



Garden Time

Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2023

Winter-Interest Plants Cold Weather Color

Heuchera Saxifragaceae

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PODCAST 013

Season 2
Episode 1

Jan. 18, 2023

The cold days of winter are here and you might think that the winter garden is boring and the best plants are asleep, but you'd be wrong! There are lots of plants that can bring structure, texture and color to your winter garden! We'll share some great ones on this episode of Garden Time.



Jeff, Judy and Ryan with Aaron Rivera from Al's Garden & Home.

A lot of people say that the winter garden is boring. The cold rains, the lack of daylight and associated lack of warmth all signal a cold and boring garden. To prove everyone wrong we stopped by the Al's Garden and Home in Sherwood (503-726-1162) to talk with Aaron and see some plants that will provide color, texture, structure and even fragrance for the winter garden. He also talked about planting in the winter. As long as the ground is not frozen solid, you can still plant! He recommends that you follow the same rules for planting in the winter as you do the rest of the year. Dig a nice sized hole, amend the soil, water well and even use a transplant fertilizer. By following those simple rules and by planting now you can assure yourself of a beautiful garden next winter.

We started with a lavender plant. These are well known for their wonderful bloom stalks and intoxicating fragrance during the early summer, but they are

also great in the winter garden too. The evergreen foliage can brighten up your garden and it is also fragrant if you brush it. Next were ferns. These are a favorite native in the Northwest garden, with many of us having sword ferns or deer ferns in our garden. But there are so many varieties that can add a lot of different textures in between your other plants. These were smaller varieties and quite dainty. We featured the Autumn fern which gets a nice orange color in the fall and then will turn green again in the spring. You can keep these looking nice by cutting off the old weathered fronds in the late winter and letting the newer green fronds grow up to replace them. Grasses are also popular in the fall and winter garden. For most varieties, they are simply tall green clumps during most of the summer, but then in the fall a lot of them change color and can also add a soft texture to the hard edges of your garden. We looked at the Orange New Zealand Sedge with its wonderful

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Black Mondo and Evergold Grasses

fall color still showing. Some gardeners will cut their grasses back in the late fall, but they can add a great backdrop to your garden especially on those windy days. Wait until early spring to cut them back and they will be fine. If you have an evergreen grass like 'Evergold' you can just pull out the dead or brown leaves and let the rest stay there. The new growth will fill in the bare spots when the weather warms up. Aaron also showed us how you can pair up a darker grass like Black Mondo grass with the brighter Evergold to really show the contrast. These smaller grasses will also work well in containers for year-round contrast.

The next great plants on the table were the hellebores. These are old garden favorites with a twist. There are newer varieties coming out every year and that means new bright colors for your winter garden. The flowers traditionally would face down when the plant blooms, but the newer varieties are bred with the flowers facing more upright so you can enjoy them in the garden. In addition to the flowers, a lot of varieties have interesting foliage as well. Now is a good time to cut back the foliage to expose those new blooms. The older foliage can start to look pretty bad in the late winter and cutting off the leaves will not damage the plant since it will send up new leaves later this spring. Just be careful to avoid those new flowers when you do the cutting.

Ryan pointed out that the flower blooms of the perennial hellebores looks great but there are other plants that bring interest to your garden through their berries. Wintergreen is a low growing ground cover, but it has some colorful berries and leaves that can brighten up those lower dark areas in your garden. They can have red or pink berries and even variegated foliage that will turn a bronze color in the fall and winter. The berries are cool for another reason too. They have a nice mint flavor and the leaves can be used to make a tea. Another nice plant is the underused epimedium. This is a family of plants that have different characteristics depending on the one you choose, but they all are known for their wonderful dainty blooms. The best way to observe these blooms is to cut all the foliage back to the ground in the late fall to late winter. The new, orchid-like blooms rise above the ground with new foliage following. Some people keep the foliage until the last minute so they can see the distinctive patterns on the leaves. We then moved to euphorbia. This is a huge family of plants that includes the tender poinsettia to the more hardy varieties. The ones for your outdoor garden can have great variegated foliage and wonderful, but unusual bloom stalks. We saw 'Ascot Rainbow', with reddish stems and multicolored variegated foliage and 'Glacier blue' with a bright cream colored foliage. These stay much shorter than the larger Euphorbia wulfenii. The next plants we looked at were the heucheras. These have become quite popular in recent years. It is because of the fo-



Wintergreen

PHOTO CREDIT: TSUGAWA NURSERY

liage. The different leaf colors with patterns of different colored veins in the leaves are incredible. There are also flower stalks and they are not huge, but are still interesting. The common name of 'coral bells' gives a hint of the flowers as they form long strings of bell-shaped flowers. A taller grass-like plant was next. The phormium, or New Zealand Flax, are a hardy plant in your winter garden. Some have bright leaves, some have dark leaves, some are upright and some are weeping, some can get really tall (over six feet tall) and some can stay shorter (a foot or two). The New Zealand Flax doesn't really need pruning, as you can just cut out the ugly looking stalks, but it does need well-drained soil to thrive. We saw the green and gold 'Yellow Wave' and the deep blood red 'Amazing Red'.

The next plant can be outdoors and/or indoors and can get really big if you don't keep an eye on it. It's the Fatsia. We had a Fatsia 'Spider's Web' to look at with its variegated foliage. This one likes morning sun which will help bring out its variegation. Ryan found a couple more plants that were actually blooming right now, we started with the English Daisy. When spring starts to get close you will find these starting to pop up. These groundcover blooms will continue through the summer, with fewer blooms, but they still will look good. Other early bloomers are the pansies and violas. These are from the same family and will take a beating and still continue to bloom. We've seen them completely frozen in the morning and then looking great in the afternoon when the temps get warm again. They are tough! They are 'winter blooming', but they will bloom all season long and will reseed if conditions are right. In addition to the bright colors, they also have a slight sweet fragrance. In the later winter and early spring you will also see the hardy cyclamen starting to bloom. They usually have the bloom appear first, followed by the foliage. It is a nice surprise in the early spring garden. There are a couple types of cyclamen. The hardy, which tends to have a smaller bloom, and the tender florists cyclamen which is an indoor plant with larger blooms. Bergenia was next. It has a nice bronze colored foliage right now in the cold days of winter, followed by bright flower spikes in the spring, and a return to green foliage in the summer again. Some varieties can get huge and are called Elephant Ears due to the big leaves. Sedums are also great ground cover types of winter plants. The 'Dragon's Blood' sedum was on the table and it showed how you can use a small plant like this to fill in the blank parts of your winter garden. Be sure to pick a good variety for your winter garden as some will disappear and die back in the cold. Once they are established they can be very drought tolerant as well!

We took a break and returned to talk about a few more plants.

This time we were looking at broad leaved ever-



Heuchera 'Carnival Watermelon'

PHOTO CREDIT: CULTIVAR413 VIA FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS



Bergenia 'Pink Dragonfly'

PHOTO CREDIT: TSUGAWA NURSERY

**'Yuletide' Camellia****Carsten's Wintergold Mugo Pine**

greens, needled evergreens and dormant trees known for their branch and trunk structures. The first one was the contorted filbert. A variety that a lot of people look for is the 'Harry Lauder Walking Stick' or Corkscrew Hazel. These are very slow growing and have twisty, bendy clusters of branches. If you shine a light on them in the winter garden, they can be quite striking. They even have signature catkins, or flowers, that show up in the spring, though you won't get any nuts from the tree later in the season. Judy then pointed out the evergreen magnolias, Cape Harris and Teddybear. These are great small trees in the garden. They have the great white, fragrant flower in the late spring and summer, but right now they have the glossy leaves and an interesting underside to the leaf that makes them a great addition to the winter garden.

Camellias are a favorite in the Northwest garden. If you plant different species you can have color from October or November to May or June. Sasanqua camellias are blooming now and Japonica, with their bigger and showier blooms are great for the spring garden. There are also hybrids that can bridge the seasons to bring blooms to your garden. One that we love is the Yuletide camellia. This one starts blooming around Christmas time with red petals and bright yellow centers, perfect for the holiday season. Next we found a bright gold pine at the back of the table, the Chief Joseph. This was found in the Willowa mountains of Oregon and it is a slow growing pine that is green in the summer and then when the colder temperatures roll in it turns to a bright golden color. Another pine that we had on the table was a Scots Pine, that is more of a ground cover and only gets about two feet tall when it matures. It really spreads out and covers a large area if you are looking for something that is low maintenance and strikingly beautiful. If you are looking for something colorful and short, then the Mugo Pine 'Carsten's Wintergold' might be the one for you. This one stays short and forms a bun shape, and turns a wonderful gold color in the winter! Mahonias should be familiar to Oregonians. Some varieties are known as Oregon Grapes and are the state flower of Oregon. They are not grapes, but get their name from the purple berries that form on the plant and are a favorite of native birds and wildlife. The one we saw was a variety called 'Charity'. It gets large stalks of golden flowers in the winter which are a favorite of hummingbirds and bees. Its 'holly-like' leaves create an interesting foliage in your garden during the winter months. Aaron then pointed out a blueberry next to the mahonia. This variety, 'Sunshine Blue', keeps its leaves in the winter, unlike a lot of the other blueberry varieties. It also is a great berry for the home gardener as it is covered with wonderful fruit during the mid-summer months.

We were approaching the end of the table and that included a variety of Euonymus. This one was evergreen with the new growth a bright golden color. It

will get even more gold with more sun in the winter. We then went to an evergreen hemlock that had variegated foliage. This was a newer variety with the newer growth having a white tip to it. It will turn back to a green in the summer, but as soon as the temperatures drop you can expect the new foliage to go back to white again. At the back of the table was a bunch of twigs. Actually it was a dogwood called 'Midwinter Fire' and it may be non-descript in the summer, but in the winter it has fiery orange and red branches that really stand out in your garden. We've seen them in gardens and they truly stop traffic in the winter! Next to the pretty sticks was a plant that will surprise you. Sarcococca, or sweet box, will stay low to the ground and in the winter it has tiny blooms that are very hard to find, but you can sure smell them! This plant will have people wandering your garden looking for the source of the wonderful fragrance. It is an evergreen and during the summer it can easily get lost among your other garden plants. But make no mistake, you'll find it in the winter! Just follow your nose. Another bright plant in the winter garden is the variegated boxwood. It is like its popular cousin, the evergreen boxwood, but this one has the showy leaves that you will love in your garden.

As we were finishing up we saw a couple of Cryptomerias. Variety 'Mushroom' turns a dark bronze color with soft foliage in the winter, but returns to a bright green in the summer. Variety 'Elegans' is similar, with a striking fall and winter color, turning to green in the summer. The foliage is very feathery and soft to the touch. A great winter blooming shrub is the witch hazel. These have little clusters of blooms that look like shredded coconut on the length of the bare branches. They have bloom colors in the reds, yellows and oranges, with green leaves in the summer that turn into bright fall colors at the end of the season. Edgeworthia, or Chinese Paperbush was next and this one is special. It is called paperbush because some cultures used it to make paper, but it is known for something even more special. The pendulous blooms on this shrub are just showing up now and they are very fragrant! They look like balls of bright yellow or orange flowers and are a show-case in the mid-winter garden. Ryan found one more plant at the back of the table and that was a pencil thin Yew. This one stays nice and narrow so it can fit in a tight spot in your garden, a foot wide and eight feet tall at maturity. It too, will turn a bright gold in the winter and returns to a nice green in the summer.

We finished by talking about now being the best time to shop your local garden center to fill your winter garden. You can find the plants now that will really shine next winter after they have had a summer to acclimate to your garden. We recommend that you stop by any of the four Al's Garden and Home locations in the Portland metro area, or check with your own local, independent garden center.

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PODCAST 014

Season 2
Episode 2

Feb. 1, 2023

Would a rose by any other name smell as sweet? What if we didn't call it a rose? On this episode of Garden Time we talk about plant names. We discuss why we use Latin in naming plants and some of the weirdest common names that we could find. It's all about names on this episode of Garden Time.



As a gardener, have you ever wondered why we use Latin names for plants, or thought about why some plants have unique and weird common names? In this episode of Garden Time we did a little research and sat down to talk about those questions and many more about plants and how we name them.

Judy, Ryan and producer Jeff found some chairs at the AI's Garden and Home in Sherwood, Oregon to discuss this very broad and unique topic. We started with Latin. Latin names are the most common form of scientific naming and classification. Actually the naming of plants is as old as

time itself. People would make up names for the plants they were familiar with and those names were shared throughout local cultures. However, that proved to be a problem as time passed and people tried to share information on different plants. How can you share information on plants if every culture has a different name for each plant? More on those common names later.

In the 18th century scientists were looking for a system to standardize the naming of plants. Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus eventually came up with the binomial (two-names) system of naming plants. He chose Latin which was considered a 'dead'

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language, meaning that there was no new words or slang created over time. Latin words were also descriptive so they could help you even if you didn't know what a plant looked like (for example, if you see the name 'alba', which means 'white' in Latin, you know that some part of the plant is probably white). Linnaeus used the binomial system to classify plants with the first name, Genus (always capitalized) representing the a large group of plants with a similar ancestor or similar characteristics. That is followed by the species (lowercase letter), an even smaller grouping of the Genus with even more shared characteristics. So when you have a 'Rosa alba' you can figure out that you are looking at a 'white rose'. Even the current human race uses a Latin name, Homo sapiens (meaning 'wise man') to classify our species. The naming of plants can go even further if you refer to specific cultivars. Cultivars are the new, and significantly different, plants in this family that are produced through cross breeding and hybridization.

This helps growers, retailers and customers to determine the specific plant they are talking about. If you go to a local garden center and ask for a maple you could be referring to a large variety of trees. If you want a red maple, then asking for an Acer rubrum, is the way to go. Then by selecting a specific cultivar like a 'Frank Jr' (common name 'Redpointe' Red Maple), you are assured of getting the right tree you want. These cultivar names are not always Latin and are sometimes a common name to assist in marketing.

Latin may seem like a difficult way of tracking plants, but it does help people and scientists across different cultures and languages to categorize old and new plants. Sometimes you can even determine the area of origin by looking at the name. Chinensis means 'from China', Japonicus means 'from Japan', Canadensis means 'of Canada' and Orientalis means 'from the Orient'. You'll find many other names like these.

The Latin names can change though. In the past, plants gained their Latin names through the description of plant characteristics or observation of their structures. That means sometimes plants were grouped together because of looks and not ancestry. Now, in the age of DNA and genetic sequencing, we can find out if plants are genetically linked. That means that some plants are moved to different 'families' and that can be confusing and frustrating for growers, retailers and customers. An example that Judy used is that a Hebe is now classified as a Veronica as announced by NATAG (RHS Nomenclature and Taxonomy Advisory Group) in 2020. Even though the scientific name has changed, many retailers are still listing the plant as a Hebe to make it easier for the consumer, though the change will probably become permanent over time.

That brings us to the use of common names which we tackled after a quick break.



PHOTO CREDIT: JUDY GALLAGHER VIA FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS

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Mother-in-Law's Tongue



Shaggy Soldier

As mentioned before, the use of common names probably started when people first recognized plants and wanted to describe them to others. Common names could refer to medicinal properties (lungwort), being edible (blueberry), or sometimes just a visual observation of the plant itself (cigar flower). That led us down a long list of names that are just strange. Here are a few names that we found on a quick search of the internet and through Ryan and Judy's experience in garden centers. Sneezeweed (*Helenium* sp.), Pussetoes (*Antennaria* sp.), Cheeseweed (*Malva neglecta*), Butter-and-Eggs, Common Toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*), Fried Egg Flower (*Romnea coulteri*), Burning Bush, Sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*), Sticky Willy (*Galium aparine*), Mother-in-Law's Tongue or Snake Plant (*Sansevieria trifasciata*), Kangaroo Paws (*Anigozanthos flavidus*), Corpse Flower (*Titan arum*), American Skunk Cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*), Sausage Tree (*Kigelia Africana*), Mouse Tail (*Arisarum proboscideum*), Zebra Plant, Monkey Monstera, Bird of Paradise (*Strelitzia*), Bastard Toadflax (*Comandra umbellata*), Mad Dog Skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*), Cuckoo Flower (*Cardmine pratensis*), Viper's Bugloss (*Echium vulgare*), Shaggy Soldier (*Galinsoga quadriradiata*), Common Nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*), Brazen Hussy, Spotted Toad Lily, Peanut Butter Tree (*Clerodendrum trichotomum*), Cobra Lily and Busy Lizzies (*impatiens*). This was just a short list of names from about a half dozen sites on the internet. There are many, many more out on the market.

Of course sometimes common names become a liability to the plant when society advances and some names are a little too nasty to mention on our show. A name that is changing is the houseplant, Wandering Jew. This plant has been on the market for decades under that common name. Some growers are changing the name or using the Latin name. Judy has changed it at Al's to Wandering Dude. A more appropriate name for this beautiful plant.

Growers are also trying to come up with unique names each year when they hybridize new varieties. These common names could be tributes to friends or family, could reflect items that they resemble (like the Red Sunset Maple) or some cute name to help with marketing and selling the plant. Garden Time has been honored to have a few flower varieties named for our show. There is a rose from Heirloom Roses, an iris from Schreiner's Iris, a dahlia from Swan Island Dahlias and a tulip (no longer grown) from Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm. The three flowers can be found for purchase on the www.GardenTime.tv website.

So when you go shopping for plants take a long look at the plant tags. Not only will you find great information on the plant and planting conditions, but you may learn a bit more about the heritage of that plant.



Zebra Plant

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PODCAST 015 PREVUE

February 2023

We're preparing for our next podcast, and here are some of the topics we plan to discuss. Since the Garden Time Podcast is a free-form format, we never know what might pop up as we talk, but the information below is a loose guide as to where we'll begin. We would love to have your input on topics for future podcasts. Send us your ideas and questions at gardentime@comcast.net.

Coming in February, we're getting organized for spring! For most of us, the winter months are a break from serious gardening, but that doesn't mean you can ignore it completely. Now is the perfect time to take inventory of your garden tools. How are they holding up? Do they need to be cleaned or sharpened? Perhaps it's time to replace some of them, altogether. With that in mind, we'll have a podcast on the must-have tools for your garden shed and some of the more interesting tools to make your job easier. Find out what's hot, what's coming soon, and what every gardener should have in their arsenal for this coming season.

Later in February, we'll wrap up the month with some great early season garden tips from our favorite garden expert, Jan McNeilan. Jan is our go-to person when it comes to preparing for the seasons. She has kept copious records every year on which plants performed well and which ones didn't and she shares that knowledge with us. If you're looking for motivation to get organized and get ready for spring, Jan will share some pointers to give you a head start on your successful garden. We love having her on the show because she always has new and interesting suggestions that will make taking care of your garden as fun and easy as possible. Don't miss this episode!

Check our website regularly for the premieres of these topical and thought-provoking February podcasts.



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Judy and Ryan with Jan McNeilan.

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What To Do in the Garden

FEBRUARY

February, the month of Valentine's Day, is for lovers... of gardening! Sure, it's still a little cold, but your plants are preparing for their spring debut. Now is the time to give them a head start by pruning, cleaning, spraying and planting. Everything you do today will pay dividends for the rest of the year.

PLANNING



- Don't forget to add entries into your gardening journal! Planning ahead means you can be more focused on the important projects lined up for your garden spaces this year.

- Mason Bees: If you don't already have a Mason Bee nesting block, then this is the time to get one set up so you

can be ready to attract your own crop of pollinators. Mason Bees will start emerging late February or early March.



- Start thinking and planning what landscaping you want to do this year. Bring photos of spaces you'd like help with into your local independent garden center and ask for their advice.

PLANTING



- Fruit time! Plant blueberries, strawberries and cane berries.

Most of the plants will be available sometime in February - early shopping yields the best selection.

- Bare root fruit trees are available this month.

- Plant sweet peas! These fragrant pretty flowers should be planted late winter or early spring directly into their garden space.



TASKS, MAINTENANCE & CLEAN-UP

- Pruning can be done this month on fruit trees, blueberries, shade and flowering trees, as well as most shrubs. Rose pruning should be delayed until the last half of February. Please do some research before hacking away!

Briefly, pruning is done to improve the shape of the plant, to open it up to allow more sun in

and air to circulate through the foliage. Start your pruning by removing any dead or broken



branches or crossing limbs. Suckers and water sprouts can be removed at this time.

- Prune fall-bearing raspberries now. Check your local garden center for instructions.

- Hose off Blue Spruce and Alberta Spruce, or any spruce for that matter, with a hard stream of water to knock off any aphids feeding on the foliage.

- Dormant Spray with Bonide's

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- Peach trees second spraying can be done this month for peach leaf curl with approved fungus control labeled for peaches, like

Fungonil or Microcop.

- Water any plants that are underneath the overhang of the house or under wide growing evergreens, where soil can become quite dry.
- Fertilize trees, shrubs and perennials with slow release fertilizer like 'All Purpose Tree & Shrub

Fertilizer'.

- Soil prep for the garden. Dump on compost and turn over with a spade as it's too early and wet to rototill. You may find it interesting to know that spading the soil instead of rototilling is better for the soil structure, so don't fret if you don't have a tiller. Keep weeds pulled or smothered as you see them.



- Prune roses. The best month for pruning rose bushes is February. Please research good pruning methods for your

rose bushes.

- Get your lawn mower ready for the months ahead with a sharper blade and maybe an engine tune up.
- Boost your lawn now with a

good lawn fertilizer. Do not apply grass seed until late April.

- Look for slug eggs out in the garden. The eggs look like little white BBs and can often be found under rocks and debris in the garden. Raking up and destroying all that you find now will eliminate many hungry adult slugs later. Use Slug magic to get rid of adults. Slug Magic is a very safe product that is only iron phosphate so the pets will not be harmed, but is deadly for slugs and snails. The broken down iron then gets to be consumed by the plants!



VEGETABLE GARDEN

- Check soil temperatures for best planting times for crops desired. Refer back to soil temperature chart (January issue) for best seed sowing times and soil temperature for planting out young starts.



- Plant horseradish, rhubarb and asparagus starting this month. Make sure you hydrate asparagus crowns first by soaking the crowns in water for about 30 minutes to one hour just before planting. This will ensure the roots are well hydrated.

- Plant these veggies and herbs outdoors: peas, arugula, onions, garlic cloves, fava or broad beans, onion sets, chives, parsley and radish.

- Start these veggies indoors: artichokes, bok choy, broccoli, cabbage, celeriac. At the end of this month, start seeds for tomatoes, peppers and eggplant indoors.

- Plant onion sets, yellow, white or red.

- Watch for Walla Walla Sweets plant starts to come out late in the month or early March. It's a good idea to trim off any brown leaves from the green tops as well as set the roots into water to re-hydrate for one-half hour to one hour before planting out.



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