on the same plant. To force the plant to produce more female flowers, remove the male flowers. Tuberous begonias are easy to overwinter by digging up the tuber and storing it in a frost-free, cool location.

*Begonia boliviensis* was discovered growing along cliff walls in the Bolivian Andes and was one of the species used in the production of the first hybrid tuberous begonia. They grow two to three feet tall and can easily be overwintered just like tuberous begonias. Hybrids such as ‘Bonfire’ and ‘Santa Cruz’ are less vigorous than the straight species.
Rhizomatous begonias are the largest class of begonias and are known for their rhizomes, which grow horizontally near the soil surface that sprout new roots and leaves. The rhizome stores water and nutrients, making it possible for the plant to survive some neglect and irregular watering.

*B. Rex-cultorum* group (*Rex* begonias) are a subgroup of rhizomatous begonias and are grown for their fabulous, colorful foliage. The flowers are insignificant, but with foliage like that, who cares?! They don’t like hot climates, but here in the Pacific Northwest, they grow beautifully to twelve to eighteen inches tall and wide in a shady location outside or indoors. As with most begonias, overwatering is a death sentence.

Cane and angel wing begonias have an upright growth habit with handsome foliage, often with wing-like shapes, and clusters of flowers that appear intermittently. Most can be easily propagated by cuttings. Dragon Wing begonias are hybrids of angel wing and wax begonias.

*Begonia grandis* is noted for its deciduous, lush wing-shaped green leaves with red veining and red undersides and is completely hardy in Zones 6-9. They grow from a tuber and produce nodding clusters of pink or white flowers. The plant multiplies readily by bulbils and will pop up in unexpected places in moist, woodsy soil and light shade.

There are new, exciting hardy begonias that survive winters in the PNW, some of which have been collected by Dan Hinkley. *B. palmata* DJHM “marbled form” has palmate-shaped green leaves splashed with burgundy. Exclusive to Windcliff Plants and Monrovia’s Dan Hinkley Collection are *B. ‘Tectonic™ Eruption’* with heavily scalloped foliage and occasional tiny yellow flowers, and *B. stiletensis* with unbelievably enormous eighteen-inch long by twelve-inch wide rich, glossy green leaves. The latter’s hardiness is still being determined. These are examples of several new hardy begonias never before available to consumers.

With so many fabulous begonias to choose from, I need a bigger garden!
This featured plant—*Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii* ‘Lambrook Gold’—commemorates Margery Fish of East Lambrook Manor. One of several specimens named to honor her work, ‘Lambrook Gold’ is an evergreen sub-shrub recognized as a Great Plant Pick and winner of RHS Award of Garden Merit. In short, a statuesque stalwart of the ‘spurge’ family *Euphorbiaceae*.

This family includes thousands of plants across sub-tropic, temperate and tropical biomes. Notable family members include the famed poinsettia rubber tree. Although Euphorbia were officially titled by Carl Linnaeus in 1753, they were documented by Pliny in approximately 79 AD. Purportedly, the name arose from King Juba II of Mauretania, who was treated with the plant and wished to recognize his Greek physician, Euphorbus.

Euphorbia prefer sharply drained, medium soil and full sun. As summer approaches, dappled afternoon shade is recommended; too much shade may degrade each cluster’s striking silhouette. ‘Lambrook Gold’ has a clumping habit and often reaches a height and spread of two to four feet (its blooms may range from late March to early July). Euphorbia are toxic and produce caustic chemicals, which may be exposed via the air. When handling any member of the genus, wear gloves to avoid skin irritations from the terpene esters found in theirmilky saps.

‘Lambrook Gold’ is used in mixed borders, beds, hedgerows, and as a ground cover particularly in rock and cottage gardens. Its various seasonal hues provide a solid foil on which to balance palettes of companion plants such as Allium, Ceanothus, Cotinus, Helleborus, Iris, Lupines, Miscanthus, Parahebe, and Rosa. Euphorbia offers gardeners plentiful options and unique ornamental treasures to infuse their gardens with the distinctive elegance and tenacity of the spurges!

You can see ‘Lambrook Gold’ in the Perennial Border at the Bellevue Botanical Garden.

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**Save the Date!**

**Progressive Bellevue Garden Party**  
**Saturday, July 24, 2021**

We have selected some outstanding Bellevue gardens to delight Society members at our Progressive Bellevue Garden Party!

Hosts and our Events Team have joined to plan a special treat in each garden. We have carefully designed a program that will encourage social distancing to ensure guest health and safety.

This will not be your average garden tour…this will be an experience! A limited number of tickets will be offered to BBGS members only. Mark your calendar and watch for more info coming soon!
My neighbor is moving and offered me a beautiful giant trillium (Trillium chloropetalum var. giganteum) from her garden. I would like it but it must be dug up right away. Can I move a trillium that is in flower without killing it?

In my opinion, trilliums are among the most interesting and beautiful of wildflowers. There are forty-three species known worldwide and thirty-eight of them are native to North America. These members of the lily family all share the characteristic three leaves and three petal flower structure. Trillium ovatum is the trillium you see when you hike in our local woods. I think it’s one of the most attractive species, featuring multiple delicate, nodding white and fading to pink flowers. It used to be about the only trillium you could find at garden stores, but now more rare and interesting varieties are becoming available at local and online nurseries. The species your neighbor has offered you is quite a prize. Trillium chloropetalum var. giganteum (giant wake robin) is native to California. Over time, it can form a two-feet tall by three-feet wide clump of deep green foliage with leaves that can grow to eight inches long. In early spring, each whorl of leaves is crowned with a spectacular deep burgundy four-inch flower.

I’m not surprised to hear you’re concerned about transplanting a trillium when it’s in full bloom. The rule of thumb is to divide spring blooming perennials in fall to give them time to recover before growth (and hopefully flowering) resumes in spring. When I first moved to Washington, a friend told me that trilliums were so delicate that if you picked a flower off one, it wouldn’t bloom again for years. Maybe because of hearing that, I’ve never picked a trillium flower. I’m fairly sure, however, that the idea that picking a trillium flower will cause it harm is a bunch of bull-tweetle. I’ve learned through experience that trilliums are such tough plants, you can easily move them when they are in full-bloom, and you can even divide them while you’re at it.

I found this out while procuring plants to sell at a Master Gardener plant sale. I was chairman of the rare plant section, and a friend offered to allow me to dig up and sell what was, at that time, an extremely rare Trillium kurabayashii from her garden. These Oregon natives form a tall clump made up of whorls of black and green deeply mottled leaves, topped with exquisite, dark-red, four-inch tall upright flowers. I had my doubts about the wisdom of digging up such a rare trillium in full bloom, but I decided it was worth a try because it was bound to sell for top dollar at the sale. When I lifted the plant, however, the root ball started falling apart. Since it was practically dividing itself, I realized that I could make a lot more money for the cause if I divided it and sold the divisions rather than the single plant, so I used my hands to coax the bulbous roots apart. When I was done, I had potted up twelve well-rooted divisions topped with flowering stems. I kept one for myself and sold the rest, warning potential buyers that I had no idea if their expensive acquisitions would survive.

That was well over twenty years ago and I still run into people who bought one of the original divisions. In every case, they told me their trilliums thrived, became large clumps, and have bloomed reliably year after year. The division I kept for myself has turned into an impressive clump, and flowers spectacularly every spring. Since that discovery, I’ve successfully divided several other trilliums in full bloom, including the gorgeous species your neighbor is offering you. Just make sure there’s at least one well rooted stalk attached to each division, plant them in light shade in rich, moist, well-drained soil and water carefully for the first season. The divisions you plant this spring should grow so well that it won’t be too many years before your trillium may be big enough to divide again. Think how surprised and delighted your gardening friends will be when you share fully blooming trillium divisions with them in the spring!
Among the most passionate topics of debate in horticultural circles the last couple of decades is that of the role of “native” versus “non-native” plants in public green spaces as well as in home gardens. Some so-called native-plant purists insist not only on the primacy of the former, but go so far as to advocate the banishment or eradication of the “scourge” of non-native plants from our cultivated landscapes. On the other extreme, some fervent advocates of introduced, exotic plants dismiss native plant gardens as monotonous and devoid of imagination, looking ragged and unkempt most of the year. Must the conscientious yet adventurous gardener choose one side or the other, or is there a middle path? Let’s turn down the heat and examine the merits of both camps. We can all agree that native plants are of vital importance to the ecosystem and must be protected where endangered, both from disturbance engendered by human activity and from harm caused by invasive introduced plants. On the other extreme, some fervent advocates of introduced, exotic plants dismiss native plant gardens as monotonous and devoid of imagination, looking ragged and unkempt most of the year.

Must the conscientious yet adventurous gardener choose one side or the other, or is there a middle path? Let’s turn down the heat and examine the merits of both camps. We can all agree that native plants are of vital importance to the ecosystem and must be protected where endangered, both from disturbance engendered by human activity and from harm caused by invasive introduced plants. In our neck of the woods, one doesn’t have to travel far to find urban forests under assault by hordes of *Hedera helix* (English ivy), or sunny slopes smothered in *Rubus armeniacus* (Himalayan blackberry). However, the vast majority of introduced plants are much better behaved than these two botanical thugs, posing little to no risk to indigenous flora.

In fact, judiciously selected non-natives bring benefits above and beyond their beauty. Given the uncertainties surrounding global climate change, they may be better suited for our hotter and drier future than many indigenous plants. Like natives, well-chosen introduced plants also provide fodder and shelter for birds and other wildlife. Most importantly, thoughtfully curated exotic plants can greatly extend the bloom season, which is a boon to pollinators.

While contemplating my own garden a few months ago in mid-autumn, it struck me that the preponderance of plants still in vigorous bloom hail originally from Latin America: dalias, salvias, abutilons, fuchsias, cestrums, brugmansias, tibouchinas. As I write these lines today, in mid-winter, I’m watching a grateful hummingbird as it feasts on the orange blossoms of *Berberis darwinii*, a native of Chile. From the other side of the Pacific Rim, East Asian species such as *Camellia sasanqua*, *Daphne bholua*, *Edgeworthia chrysantha*, *Hamamelis x intermedia*, *Sarcococca ruscifolia*, and *Mahonia x media* cultivars such as ‘Charity’ and ‘Lionel Fortescue’ bestow their blossoms from the nadir of our dark season into earliest spring; these are lifesavers for our high-needs, hungry hummers.

Apropos of nourishment, most of us would end up fatally famished if we tried to subsist on a diet afforded solely by native vegetation. Our agricultural economy would be devastated as well: of Washington State’s twenty-five most valuable crops, only two —blueberries, at number eight, and maize (corn), at number eleven— originated in what is now the United States of America. The overwhelming mass (from apples and wine grapes to wheat and hops) is of cosmopolitan origin, an apt reflection of the diversity of our human population. Yet we can enjoy the best of both worlds in our Pacific Northwest vegetable gardens if we expand our definition of “native” to include food plants indigenous to our southern neighbors in Latin America: tomatoes, potatoes, sweet potatoes, peanuts, chile and bell peppers, lima and runner beans, and most varieties of squash.

A couple of millennia ago, the Roman dramatist Plautus opined that “moderation in all things is the best policy.” We can protect and nurture native plants while also boosting biodiversity through the informed selection of plants from compatible climate zones around the world. To get a clearer picture of what you can responsibly add to your plant palette, visit the Bellevue Botanical Garden’s perennial border, and peruse the list of one thousand exceptional plants for the maritime Pacific Northwest (updated annually) chosen by the Elisabeth Miller Botanical Garden for their Great Plant Picks program.

Carlos Magdalena, tropical botanical horticulturalist at London’s Kew Gardens, reminds us in *The Plant Messiah: Adventures in Search of the World’s Rarest Species* that “plants are the key to the future of the planet” in that they provide the air we breathe, our clothing, shelter, medicine, food and drink. It’s up to each of us to ensure their survival by doing our part to promote biodiversity.
Home gardeners can do a lot for pollinator species by providing access to shelter, food, water, and nesting space. The Urban Meadow at the Bellevue Botanical Garden is an example of a pollinator-friendly planting. Next time you walk at the Garden, look at the plants and layout for ideas for your garden.

Urban and suburban gardens are not too small to create habitat! Many pollinators have a small range, so you probably have enough space in your yard to support a variety of species. Also, insects don’t care about property lines, and neighboring yards may have some of these features that you can use to enhance or play off of in your own garden.

These are elements that you can include in your garden to encourage pollinators:

- Plant a variety of flower types, shapes and colors. Some insects prefer ray and disk flowers, while others like complex flowers like salvia.
- Choose single flowers. Double flowers often don’t provide access to pollen or nectar, and in many cases, don’t even have them.
- Plan for long bloom seasons. Insects are active from early spring to late fall. Maples bloom early, as do dandelions. For fall, grow asters, California poppy, fuchsias, and plants in the mint family.
- Group species together. Swaths are visible from a distance and keep insects in one place for a longer time.
- Include native plants. Native insects are attracted to native plant species. Growing a variety of native and non-native plants will be much appreciated by your insect friends.
- Provide a water source like puddles, a bird bath, or a small dish with rocks and water. Make sure the sides of the water source are sloped for access. Areas of bare earth that pool water are excellent sources of water and minerals for butterflies.
- Avoid pesticides, as they can be highly toxic to pollinators. If you must use them, target applications and don’t spray on plants that are currently blooming.
- Think about shelter and nesting sites. Bumble bees, sweat bees, miner bees, and others nest in the ground, so they require undisturbed soil for their nests. Ornamental grasses have dense crowns which provide protection for eggs, larvae, and pupae. Brush piles provide safe shelter as well. Leave some dead wood in trees and shrubs for wood-nesters.
- Cultivate an aesthetic that allows for imperfections. Leaf cutter bees and butterfly larva make holes in leaves. You can train your mind to see those cut-outs as a sign of a healthy garden that supports bees and butterflies. When you start watching for other life—bees, beetles, butterflies, flies, and birds—you will see those “imperfections” a little differently.

Incorporate any of the above to help provide pollinators with a safe and happy home, and have fun making new friends in the garden!
In today’s wired world, where friends and family are just a text or email away, it’s easy to forget that our predecessors didn’t have it so easy. Their choices were limited when they wanted to deliver a message to someone. To further complicate matters, sometimes the message was delicate, and back then people were far more reticent than they are today.

Take the Victorian Era, for instance. Not only were people limited by their modes of communication, but also by the severe restrictions inherent in their society; Victorians considered it to be in poor taste to express feelings in words. But feelings still needed to be expressed, so is it any wonder that the “language of flowers”—or floriography—surged in popularity during the Victorian Era?

We aren’t talking about our simple modern-day flower language that tells us that a red rose means love, a yellow rose means friendship, and a pink rose means gratitude. The Victorian flower language was far more complex and nuanced, and was used to communicate messages that would have been considered improper to speak aloud.

For example, a bouquet of hyacinths said, “Your loveliness charms me,” heliotrope meant, “You have my eternal love and devotion,” and lavender conveyed, “I do not trust you.”

The recipient might then send back a flower or bouquet with their response. If a suitor sent a red tulip, which declared love, the recipient might send back honeysuckle meaning devoted affection, or candytuft to express indifference.

This “flower language” did not stop there. Beyond the type of flower, there were other elements to decipher. For example, the way the flowers were presented and in what condition also held a message. Flowers presented with the right hand meant “yes,” while those presented with the left meant “no.” The giver might also have presented the bouquet upside down, which indicated that the recipient’s interpretation should be the opposite of what was traditional for that flower. Even the ribbon tied around the bouquet meant something. A ribbon tied on the left conveyed that the bouquet’s meaning applied to the giver, while a ribbon tied on the right indicated that the meaning was to be attributed to the recipient. Not surprisingly, the condition of the bouquet said a lot too, with the difference between a fresh and wilted bouquet being clear.

The color of the bouquet also sent a coded message. For instance, the carnation, with its wide range of colors, was used to convey a variety of messages. Red carnations symbolized admiration, pink expressed gratitude, purple meant fickleness, and yellow conveyed rejection. (In fact, yellow flowers of any variety usually communicated a negative message – jealousy, disdain, disinterest, etc.)

Such complex meanings were surely hard to keep straight and it was not unusual for Victorian households to have one or more “flower dictionaries” to interpret the messages. Unfortunately, this was not always foolproof, as meanings could differ from one book to the next. In fact, in the United States between 1827 and 1923, there were nearly one hundred different flower guidebooks in circulation.

Interestingly, the language of flowers was not an invention of the Victorian era. In fact, according to The Old Farmer’s Almanac, “The symbolic language of flowers has been recognized for centuries in many countries throughout Europe and Asia. They even play a large role in William Shakespeare’s works. Mythologies, folklore, sonnets, and plays of the ancient Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, and Chinese are peppered with flower and plant symbolism…”

Alas, World War I brought an end to the popularity of floriography, as people were forced to shift their attention and resources to war. By the end of World War I, floriography had largely vanished. What remains today are a few museum exhibits, as well as numerous contemporary books and online articles devoted to the topic.

So, the next time you pick up your phone to text a friend, remember that communication has not always been such a simple matter. In fact, you might even put down that phone and say it with flowers instead.
Spring is here, astronomically speaking if not meteorologically. Time to shake off any lingering April foolishness, round up the usual suspects (gloves, hat, pruning shears, bin/basket and spade), and head out to the garden. Elevate your mood by tackling a couple of the following tasks.

**CLEAN UP:** Start with your garden tools if you neglected to do this last autumn. Sharpen and sterilize pruners. Tidy up perennial beds, remove last year’s growth from ornamental grasses. Pick off old foliage from roses and pick up all fallen leaves around their bases.

**CUT BACK:** Inspect shrubs, then remove dead, diseased or damaged branches. Reduce hardy fuchsias to a frame of six inches to one foot. To control size, do the same to bushy salvias and abutilons if the top growth survived the winter snows. It’s not too late to prune your roses, although you may delay the first flush of blooms.

**CLEAR OUT:** Take a long, hard look around. Is there a portion of the garden that’s been driving you crazy? Now’s the time to do a complete makeover. Be bold! This also applies to liberating your space from the tyranny of useless implements and peripherals such as worn-out or broken tools and containers. Marie Kondo applauds you.

**COMPOST AROUND:** Nourish your plants while suppressing weeds by spreading a two-inch layer of organic, fine compost or well-rotted manure all around, taking care not to smother any wee wonders.

**CHECK IN:** Consult the experts, such as the Master Gardener Foundation of King County. Due to the pandemic, in-person clinics are on hold, but free on-line Zoom events are slated (See www.mgfkc.org). You can also email them with questions about plant or pest ID as well as glean practical advice on other garden-related issues. Another fine source of online information on a whole host of horticultural concerns can be found at Gardendesign.com. Closer to home, see what Great Plant Picks (an educational program of the Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden) is suggesting for Pacific Northwest Gardeners this year. You can find them at www.greatplantpicks.org.

**COME VISIT:** Finally, visit the Bellevue Botanical Garden in person whenever your spirits or inspiration are sagging. If it’s a rainy spring day, stay in and explore the plants at the Garden with the comprehensive Collection Search, available on the Bellevue Botanical Garden website! With this remarkable tool, you can find detailed information about the entire living collection at the Garden. Find it at bbgcollection.bellevuewa.gov.
“There are ways in, journeys to the center of life, through time; through air, matter, dream and thought. The ways are not always mapped or charted, but sometimes being lost, if there is such a thing, is the sweetest place to be. And always, in this search, a person might find that she is already there, at the center of the world. It may be a broken world, but it is glorious nonetheless.”

-Linda Hogan
_The Woman Who Watches Over the World: A Native Memoir_

Finding the Lost Meadow
By Cynthia Welte

Beyond the central gardens is a loop trail called the Lost Meadow Trail, which takes you through the woodlands. On the one-third mile loop, you’ll travel through a mixed deciduous and coniferous forest, lush with ferns and mosses. On the western edge, near the sculpture “Night Blooming,” is an opening in the trees called the Lost Meadow. It’s a small meadow—about an acre in size. There are not currently any trails through it, so visitors enjoy it along the main trail. It’s a great spot for birdwatching or to just enjoy a quiet moment away from urban life.

When the Garden opened in 1992, there was one loop through the central gardens that passed what are now the Native Discovery and Yao Gardens (we now call this the Tateuchi Loop Trail). Much of the Garden’s original thirty-six acres were still wild back then. The only paths in the woods were made by neighbors. According to Jan Beck, former crew leader, “Once you entered [that area], it was magic. There was such a silence that nature would talk to you. Few people used it—they stayed on the main trail. The giant maples leaning over the trail with the moss dripping off them were gorgeous.”

There was a clearing in the trees, but the true extent of it was hidden by blackberries and other weeds. Once the weed species were removed, a meadow was revealed. Staff sowed it with meadow grasses and managed the weeds.

One day, one of the gardeners, Christine, was working out in that area and came across an upset woman. She had been out there for a while and was looking for the main trail. Christine helped her out of the woods, and all was well. It became something of a legend among staff, that the Garden was so wild, one could get lost in the woods that close to the center of a city! A few years later, Garden staff and the Society began planning the second loop trail through the woods. They were brainstorming name ideas and Jan Beck told them the story of the lost woman and she suggested, “Lost Meadow Trail.” What had been lost was now found.

For now, the woods along the Lost Meadow Trail are not part of the curated collection. They are maintained for health and safety, and the grounds crew is keeping a close eye on the changes happening to the plants in this area. It is dominantly deciduous forest now, but those trees are reaching the end of their lives. As they die, they are being replaced by native conifers.

There are several ideas for the future of the Lost Meadow. We’d love to mow trails through the Meadow, changing them year to year so visitors can observe the meadow up close. Someday, a treehouse might even look out over the Meadow!

For now, Garden visitors can enjoy the grasses swaying in the breeze or sit on the bench across the trail from the Lost Meadow and quietly watch deer and rabbits grazing.
A bout this time of year, the idea of growing tomatoes at home begins to come over gardeners and nongardeners alike. Home-grown tomatoes are so sublime compared to store-bought tomatoes that, once the thought takes hold, it becomes impossible to resist. Propelled forward on a thrilling can-do wave of desire and optimism, people rush to buy seed packets or tomato plants and the adventure is on.

Initially confronting the enormous field of available tomato choices, however, can dampen a little of that joyful energy. There are dozens of varieties, and each delicious description in a catalog, on a seed packet, or on a plant tag sounds more tempting than the last. Where to begin? A good place to start is with the question: “What kind of tomato(es) do I want? Big beefsteak tomatoes for glorious sandwiches? Salad tomatoes? Tomatoes for sauce? Tiny tomatoes for nibbling?”

Making this first clarifying decision enables buyers to focus on subsets of tomatoes rather than the entire, overwhelming array. So far so good. For would-be tomato growers in this region, however, the real focus-snapping question is: “How many days does a variety take to reach maturity?”

In the Northwest, the hot summer days that tomato plants love are limited, so varieties which need fewer days to start producing tomatoes are a safer bet. Some varieties begin to deliver ripe fruit in as few as fifty-five days. Others require ninety days. It is gloomy to contemplate facing a frost when the plants you have been tenderly watching over for weeks have yet to produce their first ripe tomato. Bear that in mind if you find yourself falling for a ninety-day beauty.

The next decision to make is: “Do you want ‘determinate’ or ‘indeterminate’ plants?” Determinate plants do not require staking and are popular for growing in containers. The downside is that all their tomatoes are ready to pick at the same time. After that, your harvest days (and the plant) are finished. Indeterminate tomatoes can keep growing and giving you more tomatoes until early fall, but they need to be supported to keep them from bending or breaking. This does not mean indeterminate plants cannot be grown in pots; it just means using bigger containers that can accommodate stakes.

A little expert advice on actual tomato varieties can be a great help when making final buying choices. Happily, it is available. Ciscoe Morris, for instance, has long recommended three indeterminate varieties: ‘Stupice’, ‘Early Girl’ (medium-sized tomatoes; pictured below), and ‘Sungold’ (a popular, cherry-sized, yellow tomato). If you are ready for something new, he also recommends a cherry tomato called ‘Lucky Tiger’, and his “all-time favorite” tomato, ‘Pink Berkeley Tie-Dye’ (pictured above). “Just seeing the fruit with its psychedelic swirls of yellow, green and red will remind you of your hippie days,” he says, “and when you bite into the tricolored flesh—each hue imbued with its own spicy, sweet or tart flavor—you’ll find yourself with an incurable case of the munchies!”

In the April 2021 issue of Fine Gardening magazine, gardener and author, Niki Jabbour, gives the nod to ‘Sungold’ as her favorite tomato as well, adding that even in her Nova Scotia, Canada garden, it starts bearing hundreds of one-inch diameter tomatoes in just fifty-seven days.

Eight other experts offer their own top tomato recommendations in the same issue of Fine Gardening, along with growing tips. Four recommendations mature in sixty-five days or fewer, including ‘Alston Everlasting’, a high-yield heirloom, and ‘Juliet’, an oval-shaped tomato.

Seattle’s Tilth Alliance has an on-line list of top tomato varieties for the Seattle area, too. ‘Sungold’ is on their list of good early-season producers, as is ‘Matina’, a small- to medium-sized indeterminate hybrid requiring seventy days to maturity. Determinate ‘Siletz’, a mid-sized slicing tomato, and little, indeterminate ‘Sweet Million’ are also on their list.

Making good tomato plant choices is just the first step in tomato growing, of course. The real work and potential pleasures lie ahead, but that is another story.
We were extremely disappointed last spring when we had to cancel our speakers who were scheduled to give lectures on a variety of fascinating topics. But we have great news! Through the power of Zoom, we have been able to reschedule all of them! And, because of the overwhelming popularity of our webinars, we have added three more!

**Loree Bohl** will kick off our spring lectures on April 7 with her lecture on “Fearless Gardening.” You may follow Loree’s popular blog, “Danger Garden” (www.thedangergarden.com), where she shares her love for agaves, cactus, and all things spiky. Her book, *Fearless Gardening: Be Bold, Break the Rules, Grow What You Love*, has just been published by Timber Press. Loree’s lecture is a call to arms, urging gardeners to be bold, break the rules, and be adventurous. In this photo-rich lecture, you’ll be inspired to look at plants differently and expand your horizons.

Then, on April 21, **Jeffrey Bale** will present his lecture on “The Pleasure Garden.” Jeffrey spends every winter visiting iconic gardens around the world.
This year was his thirty-seventh winter abroad, and he went to Paris, Egypt, Jordan, and Israel. In fact, it was an early trip to Spain and Portugal that introduced Jeffrey to the “Art of Mosaic.” When he returned home, he taught himself how to build pebble and tile mosaics and frequently uses them to embellish his garden designs for clients (including at Dan Hinkley’s Windcliff) and for himself. He has also studied the art of stone carving in India. Jeffrey’s view of “Pleasure Gardens” is almost mystical; he sees salient details that many of us would miss. During his PowerPoint presentation, he will show us some of the gardens he has encountered during his worldwide travels, including the famed Alhambra in Spain.

On May 5, Richard Hawke will join us to talk about “Top Rated Perennials.” Richard has been the Plant Evaluation Manager at the Chicago Botanic Garden since 1986, is an instructor for the School of the Chicago Botanic Garden, the author of Plant Evaluation Notes, and an author and contributing editor for Fine Gardening magazine. He received the Perennial Plant Association’s Academic Award for teaching excellence. In his lecture, Richard will talk about perennials that have proven to be beautiful, reliable, and hardy in the Chicago Botanic Garden’s evaluation trials. Find out which perennials are winners and why.

On May 19, Richie Steffen, Executive Director of the Elizabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden, president of the Hardy Fern Foundation, and co-author of The Plant Lovers Guide to Ferns, will present his informative and fun lecture on the ferns of the Bellevue Botanical Garden. Ferns have had an important place in the Garden since the Shorts family developed the land prior to it becoming a public garden. Today the BBG has a partnership with the Hardy Fern Foundation, which assists with maintaining the ferns and adding to the collection. Richie will share his knowledge of the best selections for our area, as well as the varied and interesting history of the ferns in the Garden.

Our spring lectures will wrap up on June 16 with Patrick McMillan, director of Heronswood Garden and former director at the South Carolina Botanical Garden in Clemson, South Carolina. Patrick is probably best known for his role as host, writer, producer, and editor of the Emmy-award winning PBS series, Expeditions with Patrick McMillan. In his lecture, he will discuss the captivating hummingbirds that zip through our gardens. Their colors and speed are things of wonder, but their importance to the world and our importance to them is often less obvious. Patrick will give us a fascinating look at the biology and ecological importance of these tiny birds, as well as how to best entice and care for them in your own garden.

Spring Lectures

Fearless Gardening: Be Bold, Break the Rules, Grow What You Love, with Loree Bohl
Wednesday, April 7, 7pm
$5 BBGS members/$15 non-member

The Pleasure Garden, with Jeffrey Bale
Wednesday, April 21, 7pm
$5 BBGS members/$15 non-member

Only the Best: Top-rated Perennials, with Richard Hawke
Wednesday, May 5, 7pm
$5 BBGS members/$15 non-member

Ferns: A Bellevue Botanical Garden Legacy, with Richie Steffen
Wednesday, May 19, 7pm
$5 BBGS members/$15 non-member

Hummingbirds: Life in Fast Forward, with Patrick McMillan
Wednesday, June 16, 7pm
$10 BBGS members/$15 non-member

Watch these lectures from your favorite easy chair! Register at bellevuebotanical.org/webinars. All webinars are recorded, and you will receive the recording the next day via email and you will have two weeks to watch it.
BBGS Needs Your Talents!

We could not do our important work without our volunteer Board of Directors and committee members. Do you want to make an impact and help your community at the same time? Do you have skills you would like to use to help us achieve our mission? If so, BBGS needs your talents! We are looking for energetic, skilled volunteers who enjoy being part of a team to join our committees and Board of Directors.

**Why being a volunteer in your community is important**

- You can make a difference by sharing your unique skills to support others.
- You get a chance to give back and improve your community.
- You will learn a lot and experience something new.
- You help strengthen your community by working together to enhance fellowship and collaboration.
- You can connect with your neighbors and meet like-minded people in your community.

If you are interested in learning more, please email us at volunteer@bellevuebotanical.org.

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**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

**Circles of Giving**
- Crystal Wilson

**Supporting**
- David Aho
- Brenda Allyn
- Buras-Elsen
- Kathleen Dickinson
- Faye Harold
- Somaly Hoy
- Zach Mysliwiec
- Sally Long & Don Parkinson
- Cathy Wales
- Jenny Wyatt

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- Dawn Rubstello & Joe Ammirati
- Brenda Berkey & Eric Bai
- Kara Banke

- Delilah Marquez & Eric Biro
- Vik Phillips & Jim Browning
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- Kyra Canfield
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- Jeanne Celeste
- Reji & Deepas Dasan
- Terri & James Doyle
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- Andrea Goodmansen
- Charlie Gough
- Savanna Sinderud & William Graham
- Barbara & Chuck Harwood
- Brenna Hayward
- Kathy Hazslip
- Cristina Haworth & Jeffrey Hill
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- Tina & Gerry Kaelin
- Judith Lee
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- Maria Garcia Struck & Jaime Leycegui
- Phyllis Ying & Andrew Lingbloom
- Katy Terry & Michael McGloin
- Michele & Stephen Miller
- Mary Ann & Richard Moore
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- Marian & Ken Pacquer
- Christy & Steve Palmer
- Kathleen Pankasin
- Barbara Parker
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- Shirley & James Raabe
- Jody & Wayne Sagawa
- JoAnn Atwell-Scrivner & Richard Scrivner
- Lisa Wisnner-Slivka & Ben Slikva
- James D. Anderson & Glenn Sproles
- Shanon & Eric Stathers
- Sarah De la Cruz & Renee Stearns
- Eva Stephanus
- Susan & Rich Stewart
- Cheri & Murray Urquhart
- Brigitta Ujhelyi & Stephen Voorhees
- Jessica Zahn

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- Susan Abbott
- Stephanie Adams
- Julie Allyne
- Gail Alsog
- Jenny Andrews
- Carol Arnold
- Barbara Beers
- Jeanne Blichfeld
- Helen Bodine
- Patricia Bottorff
- Lori Broznowski
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- Nancy Dawson
- Lauri DeWitt
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- Allyson Kemp
- Yonitti Kinsella
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- Patricia Kulgren
- Lisa Kympton
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- Kendall McLean
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- Susan Stuart
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- Torrey Trahanovsky
- Shawna Van Nimwegen
- Katherine Voss
- Gale Wald
- Margo Wei
- Beverly Wiegand
- Dawn Will
- Nicole Wilson
- Wendy Woodside
- Parto Yegan
- Lawrence Yuan
- Carolyn Yund
- Corinne Zibelli

*November 16, 2020 - February 15, 2021*
Member Discount Program

**BBGS members receive a 10% discount at the following nurseries, garden centers and garden service providers. Please see bellevuebotanical.org/membership for details.**

- Bartlett Tree Experts, Lynnwood
- Bellevue Nursery, Bellevue
- Bouquet Banque Nursery, Marysville
- Cedar Grove, 5 retail locations and online
- City Peoples Garden Store, Seattle
- City People's Mercantile, Seattle
- Classic Nursery, Woodinville
- Crown Bees, Woodinville
- Davey Tree Expert Co., Redmond
- Gray Barn Nursery & Garden Center, Redmond
- Kent East Hill Nursery, Kent
- Jungle Fever Exotics, Tacoma
- MsK Rare and Native Plant Nursery, Shoreline
- Old Goat Farm, Orting
- Pine Creek Farms and Nursery, Monroe
- Ravenna Gardens, Seattle
- Swansons Nursery, Seattle

Bellevue Botanical Garden Society

*Our Mission is to perpetuate and further enhance the Bellevue Botanical Garden as a learning resource in partnership with the City of Bellevue.*

The Garden is located at 12001 Main St., Bellevue, WA 98005 and is open daily from dawn until dusk. Visitor Center buildings are closed until further notice. To reach Society staff, please email us at bbgsoffice@bellevuebotanical.org

[www.bellevuebotanical.org](http://www.bellevuebotanical.org)

OFFICERS OF THE BELLEVUE BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY

**CO-PRESIDENTS** Heather Babiak-Kane & Cleo Raulerson

**TREASURER** Amy Doughty

**SECRETARY** Jim Livingston

**DIRECTORS**

Tracy Botsford, Barbara Bruell, Anne Dziok, Chuck Freedenberg, Denise Lane, Nita-Jo Rountree, Kathleen Searcy, Gretchen Stengel, Lisa Wozow

THE BUZZ TEAM

Sandra Featherly, JG Federman, Kathryn Highland, Wendy Leavitt, Darcy McInnis, Ciscoe Morris, Nita-Jo Rountree, Daniel Sparler, Cynthia Welte

SUBMIT A QUESTION FOR CISCOE MORRIS

askciscoe@bellevuebotanical.org

CONTACT THE BUZZ TEAM

buzzteam@bellevuebotanical.org

What's New!

The delightful creations from Dave’s Metal Designs are a favorite find during Arts in the Garden. These charming sculptures are now available in the Trillium Store! Dave’s unique home and garden art collections are hand-forged metal and crafted with natural stone or wood. The graceful long-legged cranes measure approximately three feet high. $140-$189. The happy family of ducks measure between eight and twelve inches. Sold individually. $65-$80. Adorable penguins each measure eight inches. $62-$72.

Dave recommends that items made with wood are placed indoors or in covered outdoor areas. Available exclusively in-store and not sold in our online store.

Trillium Store Hours

Open weekends through June, 11am-3pm. Visit our website for weekday store hours and updates. Shopping appointments may be scheduled by emailing trillium@bellevuebotanical.org. Or shop online! Use this handy QR Code to access our online store:

Email trillium@bellevuebotanical.org for your member discount code. We will provide contactless curbside pickup for online orders.
Good to Know!

The Bellevue Botanical Garden Society is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization that supports the Bellevue Botanical Garden. Our Vision: Through education and community involvement, we inspire all generations to advance Northwest horticultural knowledge, and preserve natural beauty and our local ecology.

Connect with Us!

Facebook | Instagram

Gardening and Nature Journaling, April 6, 7pm.
Fearless Gardening, April 7, 7pm.
Enriching Your Garden with Vines, April 14, 6:30pm.
Kokedama, April 15, 7pm.
Spring Blooms Watercolor Workshop, April 17, 10am.
Girl Scout Junior Gardening Badge Workshop, April 18, 1pm.
The Pleasure Garden, April 21, 7pm.
Top Rated Perennials, May 5, 7pm.
The Art, Science and Magic of Propagation, May 6, 7pm.
Get to Know the BBG, May 13, 7pm.
Let’s Paint Hydrangeas! Acrylic Painting, May 15, 10am.
Ferns: A Bellevue Botanical Garden Legacy, May 19, 7pm.
Connecting Youth with Nature: Wellness and Health Benefits, May 20, 7pm.
Conifer Pruning, June 8, 6:30pm.
Floral Design, June 15, 6:30pm.
Hummingbirds: Life in Fast Forward, June 16, 7pm.
Native Plants and Bird Habitat, June 24, 7pm.
Flower Arranging for Families, June 27, 2pm.
Perfect Plant Combos for Every Garden, June 29, 7pm.