



LIONS R~O~A~R

Christmas Tree Sales

As the holidays draw near, we Lions look forward to seeing all those familiar faces as well as new ones at our Annual Christmas Tree Sales, at our lot next to the Chamber of Commerce on State Route 20. Time to mark your calendars as sales begins the first Saturday following Thanksgiving Day, November 25. Our Christmas Tree Sale is one of our many fund raisers throughout the year to benefit those in need in our community.

Medical Equipment

Your Oak Harbor Lions Club has a supply of medical equipment, such as wheelchairs, walkers, shower chairs and/or benches, commodes, and electric scooters, which is lent to those in need at no cost. You may contact us on our website at www.oakharborlions.org to locate a Lions member ready to assist you in your request.

Become a Lion

As many of you know, the Lions Club motto of "WE SERVE" rings true all year round and we wish to "Thank" all of you for your continued support of our many community outreach programs. We encourage members of our community to join their local Lions Club. Just imagine, a little kindness from oneself can go a long way. If you are interested in becoming a Lion, the Oak Harbor Lions Club meets every Wednesday evening, 6pm for a dinner social and 7pm meeting time at the Oak Harbor Elks Lodge, 155 NE Ernst St. Again thank you for your continued support and we hope to see you soon!



Take Advantage of Winter & Plan Your Perfect Native Plant Landscape

The onset of winter is a bittersweet time – wouldn't you agree? Although our bodies I'm sure are, in many ways, welcome the more restful nature of this autumnal season, as temperatures drop and light lacks, winter's approach doesn't have to be begrudgingly accepted – rather, it can be excitedly embraced.

This winter, I challenge you to veer from apathy to excitement. Winter is to be welcomed this year. Why and how so? Winter is the best time to keep your mind active and creative, and to plan for and implement the next spring garden project. You know – the one that's been lingering on your "To Do List" this past year. Now, as the chill sets in outside, I encourage you as you're drawn inside, begin to plan for that future project. Spring is often associated with the garden, the landscape. If you're like me, many of your winter-time planning revolves around where the next vegetable bed or landscaped terrace will be installed. Before you know it, the future will be here, and the planning time you've taken this winter will pay off – in more ways than one.

When it comes to landscaping projects, in particular, consider the use of Pacific Northwest native plants in your planning process. Whether native plants encompass your landscape in its entirety, or serve as accents to your favorite ornamentals, native plants provide many benefits – to both the gardener and the environment. What makes a plant "native" to Whidbey Island, or the Pacific Northwest region? Native plants are those which are from, or indigenous to a region because they've established communities over long periods of time with little to no human assistance and continue to thrive in balance with other plant species, contributing to overall biodiversity and resiliency. Native plants, additionally, end up requiring less maintenance over the long-term, as they are better adapted to the region in which they are from – meaning less work for you overall, while still achieving the color, fragrance, shape, and other aesthetics you would look for in non-native plants. There are also countless conservation benefits to using native plants in landscaping, including native plants playing a role to improve our water quality, reduce soil and wind erosion, clean the air, reduce energy costs, attract and support local wildlife, and beautify property. From ground covers to shrubs, to conifer and deciduous trees, there are many species you can choose from and are often in good supply at your local plant nurseries and wholesalers. Additionally, each year the Whidbey Island Conservation District hosts its biggest outreach event – its Native Bare Root Plant Sale. Conservation of soil and water is the guiding principle behind selling native plants through the Whidbey Island Conservation District's Native Plant Sale. Additionally, raising public awareness on Whidbey Island of responsible land and resource stewardship is also a focus. November 1 marked the launch of the online native plant sale at www.whidbeycd.org. In addition to consulting the expertise provided by your local nursery and garden shop experts, the Whidbey Island Conservation District's website and staff are a great starting place for acquainting yourself with native plants for your spring landscaping project.

While I could spend countless hours (and

pages) sharing with you native plant species worth selecting for your project, more importantly, I wish to empower you by providing a set of helpful tips and tools, resources, and reference materials to help you make those decisions yourself. Like me, knowledge comes with research and practice, and I hope that prior to selecting native plant species (or any plant species, for that matter), you'll consider the following to truly make a difference – both in your project planning this spring and for the health and vitality of the natural resources on your property.

Prior to choosing native plant species for your landscape, be sure to research and understand your landscape's . . .

Soil type(s)

Check out "WebSoilSurvey" online – websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov – to view your site's soil data on a "larger landscape" scale, for starters. Or, if you want more specifics in detail, get a soil test to learn what your soils need. Note: For most native plants, you will not likely need to amend your soil, as native plants – if selected with thought – will be adapted better than ornamental non-native species to that environment.

Topography

What is the "lay of the landscape" you plan to plant on? Where are the ridgetops and bottomlands, and how do those features affect sunlight availability and water retention for your soon-to-be-planted natives?

Slope & aspect

Is the site you plan to place these native plants in considered "full sun" – 6+ hours of direct sunlight; "part shade" – 3 to 6 hours of direct sunlight; "full shade" – 3 hours of direct sunlight, preferably eastern facing light?

Climate

What is the average temperature, precipitation, wind speed and direction, humidity, and seasonal variations in your landscape over time?

Water Availability

How much water is retained throughout the growing season? Will you need to bring in supplemental water through drip irrigation or rain water collection?

Existing Native Plant Communities

What plants are growing there naturally? Are there ways you can keep existing plant species and enhance them with additional native plants you enjoy? Native plants which are growing there successfully can give you clues as to complementary "paired" plants you might select.

As we venture into winter together, stay tuned for more tips about creating your perfect native plant landscaping palette in the *Make a Difference Column*, including infusing elements of landscape design into your spring project planting. We'll see you next month! For additional resources, expertise, and support pertaining to native plants and other natural resource conservation topics, including farm and forest planning, alternative stormwater management, and more, contact the Whidbey Island Conservation District for free, voluntary conservation planning assistance from our staff. Visit www.whidbeycd.org or call (888) 678-4922 to get in touch with us. We look forward to hearing from you.

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