

Thinking Spring

Here's hoping the extreme weather we've had is over. We've enjoyed some beautiful sunny days recently, making it a little easier to imagine getting outside in our yards...bet most of us can't wait. Plants are just beginning to peek up through the soil; and we can start thinking about tidying up or perhaps plan a new look for our gardens this year. These projects inevitably involve moving and or dividing some of our plantings.

It is with these tasks in mind and with our Plant Sale fast approaching, that the **POPULAR PLANT SALE PLANT LIST** has been included with this newsletter. The list of plants has been expanded with space provided if you wish to include a plant you have, not shown. Extra copies of this list will be available at our meetings. Practical guidelines are given on the reverse side to help you when potting up plants for our sale. Please remember to label your plants~~it's of great help to us when setting up. Last year, we also found it saved valuable time on the morning of our sale, to have pre-priced larger groups of plant contributions. If you discover that you will be bringing a large quantity of a variety of plants, even if it's the week before our sale, please let me know.

A **PLANT SALE VOLUNTEER FORM** is also enclosed. We're a month later, as normally it's sent out in January~~your early return of this form would be appreciated. You can now access **FORMS** on our website at www.brags.ca. Simply 'save' a copy of the *Word* format, fill in blanks (you'll need to adjust some of the spacing as it is not an *on-line* form) and email it to info@brags.ca. Or, bring completed forms with you to our February or March meetings. All volunteers will be contacted in February/early March.

Our sale was so much fun last year! I hope that all who helped out can do so again and want to encourage members 'new' to our Plant Sale experience, to come out and volunteer. You don't have to be a plant expert because we have master gardeners in attendance for all the "hard" questions. It's a wonderful way to get involved~~benefiting our club and helping all those happy plant shoppers! Thanks~~

Susan McDougall



**The flowers of late winter and early
spring occupy places
in our hearts well out of proportion to
their size.**

Gertrude S. Wister



My Favorite Plant Today is . .

. *Erica carnea* 'Springwood White'

Consider a small evergreen shrub that blooms continuously for four months during the dreariest time of the year, rarely has trouble with pests or disease, is simple to prune and completely hardy in our gardens. My Favorite Plant, today, is all this and more, yet many of us dismiss it as too common to consider for our gardens. I am speaking of the winter blooming heathers. Actually, plants in the genus *Erica* are usually called heaths while heathers are members of the *Calluna* genus – these bloom later in the year – so I should refer to my favorite plant as a winter blooming heath.

My favorite cultivar is *Erica carnea* 'Springwood White'. It has been blooming since the beginning of January and will continue right through April. It has small, white, flowers in an inverted urn shape that is typical of this family. The light green foliage is needle-like and arranged in whorls around the stem. There are two periods of growth, one just as the flowers are fading and the other later in the early summer. The new growth gives the plant a lovely flush of pale green that I enjoy as much as the flowers.

Springwood White is low growing with a height of about 8-10 inches. If left to grow unchecked it will sprawl widely and develop an open centre. I prefer my plants to grow in a compact, bushy shape, so every year I shear off all the flowers just as they are fading and turning brown. While pruning I also look for and pot up any branches that have rooted themselves in the soil - an easy acquisition for the plant sale.

Ericas prefer full to part sun, but grow very well in more shade. As with most plants, the more sun it gets the more flowers and tighter habit will be produced. I have found that as my garden has grown there are quite a few heaths that do not get as much sun as they used to and, even though they do not bloom, they still make a great groundcover. I especially love the look of winter heath on a slope. If you are building a small, or large, rock retaining wall it is easy to fill the holes with this plant and within a few years it will fill in and you will have a wall of winter colour.

Diane Allison

WRENHAVEN NURSERY CLOSING



Wrenhaven Nursery, growers of specialty rhodos, azaleas and bonsai, has recently announced that it is closing at the end of May after many decades in business. Tiina Turu and Hart Wellmeier (and his parents before them) have shared their knowledge and experience as well as selling plants to many of us over that time. The Rhodo Truss Display at the Rhodo Festival has also been enriched the past few years by a generous contribution of trusses from Wrenhaven.

The remaining plants will be sold at a **60% discount** (by appointment only until February 28) until closing on May 31.

Check: wrenhavennursery.com
16651 20 Ave Surrey
604-536-7283

HAVEN'T WE SUFFERED ENOUGH?

Just in case we get any more freezing temperatures this winter, you may want to consider using a more environmentally friendly alternative to rock salt for melting ice on sidewalks and driveways. One good site that discusses pros and cons of other choices is -

<http://www.gardensalive.com/article.asp?ai=524&bhc d2=1168908877>.

BRAGS' Year at a Glance

February 7, 2007

Les Clay

Species Rhododendrons

March 7, 2007

Sharon Hanna

Starting Plants from Seed

April 4, 2007

Dave Hutch

Native plants for the Home Garden

April 22, 2007

BRAGS Plant Sale

May 2, 2007

Ayuko Inoue

May 6, 2007

Rhododendron Festival

June 6, 2007

Regular Meeting

Speaker to be confirmed

July, 2007

Garden Tour

August, 2007

Picnic

Meetings: 7:00 pm

Burnaby Village Museum

(Discovery Room)

6501 Deer Lake Avenue

Every gardener knows
that under the cloak of winter
lies a miracle ...

a seed waiting to sprout,
a bulb opening to the light,
a bud straining to unfurl.

And the anticipation
nurtures our dream.

Barbara Winkler

Our February Speaker

Les Clay

Les Clay has been in the nursery business for over 50 years and currently operates Rhodohaven Gardens in Langley. He is a well-known expert in rhodo propagation and in 1975 was President of the International Plant Propagation Society. Two years later he began Les Clay Nursery (now sold) using new tissue culture technology. Les will talk to us about species rhodos with recommendations for suitable types to grow in containers and small gardens.

Letter to the Editor

I just want to say a big thank you to the long-term members of the club for the support given to us rookies. They make our jobs look that much easier and go so much smoother. Case in point, on the morning of our January meeting I was faced with the dilemma of a speaker canceling. After just a few phone calls amongst a few members, Norbert and Val Wuensche, like the seasoned pros that they are, stepped up and saved the day. So a personal thank you not only to them but to all the more senior members for taking up the slack for all us new members still trying to find our way. Consider this a big bouquet sent your way. Thank you.

Peter Barnsdale.

BRAGS 2007 EXECUTIVE

President

Susan Brandl
522-6190

Vice-President

Faye Kilpatrick
434-5921

Treasurer

Heather MacKay
438-1342

Secretary

Beverlee Birce
525-0201

STANDING COMMITTEES

Fund Raising

Peter Barnsdale
421-8987
& Cheryl Fiddis
435-2801

Membership

David Forsyth
298-6350

Nominations

Cheryl Fiddis
435-2801
Marti Tutti
436-1942
& Val Wuensche
298-2836

Publicity

Jackie Walker
420-0275

Rhododendron

Festival

Judy Wellington
434-8287
& Doreen Harold
434-1102

OTHER COMMITTEES

Garden Contest

Judy Wellington
434-8287

Garden Tour

Wendy Snyder
937-0556

& Faye Kilpatrick
434-5921

Newsletter

Margot Moser
250-468-9167

Anne & David Forsyth
298-6350

Plant Sale

Susan McDougall
432-9641

Raffle & Greeting

Val Wuensche
298-2836
Judy Wellington
434-8287

Refreshments

Wendy Snyder
937-0556

Speakers

Peter Barnsdale
421-8987

Website

David Forsyth
298-6350