

May 2024 Newsletter

Happy May!

Life is a little bit *like a garden* — you have to find time
to *plant the seeds for beautiful flowers to grow.*”

— Oscar De

La Renta

Interesting Factoid: The May birth flowers are lily of the valley and hawthorn. Popular amongst royal brides, lily of the valley features delicate little florets that carry a beautiful sweet scent. You will often see bridal bouquets featuring at least one sprig of these wonderful blooms.

As lilies of the valley only bloom for a brief period of time, their associated meanings of hope, return to happiness, sweetness and humility are fitting. There are many legends surrounding these stunning flowers. Like the saying, lilies came from the tears that Eve shed when she was banished from the Garden of Eve with Adam.

Hawthorns are unique flowers that feature bright white petals and distinctive antennas in the centre. They also have small red berries that can be used in any bright flower arrangement! Hawthorns represent hope, happiness and faith.

May 8 MEETING:

Date: May 8, 2024

Time: 9:30 AM - Set-up

10:00 AM - Business Meeting

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

11:00 AM - Program - Molly van der Burch from King County

Master Gardeners will talk about Hummingbirds

12:30 PM - Clean-up

Location: Our Savior Lutheran Church

745 Front Street South

Issaquah, WA

Snack Committee:

Hostess: Gloria

Committee: Joan H, Cathy, Debbie D, and Marie

***** 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 have a SALE TABLE at each meeting. **For the months of April and May we are going to focus on bringing plants (both indoor and outdoor) to sell.**

Bring your plants plus other items and your wallets!!

TIME TO PAY DUES:

It's that time of year again when we need to pay dues for the next garden club year.

Amount: Minimum dues is \$25.00 with or without a contribution to the club in lieu of having a plant sale / fund raiser this spring. Write checks payable to the Issaquah Garden Club.

Send to: Sandra Roberts

4623 194th Ave SE

Issaquah, WA 98027-4357

OR you can bring cash or check to the May garden club meeting

YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED:

APRIL MEETING SUMMARY:

OFFICERS WERE ELECTED: The officers for the 2024 - 2025 garden club year will be:

President: Joy with back-up by Lois and Sandra

Vice President: Debbie D. and Deb Matson

Secretary: Lois

Treasurer: Sandra

ARBOR DAY: We have made our annual donation towards the Arbor Day Celebration at Bellevue Botanical Garden. Between donations from the ELWD and clubs there is over \$1000.00 to spend this year. And, according to James at BBG they actually need shrubs so he has been given approval to order shrubs and/or trees for the Arbor Day celebration. It will be fun to see what he buys. All are welcome at the April 29 Board Meeting when we will be given a tour of the garden and see what's new ...

PROGRAM: Shirley Hill did a fabulous presentation of Ikebana. She shared a number of tips and tricks as well as educating us on the principles of the very old art of Ikebana. She reviewed principles of balance, color, depth, form, line, movement and space and how to put them into practice when making our arrangements. She started with a simple arrangement (the first if you are taking a lengthy course in Ikebana) and then did 4 other arrangements demonstrating a more free-form style. All were gorgeous and very inspiring!

GRANT UPDATE:

We've heard that our grant applications have been accepted and checks are beginning to arrive. Good job to everyone that put in the applications and to Gale for helping!

Georgann - Post Office beautification project
Joan H - Garden Therapy
Dianne - Blue Star Marker

ELWD BOARD MEETING - APRIL 29 (SUMMARY):

Kids Program Support: Sitting in the ELWD budget was \$700+ dollars earmarked to support education of children about gardening. It was decided to divide the money between the Bellevue Botanical Garden Children's Program (\$500) and the Bellevue Demonstration Garden Children's Program (\$200+).

New Garden Clubs Joining ELWD: Duvall is a new club and currently meeting, the Mill Creek club has reached out and will potentially join as will the Norwood Garden Club (North Woodinville). We are also pleased to hear that the Woodinville Garden Club is planning to send delegates to ELWD meetings.

Tree Planting: The Arbor Day Tree this year is a Garry Oak. Garry Oak, *Quercus garryana*, is a beautiful, white oak tree native to the Pacific Coast of North America. They can grow to be quite large, with mushroom-shaped canopies of green leaves and sturdy trunks wrapped in bark that is white to grayish in color and distinctly furrowed. Garry Oak is the only native oak in Washington and British Columbia, and the principle native oak of Oregon. Garry Oak ecosystems provide an incredibly rich habitat for wildlife - moths, butterflies and bees. They have become rare, and in some location are critically imperiled and at risk of extinction.

New Requirements to Volunteer at BBG: Colin Wick, Bellevue Botanical Garden Volunteer Coordinator came to discuss the new program requirements in order to work (even for a day) as a volunteer. He shared that every five years the program goes through an accreditation process and this year the outcome was new requirements for volunteers. Here is a brief overview of the requirements:

- ** Review Bellevue Parks & Community Services Volunteer Handbook and sign attestation that this has been done. Must be an actual signature - either hardcopy or photo of form with signature (mail or email to Colin)

- ** Complete form giving BBG permission to manage your data

- ** Sign liability waiver

- ** YEARLY background check is REQUIRED. This is done through a company called Employers Choice. Submitting some basic information to Colin can get this process started or you can go directly to the company.

This new requirement does not impact our ability to attend functions at BBG such as classes, flower shows and board meetings. These are all things that fall under a "lease agreement" which negates the requirements needed to volunteer.

See the end of the newsletter for more in-depth details!

SAVE THE DATES:

May 17, 2024: Bellevue Botanical Garden Spring Work Day. If you can come and help please let June Anne Hassebroek know - juneannhas@aol.com. **You must have your background check completed to participate.** Information regarding this process is in an ADDENDUM following the EDUCATIONAL CORNER.

Time: 9:00AM - 11:00AM

May 20, 2024: General Membership Meeting (GMM). Details to come (watch your email) but the first speaker has been invited - Allison Johnson to talk about English Gardens. This presentation comes on the heels of a recent visit for Allison back to England. Should be excellent! The afternoon presentation will be done by floral designers from Hill & Dale Garden Club.

Location: St. Andrews Lutheran Church
2650 148th Ave. SE, Bellevue

Time: Can arrive at 9:30AM and program begins at 10:00AM

Cost: \$10.00 payable at the door

RESERVATION REQUIRED: Email Joyce Voldal
at javoldal@hotmail.com

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

June 8 - 11, 2024: Annual Meeting and Flower Show - “Our Extraordinary Earth”

to be held at Little Creek Casino in Shelton

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

EDUCATIONAL CORNER

How to Grow and Care for Peonies—a Showy Perennial That Only Gets Better With Age

Get a beautiful show from your peonies with this complete care guide.

Every flower is beautiful in its own right, but there's something especially alluring about the peony's voluminous, ruffled blooms. Produced in a rainbow of colors ranging from delicate pastel pink to creamy white to rich red, they're inherently romantic and a true hallmark of spring and summer. While learning how to grow and care for peonies requires some attention to detail, you'll be rewarded kindly. In fact, this perennial is known to produce increasingly gorgeous blossoms year after year.

Types of Peonies

There are over 6,500 varieties of peonies. Of those varieties, each falls into one of three categories:

Herbaceous: This cold-hardy type of peony is the most common and grows on stems

Tree: Tree peonies are stemmed shrubs

Itoh: These are a cross between herbaceous and tree peonies

How to Plant Peonies

Peonies are typically planted in early fall. If planted in the spring, they may not bloom until the following year

or later. They should be planted in an area that gets at least six hours of full sun and has well-draining soil.

From Divisions

Peonies are often sold as divisions with three to four eyes. Make sure the divisions are free from rot when they are planted and trim away any soft spots with a sharp knife.

Dig a hole 12 to 18 inches deep and 18 inches wide. Space the holes 3 to 4 feet apart.

Add 10-10-10 fertilizer to the hole according to the packages instructions.

Fill the whole about half full of amended soil.

Place the root division with the eyes facing upward in the hole.

Backfill the hole, making sure the eyes are not more than 2 inches below the soil surface.

Water well.

From Containers

Planting mature peonies straight from the container is the simplest way to grow the perennial. "Peonies need a lot of space to grow, so if you're purchasing multiple plants, be sure you have enough room in your garden,"

says Rebecca Sears, gardening expert and chief marketing officer for [Ferry-Morse](#). Once planted, it'll take about three years for an abundant show of flowers.

Dig a hole large enough to fit the plant's roots. Space the holes 3 to 4 feet apart.

Gently remove the plant from its container.

Place the peony in the hole you dug.

Backfill the hole with soil, making sure the eyes are not more than 2 inches below the soil surface.

Water well.

Growing Peonies From Seed

Peonies can be grown from seed, but it's not the best method. "It can take anywhere from five to seven years for a peony to produce flowers from seed, so your best bet is to instead purchase a potted plant from a root propagation," says [Bart Miller](#), a peony farmer based in Hyrum, Utah.

That said, if you already have peonies in your garden and want to try planting from seeds produced by your plant, you can do so. But keep in mind that unless the parent plant is an open-pollinated variety, the seeds

won't grow true—meaning the resulting plants will likely look different than the parent, says Sears.

Start by collecting the seed pods in the late summer or early fall once they've browned and split open.

Once collected, place the seeds in lukewarm water and discard any seeds that float, as these likely won't sprout.

Plant your seeds right away in an area that gets at least six hours of sun per day and has well-draining soil.

Water the seeds well after planting.

How to Transplant Peonies

Once settled, peonies don't take very kindly to transplanting. Doing so typically requires a long recovery process and can stall blooms for up to three years. In cases of poor transfer, it can cause severe damage and result in a lengthy recovery.

"Peonies have deep and extensive root systems, and they establish strong connections with the soil over time," says [Michael O'Brien](#), founder and owner of Hommes + Gardens. "Young peony plants may produce smaller flowers initially, but as they mature and develop a stronger root system, the blooms tend to increase in size and quality. By transplanting, you are interrupting this process."

If you must transplant, he says to do so during fall or early spring following these steps.

Dig carefully around the plant, making sure to avoid damage to the root system.

Gently remove the peony from its current location.

Select a well-draining location with sunlight or partial shade.

Dig a hole big enough to accommodate its roots.

Place the peony in the hole with buds facing upward.

Backfill with soil, making sure the eyes are not more than 2 inches below the soil surface.

Water thoroughly and apply organic mulch to retain moisture and deter weeds.

How to Care for Peonies

Peonies need adequate care in order for their beautiful blooms to flourish.

Light

Peonies need at least six hours of full sunlight to achieve an abundance of large, healthy flowers, says Sears.

Soil

Well-draining soil with a slightly acidic to neutral pH is essential, along with a good, organic compost.

Water

Water peonies on a regular basis during their first fall and spring. Once established, water well when the soil is dry. Peonies don't need a lot of supplemental irrigation.

Temperature

Peonies like plenty of sun during their growing season and need a solid winter freeze to store energy in their roots to form the buds for the following spring.

"Therefore, peonies are not a good prospect for warm zones like Southern California, Florida, and some southern states," Miller says.

Fertilizer

Once the plants have bloomed, apply a mix of compost and a bit of 10-10-10 fertilizer to the base of the plant every year, Sears says.

How to Prune Peonies

Prune peonies in late fall or early spring by cutting them back to ground level before new growth emerges, says O'Brien. "While pruning, do a quick health check. If you see any dead or damaged stems, remove them at that time to maintain plant health," he says. During the growing season, deadhead spent blooms, leaving the foliage to allow the plant to store energy for next year's growth, says Miller.

Common Problems With Peonies

Once established, peonies are a hardy shrub that requires minimal maintenance. However, like other plants, they're susceptible to their own set of issues.

Leggy Stems

If your peonies aren't getting enough sun, you'll notice that the plant is producing leggy stems and very few flowers. "You can dig up your plant and move it to a sunnier spot, but it will take a few seasons for it to start blooming again," says Sears. "Alternatively, you could also trim away any trees or shrubs that are giving your peonies extra shade."

Crispy Leaves

Conversely, if you notice singed or burnt leaves, this is a sign your peonies are getting too much sun. They're particularly prone to this issue in the middle of summer when days are long and hot. Sears recommends adding structures or other plants around your peonies to provide them with extra shade, rather than moving them to a shadier spot.

No Blooms

You may notice that your peony produce ample greenery, but that the blooms are lacking. While it does take anywhere from three to seven years for abundant blossoms, this could be a sign that your peonies were planted too deep into the soil. "Too much soil around the crown of the plant can prevent them from blooming," says Sears. "You will have to dig your peonies up and replant them to fix this, but they should start to bloom in the seasons to come."

Powdery Mildew

One common issue with peonies is powdery mildew, which can leave their leaves looking less than beautiful. "A simple solution is to ensure proper air circulation around the plants, avoid overhead watering, and to treat them with a neem oil or a homemade baking soda

spray," O'Brien says. "With a little TLC, those peonies will be blooming splendidly in no time."

ADDENDUM (BACKGROUND CHECK INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERING AT BELLEVUE BOTANICAL GARDEN):

Volunteers who would like to occasionally participate in prearranged group activities like the work party on 5/17 should start by completing this webform:

[Group Volunteer Activity Participant - Bellevue Botanical Garden \(BBG\)](#)

After the form is submitted, they will receive an automated reply with instructions to complete a background check (this is a new requirement this year).

Volunteers that can't use or don't have access to a computer or mobile device are invited to call

me directly at [425-452-6826](tel:425-452-6826) to make alternative arrangements.

If they have any questions, they can email BBGVolunteers@bellevuewa.gov or call [425-452-6826](tel:425-452-6826).

Colin Wick

Volunteer Coordinator, Bellevue Botanical Garden
Parks & Community Services, City of Bellevue
(He/Him)

[425-452-6826](tel:425-452-6826) | CWick@bellevuewa.gov | [Book a Meeting](#)

<https://BellevueBotanical.org/>