I should have made the working paths wider. My “details later” procrastination wasn’t confined to heathers along the working paths, but only there did it create a serious problem. The five-foot-wide main garden path is barely troubled by a couple years of my detail neglect. The three-foot-wide subsidiary paths soon may become questionable (maybe they should have been four feet wide?), but the working paths no longer allow space for working!

Even the deer have stopped frolicking in this part of my Philomath garden. They used to walk gracefully along the top path, take a flying leap over the dip that accommodates the electrical box, and land on the opposite bank before heading across the driveway into the meadow and forest. Now they take other routes through the garden. Deer will walk through any part of the garden not covered with shrubby vegetation—say, a newly planted section with lots of bare or bark-mulched ground between the young plants. Once the plants have met, the deer either jump over them or go around them on the permanent paths.

Thank goodness for ‘Jacqueline’! Three plants of E. x ‘Jacqueline’ fill the triangle formed by the intersection of working paths, and despite my earlier comment about this cultivar’s vigour, it also has the highly desirable trait of accepting very hard pruning with barely a whimper. Year after year, I have cut the sides of E. x ‘Jacqueline’ down to bare wood without noticeable damage to the plants. They soon cover the bare patches with new foliage, and this cultivar’s growth habit is so upright that in comparison with its Calluna companions, its width seems hardly to have changed. Had I chosen another large Calluna cultivar for this crucial location, both working paths would have been blocked years ago.

This spring, no matter how many other chores are demanding my attention, once I’ve finished all the pruning that can be done with my trusty electrical assistant, I’m going to get down on my knees and cut off all the overgrown basal branches along all my garden paths. Where cultivars have sprawling growth, I’ll reach underneath as far as I can to remove the lowest branches and hope that new upper growth will lean over and cover the cut stem ends. Because I expect nobody but me to use the working paths, I don’t even need to worry about how the cut edges there look.

What matters is that when the work is finished, properly, I’ll once again have real working path.

The working path (beginning centre foreground) on top of the berm in the Wulff garden, September, 2012. The path curves left around E. x ‘Jacqueline’ (centre), and a bit of it may be seen nearer the top of the photo to the left of the pine. The branch path begins its diagonal descent between the unknown pink Calluna (right foreground) and E. x ‘Jacqueline’. C. vulgaris ‘Oxshott Common’ is in foreground left, C. vulgaris ‘Silver Knight’ in foreground right. C. vulgaris ‘Reini’ (centre right) effectively hides the branch path.

Ella May T. Wulff

Bruckenthalia Hybrids

In 1987, I made first trials crossing Erica spiculifolia (Balkan heath) with other Erica species. The Balkan heaths name then was Bruckenthalia spiculifolia. Bruckenthalia is still used here in the company and amongst colleagues.

That year I pollinated Erica spiculifolia with pollen from nine other species. Only the crosses with Erica cinerea (bell heather) and Erica bergiana (a Cape heath) resulted in seeds and young plants. The seedlings of Erica cinerea x spiculifolia unfortunately were killed by frost in the first winter. The seedlings of the hybrid with the Cape heath were more frost tolerant and survived. This was named Erica x gauflicans, and two clones were selected and named ‘Edewecht Belle’ and ‘Edewecht Blush’.
In subsequent years I tried several more crosses. In 2004 I succeeded with pollen of *Erica vagans*, *E. sicula*, *E. terminalis* and *E. manipuliflora*. From all of these I obtained seeds. The seedlings of *Erica spiculifolia x vagans* all died. The others were propagated so I was able to compare them and test them for suitability of production and garden use.

Two clones of the hybrid *Erica spiculifolia x manipuliflora* received cultivar names. ‘Lisette’ (reg. no. E.2012:03. Heathers 10: 84). When registered the flowers were described as lilac-pink (H11) and ‘Pamela’ (reg. no. E.2012:01. Heathers 10: 83). When registered the flowers were described as heliotrope (H12).

In Germany both cultivars are significantly more valuable for the garden than those of *E. x gaudificans*. The flowers are slightly larger. The flowering time starts early June and lasts into late autumn. As pot-plants, they need sufficient water and fertilizer, and the faded flowers need to be removed. As a side note, *Erica spiculifolia* will flower a second time, if faded flowers are removed.

Both ‘Lisette’ and ‘Pamela’ are produced in larger quantities in Germany and sold as flowering pot plants. I hope you will try these varieties in your garden.
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