



# MILL BAY GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER

Website: [www.millbaygardenclub.com](http://www.millbaygardenclub.com)

Email: [mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com)

## Next Meeting:

Date: **Tues, March 25th, 2025**

Time: **7pm** (doors open 6:30pm)

Place: **Mill Bay Community League Hall**  
(1001 Shawnigan Mill Bay Road)

### Activities:

**Business Meeting; Members' Forum;  
Gardening Q&A; Library; Raffle;  
Plant Sales; Guest Speaker;  
Socializing!**



## March Speakers:

**T'uwahwiye' Philomena  
Williams and  
Genevieve Singleton on  
Cowichan Flowers**

*See page 3 for details*



## Inside...

- President's Report p 2
- This Month's Speaker p 3
- Executive/Committee Reports p 4-5
- Barb Kohlman's Tips p 9
- Last Meeting's Minutes p 11-13

## March Brag Table Theme:

### *March Magic*

With plant and flower identification and commentary provided by Barb Kohlman, the Brag Table is a great part of our monthly meetings. It's a fun and interactive way to share what's going on in your garden. The bonus is a prize awarded randomly to one of the monthly participants. If you've never participated, give it a fling, be it flower, vegetable or fungus!

## A little ray of sunshine...

Club member and Flower and Garden show chair Janice Rose sends card on behalf of the Club to members experiencing illness or loss, bringing a spot of sunshine into a stressful time for a club member.

If you know of someone in the Club who is sick, in hospital, or has lost a loved one, please let Janice know and she will send a card on our behalf.



## President's Message: March 2025

Richard Nelson

We are living in chaotic times. The former cooperative economic relationship between Canada and the USA has been eclipsed by a severe protectionist and isolationist stance by the current US administration. It appears to not matter that a North American Free Trade Agreement has been successfully negotiated and should still be in effect (I am desperately working at not getting into a rant here). A major potential downside of this situation includes large increases in the cost of food imported into Canada from the US and the consequent absence of US produce from Canadian markets. US produce has supplied a very significant portion of Canada's groceries. I doubt that this is news to readers but what can we do about our dilemma?

In times of crisis people have repeatedly turned to their gardens to shore up their food security and gain a sense control in their lives. Fruit and vegetable gardeners know that the efforts they put into their gardens can translate into some remarkable harvests of produce for in-season use and that can be prepared to store through the winter and into the next growing season. The inputs we use to create our gardens such as seeds, plant starts, soils and amendments are largely of local origin. The outputs of local gardens can have a strong ripple effect into communities through increased local food supply, strengthened local economies and building relationships among neighbours.

In Canada during World Wars I and II there were in excess of 200,000 War Gardens or Victory Gardens grown across the country. These gardens showed multiple benefits including the production of local food which took pressure away from production, transportation and distribution systems, improvement of the skill sets of people

involved in growing and bringing families together in the wholesome and healthful activity that gardening is.

Through the 1960s '70s and into the '80s, perhaps in response to the Cold War, there was a significant 'back to the land' movement complete with a renewed push to establish homesteads and communes. This whole movement was bolstered with plenty of how to guides, magazines like Harrowsmith and the Whole Earth Catalogue all focused on helping people increase self sufficiency by feeding and sheltering their family and friends through uncertain times. These resources still survive and have proliferated – see the Mill Bay Garden Club library for a rich and varied store of gardening guides.

The world-wide epidemic of Covid-19 sparked many people to turn to the soil for sustenance and solace. So strong was the interest in growing gardens that seed racks and plant stands were quickly sold out. The demand, scarcity and rising cost of seed inspired a great interest in seed saving and sharing which continues to grow as evidenced by the large number of local seed producers that participate in Seedy Saturdays in communities across the country.

In these brand new uncertain times we gardeners are ideally equipped to pivot from crisis to creation of stronger communities. With the 'Buy Canadian' movement well underway now is prime time to launch a renewed surge into growing a patch to feed the community. So let us turn off the news, close our screens and get out in the weather to cultivate our future harvest.

In Gardening,

Richard

## 25 March 2025, Mill Bay Garden Club Agenda

- 1) 7:00 p.m.: Call to Order
  - a) Approval of the agenda
  - b) Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting
  - c) President's Report – Richard Nelson
    - i.) Car Pooling; Social Media; Seedy Saturday 15 March; membership; volunteers; request for volunteers at Cowichan Exhibition
  - d) Executive Committee reports
  - e) Questions for the Executive
  - f) Brag Table: March Magic
  - g) Garden-related Questions with our Master Gardeners
- Break
- 2) 8:00 p.m. Speaker: **T'uwahwiye' Philomena Williams and Genevieve Singleton on Cowichan Flowers**
  - h) Adjournment

## Executive Members

- President**  
Richard Nelson
- Vice President**  
Kathy Code
- Treasurer**  
Gord Hamilton
- Secretary**  
Carol Goodger-Hill
- Past-President**  
Gill Keir

## Committee Leads

- Membership**  
Robin Reid
- Flower & Garden Show**  
Janice Rose
- Library**  
Katherine Miller
- Kitchen**  
Judy Raimondo
- Plant Sales**  
Carrie Nelson
- Bursary**  
Ann Baty

*Cont'd next page...*

## March's Speaker:

### **T'uwahwiye' Philomena Williams and Genevieve Singleton on Cowichan Flowers**

The talk will be called Qwu'utsun Sp'e'luq'um, Cowichan Flowers, sharing our favourite wild flowers, their uses and stories.

Cowichan elder, T'uwahwiye' Philomena Williams, is a well known knowledge keeper and very active in the Quw'utsun community., She is a Hul'q'umi'num' teacher, is very knowledgeable about her community and has a deep affinity for all things nature. She was an elder at Vancouver Island University in Duncan.

Genevieve Singleton, has been a keen plant lover since childhood. She is especially interested in ethnobotany. She is a nature interpreter and biologist, sharing her love of nature throughout the Cowichan Valley and further afield for many years.

Philomena and Genevieve enjoy doing plant presentations together.

## Committee Reports

### From the Kitchen

Just the usual reminder for folks to bring their own cup for coffee time, and a big thanks to all the volunteers who signed up to bring treats and help in the kitchen.

*Judy*



### Notes from the Library

Hello all-

Thank to everyone who is making such good use of our club library. Don't forget to look at the Reference section and scope out the pamphlets on Garry Oak ecosystems. Please pass on your suggestions for new books or topics you would like to see represented in the library.

Yours in reading,

*Katherine*

### Flower & Garden Show - Volunteers Wanted

The 2025 Flower & Garden Show (May 30th & 31st) is only 2 months away. At this point we have only HALF the number of volunteers that we need.

The success of the show depends on volunteers.

### Memorial Garden Clean Up

**Volunteers for the next Clean Up required!**

**Saturday April 12th**

**10:00am**

**Many hands make light work. Bring your weeding and pruning tools. It's always fun. Get to know some of your fellow club members while you weed and chat.**

**Heather Jenkins**

*...from previous page*

### Committee Leads (cont'd)

#### Sunshine

Janice Rose

#### Brag Table

Barb Kohlman

#### Memorial Garden

Heather Jenkins

#### Raffle

Stephanie Taylor

#### Website Administrator

Gord Hamilton

[www.Millbaygardenclub.com](http://www.Millbaygardenclub.com)

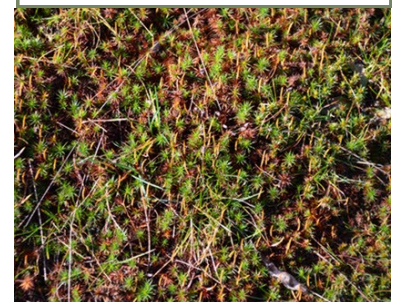
#### Social Media

**\*\*VACANT\*\***

[www.facebook.com/millbaygardenclub](http://www.facebook.com/millbaygardenclub)

#### Newsletter Editor

Dave Byrnes



### Social Media

If you use Facebook, don't forget to check us out and "LIKE" us at:

[www.facebook.com/millbaygardenclub](http://www.facebook.com/millbaygardenclub)

**Position Vacant  
Could it be you?**

## **Committee Reports (continued)**

### **Membership & Seedy Saturday**

Thank you for those who volunteered with the set up, take down, and manning of the table at Seedy Saturday. It was a fun and informative time for everyone. It was my first time there and it would say that it is something not to be missed. Lots of activity and information. Mark your calendar for next year's Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday.

We have 4 new members from Seedy Saturday. Welcome!

I also learned at our monthly executive meeting that those membership cards given out when you become a member can get you discounts at certain places. Here are a few where discounts have been given:

- Borden's in Victoria
- Buckerfields
- Garden Works

If you know of any others, let's share that knowledge. Have an awesome day!

Robin

### **Plant Sale Table at March 25 General Meeting**

Please consider donating a few plants to the general meeting plant table to be sold to other club members. These funds help cover club expenses.

See you March 25th!

Carrie

### **From the Plant Sale Table at the Flower & Garden Show 2025**

The Plant Sale Table is always a popular destination at the Flower and Garden Show. The sale often raises in excess of \$1,000 to help defray club expenses. The success of the plant sale table depends on the support of club members, who donate plants and help out on the day.

Starting now, and for the next few months, we ask club members to think about what you can donate. If you are dividing plants, please set a few aside for us. If you are seeding or propagating, ditto. We love flowers, vegetables, perennials, shrubs and more. Please avoid donating invasive plants.

More information will follow in the next newsletters, this is just a head's up for now.

Thank you for your anticipated, welcomed and necessary support!

Katherine Miller  
Flower and Garden Show  
Plant Sale Table lead

## Car Pool to MBGC Meetings

Not able to attend MB garden club meetings because you don't have a vehicle or don't feel comfortable driving at night?

Your fellow members are missing you and we are organizing a carpooling service.

If you are interested in carpooling (riding or driving) please contact Sally Emory. She will do her best to match riders with drivers.

*Sally Emory*

## Mill Bay Garden Club 76th Flower & Garden Show Silent Auction

We are very proud to say that the Garden Club was very successful in fundraising at the 2024 Flower & Garden show and made donations to the following local charities:

- Two bursaries to two students pursuing careers in horticulture,
- Nourish Cowichan,
- Shawnigan Basin Society,
- Cowichan Hospice,
- Somenos Transition House, and the
- CMS Food Bank.

**That was incredible team work by everyone. We couldn't do it without you!**

The Silent Auction is a central attraction of the day, and we ask you to donate something for inclusion. Donations can include goods, gift certificates or services. Put on your "creative hats"! It could be something you make, buy, refurbish, or a gently worn item. Most importantly, you will share in the grateful thanks from the individuals and organizations who benefit from the Silent Auction's success!

We also need volunteers for Friday, May 30th to set up tables etc., and Saturday, May 31st, the day of the show. Please get in touch if you have questions about potential donations and/or if you can help. **Many hands make light work ..... and it is fun!**

**Please bring your donations to a club meeting or contact Shari (by phone or email) to drop it off to her house.**

**2025 Silent Auction Committee:**

Jennifer Campbell

Shari Wilson

Susan Rudolph

## Our New Meritorious Service Award

Congratulations Nick and Heather Jenkins. At our February meeting they were presented with our new perpetual trophy for Meritorious Service Award to the MBGC. This new trophy replaces the Outstanding Service Award and was created by Jim and Janice Rose. It recognizes members who have been actively involved in our club for at least 20 years.

Nick and Heather have volunteered their time and energy in a variety of ways including managing our plant sales at club meetings, organizing and working at the Memorial Garden and being heavily involved in helping organize our Community Flower and Garden Show.

Thank you Nick and Heather for your enthusiastic dedication and the many contributions you have made to our club!

Previous winners of this award include: Mary Gale (2021), Ruby Armour (2021), Elaine Scott (2023), Bill Herring (2023) and Barb Kohlman (2023).

*Janice Rose*



*Photo by Jim Wisnia*



*Photo by Dave Byrnes*



*Cupcakes by Pat Spezowka*

# Community Flower & Garden Show

## So what's happening outside with the vendors?

Each year the we invite small local companies to showcase and sell their garden related wares. Vendors range from our own garden club's plant table to individuals and companies selling hanging pots, native and cultivated perennial plants, shrubs and small trees to garden ornaments, to lotions and potions made from garden-reared plants, to composted bark mulch and wood chips direct from a sawmill and clay sculptures and.....

Every year South Cowichan Healthcare Auxiliary serves lunchtime fare of delicious bunwiches and their famous strawberry teas, coffee and soft drinks.

Individual vendors will be advertised on the garden club web page as we get closer to show time.

**PLANT SALE**  
**COWICHAN VALLEY RHODODENDRON SOCIETY**  
**Saturday, May 3, 2025, 10am – 2pm**  
**New Location: THE HUB**  
**2375 Koksilah Road, Duncan**



- UNIQUE AND SPECIAL RHODODENDRONS
- HUNDREDS OF COMPANION PLANTS – Hostas, Peonies, Perennials, Companion & Shade Plants
- RHODODENDRON TRUSS SHOW
- KNOWLEDGEABLE GARDENERS TO ANSWER QUESTIONS
- SUITABLE PARKING AVAILABLE

Contact: [cowichanrhodos.ca](http://cowichanrhodos.ca)  
 Email: [cowichanvalleyrhododendron@gmail.com](mailto:cowichanvalleyrhododendron@gmail.com)

Nanaimo Gladiolus and Dahlia Society

**Glad Corm & Dahlia Tuber**

**Sale**

**Saturday**  
**April 26, 2025**  
**10 am – 2 pm**

**Country Club Mall**  
 3200 North Island Highway  
 Nanaimo

Cash, debit or credit  
[www.nanaimogliolusanddahliaociety.ca](http://www.nanaimogliolusanddahliaociety.ca)






## Gardening Tips for March-April 2025 by Barb Kohlman

When your forsythia is blooming it is time to prune your roses so I see that my neighbours forsythia is starting to do this.



Hellebores are looking good even though they were covered in snow, Hope you have trimmed off all the leaves of the Helleborus x hybridus by now so that you can enjoy the beautiful blooms, and so there is space for new leaves to grow.

The single hellebores are best for offering nectar to the bees. In double flowers the nectarines have evolved to be 'petals' and so less nectar is produced.

As always get after those pop weeds. Don't put them in your compost as they have enough stored energy to mature and form seeds. Put them in a black plastic bag to rot and then put them into your compost.

The most pressing chore, at this time, is to clean up after the winter. I do not remove leaves from my beds where they do not interfere with plants that are emerging, but do take them away from bulbs that are growing and off of primulas etc.

WAIT till the soil has dried enough to work without causing damage to its' structure. Soil structure is how the aggregates (groupings of particles of sand, silt and clay held together by humus) are formed and held together to allow good drainage but still hold enough water for the use of our plants and for the soil micro organisms.

Raised veggie beds will dry and warm up sooner.

Stepping on soil surfaces while wet will cause compaction, squeezing all the air out of your soil profile, especially in the top 12" of soil. Plants and organisms need just as much air in the soil profile as they do moisture. Plant roots, the fibrous ones, grow in the top 12"-18" of the soil. So it follows that you will be limiting your plant growth and health when compacting the soil.

And when your soil has warmed give your soil organisms and plants a treat by broadcasting an organic mix (I use Borden's Mix from Borden Mercantile in Victoria) and then mulch with a 2" or so layer of compost.

*Barb Kohlman*

# Mill Bay Flower & Garden Show



## Grow & Go!

**Saturday, May 31, 2025**

Cobble Hill Hall, 3550 Watson Avenue

Adults \$2 / Children free

Join Us from 9 AM to 2 PM



### GROW!

#### Exhibit Your Prized Flowers or Veggies

Dozens of Classes to Enter  
Entries accepted May 30th

Download Exhibitor's Guide online at:  
[www.millbaygardenclub.com/show](http://www.millbaygardenclub.com/show)

Or visit these local retailers for a copy:

**Duncan:** Dinter Nursery,  
Buckerfield's and Shar-Kare

**Cobble Hill:** Country Grocer

**Mill Bay:** Thrifty Foods,  
Crazy Daisy Garden Shoppe

### GO!

#### Help Support Local Charities

Silent Auction

Dozens of delightful treasures to bid on

#### Shop, Dine and Learn at Our Garden Market

Plants and Garden Accessories,  
Strawberry Tea

Talk to Master Gardeners

#### Admire the Exhibits

Award-Winning Flowers  
and Produce



## Mill Bay Garden Club

[www.millbaygardenclub.com](http://www.millbaygardenclub.com)



## GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

7:00 pm, February 28, 2025

President Richard Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM in the Mill Bay Community Centre.

Norman Redcliffe moved adoption of the agenda; seconded by Cecile Healey. Passed.

Jim Wisnia moved adoption of the minutes of the general meeting of January 28, 2025; seconded by Janice Rose. Passed.

President's Report. Richard has produced a sign up sheet for members who wish to take part in car pooling. Sally Emory volunteered to coordinate the activity and was given the form. We also need a volunteer to coordinate social media. Anyone interested should contact Richard. Seedy Saturday will take place in Cobble Hill in two weeks. Robin indicated that she has several volunteers but could use a few more.

Vice-President: Kathy Code is hoping to hear from a bonsai expert who could be our speaker for the March meeting. She has already found speakers for April and May.

Treasurer: Gord said he had paid our membership to the B.C. Council of Garden Clubs which also provides us with insurance.

Membership: We have one new member tonight.

Sunshine: Janice said that if you wish to send any cards to Elaine Scott who is ill you can leave them in a box at Barb Kohlman's home. Barb will deliver them.

Memorial Garden: There will be a clean-up party here in the garden on Saturday March 8.

Flower and Garden Show: Janice said our 76th show will be on May 30 and 31. She thanked Nick, Carrie and Heather for their help and introduced Katherine Miller and Jennifer Campbell who will be leading committees. Al Mikalishen passed out a sign up sheet for volunteers for the show. Please indicate if you have changed your email address. If you are a new member please add your email address.. You may also volunteer to join the steering committee.

Katherine Miller is the Plant Sale coordinator. Please consider propagating seedlings for the show. You can bring them in May. Elaine Scott will also be giving us plants from the Plantaholics sale.

*Minutes continued on next page*

*Minutes continued from previous page*

Jennifer Campbell is the coordinator for the Silent Auction which raises the money to pay for the Flower and Garden Show. Her committee includes Sue Rudolph and Sharie Wilson. She would like members to bring donations to the meetings. A table will be set up at the back of the room to collect items along with their completed donation forms. Items can also be dropped off at Sharie Wilson's home. More volunteers would be welcome.

Library: Katherine introduced a few new books which included:

No dig; gardening for beginners by Christopher Dowding. Penguin Random House, 2022.

The self sufficiency garden by Huw Richards and Sam Cooper. Penguin Random House, 2024

RHS The little book of wild gardening by Holly Farrell. Mitchell Beazley, 2022.

Katherine also picked up a number of pamphlets at the Master Gardener's conference which are now in a large plastic bag but the pamphlets can be checked out individually. They are on topics such as invasive species, Garry oaks, etc.

Raffle: Stephanie is selling tickets at 3 for \$5. Pick them up at the break.

Plant Sale : Kathleen Mercer would welcome any donations.

Brag Table: Barb Kohlman showed us a container of microgreens that were grown on a coir pad. The pad can be composted after use. Hellebores are in bloom now. The old leaves should be cut off now. She also showed us a maidenhair fern (*Adiantum venustum*) which is a ground cover with black stems. A glass flower holder was left after the Christmas party. It needs an owner. Fran Benton showed us some fungus. Dustin assured her it is a sign of a healthy environment.

Kitchen: Judy passed around a sign up list for goodies. She has one blank spot for March and needs volunteers for April.

Dustin Carlson is having a workshop on mushrooms in April. He passed around a sign-up sheet. There will be sessions on log cultivation and bed gardening, mainly oyster mushrooms and wine caps.

Janice Rose announced that the Awards Sub Committee has awarded a new Meritorious Service award this year. Janice and her husband have prepared a cup award. Since 2000 5 members have been given this award so 5 name tags will be attached to the base of the cup. Heather and Nick Jenkins are the recipients tonight for their outstanding contributions to the club over a number of years which include but are not limited to - all the printing for the Flower and Garden Show, setting up tents, handling the vendors and the Memorial Garden. In honour of the occasion Pat Spezowka made her special cupcakes for tonight.

The meeting broke for refreshment at 7:45 and reconvened at 8:00.

The raffle table tonight included packets of bulbs, a sprayer, a bird house and a book "Gardening Made Easy".

*Minutes continued on next page*

*Minutes continued from previous page*

Kathy Code introduced tonight's speaker Amy Luck-MacGregor from Spring Hill Soil Lab who spoke on soil food web organisms. Soil is a living ecosystem. Dirt is dead. Microorganisms build soil, hold water, gather nutrients and protect against pests and diseases. The healthier a plant is, the more it contributes to the soil. She showed us slides of the various stages of soil regeneration and the things to look for in healthy soil. Members had brought samples of their compost. She examined these under a microscope and projected them onto a screen. She pointed out the various components in the soil.

Gwen Redcliffe made a motion to adjourn at 9:24 PM.