



## Hello!

My last newsletter was in February 2016, a year ago. I've issued newsletters for over 24 years. Readers choose paper mail or e-mail. *This* is the web PDF version. It consists of random thoughts, written at various times, patched together, edited, polished and squeezed into these few pages. It recalls, after hosting a party, making a meal out of whatever leftover food one finds in the refrigerator or countertop.

Things in my life are similar overall and stable with two notable exceptions. One, my edible houseplants book is far closer to completion. It began almost 7 years ago (March 2010), so this is no surprise. The second new thing is my elderly mother now lives in an assisted-care apartment, so my siblings and I visit her and adjust to her loss of utter independence.

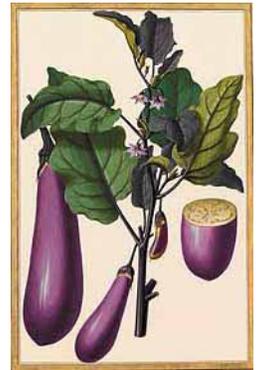
**RIP.** In a matter of five months, two major players in Seattle's horticulture circle died unexpectedly. Sarah Reichard, 58 (UW Botanic Gardens director), and Cass Turnbull, 62 (PlantAmnesty founder, president, spokesperson), were both Seattle natives who rose to local leadership roles taking utterly divergent paths. Sarah exemplified academic science, with its tenure-tract handcuffs, humorless, fact-based, peer-reviewed materials and methods. Cass was driven by restless, irrepressible determination, outsized humor, and volunteers to fight "the senseless torture and mutilation of plants." Sarah had special concern about invasive species; Cass in her later years was more concerned about saving Seattle trees from development than fighting topping and bad pruning. Both leaders brought people together doing the work they loved. Each woman made sufficient impact living, that their deaths will cause uncertainty and serious deliberation about the future direction of their endeavors. Both were integral to organizations rather than "lone wolves" such as myself.

Over 70 **clients** hired me in 2016, many on more than one day. I'm grateful for that—and my indispensable assistants. Some jobs were easy, others difficult; a few dangerous and brought forth bruises, sweat, blood and cursing. Also, I much appreciate the many people who attended my 13 public tours last year, and those who hired me to lead custom tours, attended my Open Gardens or bought books. By keeping me afloat financially, you likable people enable me to produce painstaking books that magnify and outlive my local Seattle day-to-day endeavors.

The most interesting and agreeable **new plants** out of over 50 kinds acquired last year that I grew and tasted included: *Medinilla Cummingii* 'Kinabalu', *Neomarica longifolia*, and a dwarf *Spondias dulcis*.

Few buy **groceries** at more places than I. Below are 30+ Seattle outlets that I now or then patronize. Over half are within my walking distance. Each sells something that none of the others sells; or features a lower price. Seattle residents are privileged to be offered such vast richness of choices. It is a pity how few shoppers choose to avail themselves of more than a handful.

- Amy's Merkato Ethiopian market
- Ballard Market
- Bert's Red Apple
- Big John's PFI
- Central Co-op (not a member)
- Central Market Shoreline
- Costco (not a member)
- Ballard Market
- District Market
- DK Market (in Renton)
- Farmer's Market (several)
- Fred Meyer
- Grocery Outlet
- HT Oaktree Market
- Ken's Market Greenwood
- Lam Seafood
- Leschi Food Mart
- Little Lago Deli & Market
- Metropolitan Market
- Montlake Boulevard Market
- Mont's Market
- Pike Place Market
- QFC
- PCC Natural Market (not a member)
- Rising Sun Produce
- Safeway
- Seattle Chinese Herb & Grocery
- Trader Joe's
- University Seafood & Poultry
- Uwajimaya
- Whole Foods
- World Market



The above list excludes local **beer or wine stores**:

- Beer Junction
- Bottleworks
- Chuck's Hopshop
- City Cellars
- Dawg Pound Beer & Wine
- Full-Throttle Bottle
- Growl Store
- Esquin Wine Merchants
- European Wine Shop
- Pete's Wine Shop

Plus various brewpubs, wineries & liquor stores.

**Trader Joe's** food stores offer some unique items of superb quality at pleasingly low prices. Two irresistible examples: gigantic *Commendation* chocolate bars of over 4 pounds (\$14.99), and a red wine, *Moon X* 2014 black Pinot Noir (\$5.99).

**New beer delights** experienced: I patronized the Growl Store (<https://www.theGrowlStore.com>) on E Madison St, and the Beer Junction in West Seattle ([www.theBeerJunction.com](http://www.theBeerJunction.com)). I tasted a delectable Belching Beaver® peanut butter milk stout; & savored gluten-free Ghostfish Watchstander stout.

**Water** is on my mind. Like oxygen, it is vital to sustain life, yet sometimes gets taken for granted. Seattle is blessed with both dramatic saltwater and immense freshwater; numerous bridges; and is powered by hydroelectric power. Rainwater pours or drizzles in our wet season; gardeners depend on it in our dry season. It washes away our stains and cleans our messes. We make it into delightful beverages such as tea and beer.

**The NW Flower & Garden Show** is Feb. 22–26 at downtown Seattle's Washington State Convention Center; (<http://www.GardenShow.com>). In evenings I staff **Flora & Fauna Books** booth. Owner David Hutchinson staffs daily from 9:00 til around 5; then I til closing time. Books are new, out-of-print and rare ones on gardening, plant exploration, and natural history. I dine downtown with friends at post-show dinners with anywhere from one other person to about seven. You need not already know me, either. Just be hungry, and good company.

**Edible Houseplant project.** My edible houseplants book likely will be my last big book undertaking, may be most important, and certainly is the most involved. After it is printed, I'll just write articles and edit other people's writing, such as Gary Lockhart's health books. To make the edible houseplants book a masterpiece takes extraordinary time; finishing it will be a major relief. It is special compared to my previous books since it has a larger audience and relates directly to eating. I'd like to pour not only intellectual vigor into it, but as much passion as can be conveyed in such a hefty, technical tome. Passion and endurance enable and power my intellectual reach, so ideally the *outcome* should reflect that. When people go to a formal banquet or luxuriant opera, they dress up in their finest most valuable

clothing. Serving special meals, they use their best china and gleaming silverware. Musicians performing live rather than in the studio often get inspired and summon forth singular touches. Similarly, I try to make this book both packed full of data and still lively to read. Lightweight fluff writing about plants abounds on the internet, most with lamentable lack of scholarship. And bookshelves contain weighty scholarly books consisting of stark naked facts, devoid of any more life, humor or imagination than a toaster. Heck, even a dictionary is enlivened by poignant and living words. I try to unite facts and passion in my book, sprinkling adjectives like spices.

A 2015 book, **The Food Lab**, is superb and heavy-weight, nearly 1,000 pages. The author, J. Kenji López-Alt, worked for the eminent *Cook's Illustrated* magazine for years. The book is a sound introduction to kitchen tools and techniques; tests accepted practices, assumes readers know nothing, and has recipes for virtually all basic USA traditional dishes. The scope is conservative in, for example, a section devoted to wheat pasta with not even one word about alternatives—corn, rice, bean, chickpea, quinoa. But after a person masters the basics, then he or she is well enabled to delve further. The author also is not into advocacy for organic food, non-GMO, and the like. His writing style is crystal clear and pleasing to read. You find good explanations of and rationale for blanching, searing, sautéing, braising and roasting. A blemish is that the book designer used fonts and colors poorly. And that blemish is seen so often these days as to be normal. *Sigh*.

Seattle's 2016 had **weird weather**, with things I had not noticed ever, such as my *Ephedra* plant fruiting for the first time in 24 or 25 years; and an astonishing plethora of flowers in November. We are going through a colder, wetter winter than usual, too.

A winter delight is having **time to socialize**. The cold, wet, dark, and less garden work *encourages* indoor gathering of friends, neighbors and relatives. Families may be separated geographically or culturally, but we can all visit neighbors and friends. We can compare our favorite music, food, drink, and share the contentment of togetherness, which most humans have a predilection for. The very young and very old are more easily excited. Those of us middle aged have a history of disappointment in love, finances, politics, business, work, health and whatnot. That baggage causes us to be guarded, wary, and harder to please, less likely to smile, let alone laugh. But we must try. And trying does not mean "liking" on Facebook®. Instead, give someone else *real* time and a hug 😊. Musicians need audience, writers need readers, cooks need eaters, preachers need flocks. We all need companionship. Even introverts need a pet, book, a movie—or at least a mirror.

**Seattle is anomalous** currently compared to most cities. The economy here booms. Construction is at a cancerous pace. Its climate is on the whole benign. Its people are diverse and mostly pleasant and friendly rather than barbarous and boorish. Its location affords ready access to Canada, the Far East, California, and the Rocky Mountain region. Its abounding hills that some cyclists dislike afford vistas and set it apart from most large cities. Bad things about Seattle exist also, and include earthquakes; costly to live in; bad traffic; winter gloom; regressive taxes; high dental fees. A Seattle native, I am odd in that I loathe coffee; do not ski, sail, or care about even slightly its sports teams. But I do possess a slow-pace, mellow, low-stress personality.

Exploring Seattle plant life, noting flowering and fruiting times, tasting edibles, and conversing, is a joy.

**Walking tours** let people benefit personally from my learning. Dress for the weather; be prepared to walk. Usually at the tour's end, I invite attendees to join me to sit somewhere nearby for rest, chatting, a bite to eat and a drink. Tours proceed even if it rains, or with a low turnout. Registrants are called if an emergency occurs. Tours are limited to 15 participants. (*Custom tours can be arranged for your group.*) The cost per participant is **\$10** (*i.e.*, \$9.17 plus \$.83 sales tax). Payment by cash or checks only. For additional information, or to register, e-mail or call Arthur Lee Jacobson at (206) 328-8733

ALJ@consultant.com. Committing months ahead to events is distasteful. But my newsletters come out rarely. To help you, below are two Seattle tree & plant walking tours, and my two-day spring Open Garden. To learn more about these or of other events, please either contact me, or visit my website ArthurLeeJ.com. You will not be bombarded with e-mails.

### **UW Campus near Spring Equinox**

Sunday, March 26, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

The enormous UW campus affords tremendous landscape plant diversity, plus wild ones. Many rare trees and shrubs were planted by forestry professors, botanists, and the gardening staff. We will encounter fascinating specimens. The Yoshino Cherry trees blossoming on the liberal arts quad are utterly enchanting, and everyone photographs them.

*Meet* in front of the Burke Museum (free parking; nearby bus stops).

### **Wild Edible Plants of Spring** (Limit of 10 people)

Sunday, April 2, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Anyone who spends much time walking outside should learn common wild edible plants, and learn to avoid poisonous ones. Hikers, walkers, and chefs can increase their culinary options by attending this tour. The emphasis in spring is salad greens such as Candyflower, Cleavers, Cress, Daisies, Red dead-nettle,

Dock, Maple flowers, Oregon Grape new leaves, Sweet cicely, Vetch, Wall Lettuce, Wild Garlic, *etc.*

**To order my books**, mail me a check or please see <http://www.ArthurLeeJ.com/more-books.html>  
Free shipping ; autographed as you like.

**Trees of Seattle** @ \$25

**Wild Plants of Greater Seattle** @ \$20

**Trees of Green Lake** @ \$9.95

About my **availability for hire**, please call me or see <http://www.ArthurLeeJ.com/services-rates.html>

Consultations @ \$80/hour

Custom tours @\$60/hour

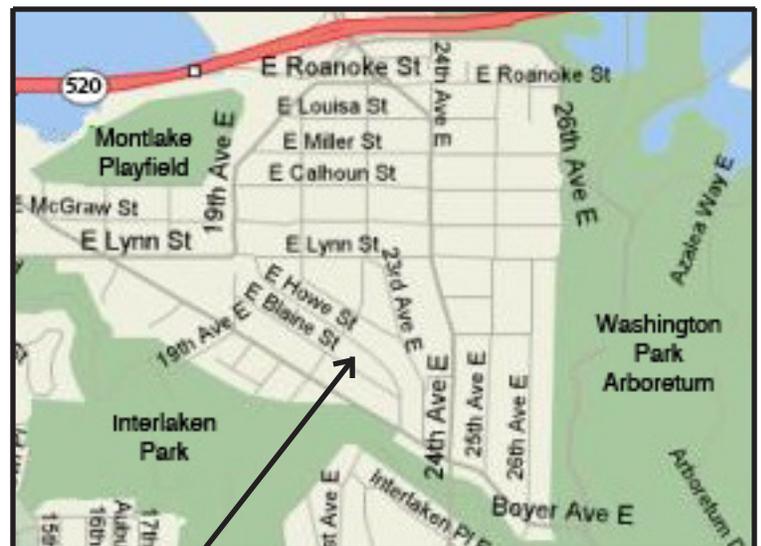
Hands-on work @\$44/hour

### **Website**

Last year, I switched to a new host for my website. This month, assisted ably by expert Meryll Larkin, I hope to make it more user friendly to “hand-held devices.” Later, still more improvements.

### **—Jacobson Open Garden—** \* ♥ 🎵 ☀️ ★

Saturday & Sunday, April 15–16<sup>th</sup>, noon - 6:00 Free. Rain or shine, all are welcome to visit my garden in Seattle's Montlake neighborhood: 2215 E Howe/2216 E Blaine St. I provide food & drink. There certainly will be books and potted plants for sale, likely a baby goat to cuddle, and maybe some artwork. Mainly, it is a springtime social. *Additional* details and tours will be put on my website; the tours page is updated monthly. If you do not use internet, simply *call* me to inquire. 📞



**HERE**

Spending hours making books, I break now and then for bodily health and social needs. I walk, do errands, or chat with people. My **most valuable assets are people**. In my peer-group (privileged college educated white men), plenty compared to me have higher I.Q., deeper pockets, more skills, more possessions, are more handsome, are married contentedly. *But* since I've stayed in one place for decades interacting with multifarious people, my blessing is a strikingly rare network to call on when I seek help.

Effective writers can make even an ornery bedbug star in a heartwarming novel. Poor writers ruin even the most promising plot by clumsy, crude, artless and boring storytelling. But regardless, both—and all of us individuals—need to **share** whatever we have with other people. Cooperation and companionship helps; competition hurts. We must enjoy *passion* where we can, whether in religion, love, food, music, sports, physical exertion, our work, hobbies . . .

**Mainstream media** focus largely on headlines to garner excitement and thereby get higher ratings to sell more ads. Disasters and exciting news get most coverage. Scandalous and sex news is deemed especially luscious. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) wrote: “newspaper writers are, for the sake of their trade, alarmists: that is their way of making themselves interesting. What they really do, however, is resemble little dogs who, as soon as anything whatever moves, start up loud barking.” Graybeard executives hire fresh graphic designers and editors to try to appeal to young, hip, well-off readers. Grown-up vocabulary, proper grammar and traditional punctuation are forsaken. Incremental or creeping phenomena such as steadily increasing overpopulation, resource depletion, species extinction, rising human displacement, mounting debt, crumbling infrastructure, melting ice sheets and chemical poisoning of our food supply . . . are so routine as to not be news. Yet these scary things erode the very foundations of our rich civilization, and bode ill for our future as a species. Together they act as a dimmer switch turning down the light of our world. The European Union may disintegrate. India's bad war on currency is causing huge turmoil. Venezuela is collapsing. Japan is in dire straits. China staggers under pollution and debt. Africa as usual is full of fighting and famine. The UK is in enormous trouble financially. To get informed about what is *really* going on in the world, read alternative media. A good collection of this sort of reporting is on the excellent blog <http://RiceFarmer.blogspot.jp>

The presidential campaigning was icky, ugly, corrupt and heartbreaking; the **election result** upsetting to the establishment and the “haves,” both domestic and international, causing them shock and worry. Sad! Regardless of the USA president, vigorous global forces of economic, climatic, ecologic, and demographic nature will ensure a rough and fearful ride for *Homo sapiens* in the near future. The 100,000

year ice-age cycle all by itself is cause for pause. Prudence suggests preparing for the worst rather than assuming blithely that things will remain comfortably stable. If you can, prepare for a big disastrous earthquake and power outage. ☺

**Rapture**. Individual people vary in what they describe as *rapturous*. Most will rank very highly coitus, exquisitely delicious food and drink, and beautiful music that engenders tears of joy and spine-tingling. Inasmuch as the easiest of these to do, is to eat, that in a large degree may help account for the sad fact that so many of us carry around excess pounds. In any case, scrawny I—for better or worse—am presently single, but still eat three **home-made meals** daily. One that I relished recently is worth sharing. It has no exact amounts because it was done from scratch rather than from a printed recipe. It is simple, quick, flavorful, pleasing visually and texturally, nutritious and inexpensive—in a word: perfect.

**Recipe**: In a frying pan, skillet or wok on medium heat dribble olive oil, then add chopped eggplant and leek. To season, squirt on soy sauce, Trader Joe's organic Green Dragon Jalapeño hot sauce, and sprinkle generous ground cumin seeds, hot chili peppers, and Italian seasoning. After a few minutes of stir-frying, add tempeh as a protein source and for its satisfying crunch. After cooking this a few minutes, take it off the heat, and mix a ripe avocado into it. (Options include using other protein sources; other oils such as hemp or sesame; adding crumbled cheese or cashews, and endless spice variations.) The result tastes divine. At moments like this, like a passionate kiss, time stands still. In any event, a meal that wonderful needs no music in the background, no sweet dessert at the end, no fine wine to accompany it. Plain, rich, healthy food, perfect in texture, appearance, and flavor. The utter opposite of people committing suicide after suffering heartbreak, I am euphoric after cooking a wonderful dinner. Food so good it makes you turn your eyes heavenward, and clap your hands.

**Disappointments** for me in 2016 included: testing a battery-powered electric Oregon™ chainsaw; its battery charge lasts too briefly and it stalls annoyingly. I tested a Makita battery-power reciprocating saw (sawzall) with 12" wood-cutting blades, and found it plays a limited role in my tree pruning. The demise of book wholesale distributor Partners West means I must personally make more deliveries to retailers. Observing the continual decline of once respectable printed media such as *Sunset Magazine*, makes me glad that I can uphold standards in my own little sphere. Light makes darkness less able to conceal. Using words and pictures, I shine my little lamp of awareness of plant life (and bits and pieces of other things) brightly, plainly and pleasingly as possible. And incidentally make people smile if not laugh.