

February 2024 Newsletter

Happy Valentine's Day!

Although it's still very much winter there are still glimmers of spring. A bulb starting to grow, a bud here and there. Spring will come ...

“There is no time like spring,
when life's alive in everything.”
—Christina Rossetti

FEBRUARY MEETING:

Date: February 14, 2024 (WEAR YOUR VALENTINE OUTFIT!)

Time: 9:30 AM - Set-up

10:00 AM - Business Meeting

10:30 AM - 11:00AM - Social time and snacks

11:00 AM - Program - Peggy Bolton will speak on the topic “Who Lives In Your Garden”. She is a Master Gardener and Audubon Master Birder who also holds certificates in professional dog training. Come expecting to learn more about the human-animal environments in your garden.

Agenda discussion: Possibility of raising dues for next year. Bring your thoughts and ideas ..

12:30 PM - Clean-up

Location: Our Savior Lutheran Church
745 Front Street South
Issaquah, WA

Lunch Committee:

Hostess: Jean

Committee: Shadi, Deb, Georgann and Joan F.

** If you are a coffee or tea drinker please remember the **BRING YOUR OWN CUP**

NOTE: As an ongoing attempt towards fundraising we're going to try to have a SALE TABLE at each meeting. The table will be stocked with items and we bring from our own homes. We can then buy each other's treasures! Remember, one person's junk is another person's treasure! Bring you items to sell as well as your wallets!!

Winter is “flu season”:

The vaccine requirements have been lifted but it's still important to remember to evaluate your state of health prior to each meeting. Obviously, if anyone is feeling

unwell or you've had recent known exposure to COVID, RSV or flu you should stay home and not attend the IGC meeting ...

YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED:

JANUARY 10 MEETING:

We enjoyed a presentation by Carol from Squak Mountain Nursery on winter gardening and also got to see some of the plants that will be soon be available for spring planting.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

For health reasons June Ann will be unable to join us on a regular basis. She is also delegating some of her ongoing duties to others:

Arbor Day at BBG: Gale

Other BBG duties: Linda White (ELWD President)

Post Office Plantings: Georgann is currently growing Salal that will be moved to the Post Office along with some ferns. A workday is being planning.

JANUARY BOARD MEETING:

A Board Meeting was held on Monday, January 29 at Bellevue Botanical Garden. In attendance from the Issaquah Garden Club were Georgann, Sandra, Lois, Jean, Dianne, Cathy and Joy.

Exciting news, it is anticipated that there will soon be a a new garden club in the ELWD District located in Duvall. There are currently 237 members in the East Lake Washington District.

A vote was held for the district to donate \$250.00 to the National Garden Club Facility in St. Louis to buy a brick for the "Path to Success Project". The brick will have the ELWD name on it and show our commitment to the national garden club effort. This will be brought to a final vote at the General Membership Meeting on February 26.

A vote was held to hold the 2025 Flower Show at Bellevue Botanical Garden on July 18 - 20 (Friday, Saturday & Sunday).

Chairman Reports:

Arbor Day (Dianne for Gale): Tree planting at Bellevue Botanical Garden on April 29

Bellevue Botanical Garden: Spring Work Day May 17

Youth (Dianne): Will begin in February at Issaquah Valley Elementary School.

There are 8 raised beds including two for good bugs/bad bugs. Dianne has turned materials over to the PTSA and they are running with it. Produce grown is either donated to the Issaquah Food Bank or used for the "Salad Bowl Celebration" at the end of the growing season.

There is also a youth program at the Bellevue Demonstration Gardens where there is another Children's Garden. Cathy is one of 4 very active volunteers at this garden and work at least 2 days a week. Food is donated to Hopelink. Last year 3200 pounds of food were donated. They also provide projects for kids such as teaching them how to read a seed packet and making "seed balls" using dated seeds donated by Squak Mountain Nursery.

KEEPING IN TOUCH:

Many of us have fond memories of Cate Mueller (who originally joined IGC in 2007) and has moved out of the area and can no longer attend. If you would like to send a card or note to her here is her current address:

Auburn Meadows
945 22nd Street NE
#133
Auburn, WA 98002

SAVE THE DATES:

February 12, 2024: Garden Therapy - We are once again able to create flower arrangements for the dining room table at the nursing home next door to the church. Gather at 10:00AM to make arrangements for Valentine's Day. Remember to bring your own clippers and some greenery from your yard.

February 14 - 18: Flower and Garden Show in Seattle

February 26, 2024: General Membership Meeting (GMM)
"HAPPY 65th BIRTHDAY ELWD"

Time: Start arriving at 9:30

Cost: \$10.00 which includes two programs and lunch

Programs: Surprise Design Program by Linda Maida and Debbie Spiller
and a horticulture program - Late Fall, Early Spring Pruning by Bruce Williams

RSVP: Joyce Voldal - javoldal@hotmail.com

Location: St. Andrews Lutheran Church

2650 148th Ave. SE

Bellevue

March 12 - 14, 2024: NGC Flower Show School IV - Dryer Masonic Center, Tacoma

March 13, 2024: Egg Decorating presented by Egg Artists of Puget Sound

Snack Committee:

Hostess: Deb

Crew: Joan H., Gloria, Lois, Dianne

April 29 - 30, 2024: NGC Gardening School in Tacoma

April 29, 2024: Arbor Day Celebration and Tree Planting at Bellevue Botanical Garden. Issaquah Garden Club has already made a \$75.00 donation per stipulation in our budget.

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May 17, 2024: Bellevue Botanical Garden Spring Work Day. Mark your calendar and details will be coming ...

May 18, 2024: Hold the date for a spring Plant Sale. Planning has begun and volunteers will be needed to help with advertising, refreshing old signage etc. Get ready!

June 2 - 5, 2024: National Garden Club Convention in Denver, Colorado

June 8 - 11, 2024: Annual Meeting and Flower Show - "Our Extraordinary Earth"
Reservations can be made until May 31, 2024 by calling [800-206-9339](tel:800-206-9339) or by contacting the Olympic Hotel directly [\(360\)252-0976](tel:360-252-0976)

July 18 - 20, 2025 (Friday, Saturday & Sunday) - Flower Show at Bellevue Botanical Garden

EDUCATIONAL CORNER

What to plant in February – 8 varieties you should sow or grow this month

Gardening experts share their advice on what to plant in February, from fabulous winter flowers to tasty crops

Many gardeners wonder what to plant in February, as there's still a chance of frost (even snow), and spring

still seems a long way off. However, now is a great time to think ahead to warmer days in the garden by introducing some new additions.

As long as the ground isn't frozen or waterlogged, some of the very [best plants](#) can be brought into your plot this month, where they can begin to establish themselves. This will set them up for a stellar performance later in the year, similar to [pruning plants in January](#).

You can also get ahead by starting some seeds off on a sunny windowsill, or in your greenhouse. And, if you fancy a bit more colour in your garden right now, there are some tough winter flowers perfect for February pots.

Below, you'll find eight recommendations for what to plant in February. Plus, there's expert advice from professional gardeners on planting and ongoing care, for the best chance of success.

8 things to plant in February in borders, pots, and seed trays

If you're looking for a quick fix to brighten your garden, consider planting some pansies. They may be small, but they're tough plants that will put up with February temperatures.

They're available as plug plants at this time of year from most nurseries and garden centres. "Plant your pansies at the same depth as they were in their containers, spaced

about 20-25cm apart," recommends Josh Novell, gardening expert and director of Polhill.

"Water consistently to keep the soil evenly moist, and apply a layer of mulch for moisture retention. It is important to deadhead spent flowers regularly to encourage continuous blooming," he adds.

You can also sow pansies from seed indoors now, for flowers in late spring.

With their gorgeous fragrance and scrambling nature, sweet peas are a summer stalwart for any garden, especially those blooming with on-trend [cottage garden ideas](#).

And while hot and hazy days are a long way off, you can start sowing these flowers now in preparation – provided you do so indoors (a sunny windowsill works well). They will flower earlier than if you waited to plant them directly outdoors in a couple of months.

Sweet peas grow long taproots, so swap out a standard seed tray for [root trainers, such as these ones from Amazon](#). Spreading the seeds on a damp piece of kitchen towel for a day or so before you plant them can help soften their outer coating and improve germination results.

Once they have grown a few pairs of leaves, pinch out the tops to encourage them to bush out. They can be planted

out when frosts have passed, alongside a sturdy support. Remember to harden them off, first, so as not to shock them.

Once planted outdoors, Chris Bonnett of GardeningExpress recommends watering them regularly at the base. Take care of any weeds growing nearby, as they may hinder their development, he adds. Don't forget to [get rid of weeds in your grass](#), too – early spring is a great time to do so.

Plant a Shrub:

You can buy forsythia potted ([try Crocus for a variety of forsythia in pots](#)) for a variety). You may also find them available as bare-roots.

This deciduous shrub is hardy and easy to grow, providing a burst of color to your just as winter begins to soften," says Josh. It can be grown as a stand-alone shrub or used in hedging, he adds.

"When deciding where to plant your forsythia, it's important to choose a sunny to partially shaded location with well-drained soil," Josh says. "Water regularly during dry spells, especially during the first year of growth."

After these perennials have finished flowering, Josh offers a top [gardening tip](#) by recommending giving them a prune to control their size and shape. He adds that mulching around the base will suppress weeds and retain soil moisture.

Planting Roses:

Planting bare-root roses in February allows time for the roots to establish before the growing season, says [Russell Birchell](#), the founder of Hedging UK. Early planting tends to be rewarded with beautiful blooms, he adds.

Before you plant them, Russell recommends soaking the roots in water for a few hours and cutting back any damaged canes and roots. They prefer a sunny planting location, with well-draining soil, he adds. They can be planted directly into the ground or in outdoor containers.

It's not just bare-root roses – you can plant pot-grown roses now, too. Water them in their containers just before planting, and again, choose a sunny location to enjoy these classic [cottage garden plants](#) at their best.

Get a Start on Vegetables:

February is the month to get ahead with early [vegetable gardening](#). Sowing hardy varieties of [broad beans now, such as "The Sutton" from Suttons](#), will give you an early crop.

You can start them in trays in your greenhouse, for planting out in spring. Or, if you live somewhere with milder temperatures, plant them directly outdoors. For the latter, sow them in single or double rows, into well-draining soil that's cleared of weeds and dug over with plenty of organic matter, such as garden compost. Choose a site that is both sheltered and sunny.

If you've planted them outdoors, protect them with [horticultural fleece \(available from Amazon\)](#) or cloches during cold snaps.

Add A Splash of Color:

Emma Fell, the head of learning and development at Hillier Garden Centers, says, "If you're looking for a way to add a splash of color to your garden early in the spring, February is the perfect month to plant primroses. These native wildflowers of Britain are some of the most attractive and easy-to-grow perennials you can find.

"They come in a range of shapes and sizes, and can create a beautiful carpet of color in any area, whether in pots or scattered amongst borders." A burst of cheery color is the ideal way to enhance any [garden design](#), ready for spring.

Emma recommends spacing them six to 12 inches apart and planting them four to six inches deep in moist soil. "As part-shade lovers, primroses are fantastic when planted underneath shrubs and trees. Water them thoroughly after planting and keep the soil moist throughout the season by adding a layer of mulch."

Or Dahlias:

Growing dahlias has become an incredibly popular [garden trend](#) in recent years. And while it's still too cold to plant them outdoors, you can start tubers off in a frost-free place in February. This will give you earlier flowers.

Plant the tubers with the stalks above soil level, then water them in lightly and keep them somewhere bright. They can be planted out once all risks of frosts have passed, usually in late spring, into a sunny spot.

Or Snowdrops:

According to gardening expert Sarah Raven, February is the perfect time to plant snowdrops 'in the green', which is when they still have green leaves and are in active growth.

These late-winter flowers are woodland plants and thrive in dappled shade. Planting them beneath trees and shrubs, in moist but well-drained soil, is ideal. Let the leaves die back naturally, as they will feed the bulbs for new growth and flowers next year. Over time, they will spread into clumps, so are a great garden investment.

Just remember to avoid them when you go to do your [first lawn cut after winter](#).

What bulbs can I plant in February?

When wondering what to plant in February, your first thought may be early bulbs, such as daffodils. But while they're the great heralds of spring, they are best planted in the autumn. You can buy a few potted bulbs from your local garden centre for planting in patio pots – but it will

be cheaper to buy dry bulbs in bulk later in the year. Do plant your snowdrops now though, as mentioned above.

If you've forced hyacinths indoors, and they've already flowered, you can plant them in your garden rather than throwing them out. "Choose a sunny spot, dig a circle, line it with grit, and turn out the bulbs,". Then, cover them with some more grit mixed into the soil, making sure you leave the foliage intact rather than cutting it back, she says. "It may take a couple of seasons before they flower again."

You can also plant some summer bulbs in pots in your greenhouse, such as [lilies](#), which can then be planted outdoors later in the year. "I'd suggest choosing the amazing taller varieties for the back of the beds, such as 'Casa Blanca' or Asiatic 'Nerone', while opting for shorter ones like speciosum var. rubrum 'Uchida', or 'White America', for your pots," says Sarah.

Is February too early to plant flowers?

Many flowers can be sown from seed in February, including cosmos, zinnias, and hollyhocks, although it's best to do this indoors until temperatures warm up a bit. You can also plant hardy winter flowers bought in pots from garden centres, such as cyclamen, primroses, pansies, and crocuses, to create pretty displays now.

In contrast, February is generally considered a little too early to [plant grass seed](#) – you'll need to wait a few weeks longer.

What is the best plant to grow in February?

The best plant to grow in February depends on your garden, as well as your own personal tastes. For instance, you may wish to grow flowers for cutting, in which case, now's a great time to sow many annual seeds indoors, or get roses in the ground. Or, if you're planning a vegetable garden this year, broad beans might be your first go-to for sowing. Or you're simply looking to recreate the ['quiet luxury' garden trend](#) with simple planting.

Just remember that plants will only flourish if you have the right spot for them, so do check you have a suitable location before investing your time and money.

AND A VALENTINE'S DAY BONUS:

The Meaning Behind Popular Valentine's Day Flowers, From Roses to Sweet Peas

Whether you're giving flowers to a friend, loved one, or romantic interest, the bouquet you choose conveys a specific message.

We give flowers on Valentine's Day as a way to show our love and appreciation for those special people in our lives.

While flowers often signify romantic interest, you can certainly give a beautiful bouquet to friends and family. Just remember that the flowers you give convey different meanings, ranging from admiration to eternal love. That's why it's helpful to understand [the symbolism of the flowers](#) you send on Valentine's Day before choosing a bouquet.

Roses

When you think of Valentine's Day, the first flower that comes to mind is likely the [rose](#). While a red rose is known to symbolize true love, the bloom is available in other colors that convey various meanings. White roses convey purity and everlasting love, yellow symbolize friendship, pink symbolize elegance, and lavender symbolize love at first sight, says Tina Merola of [Blooms by the Box](#).

Tulips

Although they're known for being a spring bloomer, tulips are very popular during Valentine's Day. "Pink [tulips](#) signify love and friendship, purple tulips represent power and royalty, and yellow tulips symbolize joy and happiness," says Merola. "The white tulip represents forgiveness as

well as purity. The yellow tulip symbolizes happiness, and the red tulip expresses love."

Lilies

Lilies have bold, eye-catching blooms that are a great addition to any Valentine's Day bouquet. "Representing purity and refined beauty, this fragrant flower conveys different messages depending on its color," says Abhay Patel, brand president of [1-800-Flowers.com](https://www.1-800-Flowers.com). "For example, orange lilies symbolize passion and white lilies indicate modesty." Additionally, yellow stands for joy and health, red for romance, and pink for elegance.

Orchids

An [orchid](#) is something your Valentine can care for well after the holiday has ended, making it a beautiful and thoughtful gift. "Always thought of as rare, exotic and exceptional, they represent unity, love, beauty, and unbridled passion," says Peggy Anne Montgomery, horticulturist with [FlowerBulbs.com](https://www.FlowerBulbs.com). "Other meanings include love, luxury, and strength. Pink orchids in particular, symbolize pure affection."

Hydrangeas

Depending on color, [hydrangeas](#) can represent many emotions. "Pink hydrangeas specifically express love, romance, and an emotional connection, which resonates with the Valentine's Day holiday," says Patel. "However, gifting blue hydrangeas often means you have something to apologize for."

Gardenias

A fragrant white bloom known to symbolize love and trust, gardenias are a great flower to give during Valentine's Day. "Gardenias were used during Victorian times as a way to send messages of secret love between two people," says Rachel Bridgwood and Lauren Anderson, owners of [Sweet Root Village](#). "They are still a great gift flower and are also tied to meanings of trust, renewal, clarity, and hope."

Sunflowers

[Sunflowers](#) are a refreshing bloom to give for Valentine's Day because they symbolize admiration, commitment to your partner, longevity, friendship, and loyalty, says Merola. Their vibrant yellow color and radiant blooms express joy and happiness, making them perfect for giving

your significant other, as well as friends and family members.

White Daisies

For a more understated Valentine's Day flower, consider white daisies. "White daisies convey a range of sentiments, making them an Valentine's Day gift," says Merola. "Symbolizing loyalty and sincerity, these flowers signify an unwavering commitment. White daisies are heartfelt symbols of innocence and pure love, making them a great way to express your feelings."

Carnations

Don't underestimate the beauty carnations have in a Valentine's Day bouquet. "[Carnations](#), overall, represent devotion and affection," says Patel. "However, a carnation's meaning can also be broken down by color. Pink represents thankfulness, white carnations often symbolize purity and friendship, and deep red means romantic love." Avoid sending yellow carnations, since they symbolize rejection and disappointment, says Merola.

Peonies

[Peonies](#) represent happiness, shyness, romance, good fortune, honor, and bravery, says Montgomery. During Valentine's Day, pink peonies are the most popular choice. "Pink peonies symbolize prosperity, good fortune, and happiness," says Merola. "Their rich symbolism makes them ideal for conveying deep emotions and creating cherished moments on this special day of love."