

# THE ECHO

## Hill and Dale District

A Member of National Garden Clubs & WA State Federation of Garden Clubs

#199 Mar 2021



### THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Happy March everyone!



Wow! One year of masks and social distancing. This year has been a challenge that is for sure. I know there has been a lot of negative things happening but let us not forget those small, good things! We have all had more time in our yards and gardens! Whether it has been taking out or putting in new plants, changing a flower bed completely or just enjoying the beauty of slowing down and enjoying the wonderful things and people we have in our lives. We have all had to learn some new and creative ways to get through 2020.

Well, sadly 2021 looks as if it too, is going to have some challenges. Meetings, whether large or small, may still be cancelled but we will be ready for whatever comes our way. We have not stopped talking and thinking about ways to keep all in touch. Zoom has been a great way to do that and I believe that it will be in our lives for a good long time. But hey, we can talk and see each other so that is great. So keep checking your emails for any new and exciting idea we come up with.

We will be having another Zoom District Meeting March 23<sup>rd</sup>. It starts at 10am - please join us! It is going to be a great meeting! Check your email as the flower schedule has been sent out a couple of times. Please look at it and send pictures for us to enjoy. Our own Midland Judges Council have a program planned, even those that are not into design will enjoy this program.

I want to give a big shout out to each club member. The wonderful donations you all supplied for the Orting Veterans Village were amazing! A few of us took them down to drop them off. The people that are putting this all together were thrilled with everything we donated. I know in the future there will be other ways to continue to help these Vets get on their feet - helping them garden will be one of them.



Stay safe and healthy  
Rachel

# District Meeting

## March 23, 2021

### Via Zoom

Let's **"Spring Outside In"** at our District Meeting on Tuesday, March 23 at 10am until about 12pm or so. Please join us using our Zoom account # 622 744 7615. No password or email link needed.

We will present our District Flower Show Entries in a slide show for all to enjoy. Don't forget to submit all of your entries between March 1<sup>st</sup> and March 19<sup>th</sup>.

Enter your bulb flowers, flowering trees/shrubs, some perennials, houseplants, and houseplants with cut flowers added.

Please see the Schedule that was emailed out to all members for more information. Have you ever wanted to enter a lovely flower or flowering branch but did not want to cut it, well now you do not have to. Just put white foam board, or poster board behind your flower or branch and snap away!!!! For your cut horticulture, please use white foam board, or poster board behind and underneath your clear bottles.



After our Flower Show, the Midland Judges Council will share a presentation on how to transform a houseplant into a pleasing spring delight for your home.



**At this point,  
we are hoping  
to be back at  
the fair-  
grounds**

**So . . . . . this is the plan!**

Join us for our meetings to brainstorm

1<sup>st</sup> planning meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, March 23, at 2pm.

2<sup>nd</sup> planning meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, April 27, at 2pm.

Zoom log in Id # 622 744 7615

Please start thinking of how we can decorate, plan for the fun, paint??, come up with kids activities and a kids planting project plus everything else with this year's theme.

Looking forward to your ideas & help.

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Paphiopedilum that I bought in Florida 5 years ago and this is the first time that it has bloomed. They only bloom once every 2-4 years, so I am very proud of this pretty girl.

Linda Pempeck



## COUNTRY GARDENERS

Well here we are entering a New Year. Covid 19 still haunts us, but there is hope this year with the emergence of the vaccines that are now available. Hopefully, a great many of our club members have been able to navigate the cumbersome system and have been or will be soon vaccinated. We are seeing positive reactions to our vigilance this past year. We just need to continue and hope that soon we will be able to again meet safely.

Our club has not had an actual meeting for some time. Our President, Chris Sherrill has been doing her best to keep us all together, albeit not in the same room. She came up with a great idea of doing "mini biographies". Giving us a chance to share some of ourselves with others in the club. The idea was to keep everyone in touch and to also connect with each other more. Sadly, only a few responses were sent, we started at the end of the alphabet, so perhaps that was an issue. We are starting again in hopes that more will share. She has also organized a couple of outside activities, but with the weather change that has become difficult.



During the Christmas holiday we usually make centerpieces for Heartwood Extended Health Care, but because of the pandemic our usual activities needed to be altered. This year several of our club members made tray favors (mini Christmas/Winter theme designs). We channeled our creativity and used bottle caps or juice caps as our base and added greenery and knick-knacks to make the centerpieces. Chris S delivered them to the facility. They were thrilled to receive approximately 100 of these for their guests. We are truly hopeful that this brought a smile to their faces during a time when it has been hard for families and friends to visit.

We were hoping that after the first of the year that we may be able to meet in person. That has not yet happened, but we have not been idle. The Washington State Soldiers Home in Orting is having constructed approximately 35 Tiny homes for the homeless Veterans.

A request for help was made to the Hill and Dale district to assist in furnishing items for these tiny homes. Many of the individual clubs stepped up to help, Country Gardeners purchased 36 wastebaskets and filled them with toiletry items as our contribution. This was a fun project and one that is desperately needed; something we could do to show respect and gratitude for their years of service.

Hopefully, we all took the time to enjoy the beautiful blanket of snow Mother Nature shared with us. Planning our spring gardens will keep us busy!.

Happy Spring all---stay healthy and safe

Kathleen Muckian, Secretary-Country Gardeners

## GLOVE AND TROWEL

Araucaria Araucana (commonly called The Monkey Puzzle Tree) is a wild, 'scary' ever-green with open splaying and spiraling branches. The tree can grow 70 ft tall and 30 ft wide and form loose see-through, pyramidal shape with a straight trunk. The tree is so open you can see through it.



The Monkey Tree forms a 6 inch long pine cones that can take 2-3 years to mature to 9 inch76 cones. At that point the cone breaks apart to release their 1 1/2 inch long, nut like seed. The seeds germinate best when sown within one month after collection. I was given a mature cone and the inner seed of the cone from a neighbor.

The Monkey Tree originates from South Chile and Western Argentina. It grows very well in the Pacific NW. These trees are not found growing anywhere else in Washington or any other state.



## ROOT & BLOOM

Just when the Bloomers were ready to have an actual in-person meeting, along came the snow. But if every cloud has a silver lining, it's snow for gardeners. The flakes contain some trace elements, particularly plant-available forms of nitrogen, a nutrient often in short supply. As a result, snow is called "the poor person's fertilizer." AND—according to the National Atmospheric Deposition Program which measures anything falling from the sky that isn't some form of water, it's a better fertilizer today than it used to be, thanks to pollution.

Anyway, on to what we've been up to, i.e. regular ZOOM meetings thanks to Kathy Johnson. Kathy attended Michigan State Garden Club ZOOM training classes, so in December we watched a YouTube program on Pothos, Draceanas and Ferns hosted by Oregon resident Laura LeBoutillier.



Our January program was supposed to be an "in person" on bonsais. Once again, cloistered, we watched *Bonsai 101* put on by Dan Robinson of Elandan Gardens in Gorst. Which brings us to February, when Judy Strickland had a show-and-tell on getting our plants and flowers ready for the March District Flower Show.

With so many things on hold, it was good to see what we could do to support the new Tiny Village for Homeless Vets at the Orting Soldiers Home. Our treasury was supposed to pay for the 35 small coffee brewers we purchased, but so many club members made individual contributions, their money paid for the pots plus coffee filters.

The frosting on the cake was that Rosie Trujillo contacted Dillano, a specialty coffee roaster in Sumner and the company donated coffee.

As for what our club members have been up to, pretty much everyone is keeping busy one way or another. Here are a few examples:

Kathy Johnson: Finished the National Garden Club garden school.

Norma Humphreys: Had a second foot surgery.

Debbie Jay: Had cataract surgery.

Kim Munson: Listened to books on overdrive from the Pierce County Library while getting for the April 23-25 Great Junk Hunt at the Puyallup Fair Grounds.

Bridget Pilgrim: In addition to taking regular walks, has been reading Wilber Smith novels on Africa.

Patty (and Gene) Power: Celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

Judy Strickland: Has been binge-watching *The West Wing* and trying to get her computer un-infected.

Karla Stover: Has a new, non-fiction book called *Wicked Tacoma* coming out in late June.

Rosie Trujillo: Has been organizing old files, shredding documents, and exercising. She's lost 12 lbs.

Doris Yuckert: Celebrated her January 15<sup>th</sup> birthday with a pizza party in the garage.

Rachel Jennings: Has been binge-watching, first, the *FBIs Most Wanted*, followed by *Heartland* so she has happy thoughts at bedtime.

And here are a few garden-related websites our members have used and recommend:

**Thesucculentsource.com**: Kathy Johnson ordered from them and quickly received healthy plants.

**MrsMunson**: on YouTube. Our own Kim demonstrates how to wire objects and make lamps, decoupage, and interesting ways to plant succulents.

**Garden answer**: on YouTube. The hostess has dozens of tutorials on all kinds of garden-related projects.

**Floretflowers.com**: A Skagit Valley company. They sell seeds for longer-stemmed sweat peas.

Gardening doesn't require a covid mask, and according to Audrey Hepburn, "To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow."

Karla Stover  
Secretary pro-tem.



## DOGWOOD

Howdy-do, fellow gardeners! We haven't met in person for so long now, but Dogwood members are trying to stay in touch with Zoom and phone calls and social media postings. It's important to keep our connections during this challenging winter. All of us are looking forward to spring with hope and anticipation! Here's the latest scoop from your local plant-life-lovin' folks.

At our December Zoom meeting, President Diane Mettler shared a slide show of members' holiday decorations. It was fun to see everyone's festive décor! We also all shared what gets us through the winter months as a gardener. It was great to get inspired by everyone's ideas to maybe try something new in the winter.

I personally made my first batch of apple mead with all the extra apples from our trees. It's challenging to keep up with them! We'll know in a year or so if I am any good at it.

Quite a few of us like to make sure to keep our bird feeders full so the little feathered bellies are not empty and we can enjoy their joyous music in the spring. We also announced winners Ginny Phillips and Bryn Williams for best Amaryllis growing (our group project). Their plants lived through the year and bloomed again! Darlene Nelson and Pam Waring won "most festively dressed" for our holiday meeting.



Dogwood donated, along with several other garden clubs and the district club, to the Orting Old Soldiers Home Tiny Homes project. Our contribution was kitchen towels and hot mitts. Jane Smith also donated soup mixes for the 35 mini homes. Lisa, along with several other district members helped deliver the donated items. All the donations will be stored until the homes are ready in April.

At our February Zoom meeting we all shared our big gardening project or goal for 2021. Seems like there were a couple of themes going on – one was for pruning and removing trees, and the other for putting in new beds, many wanting to put in raised beds. I know I'll be trying to expand my vegetable and herb garden with more raised beds as well, and hoping to branch out into growing berries too.



I sure hope my fruit trees make it through this very, very wet winter (see picture of how a couple of them are just sitting in water... had to move a couple of them because the

ground got too swampy, much worse than the other years we've been here). My herb spiral seems to be doing pretty darn well, so maybe I'll create another one or two of those.

Winter at the Dorsey property also has us brainstorming about pond maintenance. We have this decent-sized pond right outside the back door that we have put aerators in a couple of years ago, planted some lilies, and get lots of dragonflies in the summer. We have visions of trying to get it clear enough for swimming one day, without hurting the wildlife. Just reducing the muck and algae. Right now we have dozens and dozens of geese visiting every day (there are hundreds here every March since we've moved here) and a few families of ducks that live here year round, as well as the elk and deer wandering through (7 foot high fence around my garden and new fruit trees to keep them out!). Also, we definitely need to get that bird netting up against the roof over the back deck before spring to avoid a repeat of mud swallows completely taking over the deck area. Had about 3 dozen of them nesting in our eaves last year! No shortage of honey-dos, I'm sure you all can relate!!

Kindest regards to all and hoping everyone stays healthy and happy – can't wait until we can see each other again in person!

~ Crystal Dorsey

## Billy Frank Jr. National Wildlife Refuge

I am sure my household is not the only one feeling a bit of “cabin fever”, with the Covid 19, heavy rain and after holiday droop it’s great to finally get outside. We talk walks along the Chehalis Western Trail that is accessible from our neighborhood, but the same trees and ferns can get boring also.

I am recommending a drive and a walk at the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, located at 100 Brown Farm Rd NE, Olympia, WA 98516. From I-5 southbound take Exit 114 toward Nisqually. Turn right onto Brown Farm Rd; destination is on the right.. The signs are obvious. There is a fee of \$3 per day and that is for four adults. Children 16 and under are free. Below is a link to the Reserve website.

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/billy frank jr nisqually/>



The Reserve was established in 1974 after heavy pressure from the Nisqually tribe to preserve the last remaining undeveloped estuary in the lower Puget Sound. Centuries old dikes, built by former farmers were opened and the acres of tidal estuary wetlands are regenerating to their original ecology.

It’s a great place to walk, stroll, observe, gawk and smell the salt air. Dikes that once held back saltwater tides and Nisqually river floods are now flat easily negotiated trails and boardwalks. Anyone can negotiate the terrain there. Usually, there is an indoor visitor center and restrooms, all closed now due to the pandemic. Instead several Port-A-Potties are dispersed for visitor use, in just the right places....Oh, no dogs allowed at this park.

Bird watcher come from all over to visit this unique viewing opportunity. The Nisqually estuary is a resting place for migrating birds of many species going to and from the Arctic seasonally. Just last week, at the Nisqually River Overlook, we observed a Harbor Seal (*Phoca vitulina*) the most widely distributed species of pinniped, that had swum up river during the flood tide and was fishing in the muddy rushing water. Amazing how long it could hold its breath between dives and that it would try and fish in water that was like chocolate milk. I had seen seals on the open ocean before, out salmon fishing and along the Oregon coast, but never up river like this. I have added it to my “Life List” of wildlife observations.

The letter below was received from the Orting Veterans Village in response to all of the Hill and Dale donations.

Dear Local Garden Clubs,

We at the Orting Veterans Village cannot thank each and everyone of you enough! Your extreme kindness and generosity has ensured that the essential needs of the 35 veterans moving in this spring will be fully met.

We plan to open March of this year with a staggered move-in to keep everyone safe in light of COVID-19. We hope to be at full occupancy in May. Once it is safe, we would love to have your garden clubs out to the village. We have many volunteer opportunities, including helping in the villagers’ garden!

The village will feature 35 individual tiny homes, a community garden, and a community building with staff offices, a large kitchen, laundry facilities, lounge areas, and a dining area.

Quixote Communities, the non-profit managing the village, provides permanent, supportive housing. We are eager to meet our new veteran villagers and help their individual needs.

This project was only possible because of supporters in the community like you. The time and effort you have dedicated to this project is commendable, and we are so grateful. The items you donated will be appreciated and cherished by our residents.

Thank you,  
Orting Veterans Village





## SPRING EPHEMERALS

Article courtesy of Old Goat Farm

Spring ephemeral describes a life cycle of perennial woodland wildflowers which develop aerial parts (i.e. stems, leaves, and flowers) of the plant early each spring and then quickly bloom, produce seed and then go summer dormant. Some of the plants included in this group are Tulipa, Narcissus, Eranthis, Galanthus, Trillium, Anemone, Frillaria, Crocus, Cyclamen, Erythronium, Iris, Corydalis, Muscari and Cardamine.



Trillium ovatum in the woods at Old goat Farm

They have become some of my favorite plants in the garden. Years ago, while working at the Miller Garden, I developed an interest in these type plants. Mrs. Miller had planted heavily for fall interest but also had some wonderful spring plants. We decided we would give the garden more spring interest by really punching it up with spring ephemerals.

I naturally started to do at home what I did at work and now have many in my own garden. They help to start the season early and really fill in between other plants. It's all just part of my no bare earth policy. I like to use them between some of the later perennials. The spring ephemerals come up early and bloom then the other plants come out covering up the dying foliage and occupy the same space. You don't have to clean them up much. It all just gets recycled, great compost. They also work well beneath deciduous trees and shrubs. There is plenty of light until the woody plants leaf out and that is about the time the spring ephemerals go dormant. This is how they often occur in the wild.

Gardening in the northwest is almost a year round activity. There is a bit of down time between Thanksgiving and Christmas but that seems to be about it. A few of the early spring ephemerals such as Galanthus and Eranthis start blooming just after the first of the year. This group of plants give you something to look forward to on those cold winter days. It's exciting to walk through the garden and see a little bit of green poking up. By March and into April the garden really starts to explode. Old Goat Farm has a number of the spring ephemerals so next time we are open come on out and see which ones you'd like to add to your own garden.





### SPREAD A LITTLE SUNSHINE!

Do you know a member who could use a cheerful note or card? Let **Doris Yuckert** know and she will send out a card.

**dyuckert@centurylink.net** or  
253.845.8720

### MISSION STATEMENT

***National Garden Clubs, Inc.*** provides education, resources and national networking opportunities for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibility.

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