



# GARDEN DELIGHTS

Issaquah Garden Club Newsletter—March 2008  
Michele Peltonen, Editor

Some of you may already figured this out, but for those who haven't I have an admission to make. I am a bit of a science geek. When one of the speakers at the recent ELWD General Membership Meeting mentioned the concept of citizen science in the realm of gardening, I was thinking what a great idea. So I thought I'd look into some of the options. - Michele

## CITIZEN SCIENCE IN THE GARDEN

Phenology is the study of the timing of recurring natural phenomena, such as the of emergence of leaves or flowers, the first appearance of migrating birds and the laying of eggs by birds and amphibians. The observation of these kinds of events have been used as a natural calendar since ancient agricultural times. Now individuals can help science by gathering phenological data in their own backyard.

This data is used to track climatic changes, among other things. By enlisting the help of individuals, researchers can greatly expand the range and volume of the data collected. The result is faster and potentially better research.

An early citizen science program was Project FeederWatch, operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Since 1987 volunteers have submitted over a million data sets from observations made at backyard feeders. The information has helped researchers track populations changes, migration patterns, diseased birds and more. Twenty years later, the programs have gone beyond birds.

They now cross international boundaries and cover a variety of species. In addition, many of the programs encourage the participation of children and some have specific activities designed for young minds. Backyard "citizen

science" is a wonderful way to get children and grandchildren involved in the garden and the natural world beyond.

## USA National Phenology Network

This network is hosted by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. It facilitates the collection and dissemination of phenological data to support climate change research. At this website you will find links to programs in the US and elsewhere. [www.uwm.edu/Dept/Geography/npn/index.html](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Geography/npn/index.html)

## USA-NPN Project Budburst

Probably the program of most interest to gardeners, there is still time to get in on the action this spring because most of the relevant species have not yet flowered (at least in our area). There are a variety of plants from which you can choose to track. And the great website will even help you figure out the latitude and longitude of your site. [www.windows.ucar.edu/citizen\\_science/budburst/](http://www.windows.ucar.edu/citizen_science/budburst/)

## FrogwatchUSA

Something to get the boys interested. And the girls, too. Amphibians are especially sensitive



Robin eggs—a sure sign spring is really here!

to changes in their environment, which makes them an important indicator of ecosystem health. Nature's "canary in the coalmine".

[www.nwf.org/frogwatchusa/](http://www.nwf.org/frogwatchusa/)

### **Project FeederWatch**

Not specifically a phenology project, but still a great way to do citizen science. A well established program that even has a prepared science module designed for homeschoolers.

[www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/)

## **GARDEN CLUB EVENTS**

### **March 12<sup>th</sup> – HARDY FUCHSIAS**

We are delighted to have Harry King presenting the program at our March meeting. Harry has been growing hardy fuchsias for 30 years and has a wealth of knowledge to share with us. There is remarkable variety within the fuchsia family, from big 4" blossoms to teeny ones only 1/4" long. Many are hardy in our area and Harry is bound to introduce us to varieties we will want to grow in our own gardens.

### **May 3<sup>rd</sup> - IGC PLANT SALE**

If you aren't already, it's time to start thinking about the club plant sale. Pot up extras from your garden or start seeds. But please, no mint or known invasives. We'll need help the day of the sale. A schedule will be circulated at the next meeting, but if you would like first choice of the positions let Michele know and she will email you a copy of the schedule sooner.

## **GARDEN MEMORY**

*I remember that my aunt, Elsie Van Aken, was a marvelous gardener. She had a vegetable garden and made all sorts of pickles and jams. When I was about 9 or 10 I loved to ride my bike to her house in Yakima and help her. She also had beautiful annual beds which she propagated by seed. And indoors she raised many tropical plants such as orchids. When she died at age 98 her obituary mentioned her being known for her "green thumb." – Jeanette Mahoney*

## **OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Class - Rain Gardens:** Wednesday, March 12th, 6:30 to 8:30 pm, Third Place Commons, Lake forest Park Towne Centre, Chinook Bend near Carnation. Learn to create a rain garden in your landscape. Registration is free, but RSVP's are appreciated. Contact Melissa Campbell at [melissa.campbell@kingcounty.gov](mailto:melissa.campbell@kingcounty.gov).

**Planning Meeting for Tree Preservation in Issaquah:** Tuesday, March 18th, 7:00 pm, Eagle Room, Issaquah City Hall Police Station. City Council will host a Town Hall meeting to receive citizen input on this important topic.

**Seed & Plant Exchange:** Saturday, March 22nd, 10—11 am, Duthie Hill Park parking lot, 27101 Duthie Hill Road. For more information see the Partnership for Rural King County website calendar. [www.prkc.org/calendar.htm](http://www.prkc.org/calendar.htm)

## **CONTEMPLATING WEEDS**

Creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) is such a common sight that it is easy to forget it is an invasive non-native. This "Weed of Concern" has been our parts since at least 1889, but that is no reason to ignore it.

Learn more about buttercup, other weeds and what to do about them in the King County Noxious Weed Control Program newsletter online at their website: <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/lands/weeds/kcweednews.htm>

