The Potent Teller

Newsletter of the Salal Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society
serving Northern Snohomish, Skagit and Island Counties

February 2017 www.wnps.org/salal/ **Issue 1-17**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Brenda Cunningham

It will soon be one year since I was elected to chair the Salal Chapter at our February 2016 meeting. Although I did not have a great deal of enthusiasm for the position, it was clear from the turnout at the meeting that the membership would like to continue as a chapter and I was willing to give it a try. We made some decisions about how to proceed. Jean Birdsall agreed to continue as Treasurer and Kathy Murray stepped up to be Secretary. Without those positions filled we would not have made it through this past year. And now we are fortunate to have a Vice Chair, Kerman Kermoade. I am much more hopeful about the chapter's future. Tara McGown has taken on the production of this newsletter – enabling us to communicate with all of you. We have received some wonderful program ideas for future meetings and even have a members' picnic planned for May. Our membership has grown over the past year. We now have 116 members, 23 of whom joined or rejoined in this past year. So, the future of the Salal Chapter looks bright. But I encourage you to get more involved. Some things we could use help with include re-establishing a scholarship program, planning and leading a plant walk (you don't have to be a botanist, the group will identify the plants together), writing an article for the newsletter, publicizing our chapter meetings, recruiting members, staffing a booth at a plant fair or festival, and volunteering in the display garden. As you can see from this list, there is more to do. But with the solid backing of the chapter board you could focus on just one of these items and make a real difference.

Some notes about the financial summary found with this newsletter: We are gradually drawing down the cash reserves, spending on improvements to the garden with the goal of lower maintenance in the long term. Garden expenses were minimal this year as we received arborist chips for free, but we plan to buy fresh cedar chips this year. We had a high speaker expense in 2016 as we held a special meeting in May at the WSU-NWREC facility, we do not expect to have such an expense again this year. The growing number of members who have opted to receive the newsletter electronically has helped keep printing and postage expenses low. We were able to make a donation to WNPS operations as well as to the update of Hitchcock and Cronquist. In 2017 we expect modest increases in plant sales and expenses for the sales. We have really reached capacity on sales space. We hope to re-establish a scholarship program in 2017 and have budgeted a significant increase in that expense.

Salal Chapter Spring Events

Tuesday, Feb. 14, 10 to 2 – potting up bare root plants in the nursery behind the Display Garden.

Saturday, Feb. 18, 10 to noon – chapter meeting, Padilla Bay Interpretive Center: speaker Abe Lloyd, "Coast Salish Ethnobotany".

Thursday, March 16, 10 to 2, spreading chips on path, weeding and planting in the garden.

Thursday, April 20, 10 to 2 – spreading chips on path, weeding and planting in the garden.

Friday, May 5, 10 to 2 – Native Plant Sale setup.

Saturday, May 6, 10 – noon – Native Plant Sale.

Saturday, May 20, 10 to 2 – chapter meeting, Deception Pass State Park: tour of beach restoration project with Park Manager Jack Hartt, barbeque potluck afterwards.

Mahonia nervosa Christine Farrow

Linda Henley

SALAL NATIVE PLANT GARDEN UPDATE

Brenda Cunningham, Native Plant Garden Coordinator

Once again it is time to prepare the display garden and nursery for our annual spring sale which will be held on May 6th this year. The garden has required very little attention this winter, for which I am thankful, since the ground was frozen. I plan to get fresh cedar chips this spring and we will soon be potting up bare root stock to hold for the fall sale. We received a lot of donated conifers in 2016, from WSU researchers, as well as from Master Gardeners and Salal Chapter members. Some of those were sold in the fall sale, but many have gone on to restoration projects in the valley. If you have native conifers, like cedars and Douglas fir, that have come up in the wrong places and you just can't bear to compost them, please pot them up and bring to the nursery. We will nurture them for a season and find new homes for them in the fall.

Please consider volunteering in the garden, especially this spring as we prepare for the sale. We could use people willing to haul and spread chips, as well as people interested in potting up the bare root plants. And just before the sale we need people to help the nursery plants look their best, trimming and cleaning up the pots, and inserting price tags.

There are several volunteer events scheduled this spring. If you would like to be reminded about them, please send me an email at nativegarden@fidalgo.net. See you in the garden!

Brenda Cunningham

Volunteer Events at the Native Plant Garden, 10 am to 2 pm:

Tuesday, February 14th – potting up bare root plants.
Thursday, March 16th – spreading chips on paths, weeding and planting in the garden.
Thursday, April 20th – spreading chips on paths, weeding and planting in the garden.
Friday, May 5th – Native Plant Sale setup.
Saturday, May 6th – Native Plant Sale 10 to noon – please arrive at 9:30 if you plan to help.

UPCOMING SALAL CHAPTER MEETINGS

Saturday, February 18, 10 to noon
Padilla Bay Interpretive Center.
Coast Salish Ethnobotany - Abe Lloyd
For countless generations Native Americans have stewarded the rich and diverse ecosystems surrounding the Salish Sea. Join Ethnobotanist T. Abe Lloyd as he explores the resiliency of indigenous food systems—ranging from as high as a Mt. Goat can climb to as deep as a Halibut can dive. Lloyd is an instructor at WWU and WCC as well as the director of Salal, the Cascadian Food Institute, where he works to promote indigenous foods.
Saturday, May 20, 10 to 2pm
Bowman Bay Shelter at Deception Pass State Park**.** Park Manger Jack Hartt will give us a tour of a beach restoration project and we will enjoy a barbeque potluck afterwards. The Chapter will provide items for the grill and members are encouraged to bring salads and desserts.

Chapter Meeting Minutes

Salal Chapter members can now review the minutes of the previous meeting at wnps.org/salal. Minutes will be open for approval at the February meeting.

WNPS NEWS

More information at http://www.wnps.org.
May 19 – 21, 2017 - Study Weekend
"From Sagebrush to Subalpine" Sponsored by the Northeast Chapter based at Eastern Washington University.
June 9 – 11, 2017 - Botany WA
Location: Tierra Retreat Center; Wenatchee Mountains.

Friends of the Forest Hikes

For more information see calendar page at http://www.friendsoftheacfl.org .
Friday, February 10, 10 – noon
Heart Lake hike to look for the many early signs of spring. Meet at the Heart Lake parking lot.
Friday, March 10, 10 – noon
Pine Ridge Loop, a lovely hidden meadow. Meet at the base of Mount Erie on Ray Auld Drive.

Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group

More information at http://www.skagitfisheries.org
Saturdays, February 23 and March 2, 1 to 4pm
Potting Parties at the Native Plant Nursery.
Saturday, April 22, 10 to 2 pm
Earth Day Celebration at Howard Miller Park in Rockport. Educational and service oriented activities.

Maples

Jim Duemmel

In our corner of the Pacific Northwest we have three native maples, Big-leaf Maple, Vine Maple and, less commonly, Douglas Maple. Each can be easily identified by the size and shape of its leaves and also by its winged seeds, samaras. These helicopter fruits are a little more variable than the leaves and may require a statistical viewpoint – examine several from the same tree or shrub to be sure of your identification. Leaves and samaras of these maples are shown in Figure 1. Note that the two joined (temporarily) seeds of the Big-leaf and Douglas Maples make quite an angle to each other while those of the Vine Maple point almost opposite to each other. An additional identification character, really useful in the winter, for the Vine Maple is this: the leaf buds at their base are surrounded by a fringe of hairs. A hand lens helps here.

The flowers of our three native species are also useful identification characteristics. The flowers of Big-leaf Maple, light yellow in color, hang in a dense cylinder. The flowers of both the other two are in very open clusters. Those of Douglas Maple are green and inconspicuous. Vine Maple flowers are striking. The sepals are a deep red-burgundy color and are longer that the bright white petals, beautiful flowers that warrant a close look with a hand lens.

Figure 1
Clockwise from the left: Big-leaf Maple, Douglas Maple, Vine Maple

These three are the maples you will see on hikes in the wild lands of the Pacific Northwest. However, along city streets, in city parks and backyards you will encounter a swarm of maple identification problems. Maples are favorite landscape trees and they come in bewildering variety. Figure 2 displays the leaves and samaras of some maples I found along the streets and in the parks near my Bellingham home.

All maples share standard characteristics: opposite leaves and winged fruits, always in pairs initially. However, leaf shape is a different story. Our native three adhere to the typical “maple leaf” shape, a palmately veined leaf with three to seven lobes, toothed or untoothed. (The two “lobes” closest to the petiole: are they really lobes or only large teeth? How should they be counted?)

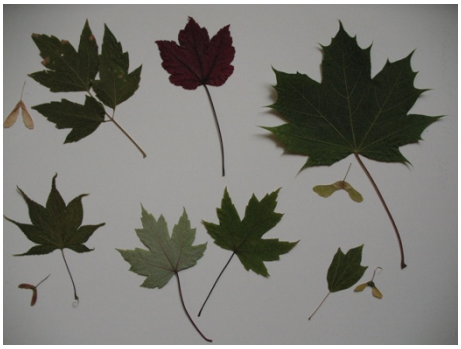


Figure 2
Some exotic maples used as landscaping, street or park trees

The maples shown in Figure 2, going clockwise starting from the upper left corner, are: Ash-leaved Maple, Red Maple, Norway Maple, Trident(?) Maple, Silver Maple (two leaves, upper and lower surfaces) and Japanese Maple. Three of these, Ash-leaved Maple, Red Maple and Silver Maple, are native to eastern North America. Norway Maple is native to Europe. The remaining two, Trident and Japanese Maple are native to eastern Asia. Surprisingly for a maple, Ash-leaved Maple has compound leaves, sometimes even with five leaflets rather than the shown three. Brilliant fall color makes Red Maple an excellent street tree. Silver Maple is another common street tree, often chosen when quick growth is desired. The “silvery” underside of its leaves suggests its name and forms a helpful identification character. Norway maple is a hardy and very common street tree that is a little difficult to distinguish from the Sugar Maple of eastern North America. Japanese Maple (two species in the horticultural trade share this common name) is extremely popular for landscaping use and comes in a vast multitude of varieties. I’m not sure I have identified the Trident Maple correctly. It’s uncommon: its leaf shape does not strongly suggest a maple but the opposite leaves and the paired samaras leave no doubt.

Maples are worldwide in distribution in the northern hemisphere with centers of diversity in eastern Asia -China, Japan, Korea – and eastern North America. Each of these centers is renowned for spectacularly colorful autumn displays, largely

a result of the bright foliage of the maples growing there.

The typical maple leaf shape (displayed on the Canadian national flag) is so iconic that species in other genera have common names that reflect their mimicry of this characteristic. Maple-leaf Currant and Maple-leaved Goosefoot are examples. In the currant and rose families maple shaped leaves are frequent. Thimbleberry and Ninebark are examples from the rose family. Still, this leaf shape is not universal among the maples as two examples in Figure 2 show. Instead, two features, opposite leaves and paired winged seeds, are reliable characteristics of the maples.

The maple genus, *Acer*, has been the type genus in the maple family, *Aceraceae*. However, the experts have transferred the genus *Acer* into the Soapberry family, *Sapindaceae*, where you will find it in the upcoming revised Hitchcock.

Figure 3
Double (the usual), triple and quadruple samaras

Maples can surprise you. We have already noticed two maples with unusual leaves in Figure 2. Here are other "surprises" you can see - if you search diligently. The flowers of maples can be male, female or perfect (male and female in the same flower) on the same plant or on different plants: maples can be dioecious, monoecious or polygamo-monoecious (a mouthful meaning separate male and female flowers on the same tree with some perfect flowers mixed in). The leaves of Douglas maple can be essentially compound, with three leaflets, on the same plant along with typical simple leaves. Usually, the fruits of maples consist of a pair of winged seeds – an identification character. But sometimes the trees miscount and produce three conjoined samaras or even, more rarely, four: examples are shown in Figure 3. Three years ago, I learned of this anomaly when someone brought an example of a triple samara to a meeting of the Komo Kulshan Chapter. That specimen came from a Trident Maple. To see if this anomaly occurred on other maples I started carefully looking at maple seeds. The result: to date I have found such samaras repeatedly on five species, all three of our natives and two exotic landscape species. If you look carefully you will find examples. Actually, I am embarrassed to admit that the pictured examples came from a Vine Maple in my backyard, a tree that grew there for thirty-five years before I noticed any nontypical samaras. In each of the last three autumns, after I learned such things existed, I have found triple samaras on that tree – easily!

Here is a list of the technical names of the species mentioned above.

Ash-leaved Maple	*Acer negundo*
Big-leaf Maple	*A. macrophyllum*
Douglas Maple	*A. glabrum*
Japanese Maple	*A. palmatum* and *A. japonicum*
Maple-leaved Currant	*Ribes acerifolium*
Maple-leaved Goosefoot	*Chenopodium simplex*
Ninebark	*Physocarpus capitatus*
Norway Maple	*A. platanoides*
Red Maple	*A. rubrum*
Silver Maple	*A. saccharinum*
Sugar Maple	*A. saccharum*
Thimbleberry	*Rubus parviflorus*
Trident Maple	*A. buergerianum*
Vine Maple	*A. circinatum*

Acer circinatum Ben Legler

Acer macrophyllum Ben Legler

Fighting Invasive Plants

Regina Wandler
Skagit Land Trust Stewardship Manager

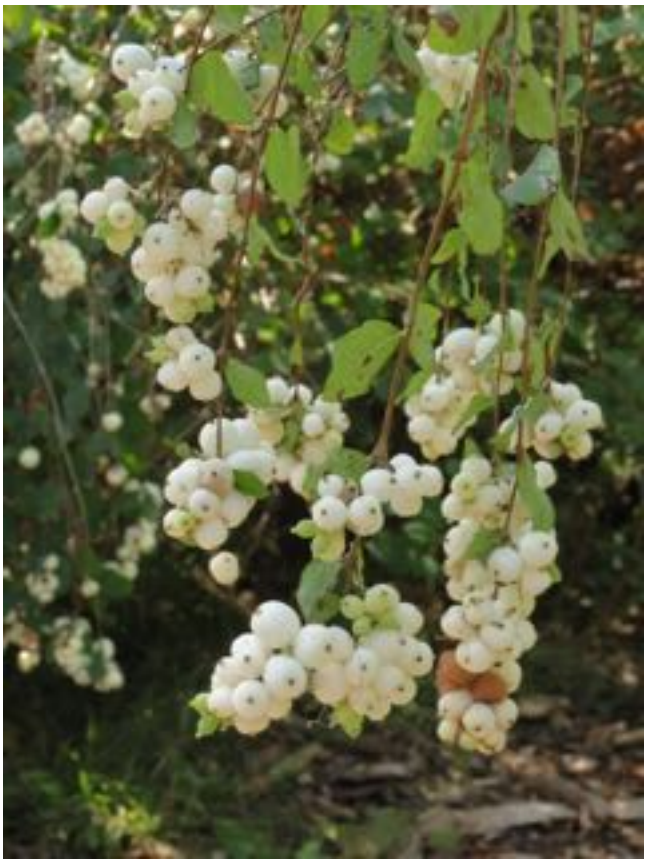
With 42 conservation areas totaling over 1700 acres to steward, Skagit Land Trust staff and volunteers find new invasive plant populations that threaten important conservation values fairly often. Making sure we know the latest listed (and sometimes, not yet listed) noxious and invasive weeds is a big job. Stewardship staff check the Washington State noxious weed list often so that we recognize new weeds on our property monitoring visits. We also focus on exploring new areas on our monitoring visits throughout the year.

Volunteers and conservation area visitors often pass us their observations, which can be particularly helpful with early detection and rapid response efforts to control new invasions. In 2013, a Skagit Valley College intern visited all of our conservation areas and mapped noxious weeds, relying extensively on help from our Land Stewards (volunteers who adopt a property and visit it regularly). Many Land Stewards include notes on invasive species in their quarterly monitoring reports.

Once staff know about invasive plant populations on our lands we can determine the most appropriate approach to control them and prioritize projects to make the best use of staff and volunteer time and funding. Sometimes we have grant funding available and can focus more time on a large control and replanting project, and sometimes we chip away at the population over time with the help of Stewardship volunteers.
If you are interested in helping us control invasive plants on protected lands throughout Skagit County, you may sign up to receive emails about upcoming work parties at www.skagitlandtrust.org.
If you are interested in completing invasive plant surveys, contact me at (360) 428-7878 or reginaw@skagitlandtrust.org.

SALAL CHAPTER ONLINE

The Salal Chapter maintains an email list of our members so we can send out timely notice of events between issues of the *Potent Teller*. If you'd like to be included or removed from the list, email Brenda Cunningham nativegarden@fidalgo.net.
You can now receive the Potent Teller via email! If you'd like to receive the newsletter in PDF format instead of paper, email Tara McGown at kcrozier@frontier.com.



Symphoricarpos albus Brenda Cunningham

Impromptu Walks/Hikes with Lucie

Lucie Johns will continue to schedule and lead plant hikes on short notice during the summer. If you want to be on that list, please send her your e-mail address luciejohns@hotmail.com.

Please direct address changes to Washington Native Plant Society, 6310 NE 74th St, Suite 215E, Seattle, WA 98115, 206-527-3210 or call toll free 1-888-288-8022 or email wnps@wnps.org.

The Washington Native Plant Society (WNPS) is dedicated to the preservation, conservation, and study of the native plants of Washington and to the education of the public on the values of native flora and its habitat.

Salal Chapter Officers
Chair: Brenda Cunningham
Vice- Chair: Kerman Kermoade
Treasurer: Jean Birdsall
Secretary: Kathy Murray
Chapter Botanist: Vacant
Visit our website at www.wnps.org/salal
The Potent Teller is issued four times yearly on the first of February, May, September and November. Direct submissions to: Tara McGown PO Box 26 Rockport, WA 98283 (360-853-8375), email kcrozier@frontier.com

Lupinus Latifolius with frost Christine Farrow

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