

From the President . . .

Is it raining, snowing or sunny when you read this? The weather has certainly been unpredictable and definitely not conducive to getting out in the garden. Many of us have trees that need attention now because buds will burst quickly when spring decides to return and it will be too late to hack and saw. Those of you who heard Dr. Alan Reid's talk on pruning will have been looking at trees in a new light, seeing many weak points that could have been nipped in the bud, literally, by judicious pruning when the trees were younger. I have lots of trees with hairy crops of watersprouts, including a Japanese maple that was unfortunately sheared into a lollipop shape. It would probably be better to start over with a new tree but I figure it's something to practice on – I can't make it any worse. But I definitely need to get out there.

Our speaker for February is Heather Edwards from Burnaby's Parks Department. She has an enviable enthusiasm for her job and her contagious excitement will turn even the grumpiest of us more positive on our city's famous Ecosculptures. (You don't have to like them but you'll see why the city is so hot on them). It's a good opportunity to find out about our Parks Department's vision and what's going on here, and express our interest in and support for native plantings. Heather had me excited about Burnaby Parks and I'm notoriously negative.

I'd like to thank Helen Vaughan for taking over as Refreshment Co-ordinator. Everyone enjoys the break and the goodies make it even nicer. Thanks also to everyone for the great show of support for our plant sale, particularly people willing to go on digs. We don't have any gardens yet which is perhaps a good thing given the weather but will contact you when something comes up. The Rhodofest team is already active too, so we have a lot of people helping out.

To help ease the winter blahs our Fundraising committee has a special Valentine's raffle prize so you'll want to be sure to get tickets. Good food, good friends, good talk – what more could you want? See you in Feb!

Susan Brandl

"Be My Valentine"



In place of the regular raffle at the meeting this month a special "BE MY VALENTINE" gift basket will be featured.

The basket will include

- a bottle of Bubbly,
- 2 pairs of German made candles,
- a large box of gourmet espresso chocolates
- a reusable metal gift basket.

Retail value approximately \$70.

Plant Sale Volunteers & Plant Donations

Volunteers are needed to work at the Plant Sale on April 20th or to dig plants from donor gardens in advance of the sale. Also, if you would like to donate plants from your garden but aren't able to dig and pot them up, a team our volunteer "diggers" will be available to help. Please fill out the Volunteer form included with this Newsletter and bring it to the next meeting or contact our interim Plant Sale Co-ordinator, Susan Brandl, by phone (604-433-4250) or email (skbrandl@shaw.ca).

Membership Renewal

Members are reminded that all BRAGS memberships expire at the end of the December each year. If you still haven't renewed your membership for 2008, please visit the Membership table at the February meeting or mail your cheque for \$12 to BRAGS Membership, 6425 Aubrey St, Burnaby BC V5B 2C9

14 Perennials That Will Add Winter Interest to Your Garden

by
Hilary Rinaldi

Just because it is going to turn cold in a few months, doesn't mean your yard has to look dull or lifeless. Believe it or not, there are other plant options that you can use to make your yard and garden look great year round.



"Fall is the best time to start thinking about adding some strong interest and color to your yard while there is still time to get everything planted, and established, before the really cold weather sets in."

So instead of thinking about plants going dormant, it's time to start planning and planting a few things that will stay colorful and look good while everything else is brown and leafless. Actually, anything that remains evergreen throughout the winter months may be considered a candidate for winter interest, but I chose some plants that flower, have great structure, or produce berries.

Now's the time to add some strong interest and color to your yard while there is still time to get everything planted, and established, before the really cold weather sets in.

I have included each plant's ideal climate zone so you can get an idea of what will do well for you in your area. A brief list of zones is at the end of this article, or you can use a climate zone map.

Many more than 14 perennials could have been listed here, but I wanted to touch on some that are not as widely used, so you can really liven up your garden!

1. **Viola tricolor - Johnny Jump Up - Zones 4 to 10**
Produces neat flowers with faces in shades of yellow, blue, violet, and white. Flowers in fall and often in winter. Self-seeds readily.
2. **Rosa rugosa - Rugosa Rose - Zones 2 to 10**
This is a large shrub that grows to 8 feet. Has good fall color. What makes this plant appealing for winter are the large tomato-like hips that are produced after it flowers. The hips are quite a feature and last all winter long.
3. **Sedum 'Herbstfreude' ('Autumn Joy') - Zones 5 to 10**
This plant has fleshy leaves and grows to 24 in (60 cm). It has large heads of pink flowers that appear in the fall that eventually fade to copper color and then turn red. So don't cut them back until the spring to get the most interest from this plant.
4. **Arum italicum - Italian Arum - Zones 7 to 10**
Grows to 12 inches (30 cm). This is a tuberous perennial with broad arrow-shaped leaves that appear in the fall. The foliage dies back in the summer just as the berries appear, which to me, aren't worth it. After the berries die, the foliage reappears, remains until the next summer and is lush and green all winter.
5. **Acorus gramineus - Sweet Flag - Zones 3 to 11**
Native to Japan, it has soft, curved leaves under 12 inches (30 cm) long and about ¼ inch (6 mm) wide. This plant is grown mainly for its foliage, which is sweet smelling. In the winter, it has beautiful texture and pleasing green, white and chartreuse colors.
6. **Miscanthus sinensis - Eulalia - Zones 4 to 10**
One of the most beautiful and least invasive ornamental grasses, it forms arching clumps up to 12 feet (3.5 m) Other varieties are smaller, but most have fine leaves that have color well into winter.
7. **Rohdea japonica - Lily of China - Zones 7 to 10**
During the winter months it forms clumps of deep green long leaves that are 8 -18 inches (20-45 cm) long. This plant has bright red berries during winter that contrast the dark green leaves very well.
8. **Dianthus gratianopolitanus - Cheddar Pink - Zones 5 to 9**
Has neat and tidy mounds of blue-gray, linear

leaves that develop into broad mats that are 12 inches (30 cm) or more in width. The low-growing silvery foliage contrasts nicely with other perennials. Flowers will continue until a hard frost.

9. Veronica blue - Speedwell - Zones 3 to 9

Even with the temperatures as low as 9F and several snow days, this plant still has beautiful burgundy foliage and looks great in front of some dwarf pine shrubs.

**10. Iberis sempervirens – Candytuft –
Zones 4 to 11**

Good for rock gardens. Grows 6 to 12 inches (15-30 cm) high with a spread of 18 to 24 inches (45 - 60 cm). 'Snowflake' is very attractive with glossy, dark green leaves. Very frost hardy.

11. Helleborus - Zones 6 to 9, others 3 to 9

This genus has tons of choices that are hardy in many climate zones. The Christmas Rose is popular for its mid-winter white flowers, often appearing in the snow. Others have flowers in shades of green, red, and purple. Awesome for winter interest, with its great foliage and flowers.

12. Erica carnea - Winter Heath - Zones 5 to 9

This is a low growing plant usually under 12 inches (30 cm) with very dense branches. Through most the winter and into early spring in has a great display of small urn-shaped flowers that are purple -pink. There are many well known cultivars to choose from.

**13. Liriope muscari and spicata -
Zones 6 to 10, and 4 to 10**

A clump forming perennial with some cultivars having leaves so dark they are practically black. This is good to group with other plants for interest. Good for a ground cover or path edging.

**14. Ophiopogon planiscapus -Black Mondo
Grass - Zones 6 to 10**

An interesting cultivar is 'Ebony Night' because it has purple-black stiff leaves that form clumps 10 inches (25 cm) in height, and 12 inches (30 cm) in width. Slow growing, but beautiful when combined with other plants to show off its unusual color.

Hilary Rinaldi is a professional landscaper, speaker and garden educator. See more at www.weekendgardener.net.

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BRAGS Year at a Glance

**February 6, 2008
Monthly Meeting
Heather Edwards
Burnaby Parks Projects**

**March 5, 2007
Monthly Meeting
Gerry Gibbons
Rhododendron Q & A**

**April 2, 2007
Monthly Meeting
Candyse Roberts
Water Features**

**April 20, 2007
BRAGS Plant Sale
Burnaby Village Museum**

**May 2, 2007
Monthly Meeting
Elaine Cramer
Hydrangeas**

**May 4, 2007
Rhododendron Festival
Deer Lake Park**

**June 6, 2007
Monthly Meeting
Brenda Faulk
Drought Tolerant Planting**

**July, 2007
Garden Tour**

Monthly Meetings
are held at 7pm at
Burnaby Village Museum
Discovery Room
Canada Way at Deer Lake Ave
(Sperling)

Got a story?

Our members love to hear about other members' gardening adventures. Tell us about your garden!

BRAGS 2008 EXECUTIVE

President
Susan Brandl
433-4250
Vice-President
Faye Kilpatrick
434-5921
Treasurer
Heather MacKay
438-1342
Secretary
Lanny Hui
Past President
Cheryl Fiddis
435-2801

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421-8987
& Cheryl Fiddis
435-2801
Membership
David Forsyth
298-6350
Nominations
Cheryl Fiddis
435-2801
Publicity
Jackie Walker
420-0275
**Rhododendron
Festival**
Judy Wellington
434-8287

OTHER COMMITTEES

Newsletter
Editor-Vacant
Distribution-D & A Forsyth
298-6350
Plant Sale
Vacant
Garden Contest
Judy Wellington
434-8287
Garden Tour
Faye Kilpatrick
434-5921
Speakers
Vacant
Refreshments
Helen Vaughan
299-2014
Website
David Forsyth
298-6350

PLANT SALE - VOLUNTEER FORM

Sunday, April 20, 2008

Name _____ Phone # _____

~~~~ What I can do to help ~~~~

Please place a 'checkmark' beside all the areas you would like to help with. Put a star next to your preferred volunteer choice(s).

- a) I have plants for volunteers to dig up and pot* _____
- b) Dig up and pot plants from other member's gardens* _____
- c) Provide plants for sale _____
- d) I have containers to donate _____
- e) I need containers _____
- f) Store and care for potted plants until sale day _____
- g) Pick up/deliver plants stored at member's gardens, to sale _____
- h) Be part of the set up crew the day of the sale _____
- i) Price, sort & set up plants at sale _____
- j) Help to identify plants not labelled _____
- k) Sell plants _____
- l) Cashier/Assist Cashier _____
- m) Assist customers with carrying purchases _____
- n) Help with clean up – 1:00 pm _____

Please hand in at BRAGS upcoming meetings~~~~Thanks!

* Anyone who can volunteer a garden or who can help on digs contact
Susan Brandl at 604-433-4250 or skbrandl@shaw.ca

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