



Perennial Notes

November 2012

Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society—an unincorporated nonprofit association

WHPS COMING EVENTS!

All regular meetings are 6:30 social time, 7:00 p.m. program at Olbrich Gardens Commons, 3330 Atwood Avenue, Madison, unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, November 14, *Plant Introduction Process: Do You Have the Hot New Plant?* with speaker Angela Treadwell-Palmer, Plants Nouveau. Treadwell-Palmer (a.k.a. Plantweenie)



has a Bachelor of Science in Ornamental Horticulture and Landscape Design from the University of Delaware. Her career has spanned almost every aspect of gardening, garden design and teaching folks how to garden with plants—especially natives. She's the founder and now team partner in Plants Nouveau, LLC., in Charleston, SC. She travels around the world searching for

new plants to introduce. The Plants Nouveau motto is "Responsible introductions. Making tomorrow's gardens possible." Plants Nouveau is known for its wild and colorful marketing, yet is very thoughtful and jam-packed with information to help growers and consumers succeed with their new plants. It is the fashionista of the new plants world. Before embarking on her own, Angie managed the staff and development of half of the collections at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, DC, as well as their Elite Plant Introduction Program. She also curated the Introduction Garden. She was a perennial buyer/grower for one of the largest retail garden centers on the East Coast, Homestead Gardens/Growers, in Davidsonville, MD. For three years, she managed the Plant Introduction Program for Chicagoland Grows®, Inc., the plant introduction program of the Chicago Botanic Garden and the Morton Arboretum. She served an even longer term as the Director of New Products for one of the largest wholesale nurseries on the East Coast, The Conard-Pyle Co.



Wednesday, December 12, *Annual Meeting, Member Potpourri, Seed Exchange.* This is a favorite program each year—an opportunity to look at member gardens and pick up seeds, tubers, and bulbs from members who have been picking and digging to clean up for fall. Our **Annual Meeting** will elect the board for the coming year and announce our proposed donations from the 2012 Plant Sale proceeds. **To participate in the Member Potpourri, contact Stephanie O'Neal by Monday, December 10** at sone2@aol.com, (608) 256-6108. If you have photos of new work in your garden to show, or if you've got some favorite plants you'd like us to see, or if you've visited a garden that you'd like us to experience through your eyes, plan on showing 10-15 photos at our meeting. Jane Gahlman will be coordinating the **Seed Exchange** from 6:30-7:00 p.m. and after the program. She'll have envelopes for you to select as many seeds as you'd like. **Join us December 12 for a great gathering of our members!**

Mark your calendar for these meeting dates and events in 2013

Sunday, January 20, 2013 Potluck Brunch, setup after 9:00 a.m., serving at 10:00 a.m. Catch up with fellow members, enjoy some wonderful food, take a winter walk through Olbrich Gardens and then warm up with a walk through Bolz Conservatory. Members bring a dish to share and their own plates/cutlery. WHPS provides water and juice (soda machine available).

February 8-10, WPT Garden Expo Eleanor Rodini—erodini@library.wisc.edu, 608-257-2984—is coordinating the WHPS booth at the Garden Expo, and volunteers who sign up to work a shift at the booth will receive a free entrance ticket to the Expo—contact Eleanor if you are interested. WHPS is also sponsoring a speaker at the Expo, **Roy Klehm**, noted peony hybridizer and founder of Beaver Creek Nursery and Song Sparrow Farm and Nursery. His presentation, ***My Mentoring Horticulture Heroes: Key people who mentored me and their contributions to gardens and landscapes***, will no doubt be one of the highlights of the Garden Expo.

Wednesday, February 20, 2013, Meeting (topic TBA)

Wednesday, March 20, 2013 Meeting (topic TBA)

Wednesday, April 17, 2013 Meeting (topic TBA)

Saturday, May 18 WHPS PLANT SALE (setup May 17)

Sunday, June 2, 2013 *Bus trip to Lake Geneva/Burlington Area Nurseries and Private Gardens*

June 26-29, 2013 We're going to Philadelphia! Public and private gardens and garden shopping! Dates are actual tour dates and do not include travel time. Look for more information in 2013.

Wednesday, August 21, 2013 *Summer Potluck Dinner and walk through Olbrich Gardens*

Wednesday, September 18, 2013 *Speaker Kelly Norris of Iowa's Rainbow Iris Farm* on the topic of ***Chic Plants***.

Wednesday, October 16, 2013 *Joint Meeting with Hosta Society*—Sue Olsen, owner of Foliage Gardens (<http://www.foliagegardens.com/>) and author of ***Encyclopedia of Garden Ferns***. SPECIAL TIME: 6:00 p.m. Social; 6:30 pm. meeting.

Wednesday, November 13, 2013 Meeting (topic TBA)

Wednesday, December 11, 2013 *Annual Meeting, Seed Exchange and Member Potpourri*

Dues Notices will be mailed in January

If you have already paid your dues through 2013 and beyond, you will **not** receive a dues renewal form.

Wednesday, December 12, Member Potpourri Members Express Their Garden Views

If you haven't attended the WHPS Annual Meeting, Seed Exchange and Member Potpourri, you've been missing a great opportunity to network with member gardeners, pick up some annual and perennial seeds, bulbs and tubers to store over the winter, and view photos and videos of member gardens and memorable gardens visited.

Member Potpourri

And we'd love to see photos of your garden **December 12!** If you've been taking pictures of your garden through the seasons, or if you have a special project you've just documented and completed and would like to show us, ***please contact Stephanie O'Neal before December 10*** (sone2@aol.com; 608-256-6108) ***so she can put you on the list to present your photos.*** You can bring your photos saved on a flash drive or CD, which we will load onto the WHPS laptop before the meeting (We ask that you arrive at 6:30 to load them into the computer.) You will have 10 minutes maximum to present, and you are welcome to present as many or as few photos as you wish during that timeframe. In the past, we have even had some members present a DVD or PowerPoint presentation. **You don't have to be a professional photographer or presenter to be a part of the Member Potpourri.** You just have to be proud of your gardening accomplishments, have photos of plants you are passionate about, have visited a really interesting garden or have a garden project you think we'd like to learn about.

Seed Exchange

For the Seed Exchange, you are invited to bring your ripe seeds, extra dahlia tubers, gladiola bulbs, etc. to offer to other members in the half-hour before the meeting (6:30-7:00 p.m.) and after the meeting. If you are not familiar with this event, there is an excellent *Seed Exchange FAQ* on our Web site in the Newsletters & Articles section. If you have questions before the event, contact Jane Gahlman, our VP and Seed Exchange Coordinator, at 608-837-2317, jmgahlman@hotmail.com.

Weeds and the Web

If you are looking for information on weeds, here are a few recommended Websites:

- The University of Illinois has a great weed identification site at <http://weeds.cropsci.illinois.edu/weedid.htm>
- The UW-Madison Weed Selector Tool has lists of weeds under both common and scientific names at <http://weedid.wisc.edu/>
- The USDA has a *Weeds in Wisconsin* page on its Introduced, Invasive and Noxious Plants site <http://plants.usda.gov/java/>

Other events of note

Fall & Winter, 2012-2013, Olbrich Botanical Gardens will be offering a broad range of programs and workshops for all levels of interest. For more information, go to <http://www.olbrich.org/education/classes.cfm>

Saturday, December 1-Monday, December 31, Olbrich's Holiday Express: Flower and Model Train Show, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. daily. Members free. Admission general public-\$3 for adults, \$2 children ages 3 to 12. Children 2 and under-free. Admission to the tropical Bolz Conservatory is included.

And don't forget the **Dane County Farmers Market** (<http://dcfm.org/>), which will be held indoors November 17-December 15 at Monona Terrace, and January 7-April 14 at the Madison Senior Center.

UW-Madison Arboretum Walks (events begin at the Visitors Center, unless otherwise noted) <http://uwarboretum.org/events/>

—**Sunday, November 18, 1:00-2:30 p.m. Thinking Like an Arboretum** Aldo Leopold's essay, *Thinking Like a Mountain*, is the basis for this tour about the relationship between predators and prey, and the diversity of ecosystems.

—**Saturday, November 24, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Night Walk: Stars and Night Sounds** The waxing moon will be about 78 percent full, lighting the way for this night walk. Listen for evening animal activity and look for stars if the sky is clear.

—**Sunday, November 25, 1:00-2:30 p.m. Walk: Late Fall in Wingra Woods** Since most leaves have dropped from the deciduous trees, it's easier to see tree forms and the birds and animals that live in the trees year-round. Meet at the Wingra Springs Parking Lot.

—**Sunday, December 2, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Walk: Effigy Mounds** The Arboretum contains rare, intact mound groups remaining out of the hundreds built in our area more than 1,000 years ago. On this tour, which features the mounds in Wingra and Gallistel Woods, you'll learn about these ancient earthworks and the cultures that built them.

The Paine Art Center and Gardens, Oshkosh <http://www.thepaine.org/>

November 16, 2013-January 7, 2013 Nutcracker in the Castle, The Nutcracker story unfolds in the Paine "castle" with the historic rooms elaborately decorated as the fantastic scenes of the beloved ballet. Special actor-guided tours with live music and youth ballet performances further bring the fantasy to life.

December 13-16, 20-23 and 27-30 Janesville's Rotary Botanical Gardens' Holiday Light Show has been a beloved December tradition for years...the trains, the music, the cookies and hot chocolate!!! <http://rotarybotanicalgardens.org/events>

A Primula for Every Border

This article is a reprint from *Perennial Notes*, April 2002



This year is officially the year of the rose (genus *Rosa*), but for me it will, as usual, be the year of the primrose (genus *Primula*). I've nothing against roses; they just don't do well in my yard, which has full sun nowhere. Primroses, however, appreciate a bit of shade and I can provide as much or as little as they desire.

Primroses are sweet, endearing little flowers. They bloom primarily in spring, hence the name, derived from the Latin *primus*, meaning first. They are not prim in the sense of prim and proper, being informal, friendly and exuberant in flower. It is always proper to include them in the garden. I consider them essential.

There are about 425 species of primrose. Most are native to a variety of habitats in the moister, cooler areas of the Northern Hemisphere. Given the range of habitats they have adapted to, it only makes sense that some will survive and thrive in our Wisconsin gardens, although most need a wee bit of help. As long as one satisfies the absolute requirement—that their root zone is cool and moist while growing—it is possible to find a primula for any partly sunny to very shady area of the garden. They dislike extremes of temperature, and therefore benefit from a mulch in winter and a carefully chosen location to provide protection from our hot midsummer afternoon sun. They also generally like a humus-rich soil.

Easiest of all the *Primulas* is *P. sieboldii*. Although it is native to wet meadows in Japan, it grows beautifully here. One Web site even describes it as the only “foolproof” primrose, growing in any soil and exposure. It has the good sense to go dormant in August when most primroses are struggling with the heat and not looking their best.



P. sieboldii comes in a variety of colors—white, shades of pink, lavender, even two-toned with the petals white on one side and pink on the other. Like snowflakes, the petal shapes are all different. They grow easily from seed, demanding no special care to get through the heat of summer. They bloom in their second year, rewarding

the gardener with the joy of discovering a unique flower as each plant comes into bloom.

The 425 species of primrose have been divided by botanists into 37 sections and many subsections. *P. sieboldii* is, for example, in Section *Cortusoides* and subsection *Cortusoides*. The value of these classifications to the gardener is that species in the same section usually have similar cultural needs. In this same

section and subsection is *P. polyneura*, a species I started from seed, planted out and forgot about until its third year, when it bloomed. It was the star of the garden. Growing in deepish shade, its flowers were a dark pink and very long lasting. The same section but in subsection *Geranioides* is *P. kisoana*, which also does well here in a woody garden. It has big, fuzzy leaves, white or pink flowers, and is easily propagated, as it is rhizomatous (unusual for a primrose).

Most garden writers put the *Primulas* in broader groups determined by common cultural needs. The above mentioned primulas are woodland primulas (from Asia), growing in similar conditions to the European woodland (edge of woods) primulas. It is this latter group with its ‘gold-laced’ variety and a ‘true blue,’ both grown from Thomson Morgan seed, that led me down the primrose path of enchantment with these plants.

A more demanding group of *Primula* is that referred to as for the bog or waterside, frequently called ‘candelabra’ because of the multiple-tiered flower spikes. Of these, *P. japonica* is most easily grown here. Although short-lived, it self-sows readily, so one need never be without them. Others in this group, *P. bulleyana* and *P. beesiana*, although perennial in their native lands, are only biennial for us. Apparently, one Midwestern summer is their limit. Fortunately, they too will self-sow. Mine died after setting seed, despite my valiant attempts to keep them happy. The following spring, seedlings were everywhere—including The PATH! I hadn't the heart to weed them out. This worked out for the best, as the ones that germinated in the lovingly-constructed-specially-for-primroses raised bed, home of the parent plants, all died, and the ones in the PATH flourished. If they come through the winter, I'll have a real primrose path. Attempting to grow this group is, for me true “habitat denial,” as my garden is at the top of a dry, thin-soiled hill with much of the shade provided by large trees (elms), well known for their ability to take all available moisture. These primulas need constantly moist soil, good drainage, a fair amount of light (no deep shade) and are very unforgiving if their root zone becomes hot or dry.

For more specifics on *Primula* culture *Rock Gardening*, by H. Lincoln Foster and *Primroses & Spring*, by Doretta Klaber, offer an excellent introduction. Both are by American gardeners and contain useful insights into growing primroses in the U.S.A. My favorite reference book is *Primula*, by John



Richards. It contains detailed cultural information from a British perspective and fascinating descriptions of *Primulas* in their native lands. You can read about leaf mould pastures high in the Himalayas or *P. florindae*, tall as a person when in flower. All three books are in the Olbrich Library.

—Ruth Cadoret

Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society



November 2012 Newsletter

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Do you have a question about your membership? Contact Jane LaFlash at whps05@yahoo.com, 608-243-1208.

..... Member news, tips, etc.

Another Treat for Anglophiles

Marilyn, our wonderful guide on this year's garden trip to England, said they learned the following poem in school as a way to remember the names of the Kings and Queens of England in order. She had it memorized and repeated it to us on the bus as she was talking about the Queen's Jubilee and Birthday Party. At our request she wrote it down and gave us copies.

—Jane Gahlman

Kings and Queens of England

Willy Willy, Henry Steve
Henry Dick, John Henry Three
One Two Three Eds, Richard Two
Henry Four, Five Six then who?
Edwards Four Five, Dick the Bad
Henry Seven Eight, Ed the Lad
Mary Lizzie, James the Vain
Charlie and Charlie, James Again.
William & Mary, Anna Gloria
Four Georges, William then Victoria
Edward Seven, George Five,
Edward, George and Lizzie alive.

Recommended Reading

If you are like me, fall and winter is all about finding some interesting gardening books to keep me in the garden, if only in my mind. Here are a few books that have helped me dream about the possibilities for next year. —Stephanie O'Neal

—**The Homeowner's Complete Tree & Shrub Handbook: *The Essential Guide to Choosing, Planting and Maintaining Perfect Landscape Plants***, by Penelope O'Sullivan

—**Covering Ground: *Unexpected Ideas for Landscaping with Colorful, Low-maintenance Ground Covers***, by Barbara W. Ellis

—**The Home Depot Landscaping 1-2-3**, great step-by-step guide for everyone, from beginners on. Lots of tips and pictures.

—**Sunset Landscaping with Stone**, great example pictures, how-to and background on materials

—**Sunset Landscaping Small Spaces**, another terrific picture book with succinct and informative descriptions

No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden...But though an old man, I am but a young gardener.

—Thomas Jefferson

Visit our website: <http://www.wisconsinhardyplantsociety.com>