

ISSAQUAH GARDEN CLUB NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 9 GARDEN CLUB MEETING:

Day: Second Wednesday of the month - September through May

Time: Arrive at 2:00PM if you have set-up to do
 Everyone else arrive at 2:15PM
 Meeting begins at 2:30PM

Location: Our Savior Lutheran Church
 745 Front Street South
 Issaquah

Program for November meeting: Basic Propagation - Speakers will be Gordon Polson and Alison Johnson. Gordon is a Master Gardener and composter and loves to teach about propagation. Alison is president of the NPA, Master Pruner and Master Gardener for 10 years.

Alison will also do a demonstration. She is bringing some Forsyth pot kits so we can make our own. Each kit will cost \$5.00 (you can buy one or not) and Alison will have her 'Square 'ay' with her so payment will be simple. And, of course, cash always works.

Alison will have her book "Cuttings Through the Year" (a wonderful resource) available for purchase for less than \$10.00.

HOMEWORK: They will review basic propagation techniques as well as give tips and tricks. Gordon asks us to bring a sample of a plant or shrub that we would like to propagate.

BRIEF REPORT FROM OCTOBER 12 GARDEN CLUB MEETING:

For those of you that were unable to attend you missed an excellent presentation by Bruce Williams all about Cleaning and Sharpening Garden Tools. He presented easy ways to clean and sharpen tools making it something we can do on a regular basis without help! His handout lists equipment to keep assemble and a detailed description of how to do accomplish the task. One example of a simple thing we can do is to clean rust off of tools by soaking them in white vinegar for 3 days. If they are not rust free wash them well. Dump out the old vinegar and clean your container, refill with fresh white vinegar and soak for another 3 days. This should handle most rust but if it's really bad then a third round of soaking in vinegar might be needed.

Dianne reported on Growing Green Gardeners Program: She is trying to set-up a meeting with the school as the process for of garden preparation needs to begin in February.

Georgann and several attended the Leadership Training Day in Tacoma on October 11 and reported that it was a good day however many of the suggestions to bring in new members have already been tried by our club. There was also discussion about how all the clubs struggle getting younger gardeners to attend

meetings during the day since they work or have children.

Everyone acknowledged that current members are growing older and beginning to struggle with supporting club activities.

We also discussed the possibility of having a plant sale this spring to keep our cash flow healthy. Joan offered her yard (thank you) and it was suggested that we check with the church about using their parking lot. Consensus is that we should only do one day.

Anyone interested in helping to coordinate the effort should talk to Georgann, Sandra or Lois.

A DAY TO REMEMBER ...

On October 18 several of our members attended the Greater Seattle District fundraiser that was held in Normandy Park, WA at the The Cove. Ten designers competed for the honor of being "Designer of the Day". They were presented with a collection of sculptures and design materials that did not belong to them. The designs they created were then voted on by the attendees. The competition was stiff but the winner was our own Linda White, ELWD District Director! Congratulations Linda!!!

Attendees also enjoyed a yummy lunch and were able to participate in raffle baskets and door prizes!

A good time was had by all ...

DATES FOR THE CALENDAR:

November 19 - 21: Training for volunteers at Bellevue Botanical Gardens

*** December 14 Meeting - Annual holiday potluck
Last names beginning with A - L to bring a savory treat
Last names beginning with M - Z to bring a sweet treat

February 15 - 19, 2023 - Northwest Flower and Garden Show, Seattle Convention Center

February 27, 2023 - Next GMM which will be a presentation of crafts by attendees. There is no competition but you are encouraged to reserve a space on the table to display your craft and at the meeting you can either share a bit about what you do or you don't have to speak if you don't want to. Think out of the box ... we all have crafts we do! To reserve a table contact Gale Baullinger ... email: gale5904@aol.com

April 17 - 20, 2023 - Pacific Region convention 2023 "Going Green - Together". Save the date for when the Pacific Region Convention is at the Embassy Suites in Lynnwood. You can attend for a day (or more) and not even have to spend the night! There will be tours, workshops, speakers and entertainment ... stay tuned for more details.

September 22 - 24, 2023 - District Flower Show, Bellevue Botanical Garden

April 24, 2023 - Arbor Day Celebration at Bellevue Botanical Garden. This year ELWD has been asked to provide new trees for the large front planters at BBG. For clubs to donate to this effort they need to submit a check to Gale Baullinger.

EDUCATION CORNER:

How to Ripen, Store, and Cook With Pears - Plus, the Most Popular Varieties You'll Find at the Market This Fall

Get to know this often overlooked harvest fruit.

Autumn brings a new harvest of pears to market. This luscious fruit is somewhat overlooked, but that wasn't always the case. In England, an estimated 700 varieties of pear were grown during the 18th century. In that era, a "pearmania" preoccupied New England's upper classes, and pears were more prized than apples. Perhaps for the ancients, the melting texture of a ripe pear was more appealing than an apple's chew?

And that is *exactly* where pears are misunderstood. Biting into an unripe pear, when it is hard and granular, may lead you to believe that there is no reason to seek them out. Nothing could be further from the juicy truth. Get to know pears, and you'll love them for their flavor, aroma, juiciness, texture, and sheer versatility.

How to Tell If a Pear Is Ripe

The most important thing to know about pears is when they are ripe. "Pears don't ripen on the tree. They are harvested when they are mature—not ripe," says Jim Morris, marketing and communications manager of the Pear Bureau Northwest, a not-for-profit that promotes pears grown in Washington and Oregon, where most U.S. varieties are produced.

There are three ways to identify when your pears are ripe:

******Look for a change in skin color—but note that only only a few varieties, like Bartlett, transform this obviously when they are ripe.

******Perform a sniff test. Ripe pears smell aromatic, whereas unripe pears don't have any odor at all.

******Lastly, try the neck test: The neck of the pear softens and yields to gentle pressure when the fruit pear is ready to eat.

How to Store Pears

Where to Store Unripe Pears

If your pears are not ripe, bide your time—and keep them out of the cold. "The best way to ripen your pears is to store them at room temperature, such as in a fruit bowl on your kitchen counter," says Morris. "If you keep them near other fruits that give off ethylene, such as bananas, this will accelerate the ripening process."

Where to Store Ripe Pears

Only ripe pears should be kept in the fridge. Doing so will extend their meltingly sweet life cycle by a couple of days.

How to Use Pears in Recipes

It seems too obvious to mention, but we're stating it anyway: A perfect pear can easily be served alone and unadorned. You could go so far as to center it on a pretty plate, knife and fork alongside it, for graceful slicing. It makes an unapologetic and confident dessert statement (no apple could pull off this feat!). We recommend Comice or Bartlett for the standalone treatment.

Salads and Cheese Boards

Pears enhance salads and cheese platters, complementing strong flavors like blue cheese and crisp textures like endive and toasted nuts. If you are serving pears raw, be aware that the cut fruit can oxidize quickly. Gently toss pear slices in lemon juice to keep the slices from browning.

Remember that the granular texture in some pears is natural—those are their stone cells, which can be larger or smaller, depending on the pear variety (other fruit, like guavas and feijoa, have a similar texture).

Desserts

In desserts, poached pears are velvety, while baked pears take on a more chewy, caramelized edge. Baked cakes, their moistness and texture pair deliciously with nut flours, dark chocolate, butter, and caramel.

Popular Pear Varieties

Learn about the varieties of pears you are likely to see at the market during fall—which is the fruit's peak season. Plus, discover their differences and how best to use them.

Anjou

Wide-bottomed, egg-shaped Anjou pears have a smooth, spotted skin that does not change color when ripe. Their flavor is mildly sweet and a little lemony; they have a firm texture. Red Anjou pears were developed in Oregon, after a grower discovered a sport (a botanical term for a naturally occurring genetic mutation) on a green Anjou tree. Whether you buy green or red, the pear's flavor is the same.

Bartlett (Williams)

Have you ever seen a bottle of clear schnapps called Poire Williams in a liquor store? It's made from these pears, which are called Williams in Europe. (Traditionally, the bottle is placed over a baby pear, which gradually fills the bottle as it grows. The distilled liquor is then poured over it.)

Bartlett pears are an early-ripening variety and have the quintessential pear shape, with a curvaceous bottom and short neck. They are very adaptable and delicious when eaten fresh or cooked; we use them in tarts and baked fruit desserts, like a

pandowdy. Choosing red or green Bartletts is purely a question of appearance, although the green will turn yellow as it ripens, making it easier to tell when it is ready.

Bosc

Thanks to its long, elegantly tapered neck and textured, bronze skin, the Bosc pear is easy to identify. While a Bosc will turn slightly more golden as it ripens, it remains firm (except at the stem-end). Because of its firm texture when ripe, this is the classic pear for poaching in red wine for dessert. When it is peeled and poached it holds its form, and is easily carved by the edge of spoon. We also use Bosc in pear crisps.

Comice

Smooth-skinned Comice is the dumpiest of pears with a squat body and a short neck, and it claims the silkiest, most juicy flesh. The skin is very fragile when ripe, so Comice pears may look slightly bruised if they are tumbled together. Handle them with care and enjoy them raw; they make great holiday gifts when nestled in a protective box.

Concorde

With elongated, narrow necks, smooth-skinned Concorde pears are sweet even when they are still firm—and crunchy, too. One of their parents is the buttery Comice, which makes them delicious

to eat fresh, but they also hold up well in cooking. Concorde pears are also slower to oxidize than some other varieties, so they can be sliced ahead of time without browning.

Forelle

Their speckled skin and iconic blush gave these small, bell-shaped pears the name Forelle—the German word for trout. They are one of the few pears to change skin-color when ripe (from green to yellow, with that red cheek). Their texture is dense, crisp, and somewhat coarse, which makes them a great pairing with soft cheese for contrast.

Seckel

The most petite of pears, the Seckel was Thomas Jefferson's favorite when he grew it at Monticello. The olive-skinned, tiny fruits are very sweet when ripe (they are also called sugar pears), with a slightly gritty texture. Roast a clutch of Seckel pears whole for a rustic, but photo-worthy dessert or use them to top a spectacular cake.

Starkrimson

Dark red Starkrimson pears turn brighter as they ripen, and their skin becomes more delicate. To make the most of their vivid color, use them raw in salads or atop tartines and open-face sandwiches. Enjoy!

