

# Program Coordinator's Corner

My life as the Program Coordinator has been a great experience.

I retired in 2008 after 30 years as Program Director for the CWU - Clinical Lab, Science Program and Associate Professor, teaching & training college graduates. I worked with Kelly Kindlespire, Ken Tolonen, and Margaret Morris, who all encouraged me to join the Master Gardener Program. I have loved gardening all my life and in 2009 I became a trainee with Ken & Margaret as my mentors. We read our assigned chapters in the manual and took our quizzes and final exam on paper. We attended all the in-class lectures, did our required volunteer hours, and turned in our hours each month on a paper form to Mike Bush, PhD, our Extension agent, and Kelly, the Program Coordinator.

In 2010, I was elected VP of foundation and Kelly asked me to help with the trainees as WSU went to an online course using the Angel format. He knew I had been teaching a Phlebotomy night class at YVCC as an Adjunct Professor and used Angel for the online portion. He also asked me to help make a PowerPoint on the new WSU database reporting hour system to help all of trainees and veterans. AND I saw that the trainees, as well as many veterans, were often unaware of the program structure and who did what - so I came up with the idea of creating an Orientation Handbook that was published and shared with all MGs in January of 2011. As a result of the popularity, I updated it each year to be the 'go to' resource for our MG program information.

In 2011 the president stepped down and, as VP, I became foundation President. That fall, Kelly asked me to join him at the Program Coordinator's meeting before the Adv. Ed. Conference - I assumed because I was helping him with the trainees. After he returned, he decided to step down as PC and a few

months later, no one had stepped up!?! Mike Bush announced at a foundation meeting that if there is "NO PC then there will be NO MG program"!?!? I have this "I've got to save the world" complex so it was then that I stepped up as PC. I was given NO records and very little information, although Diana Pieti, a long-time veteran, was there to help me every step of the way and the Snohomish Co PC, Howard, was my mentor answering all my WSU liaison questions.

I started having an Orientation PowerPoint before classes that acknowledged our teams and co-leaders, introduced our new trainees, and, of course, go over details of how to log volunteer hours. I worked hard on the Awards Banquet PowerPoint to recap our accomplishments for the year, acknowledge our new graduates, our emeritus eligible, our longevity MGs of 5, 10, 15, 20 years, our 100+ hour pin winners, comparison of our county to others in the state, our presidential awards for over 500 hours per year, our MG of the Year and, of course, remember any MG's who passed away during the year. A wonderful celebration of our MG program.

The next few years, I never asked for a salary and just logged Program Support hours, but at a couple of our bi-annual PC meetings I was told by other PC's that I was "nuts" to continue unpaid when all the rest of them

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**(Coordinator's Corner, cont.)**

were paid. In 2016 & 2017 the foundation gave a small stipend but again I donated many volunteer hours as well. In 2018 the WSU Extension Director and I approached the County Commissioners, where I presented a PowerPoint showcasing all the good work the MG program does in our community. As a result, they began contributing \$4,000 and in 2019, \$6,000. But it has never been about the money for me, it was always about helping our amazing Master Gardener Program.

My philosophy for leadership has always been to have the MG program be a TEAM (Together Everyone Accomplishes More) effort where we all work for what is best for the program. Yes, there are often WSU guidelines (and even mandates) that must be followed, and I felt duty bound to assure that our county followed those guidelines. I have never wanted to be a "WSU Nazi" to solely dictate MY decisions. I so appreciate all the input from our Advisory Teams, team co-leaders, and the foundation membership.

Mainly the position is record keeping (5 files drawers now), attending state PC meetings, and assuring pertinent information is given in the PC foundation minutes each month. I always tried to assure all emails, phone calls and texts from MGs are answered in a timely manner and the program was running smoothly.

Jennifer announced during our PC meeting a few weeks ago that several PCs were stepping down and when she called my name, she said that I inspired many PCs to copy my Orientation Handbook idea for their counties as a means of assuring their MGs were aware of all the information about their program.

I've jokingly called this position "Herding Cats" – don't get me wrong I love cats and have had many throughout my life.



I just want to thank every MG for the privilege of being your Program Coordinator for the past 10 years. Know I will continue to be active by 'following my passion' as a REAL MG and enjoy being with our 'family of gardeners.' **Thank you.**

~Claudia

## ***We Grew Lunch!***

This is coming up quickly so read for instructions. A group of members are creating a holiday lunch for you and much of it was grown by us. This all takes place Wednesday, December 8th, 11:30 in the Red Barn. Please go to your inbox and look for the title "RSVP" and reply to John, or send him an email so that we can count you. We have a great menu and we can't wait to share it with you. This is a 'member's only' event, masks are required, except when eating, and you must be vaccinated to attend.



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# ***Demonstration Garden***

Thanks are in order for tasks done and volunteers honored. We begin with **Angela Galbraeth**, who stepped up in a leadership position when I was recovering from surgery and Skip could not always make it early to the garden. She came early, opened up, got tools out, worked hard beside everyone and taught so many of us along the way. And to each and every one of our good volunteers who came in the worst of the heat and on the chilly mornings, we appreciate you so much.

We were able to check off much of our to-do list and took on other projects that we added. We have plans for next year that will include restoration of the shade berm, spreading our wonderful compost as we go, and really looking at the garden as a visitor and asking what it 'demonstrates' for others to do in their gardens. We hope to think like a child and ask ourselves what a child would want to see in our children's garden, and incorporate some art throughout the area. See you all in the spring. *~Diana Pieti*



***One of the great pleasures of volunteering at the Demonstration Garden is the friendships we form. Pictured are Vickie Bullard, Marjorie Conzatti, Sue Schauer, and***



**The Elf on a Shelf is returning to the greenhouse. When you come to volunteer, look around and take a moment to re-hide him for the next person to find.**



***Reminder!***  
***Foundation Meeting***

***Wednesday, December 8th @ 10:30 am.***  
***In-person at the Red Barn!***  
***Followed by "We Grew Lunch" at 11:30.***

***Master Gardener***  
***Mission Statement:***

*"Engaging university-trained volunteers to empower and sustain communities with relevant, unbiased, researched-based horticulture and environmental stewardship education."*

# ***Floribunda: How Plants Tell Time***

by Carol Barany

The plant we know botanically as *Euphorbia pulcherrima* has a rich association with Christmas. According to a Mexican legend, a child too poor to buy a gift for baby Jesus gathered humble dried weeds from the side of the road to place at the church altar on Christmas Eve. The congregation was awed and amazed when the weeds turned brilliant red and green. No flower says Christmas like the beautiful Poinsettia, earning the plant a holiday all to itself.

December 12 is Poinsettia Day in the United States. Maybe I shouldn't have been so surprised. In just a few weeks in November and December, Americans will buy more than 35 million Poinsettias, making it our bestselling potted plant, and accounting for almost one-quarter of the year's total potted plant sales.

The showy, colorful parts of the Poinsettias that most people think of as the flowers are actually colored bracts, or modified leaves. The yellow structures in the center of the colorful bracts are the actual flowers. However, Poinsettias fade fast after Christmas. Expect the plant to drop its bracts and leaves soon after those yellow flowers shed their pollen. And when it comes to getting them to re-bloom again, poinsettias are notoriously tricky to get right. It's all about photoperiodism.

Gardeners have observed for centuries that daffodils flower in the spring, and chrysanthemums flower in the fall. It wasn't until 100 years ago that two researchers from the USDA made the discovery that explained why this happened. They found that neither the Maryland Mammoth variety of tobacco, nor the Biloxi variety of soybean, would flower unless the daylength was shorter than a critical number of hours. They called this phenomenon *photoperiodism*, and plants that flower only under certain conditions are considered to be *photoperiodic*. They concluded that short-day plants flower in early spring or fall and must have a light period shorter than a critical length. Long-day plants flower chiefly in the summer, and will flower only if the light periods are longer than a criti-

cal length. Day-neutral plants flower without respect to daylength.

In 1938, new research revealed that it wasn't day length that triggered the seasonal flowering response, but rather an uninterrupted dark period. But the terms relating to day length stuck. In reality, those short-day plants are really responding to the long nights, while long-day plants are triggered by short nights. In some of the plants they studied, if the period of darkness was interrupted by as little as a one-minute exposure to light from a 25-watt bulb, flowering would not occur. It's all about darkness.

This is why it is challenging to get Poinsettias to re-bloom indoors, where artificial light can extend the day. Unless the plants are kept in an area that remains completely dark at night, they won't produce flowers. Interruption of the required darkness period will interfere with blooming. What's more, poinsettias don't naturally bloom precisely at Christmas. Instead, they are forced to bloom by keeping them in the dark for a certain number of hours each day in the winter to trick them into blooming for the holiday.

If you want to try getting your plant to re-bloom next Christmas, cut the stems back to 8" in early April. Keep the plant in indirect sun, water regularly, and re-prune if necessary to keep it bushy, but not after September 1<sup>st</sup>. This spring, grow it outdoors in a sheltered spot after night temperatures warm to 55 degrees. Re-pot it around June 1<sup>st</sup> into rich potting soil in a slightly bigger pot, and fertilize it every few weeks.

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# Master Gardeners At Home

## Book Review:

**How Plants Work** by Linda Chalker-Scott.

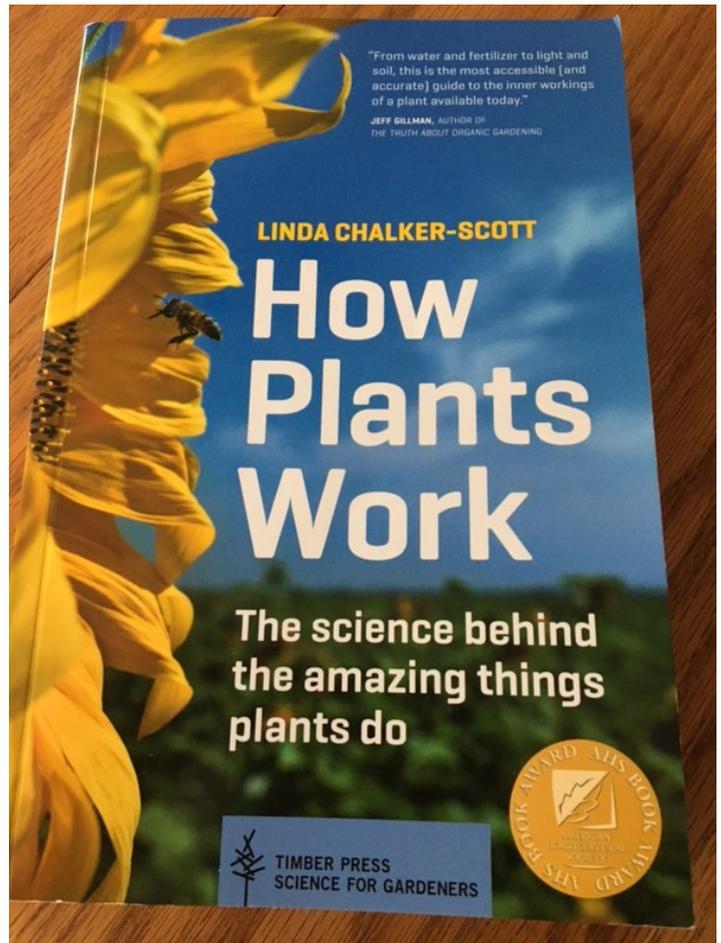
This book is part of the Timber Press Science for Gardeners series. It translates complex science into clear language and relates it to what readers observe in their own gardens.

It has won the American Horticultural Society book award.

You feel that Linda Chalker-Scott is talking and explaining things to you in this book. She has so much knowledge, information, and common sense. She takes you on a journey through the different parts of plants and you just want to keep reading and learning. The way she breaks it down and brings it all together is a gift. I feel that I will be using her knowledge in my garden and do my best to share it with others. It is a wealth of information and very practical. I know that I will come back to this book again and again to find answers and help with problem-solving.

I highly recommend it.

~Beatrice Reiss



*(Floribunda, continued from previous page)*

Now comes the tricky part. Starting October 1<sup>st</sup>, place your plant in complete darkness for 14 continuous hours each night. Try an unused closet or cupboard, or cover the plant with a box that admits absolutely no stray light in the “dark period”. Even an inadvertent short flash of light during this critical period could keep it from flowering. In the daytime, give the Poinsettia 8 hours of bright light. Continue to water and fertilize, and if you’re lucky, you should have a flowering plant in 8-10 weeks.

Given how much time it takes to coax a poinsettia to re-flower at the already busiest time of the year, this advice may be the best you’ve ever ignored. You have my permission to add the plant to your compost pile, and buy a blooming one again next year.

No MATTER  
how long the winter,  
SPRING  
is sure to FOLLOW.  
is sure to FOLLOW.

# Help me through the winter with...



**Leaf litter  
with hidden  
insects and larvae**

**Trees  
with berries  
and nuts  
and  
seedheads  
for food**



**Branch piles  
and shrubbery  
for protection**





# Dec 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 <i>Centerpiece Class @ Greenhouse 9 am</i>	2	3	4
			<i>Executive Meeting @ Ext. Office 2 pm</i>	<i>Hanging Basket Team 9-11</i>	<i>Art Team 9-11:30</i>	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	<i>Perennials Team 8-11</i>	<i>Annuals Team 8-11</i>	<i>Foundation Meeting @ Red Barn 10:30</i>	<i>Hanging Basket Team 9-11</i>	<i>Art Team 9-11:30</i>	
			<i>We Grew Lunch @ 11:30</i>	<i>Herbs Team 8-11</i>		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	<i>Perennials Team 8-11</i>	<i>Annuals Team 8-11</i>		<i>Hanging Basket Team 9-11</i>	<i>Art Team 9-11:30</i>	
				<i>Herbs Team 8-11</i>		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
					<i>Newsletter Articles Due to Editor</i>	<i>Christmas Day</i>
26	27	28	29	30	31	
					<i>Art Team 9-11:30</i>	



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