An exclusive for Society members

Summer 2020

Gladiolus 'Ruby' and Crocosmia 'Fern Hill'. Photo by Nita-Jo Rountree.
When I heard that James Alexander-Sinclair had been chosen as one of the three judges for the 2020 Northwest Flower and Garden Festival, I was thrilled. I had heard James give two lectures a few years ago, so I knew he was not only hilariously funny but also dead serious when it comes to horticulture. I was even more excited when arrangements were made for me to interview him for *The Buzz*!

James is a well-known award-winning garden designer in the United Kingdom. He has designed gardens from Cornwall to the Western Isles and from London to Moscow. He is also an award-winning writer and a frequent television personality.

I asked what prompted him to become a garden designer. “To be honest, it was a well-directed kick administered by my sister,” he said. Until that point, James had spent a long time lying on his sister’s sofa. He had tried a number of different careers, from ice cream salesman, to toy demonstrator, to waiter. His sister got him to go out and dig the garden. “From then on, I was hooked.”

James thinks it is “a pitty and a mistake” that the variability, excitement, and creativity available in a career in horticulture is not promoted. He states emphatically that, “Being a gardener is one of the greatest things you can do.”

He also makes the point that gardening and regularly being among nature is exceptionally good for one’s health and wellbeing. In Britain, doctors have finally clicked on something: “If you feel bad and you go outside, you will feel better. People who garden know this.” That has led to “Social Prescribing.” Instead of prescribing drugs for depression, doctors are sending people to a garden. “People who don’t have a garden should volunteer at the Bellevue Botanical Garden,” James says, “or garden on their balcony or in their homes.” He continues, “We want people to understand that saving the world starts in a window box.”

I emailed Rosemary Alexander, principal of The English Gardening School in London and our speaker last September, to ask her what questions I should ask James. She suggested that I ask how climate change and the current UK interest in wildlife and native plants is affecting plantings. When I read her question to him, he replied, “She’s very adorable, Rosemary.” He took a deep, thoughtful breath and said, “What has happened is that we’ve become more sensitive. It’s not

*A Chat with James Alexander-Sinclair*

*By Nita-Jo Rountree*
just gardening for our own satisfaction, it’s gardening for everything.” He says that we have realized a garden is an environment that we need to share. “We’ve become much more tolerant, and we’ve realized that a healthy garden is a healthy environment—it’s a collaboration.” He points out that we should not kill all the aphids because what are the ladybugs going to eat? We should not take off all the seed heads because what are the birds going to eat? Rather than gardening selfishly for ourselves, we are gardening in order to encourage other creatures and species to come in because it will be a richer, more diverse place if we share it. He thinks that is an attitude that has spread from gardeners to the rest of mankind, and we need to make young people understand that saving the world is through horticulture. “They have to understand that we can save the world one plant at a time,” he says.

I asked James what his favorite plants are. He said that he will give me five plants that make him happy in his own garden, but it had a proviso attached to it: “I reserve the right in perpetuity to change my mind as many times as I wish. I also reserve the right to name more than five.”

His favorite rose “of the moment” is *Rosa mutabilis*. “Oh no!” I said, “that’s my least favorite rose!” Incredulous, he asked why. “Because it changes colors,” I said. “But that’s the whole point of it!” he exclaimed, “the whole excitement of it!”

The next plant he mentioned was *Phlox ‘Blue Paradise’*—a pale washed denim blue in daylight, but come dusk, James says, “it winks seductively at you as it changes to a more spectral ice blue.”

*Persicaria ‘Blackfield’,* “a plant that flowers for a very long time,” says James. “It is invaluable. I used to use it in blocks, and it became too lumpy, and now I use it as individuals dotted through beds. It gives it that bit of color.”

He started naming plants more rapidly. “Okay, I have to have dahlias, and everyone should have a *Philadelphus* in their garden. They smell like the kneecaps of Venus.” He names *Hamamelis, Miscanthus nepalensis*, and says, “I have to name a tulip: the one I will name is ‘Ronaldo’.” (Note: After the interview, I immediately ordered fifty.) Then he names *Camassia* because “They’re nice and blue and lovely,” and alliums, to which he adds, “Oh, now I’ve gone too long.”

When I asked James what is the most important thing someone can do to improve their garden, he answered, “The real answer is grow something! Grow something that makes you happy. It could be growing the perfect parsnip or the most divine dahlia.”

Finally, I asked him, “What question would you like to be asked in an interview?” He immediately replied, “Would you like a chocolate biscuit?”
A ebullient display of deep purple blooms and silver foliage mound en masse to sculpt the landscape in serenity. Light breezes carry pollinators from afar to dance in rustic delight. Hummingbirds, butterflies and bees all find tranquility in gardens of winged Caryopterus.

This genus is composed of small, deciduous Asian shrubs. Caryopterus were once part of the Verbena Family and taxonomists now classify them under the Mint (Lamiaceae) Family. The status is not resolved and promises further developments. To many, these plants are simply known as bluebeard and many cultivars have won the Royal Horticultural Society’s Award of Garden Merit.

Take, for instance, the fetching ‘Dark Knight’ cultivar, which is also a Great Plant Pick. This featured hybrid of C. clandonensis is a cultivar which grows to a height and spread of one to two feet once mature. Perhaps the deepest color of any Blue Mist Spirea variety, ‘Dark Knight’ is a must-have addition for a complete summer landscape.

Besides a hardy constitution and mounding habit, this cultivar offers an added benefit: it flowers from July to September. Such gracious autumnal blooms arrive at a time when added splashes of color are undoubtedly welcome. Dried flowers are occasionally left in place to add a dash of showy winter interest.

Caryopterus thrive in full sun with well-drained soil (slightly acidic or neutral). Compost or mulch annually to enrich sites, particularly clay soils (heavy clay areas should be avoided). They are typically used to create memorable borders, whether they be entryways, low walls, or footpaths with other shrubs or trees. Their cottage-style garden appeal is perfect for containers, where their blooms freely tumble and cascade elegantly.

For an extra punch of vibrancy, companion plants include African lily (Agapanthus ‘Midnight Blue’), C. x clandonensis ‘Sterling Silver’, Chrysanthemum, coneflower, Festuca, Gaillardia, Veronicastrum virginicum ‘Lavendelturm’ (Culver’s root), and Rudbeckia. These combinations will generate dramatic borders, impressive rock gardens, or glowing beds. Moreover, the deep purple blooms contrast perfectly with the prolific evergreens that define the Pacific Northwest.

You can see C. clandonensis ‘Dark Knight’ in the Perennial Border at the Bellevue Botanical Garden.

Featured Plant: Caryopteris x clandonensis ‘Dark Knight’
By JG Federman

The Trillium Store is pleased to offer a safe alternative to shopping in our store. Visit our Virtual Trillium Store at bellevuebotanical.org/trilliumstore-virtual. You can shop for many of the delightful garden-inspired gifts we offer in-store. Once your order is placed, simply pick up at our no-contact curbside pick-up location. Proceeds benefit programs at the Garden.

Use this handy QR code to access our virtual store:

We look forward to seeing you and hope to offer in-store options soon. Keep an eye on our website for details about shopping by appointment.

Virtual Shopping at the Trillium Store! By Shannon Darrow

Use the coupon below to save once the store reopens!

$5 Off a Trillium Store purchase of $30 or more
Use this coupon for in-store shopping at The Trillium Store. Members, please mention your membership to save even more!
One coupon per customer. Expires 10/31/2020.
Something is chewing notches on the leaves of my rhododendrons, hydrangeas and other ornamental plants. What is doing this, and how can I prevent it?

A: The pests damaging the plants in your garden are root weevils. They’re small beetles that I refer to as “Jimmy Durante bugs” because they have long snouts. There are several different varieties of root weevils, ranging in size from one-eighth to one-quarter inch. Gardeners rarely see them because they generally only come out at night. At sunrise, they drop to the ground and hide in the duff. The larvae are small white grubs that feed underground on the roots. Unlike slug and snail damage which results in large ragged swaths of missing foliage or holes in the middle of the leaves, root weevils start on the edge and notch their way inward.

Root weevils rarely do serious harm to rhododendrons and other shrubs. They can, however, make a plant horribly ugly. Most rhododendrons with thick felt (indumentum) under the leaves are resistant to weevils, so one solution is to replace susceptible varieties with more resistant ones. If, however, weevils are decimating the leaves on a wide variety of plants in your garden, it might be worth the effort of trying to rid your garden of these pests.

There are systemic insecticides that are absorbed into the leaves and kill the weevils when they come up to feed at night, but these insecticides are deadly to bees and beneficial ground beetles. A better way to deal with weevils is to apply nematodes. Nematodes are microscopic worms (available from nurseries and mail order catalogs) that work their way into the soil to find and destroy weevil larvae. They are harmless to humans, pets and birds as well as beneficial insects and earthworms. Now is the perfect time to apply nematodes because they won’t survive if soil temperature dips below fifty-five degrees. Follow the directions carefully. To be effective, nematodes must be applied in the shade, and the soil must remain moist at all times for at least four weeks.

Unfortunately, nematodes only feed on larvae, and won’t harm egg laying adults. Therefore in order to control weevils effectively, you’ll need to apply “el kabotski” pest control.

That’s when you go out at night with flashlight in hand and make sure to shout “el kabotski” while you squish. The weevils are easy to spot. You’ll generally see them sitting on the edge of a leaf as they chew their way inward. They make a very satisfying pop when you squish them.

By the way, if you take my advice and go out gallivanting around your yard with a flashlight in the middle of the night, don’t forget to tell your neighbors what you are up to so they don’t mistake you for a burglar and call the police. I went out to do some late-night weevil squishing at Seattle University many years ago, and I neglected to inform security that I would be out there performing el kabotski. I’ll never forget when a couple of security officers threw me to the ground in the bushes in front of the Administration Building. Getting thrown down, however, is not what angered me. What upset me was the report I read later that said, “Little guy seen in the bushes.”

If it’s too much hassle to go out and squish weevils at night, consider hiring some of the neighborhood kids to perform el kabotski pest control for you. Pay them an agreed upon sum per weevil and instead of squishing them, have them put the weevils in a container that you can then put in the freezer. That will do in the weevils, and make it easy to count them. The kids love getting paid to stay up late and quickly become expert weevil hunters. If you decide to go this route, however, be on guard so that what happened to my friend doesn’t happen to you. Before long the kids he hired caught most of the weevils and began to lose interest. Then one night they came in with a shoe box practically full of weevils. My friend assumed there must have been a recent hatch of weevils in his garden—that was, until the next day when a neighbor from down the street just happened to mention that a bunch of the neighborhood kids had been playing some strange game at night with flashlights in his back yard. Those little entrepreneurs! My friend was paying for all of his neighbors’ weevils, too.

One thing is for sure. Using the combined strategy of applying nematodes and practicing el kabotski may never eradicate the weevils completely, but it can significantly reduce their numbers and the damage they cause. Your garden will look a lot better thanks to your efforts.
Arts in the Garden has been one of the Society’s annual events for many years. This popular event at the end of August brings more than thirty artists into the Bellevue Botanical Garden to display and sell their 3-D garden art. Last year, more than seven thousand people enjoyed this event.

Sadly, due to current circumstances, we have made the difficult decision to cancel this year’s in-person event. We feel that this is in the best interests of the continued health and safety of our community.

Beginning on August 1, we will feature Arts in the Garden artists on our website and on social media. We hope you will learn more about these artists and their work, and support them in whatever way you can. Please visit our Arts in the Garden page at bellevuebotanical.org/arts-in-the-garden and follow our Facebook and Instagram pages for more information. If you have questions, please email us at arts@bellevuebotanical.org.

Marcus Harper GlassWorks has been a staple at Arts in the Garden since the event began. Marcus’s glass art is inspired by plants and flowers, water life, the interactions between people, and much more.

While he grew up around art, a career in art wasn’t part of Marcus’s plan. After graduating college and working in healthcare, a class in fused glass stoked his creative passion! He now has two full time jobs: stay-at-home dad and artist.

Marcus makes his glass art in a kiln, which is not the same as blown glass. Blown glass is actively manipulated and shaped at very hot temperatures, whereas kiln formed glass is fused together in a kiln.

For his kiln-formed glass, pieces of solid glass are stacked or put into molds. Then it’s all melted in the kiln at a controlled temperature and slowly cooled back to room temperature. According to Marcus, “the thicker the layers of glass, the longer the kiln schedule. Some of my gallery pieces are one to three inches thick and can be in the kiln for over a week.”

His studio and gallery (including kilns) are in his basement. “My largest kiln—named Bertha—is big enough for me to lay down in!” Marcus is happy to have customers visit his studio by appointment, as it gives him an opportunity to connect with art collectors.

In 2010, Marcus was honored when the Smithsonian Museum purchased two pieces from his Gallery Series! They are in the collection of the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

You can find Marcus Harper GlassWorks on Facebook and online at www.marcusharperglassworks.com. Marcus also does commission work and enjoys working directly with his customers. In fact, his popular and iconic Poppy series was created because of a suggestion by a collector.

Although this year’s Arts in the Garden will not be an in-person event, beginning August 1, please visit our website at bellevuebotanical.org/arts-in-the-garden for information about Marcus’s art, and the art of more than thirty other artists who specialize in 3-D garden art, and how you can support them.
On April 22, people all over the planet commemorated—while sheltering in place—the fiftieth anniversary of the first Earth Day. That initial, 1970 flowering of support for environmental awareness and protection, held in communities throughout the United States and involving twenty million citizens (ten percent of the country’s population), was coordinated by Denis Hayes, now the CEO of Seattle’s pace-setting environmental protection NGO, the Bullitt Foundation. Following that seminal event half a century ago, Congress quickly established the Environmental Protection Agency and enacted vital legislation to clean our air and water as well as protect endangered species.

As articulated by Hayes, the key concept of Earth Day was that human activity, having caused incalculable harm to interlocking natural systems that sustain life, must be reformed with the aim of arresting and reversing that damage. This environmental epiphany was far from new, however. It was first articulated and brought to the world’s attention by Alexander von Humboldt, born in Berlin two centuries before the first Earth Day. This intellectual titan, only dimly appreciated today in the United States, was the most towering scientific mind of his day, lionized all over North and South America as well as his native Europe. His legacy surrounds us today, not only in the more than three hundred plants (such as our own *Lilium humboldtii*) and one hundred animals (including the adorable Humboldt penguin, of which Seattle’s Woodland Park Zoo hosts a colony of forty) that bear his name, but also in an ocean current, rivers, mountains, parks, universities, towns, counties, two asteroids, and a “sea” on the moon (Mare Humboldtianum).

What provoked this bonanza of taxonomic honors for Humboldt, called in his day the “Shakespeare of sciences”? What prompted Ralph Waldo Emerson to declare him “one of those wonders of the world, like Aristotle ... who appear from time to time, as if to show us the possibilities of the human mind”? What led Charles Darwin to state that without Humboldt, he would not have boarded the Beagle and thus would not have written *On the Origin of Species*? Why did Thomas Jefferson, who became his close friend, call him “one of the greatest ornaments of the age”? Why did Walt Whitman write *Leaves of Grass* with one of Humboldt’s books close at hand? What inspired Simón Bolívar to assert that Humboldt had “uprooted” him and fellow Latin American independence leaders from “ignorance” by making them proud of their continent?

The distillation of Humboldt’s charismatic appeal is his exuberance in articulating a vision of earth’s myriad interlocking natural systems as an intricate web of connection, exquisitely beautiful but also fragile and under assault by human hands. Clearly this incandescent and indefatigable polymath, who made lasting contributions to the fields of botany, zoology, geology, oceanography, meteorology, astronomy, anthropology, sociology, and political science, among others, was no aloof academic cloistered in an ivory tower. Instead, he dedicated decades to exploration of three continents on foot, horseback and canoe, risking death on many occasions. Sharing his discoveries and observations in impassioned yet accessible prose via dozens of books, hundreds of lectures, and thousands of letters, he was beloved by millions, from farmhands to heads of state.

Most revelatory for Humboldt was his trek across South America, 1799-1804. High in the Ecuadorian Andes, on the slopes of the active Chimborazo volcano (Humboldt’s ascent was a world altitude record that endured for thirty years),
Around the world, people are finding help and comfort during this terrible pandemic from a perhaps unexpected source—gardening. In fact, there has been a global rush to garden. The first hint of a groundswell in gardening enthusiasm came in early spring, when nurseries and other seed suppliers started reporting record-breaking sales of seed packets, especially vegetable seeds.

In March, for example, Crosscut reported that Seattle’s Swansons Nursery was seeing a thirty to forty percent increase in sales of seed for edible plants. “We’ve been doing this for a long time, and you don’t see any kind of bumps unless there is something very unusual going on,” owner Gabriel Maki told Crosscut. “And we can definitely feel an edibles kind of focus.”

Across the continent on Prince Edward Island, Veseys Seeds, one of Canada’s largest mail order gardening businesses, was experiencing a similar, record-breaking season. In a May 2020 interview with CBC Radio, company director of sales, John Barrett, noted that orders had increased by about 450 percent compared to the year before. It was such a huge and unexpected increase for the eighty-one-year-old company that they had to temporarily suspend seed sales online to give workers time to catch up.

The experiences of Swansons and Veseys are being repeated today in cities and towns everywhere, and the focus is broadening out past edibles to all sorts of gardening. At Wells Medina Nursery in Medina, WA, for instance, a spokesperson noted that the year began with almost frenzied purchasing of vegetable seeds and starts, but it has since expanded to all kinds of plant purchases, many by people new to gardening.

The influx of beginning gardeners is also resulting in a corresponding increase in online guidance directed at those new to the language, tools, and tasks of gardening as well as new to its joys. Social media is awash in advice on how to build a garden in the backyard, tend a few pots on a patio or grow herbs in a sunny kitchen window. There are also dozens of heart-warming postings tracking garden works in progress and sharing the thrill of garden project successes.

Although pandemic-driven worry about food supplies was almost certainly behind the initial tidal wave of interest in gardening, there is a lot more to it than that. The numerous other benefits of gardening are clearly being discovered by people spending more time at home. Diane Blazek, executive director of the U.S. industry group National Garden Bureau put it this way in a Reuters interview: “People around the world are turning to gardening as a soothing, family friendly hobby that also eases concerns over food security…”

Gardening, in short, is a perfect activity for people with time on their hands and anxiety in their hearts, providing both physical and mental health benefits. “There are certain, very stabilizing forces in gardening that can ground us when we are feeling shaky, uncertain, terrified really,” explained Rutgers University professor of horticultural therapy, Joel Flagler, in a recent interview with MarketWatch. “It’s these predictable outcomes, predictable rhythms of the garden that are very comforting right now.”

Bellevue Botanical Garden (BBG) has long been dedicated to inspiring and teaching people of every age about gardens and gardening. Happily, it is something any gardener can do on an individual scale to help others. Who knows? Maybe your offer of a plant start from your own garden, or a walk through BBG with a friend new to gardening, or the gift of a houseplant to someone stuck indoors might make an enormous difference—in a difficult day or even for a lifetime.

“Studies have proven that even the smallest bit of nature — a single tree, a small patch of flowers, a house plant — can generate health benefits,” said Kathleen Wolf, a University of Washington research social scientist in the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences in an April 2020 article in the UW News. “Look closely in your neighborhood, and the bit of nature you may have taken for granted up until now may become the focus of your attention and help you feel better.”
Amid the pall cast by the present pandemic, those of us fortunate to have gardens to care for find that they provide solace of incalculable value. As Pacific Northwest summers boast sixteen hours of daylight, we enjoy a bonanza of light-filled early mornings and evenings to get up close and personal with our plants. No social distancing necessary! Let’s outline a few of the options:

**Sow seed:** It’s not too late to plant fast-growing annuals such as nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*), zinnia, cosmos, marigold (*Tagetes ssp.*), and alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*). In late summer, plant seeds or starts of autumn- and winter-harvest veggies, such as beans, beets, cabbage and carrots. For a complete list visit WSU Extension’s website.

**Cut back, clean up and deadhead:** Although some gardeners consider this a tedious task, there’s no better way to take stock of your garden’s progress than to do a daily walkthrough with pail and pruners in hand as you survey the scene and spruce things up.

**Pinch:** Do this in early summer to encourage attractive, compact, better blooming perennials, such as dahlia, aster, chrysanthemum, impatiens, coleus. Pinching is also helpful for edible herbs such as basil, oregano, sage and thyme. A fine how-to guide is Denise Levine’s article “To Pinch or Not to Pinch” on the Master Gardeners of Napa County website.

**Transplant:** Avoid transplanting during prolonged spells of hot weather; however, lilies may be moved at any time (even when in bloom) if you take proper precautions. B and D Lilies offers excellent on-line advice. Search for “Emergency Summer Transplanting.”

**Order bulbs:** Do this now for the best selection of fall-planted, spring-blooming beauties. If you tend to plant in quantity, save a bundle by ordering through wholesalers such as the reputable Van Engelen Company. It’s easy as pie on their informative, well-illustrated, user-friendly website.

**Contemplate in gratitude:** Carve out time each day to lounge in your creation with a cool beverage and some reading material. Commune with the birds, bees and butterflies. Feel your soul at peace.

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**The First Ecologist, continued from page 7**

he developed the theory of climate zones as they relate to vegetative life, inventing isobars and isotherms to illustrate this on maps. These findings were the basis of his *Essay on the Geography of Plants*, called the world’s first ecology book by the journal Nature.

Two years earlier, on the shores of Lake Valencia in Venezuela, Humboldt witnessed firsthand how human activity, in this case cutting shoreline forests and planting cash crops that both desiccated and impoverished the soil, had altered longstanding weather patterns. Thus, he was the first to document human-induced climate change. Creating the concept of ecosystems, he wrote, “In this great chain of cause and effects ... no single fact can be considered in isolation. ... All natural forces are linked together and made naturally dependent upon each other.”

At the end of that seminal voyage, he insisted on visiting the newly founded United States (although he vehemently objected that the “cradle of liberty” was built on human bondage). In Washington, he dazzled Jefferson and James Madison with his discoveries, although he wrote of his disgust that both his hosts enslaved fellow humans.

For further reading on this august visionary, you can do no better than Andrea Wulf’s award-winning 2015 biography, titled *The Invention of Nature*, and a new, lushly illustrated large-format tome published in late 2019, *The Adventures of Alexander von Humboldt* (focusing on his journey through Latin America) that Wulf put together with artist Lillian Melcher.
On a normal day, the modern urban world is a hurrying, crowded and clamorous place. Human activity never stops. One side effect of all this constant activity, however, is that is can obscure the experience of the natural world behind a haze of sorts—almost like a curtain—comprised of sound, traffic of all kinds, and smog.

When the pandemic pushed the pause button, that obscuring curtain suddenly lifted here and there, giving humans an unexpected look at natural sights that lay behind it. In many ways, it was a revelation.

The world got quieter
Around the world, researchers tracking seismic activity reported that the extreme reduction in human hustle and bustle was causing the earth’s crust to move substantially less. Human-created seismic movement or “noise” usually makes it more difficult for seismologists to measure other movements of the earth, but the pandemic-caused shutdowns changed that.

The sudden stillness was first noted in March at the Royal Observatory in Brussels, Belgium, where seismologists noticed that the city was experiencing a thirty to fifty percent reduction in ambient seismic noise since the lockdowns began.

It did not take a seismometer, however, for people to observe the remarkable hush. Residents in cities from Taiwan to London, Rome to Los Angeles reported hearing natural sounds like birdsongs and wind in trees that were previously masked by the steady roar of traffic on the ground and in the air. The Pepperdine University Graphic newsletter quoted as-sociate professor, Fiona Stewart, a London resident, on the city’s sudden stillness: “The place is definitely quieter,” Stewart said. “There’s less noise, be it from cars or planes, which is quite pleasant. Christmas Day is when it typically quiets [sic] down most, but this is quieter than Christmas Day, so you’re getting the chance to enjoy the city without all the things that … can often be stressful.”

The air got clearer and cleaner
An enormous amount of data has been published about improvements in air quality around the globe, particularly about reductions in particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide and carbon dioxide.

While there is disagreement about the quality of some of the published data and the uses to which it might be put in the future, city-dwellers did not need studies to tell them the air was much cleaner during the shutdown. Residents took to social media to share their delight on seeing bluer skies during the day and many more stars visible at night. People also noted with surprise that major landmarks like mountains and valleys usually obscured by smog, were suddenly visible even from a distance.

For example, on April 9, CNN online news ran an article titled, “People in India can see the Himalayas for the first time in ‘decades’ as the lockdown eases air pollution.” The headline was not an exaggeration.

Only a few days into the lockdown, residents across India reported seeing sights...
that had been obscured by heavy pollution for years, including the Himalayan mountain range. The CNN story shared one such awe-struck Twitter posting: “This was the view from our rooftop at home in Punjab, India. For the first time in almost thirty years [we] could clearly see the Himalayas due to India’s lockdown clearing air pollution. Just amazing,” wrote Manjit K. Kang. And there were pictures to prove it.

**Some marine populations began recovering**

With public beaches closed and boating and fishing largely curtailed, marine populations began increasing, from fish to sea turtles.

Ninety percent of sea turtles nesting in the United States, for instance, build their nests on Florida beaches, where turtle hatchlings often fall victim to beach tourists and boat traffic. Each year, the Sea Turtle Conservancy asks residents and tourists to avoid turtle nesting areas so that more of the tiny turtles can make it safely to the open sea. The organization’s executive director, David Godfrey, told Yahoo news that he anticipates a higher nesting and survival rate for sea turtles this year due to the drastic reduction in human activity. “Boat strikes are one of the leading causes of mortality of sea turtles around Florida,” he explained. “We expect a lot more survivorship of the hatchlings…this year.”

With commercial fishing largely closed around the globe, numerous declining fish populations are also expected to increase significantly—an event not seen since World War II. “Most European fish stocks (whitefish, herring flatfish) will nearly double their biomass within one year without fishing,” Rainier Froese of the GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research in Germany noted in a Smithsonian interview this spring. So [this pause in fishing] could benefit about forty percent of the stocks currently being overfished, he said. This could be good news indeed for fish and for beleaguered fisheries a year or two from now.

**Animals came out of hiding**

Wildlife sightings are usually rare and special, but while humans stayed indoors, animals ventured into new areas where people could see them.

For example, a Los Angeles Times headline this spring read: “Coyotes, Bobcats and Bears: Wildlife is reclaiming Yosemite National Park.” Last year nearly 4.6 million tourists visited the beloved park; it was closed on March 20 and was still closed a month later. No wonder creatures who live there were having something of a holiday themselves.

“The [visible] bear population has quadrupled,” a park worker told the Times. “It is not like they aren’t usually here, it’s that they usually hang back at the edges or move in the shadows.”

People must resume their customary activities and return to work, however. That is essential. So how will these experiences during the months of the shutdown finally be regarded? It is too soon to know how much of the collected information about these unique months will hold up to further scientific scrutiny. It is also too soon to know what these rare events will offer in terms of actionable guidance for the future. One thing is certain, however. The people who lived through this time know what they experienced; they will never forget it. And those remembered visions may turn out to be valuable indeed.
Irises for Every Garden. Wed., July 1, 7pm. Taught by Daniel Mount. Daniel will cover different irises for wet and dry situations, and how to cultivate, propagate and care for these plants.

Botanically Inspired Zentangle Art. July 8, 7-8:30pm. Join Tomomi Galeano as she walks you through how to create beautiful images by drawing structured patterns.

Let’s Get Messy and Paint Flowers! Sat., July 11, 11am-1:30pm, $25/$35. Taught by Terry MacDonald. Learn to make easy flower bouquet paintings in acrylic paint using a negative painting technique.

Oh, La La! Wed., July 15, 7pm. Ciscoe Morris will regale us with some of the gardening stories in his new book, Oh, La La: Homegrown Stories, Helpful Tips, and Garden Wisdom. Hear about the gardens he has tended, the wildlife he has encountered, lessons learned, and more.

Designing the Compelling Photograph (3-part series). Taught by Ray Pfortner. Part 1: Wed., July 22, 6:30-8:30pm, Sat., July 25, 6:30-8:30pm and Wed., July 29, 6:30-8:30pm. $75/$95 (covers all three sessions). Learn about composition principles, a range of creative settings, and camera handling.

Pruning III, Thu., July 23, 7-8:30pm. Taught by Anna Moore. Learn how to prune Rhododendron, Hydrangea, Callicarpa, Viburnum bodnantense, and Abelia. Anna will cover basic pruning techniques, common pruning mistakes, and corrective pruning.

Bellevue Botanical Garden Society Annual Meeting, Tue., August 4, 7pm. Free. This year’s Annual Meeting will take place as a webinar. See page 15 for details.

Grow the Heck Up! Embellish Your Garden with Vines, Wednesday, August 19, 7pm. with Laura Watson. More details to follow.

Great Garden Trees, Wednesday, September 9, with Christina Pfeiffer. More details to follow.

Symposium: Conversations with Eden, Sat, Sep 19 & Sun, Sep 20. $50/$65. See page 13 for details.

Unless otherwise noted, webinars are $5 for BBGS members and $15 for nonmembers. Webinars require pre-registration. Register at bellevuebotanical.org/webinars. All webinars are recorded so even if you can’t make the live webinar, you will receive the recording within one business day.

October Speaker: Karen Chapman

Originally from England, Karen moved to the Pacific Northwest in 1996. Since moving here, she has co-authored two books with Christina Salwitz—Fine Foliage and Gardening with Foliage First—and has written a solo book—Deer-Resistant Design: Fence-free Gardens that Thrive Despite the Deer—that was published last year. She has also written numerous articles for national gardening magazines.

In addition to writing, Karen speaks around the country, teaches container gardening design, and hosts occasional workshops in landscape design. She has an extensive website, www.lejardinetdesigns.com, and she writes a weekly blog.

Karen specializes in creating artistic plant combinations with four-season foliage framework, functional outdoor living spaces, and deer-resistant, summer-dry designs. Her Power-Point presentation, “Deer-Resistant Drama,” will illustrate how we can have beautiful gardens even while co-existing with hungry deer.

Deer Resistant Drama
Wednesday, October 21, 7pm | Bellevue Botanical Garden
$5 BBGS members, $15 nonmembers
Buy tickets at bellevuebotanical.org/lectures
We are excited to co-host our first annual joint symposium with Heronswood: *Conversations with Eden: a look at humankind’s historical association with the plant world.* To ensure the safety of everyone, our in-person day-long event has been changed to a two-day “Cocktails and Coffee” Zoom webinar on Saturday afternoon, September 19 (cocktails) and Sunday morning, September 20 (coffee). You can watch this event from the comfort of your favorite easy chair! There will be a question and answer session after each lecture.

The Symposium will feature an all-female cast of all-star speakers:

**Jamaica Kincaid** is professor of African and African American studies at Harvard University. She has authored five novels, five non-fiction books (several of which are about gardening), and countless magazine articles for which she has won numerous awards. As recently as 2017, she won the Dan David Prize in Literature. Also, she holds Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Brandies and Tufts Universities. Her love of gardening has led her to go plant exploring with Dan Hinkley, and she based her book, *Among the Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya*, on one of their trips.

**Peggy Cornett** is the curator of plants at Monticello, former home and garden of Thomas Jefferson, where she has worked for over thirty years. She has degrees in English and Botany, and a master’s degree from the University of Delaware’s Longwood Graduate Program. She lectures on garden history, writes for gardening magazines and professional journals, and is an occasional guest on PBS. She has received the Southern Garden History Society’s Flora Ann Bynum Medal in the garden history field, and the Garden Club of America’s Horticultural Commendation for horticultural expertise. Her lecture topic will be “Nature’s Rich Mantle: Thomas Jefferson’s Vision of Elysium.”

**Victoria Johnson** is an Associate Professor of Urban Policy and Planning at Hunter College in New York. Her book, *American Eden: David Hosack, Botany, and Medicine in the Garden of the Early Republic*, was published in 2018 and was nominated for the National Book Award for Nonfiction, Pulitzer Prize for History, and the LA Times Book Prize. David Hosack was born in 1769. He had learned the importance of plant-based medicines from his medical studies, but he thought of them as supplies from druggists and apothecaries. After touring one of his professor’s gardens, he glimpsed a world in which garden rakes could unlock the saving power of nature. He resolved to learn everything he could about plants and to create the first botanical garden in America. Victoria’s lecture topic will be centered around her book.

**Kathryn Aalto** is an American landscape historian, garden designer, university lecturer, preservation consultant, and bestselling author who lives in Exeter, England. She has an M.A. in Garden History and an M.A. in Creative Nonfiction. She also has a diploma in Garden Design from the London College of Garden Design and a B.A. in English from the University of California, Berkeley. Her third book, *Writing Wild: Women, Poets, Ramblers, and Mavericks Who Shaped the Way We See the Natural World*, celebrates the contributions of overlooked, classic, and new nature writers. It has just been published by Timber Press and will be the topic of her lecture.

The Bellevue Botanical Garden Society and Heronswood need your support now more than ever. The symposium is a wonderful way for you to contribute to these iconic Gardens.

**Conversations with Eden**

Saturday, Sept. 19, 3-6pm | Sunday, Sept. 20, 9-11:50am

BBGS and Heronswood Members: $60 | Non-members $75

Visit our website for details and registration information: bellevuebotanical.org/webinars
Ruth Edwards has led the Plant Records volunteer team and program since the late 1990s. After volunteering at the Garden for twenty years, she is leaving the Northwest to be nearer to family.

Before the shutdown, Ruth and I took a walk in the Garden to talk about her volunteer career. In the process I got a lot of stories about the history of this bed or that plant. Ruth has a wealth of knowledge about the Garden—not surprising after twenty years! Here are the highlights of my talk with her:

Tell me about yourself:
I moved here in 1979 from the East Coast. I have a bachelor’s and master’s from the University of Michigan, and my background is in computers and accounting. I have two daughters and two granddaughters. When I’m not volunteering here, I’m on a wildflower hike, doing yoga, reading, line dancing, or volunteering at my church.

How did you get started volunteering at the Garden, and with Plant Records?
In the late 1990s I retired early and was looking for a place to volunteer where I could learn about plants. That brought me to the Garden. At that time there was no easy way to study the plants here. Joanne White was working on a database of plants, and I joined her. Our goal has always been to help answer two main questions: 1) I see a plant in the Garden, what is it? and 2) Is a specific plant growing in the Garden, and if so, where?

Do you have a favorite volunteer task?
My favorite task is the plant photo shoots. A photographer, photo shoot director, and sometimes another volunteer search out about twenty pre-selected plants. We take photos of plant attributes all year—habit, leaf, flower, fruit, bark, etc.

What do you like most about volunteering at the Garden?
The volunteers, the staff, learning about plants—just the whole atmosphere. It’s Mother Nature at your fingertips, both wild and cultivated. This is where I come for spiritual relief. I couldn’t live in Bellevue without the refuge of the Botanical Garden.

In her time here, Ruth learned over 3,600 plants. She has also given others a way to learn about the plants, by supplying and organizing the online Collection Search. It’s hard to overstate the value of Ruth’s legacy at the Garden.

We will all deeply miss Ruth. Please join us in wishing Ruth a happy retirement and move! You can send her a note or a card in care of the Garden, 12001 Main Street, Bellevue WA 98005 and we’ll see that she gets it.
This year’s Annual Meeting will be a webinar, which will include an update from BBGS board co-presidents and staff, a vote for our new board members, and our annual Trillium Awards. The meeting is free and open to all current members. Look for your invitation arriving in your mail in July, or register now by emailing us at annualmeeting@bellevuebotanical.org. Hope you can join us!

BBGS Annual Meeting
Tuesday, August 4, 7pm
Members Only. Free.
Register by emailing us at annualmeeting@bellevuebotanical.org or call 425-452-6919.

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.

Garden offices and buildings are closed until further notice.

Society business hours: 9am to 4pm Monday-Friday
(425) 452-2750 | bbgsoffice@bellevuebotanical.org
www.bellevuebotanical.org

OFFICERS OF THE BELLEVUE BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY
CO-PRESIDENTS Anne Dziok & Sue Johnson
TREASURER Amy Doughty
SECRETARY Heather Babiak-Kane

DIRECTORS
Barbara Bruell, Robin Root James, Denise Lane, Jim Livingston,
Cleo Raulerson, Kathleen Searcy, Gretchen Stengel,
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THE BUZZ TEAM
JG Federman, Kathryn Highland, Sue Johnson, Nancy Kartes,
Wendy Leavitt, Darcy McNinis, Nita-Jo Rountree,
Daniel Sparler, Cynthia Welte, Anita White

SUBMIT A QUESTION FOR CISCOE MORRIS
askciscoe@bellevuebotanical.org

CONTACT THE BUZZ TEAM
buzzteam@bellevuebotanical.org

Wish List

- Experienced videographer who can volunteer their time and expertise to create videos for us for our marketing and fundraising efforts.
- Hens and chicks for our children’s education program.
- New members for our Education Committee. Committee volunteers meet once a month on the first Wednesday morning to help plan and guide the Society’s educational programs.

If you can help with any of these wishes, please contact us at bbgsoffice@bellevuebotanical.org, or call 425-452-6919. Thank you!
Good to Know!

Irises for Every Season (webinar), Wed., July 1, 7pm, with Daniel Mount.

Let's Get Messy and Paint Flowers! (webinar), Sat., July 11, 11am-1:30pm, with Terry MacDonald.

Oh, La La! (webinar), Wed., July 15, 7pm, with Ciscoe Morris

Designing the Compelling Photograph (webinar), with Ray Pfortner. Part 1: Wed., July 22, 6:30-8:30pm, Sat., July 25, 6:30-8:30pm and Wed., July 29, 6:30-8:30pm.

Pruning III (webinar), Thu., July 23, 7pm, with Anna Moore

Bellevue Botanical Garden Society Annual Meeting (webinar), Tue., August 4, 7pm. Free.


Symposium: Conversations with Eden (webinar), Sat, Sep 19 & Sun., Sep 20.

SAVE THE DATE! Deer Resistant Drama, a lecture by Karen Chapman, Wednesday, October 21, 7pm.

Connect with Us!

Symposium: Conversations with Eden

Saturday, Sept. 19, 3-6pm
Sunday, Sept. 20, 9-11:50am

Join us for our first annual joint symposium with Heronswood! This webinar will feature an all-female cast of all-star speakers.

Visit our website for details and registration information: bellevuebotanical.org/webinars