



# 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, April 28th, 2026

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!

## April Speaker: Bethany Couture on *Native Plants*

See page 3 for details



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# APRIL

## March Brag Table Theme:

### Audacious April

With plant and flower identification and commentary provided by Barb Kohlman and helpers, 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 Report

Richard Nelson

Perhaps even more than creating and tending our own gardens we gardeners love to visit and enjoy the gardens of others. Garden tours are productive fund raising projects for many organizations such as Victoria Conservatory of Music, Victoria Hospice, Duncan Rotary and many garden clubs. There is a bounty of inspiration to be found in the diverse gardens opened up for tours where every gardener has unusual plants or unique ways of arranging and presenting plantings. Within garden clubs having open gardens for members is a valuable way to build knowledge and camaraderie in the group where information and insight flow back and forth between host and visitor.

From the gardener's perspective the idea of opening their garden is a project that needs thoughtful consideration. One of the first thoughts might be "is my garden worthy?" and the answer is invariably yes! Every garden is a creative act that deserves to be shared. A garden does not need to be perfectly weed free, edged, pumped up and coiffed to be enjoyed and appreciated by others. Experiencing variety is the primary reward to be gained from seeing other's gardens – each garden adds to the variety. Of course when the decision is made to open the garden

there is a strong incentive to get busy and work toward the best presentation possible but there is no need to get heroic, just do what is reasonably possible. Gardens of all sizes from tiny to rambling have individual charms.

It is important to consider how to keep potential attendance within a comfortable range. Limiting the invitation to within a single club or couple of clubs will control the numbers as opposed to circulating the information through social media which could grow attendance exponentially. Think about start and end times to manage personal energy demands on the day. Other details such as available parking and washroom access deserve attention in the planning.

On the day of an open garden the gardener host and the tourist will do best to relax and enjoy. The opportunity to visit and explore will be well appreciated and the experience will be repaid over and over. Take the opportunity to see what fellow gardeners are up to and perhaps sign up for one or more of the larger multi-garden fund raising tours. With the weather turning warm and the days long, this is the season for open gardens: let's go.

In Gardening  
*Richard*

# Mill Bay Garden Club General Meeting Agenda April 28, 2026

- I. Call to Order: 7:00pm.
  - a) Approval of the Agenda:
  - b) Approval of the minutes of the previous General Meeting
  - c) President's Message: Richard Nelson
    - Community Flower & Garden Show June 5 & 6
    - AGM - June 23
    - Nominations for Committee Leads & Executive Positions
    - Open gardens and garden tours
    - Proposals for club donations to May 11 Exec/Committee Leads Meeting
  - d) Executive & Committee reports:
  - e) Questions for the Executive:
  - f) Brag Table: "Audacious April"
  - g) Garden related questions with our Master Gardeners
  - H) Sian Richards: Gardener's Warm Up
2. Presentation 8:00pm. **Bethany Couture - Wild Plants**
  - h) Adjournment

## February's Speaker:

### Bethany Couture on Native Plants

#### Speaker Bio:

Bethany Couture is a sustainable horticulturist, permaculture practitioner, and educator based in Victoria, BC. She holds a Diploma in Permaculture Design and Education, teaches permaculture at the Pacific Horticulture College, teaches landscape design for the Master Gardener Training, and serves as lead steward of the permaculture garden at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific. Through her business, Garden Alchemist, Bethany works as a landscape designer and consultant, helping her clients transform their yards into beautiful, ecologically functional spaces.

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## Executive Members

### President

Richard Nelson

### Vice President

Kathy Code

### Treasurer

Gord Hamilton  
[mbgcfees@gmail.com](mailto:mbgcfees@gmail.com)

### Secretary

Carol Goodger-Hill

### Past-President

Gill Keir

## Committee Leads

### Membership

Alicia Wonsiak  
[mbgcmembership@gmail.com](mailto:mbgcmembership@gmail.com)

### Flower & Garden Show

Janice Rose

### Library

Katherine Miller

### Kitchen

Judy Raimondo

### Plant Sales

Carrie Nelson

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### **Presentation Summary:**

Learn how native plants can quickly transform your garden into an ecosystem that provides food, shelter, and water for wildlife while building healthy soil and requiring less maintenance. You'll learn tips on plant selection, how to provide all-season interest for people and wildlife, and proper maintenance practices.

## **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 readers

I will have several new books to share with you at our next meeting, including one on how to grow your own mushrooms. I hope you will find it useful.

We have only two meetings left to take out books, and coincidentally, two meetings left to return books you have out. At our meeting in May, anything you sign out will be kept for the summer and returned in September.

Please come and see me at any meeting if you would like help finding a book in our collection, or have suggestions for new ones.

Yours in reading,  
*Katherine*

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### **Committee Leads (cont'd)**

#### **Bursary**

Ann Baty

#### **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**

Pat Spezowka

#### **Newsletter Editor**

Dave Byrnes

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

### **Social Media**

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

[https://  
www.facebook.com/  
share/g/179g2iN22r/](https://www.facebook.com/share/g/179g2iN22r/)

## Committee Reports (continued)

### Social Media

Hello everyone,

Yeah! Our Facebook Group has over 100 members now. Thanks everyone. Keep it up.

To join please email me and I will send you an invite, go to our Facebook page and sign in or click on the link below.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/g/179g2iN22r/>

Happy posting.

*Pat*

### Membership Committee

The Mill Bay Garden Club's membership currently stands at 145, including 128 paid memberships, 14 life-time memberships, and 3 under-25 memberships.

#### **Seedy Saturday, Cobble Hill - Sat March 21st**

We had a busy and fun time at Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday on March 21st.

Thank you to the fabulous volunteers Susan, Kathy, Ann, Nancy, Tom, Diane and Richard.

Congratulations to our draw prize winners: Erin Klatt and Anne Canson !!



#### **Seed Library - Vancouver Island Regional Libraries**

A Seed Library is hosted year-round by the South Cowichan (Mill Bay) Library.

Drop by the South Cowichan Library next to Thrifty Foods in the Mill Bay Shopping Centre, 310-2720 Mill Bay Road.

Help yourself to our free prepackaged seeds generously donated by West Coast Seeds and our community.

Plant, harvest, and try seed saving! We accept clean, dry seeds that are labelled with the type and variety, as well as the year of harvest (no more than 2 years old).

## Committee Reports (continued)

### Bursary Report

#### Volunteer Wanted!

The Bursary Committee is looking for one (or two) volunteer to present the MBGC Bursary to a Quw'utsun Secondary School student on June 2nd, 7:00 pm at their awards ceremony. The presenter(s) makes a 30 second presentation and gives the student a letter, which will be provided, and possibly some flowers. There are dozens of awards so the speech is brief. Afterwards, we ask that you request a photo of the winner.

We are also hoping a member might join our friendly committee for 2027. Only one meeting each year!

### Plant Sales Table - General Meeting

There's still time to divide perennials to share with members at the club meeting or for later in June. Thanks to all for donations.

*ALSO, more importantly....*

Richard and Carrie Nelson will open their garden on Mother's Day, May 10, 2 - 4 pm for club members.

### Memorial Garden Clean Up



**Saturday May 9th**

**10.00 am**

Give us a hand!

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*

# Flower & Garden Show 2026

## Silent Auction Committee

Jennifer Campbell

Susan Rudolph

Shari Wilson

### Donations

Our goal is to raise money for the club and local charities. We welcome goods, gift certificates or services. Goods can be anything you make, refurbish or repurpose. BE CREATIVE!

**Please complete the Silent Auction Donation Form at the end of the newsletter and return it to us with your donation to one of our meetings on April 28th, or May 26th.**

There will be a table at the front of the hall set up for donations. If you are unable to bring your donation to the hall, please contact Shari Wilson to arrange a time to drop it off at her house or the Cobble Hill Hall on the day of the show.

## Plant Sales Table - Flower & Garden Show

Hello and thank you to all who have volunteered to help with the plant table. We could still use another truck/trailer to pick up plants on Friday evening and deliver them on Saturday morning. Cash table is taken care of. Another volunteer for the afternoon shift at the table, 11:30 - 2:00, would be good.

A reminder that you will bring your plant donations to the Jenkins between Monday, May 25th and Thursday, June 4th. Please include as much information with the plant as possible, at least what it is! Colour, species and other particulars are also appreciated. Thank you for not donating invasive plants. Your support with donations, pick-up and delivery and working on the day is very welcome. This plant table will be a success because of all you lovely club members.

## Coming Events

### Cairnsmore/Hospice Volunteer Gardeners' Annual Plant Sale

Saturday May 2nd, 9:00am. Cairnsmore Place, Duncan.

We are just over a week away from our plant sale and I've attached an updated plant list, but there may be other plants that we have missed or that will be added at the last minute.

- Sale starts at 9:00, so come early especially if there's something specific that you have your eye on.
- The location is a bit different from previous years - we will be in the grassy area to the right of the Cairnsmore main entrance.
- Parking is best on the side streets off Cairnsmore and we will once again have volunteers to help take your purchases to your cars.
- Master Gardeners will be on site to answer your gardening questions
- Tickets to the Duncan Rotary Garden Sale will be available for purchase on site
- We accept cash or eTransfer (no credit or debit).

We are always looking for more volunteer gardeners. From March to November we garden every Wednesday morning from 9:00 to 11:00, which includes coffee, treats and conversation at the end. In hot weather we start at 8:30. Not everyone can make it every Wednesday and this is where a few more volunteers can help to fill in. Let us know if you are able to help!

Looking forward to seeing you next Saturday, May 2nd!

### More Coming Events

- **OPEN GARDEN for club members** at Richard and Carrie Nelson's, Mother's Day (May 10th) 2-4pm).
- **2nd Annual Duncan Rotary Garden Tour** 7 June 10am-4pm. Tickets \$30, available online April 1 - June 5. See poster over.
- **Cobble Hill Fair** Saturday 22 August. Fair catalogues will be out in July, entries by Saturday 8 August.



Rotary  
Club of Duncan



# GARDEN TOUR


June 7, 2026  
10am - 4:30pm

Self Guided tour of 6 beautiful gardens!

*Master Gardeners at every stop to host and answer questions!*

**Tickets Available April 1 - June 7**

Or at these retailers **until June 7, Cash Only**

 **\$30** *All proceeds help support non-profits in the Cowichan Valley*

Available online **April 1 - June 5**



<https://gardentour2026.fundraiser.support>

*Plus limited cash-only tickets the day of the event at tour gardens*

**Duncan**

- Buckerfield's Supply Store
- Volume One Bookstore

**North Cowichan**

- Sandpiper Gardens & Glass
- Westholme Nursery

**South Cowichan**

- Dinter Nursery
- Hillside Stone & Garden

**Lake Cowichan**

- Home Hardware

Thank you to our sponsors!



## Gardening Tips for April 2026

by Barb Kohlman

Cut down group C Clematis to about 12". These are the late blooming Clematis that bloom on new wood.

Dead-head early blooming bulbs as they finish flowering to prevent seed set, but let their leaves die down naturally to feed the bulbs for next year's show.



Divide and transplant (or pot up for the Flower and Garden Show plant sale) summer and fall bloomers.

Take cuttings of over-wintered Pelargoniums (tender geraniums) and Fuchsias, and pot them up to encourage rooting. Pot them on to their summer locations when well-rooted.

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

Prune spring flowering shrubs that are now finished blooming. First dead, diseased and damaged-----then dumb!!!!!!!!!!!! and oldest ¼ out -----at the base for vase-shaped shrubs.

Plant Dahlia tubers, making sure to drive the stakes in first, to avoid damage to tubers.

Train/tie in young shoots of climbers to cover desired space.

And hope you are enjoying and "using" the nice weather.

*Barb Kohlman*

## **Minutes of the Mill Bay Garden Club General Meeting March 31, 2026**

President Richard Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM in the Mill Bay Community Hall.

Norman Redcliffe moved approval of the agenda; seconded by Fran Benton. Passed.

Gwen Redcliffe moved approval of the minutes of the general meeting of February 24, 2026; seconded by Janice Rose. Passed.

President: Richard reported that there was a lot of interest in our garden club during Seedy Saturday on March 21. We had lots of volunteers and passed out information about our forthcoming Flower and Garden Show. He pointed out the Silent Auction table at the front of the room where members may leave their donations. Two items; a plate with a painting of a lesser bittern and a Pyrex pie plate were left behind at the last general meeting. Judy will contact the owners. A friend of Nancy Bonner would like to find dried white hydrangea flowers. If you have some please contact Nancy.

Past President: Gill Keir needs volunteers for upcoming vacancies on the Executive. We need a Vice President; a Committee chair for the Flower and Garden Show, a Membership chairperson and a chairperson for the Plant Table. Please see Gill at break or contact her.

Vice President: Kathy will be presenting tonight on Wildwood. She has found speakers for every meeting up to September and will gladly help whoever volunteers for Vice President to find speakers.

Treasurer and Web site. The financial situation is fine. Gord has put a slideshow of the last Flower and Garden Show on the web site.

Membership: Seedy Saturday was a big success with over 100 entries for the prize draw and two new members.

Sunshine: Janice sent a card to Gayle Volker who is ill and who would appreciate hearing from members. If you know anyone who would like a pick-me-up card please contact Janice.

Memorial Garden. The garden is looking beautiful and will not need maintenance in April.

Flower and Garden Show. The show is getting close so please consider volunteering. The brochure is available tonight. Al Mikalishen has placed a clipboard on the side table for people to sign up. We need assistants for exhibitors, for the membership table, for the judges (who come from Sooke and do the scripting on the cards themselves), people to help set up and take down, people who have trucks to transport things and a greeter./promotor at the entrance, to name just a few. There are places for everyone so please look at the sheet and pick what you want to do.

Plant Table. Katherine urged folks to pot up plants now for the show. They will be dropped off at a central location where they will be priced. She needs someone to organize the donations and transport them to the show.

The three person Silent Auction Committee of Jenny Campbell, Sue Rudolph and Shari Wilson thanked members for last years' contributions and urged people to donate again and bring their items to the monthly meeting. Sue and Jennie will be going round to local businesses to collect donations.

Social Media: Pat is pleased with the number of people who are not members who have signed up on our Facebook account. She has begun to get gardening questions from folks so she hopes garden club members will follow Facebook and give needed feedback.

Library: There was a book sale table at Seedy Saturday so Katherine picked up several books on subjects such as growing tomatoes and permaculture.

The Raffle Table was not present tonight.

Bursary: The applications from Frances Kelsey have been picked up.

Plant Table: There were a lot of sales tonight. There still are some special potatoes and some onion sets. Carrie would like to borrow a large rectangular plastic tray for the Flower and Garden Show, like the one she demonstrated.

Kitchen: Judy needs one more volunteer for goodies for April and two more kitchen helpers. She sent the clipboard around.

Brag Table: Fran Benton was impressed with the beautiful collection of flowers, with displays of forsythia, rosemary, Daphne and hellebore. Outstanding was a vase of ornamental flowering cherry and boxwood. Fran told us to tuck some moss into the tops of potted plants. It will keep the plants cooler and moister during our hot summers. This is also the time to cut last year's fronds off sword ferns. Remember, when forsythia blooms it is time to prune your roses. Richard showed us a decaying branch with turkey tail fungus and the mycelium spreading through the wood. This fungus has medicinal uses and is useful to treat canine lymphoma.

Questions for Master Gardeners: A member brought a picture of a canker on apple trees and asked how to deal with it. There is a book in the library about pests and diseases. Pat received a question on Facebook asking if there was an organic bug spray that was safe to use in the house. It was suggested any mild pesticide should work.

Janice Rose told us that the CVRD has brought forward a Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw no. 4710. She urged everyone to read it. There are recommendations in it about fencing, chickens, cattle, RV's and many other topics. It covers the district from Lake Cowichan to the Malahat and will see many proposed changes in the way we have been doing things. To read it go to [Planyourcowichan.ca](http://Planyourcowichan.ca), then click on Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw, then on View Project, then on Find My Zone. After you have found your zone you can read all the proposed changes. There is nowhere to enter your own input. If you have concerns be aware there is a Virtual Open House on May 5 and also contact your area director now.

The meeting broke for refreshment at 7:50 and reconvened at 8:00 PM.

Kathy Code the chair of the Ecoforestry Institute Society spoke tonight on the Wildwood Ecoforest: a brief history and its importance as a forestry model. The forest is on 104 acres of old growth on Quenelle Lake near Yellow Point. It has two mandates; to promote the principles and practices of ecoforestry and to develop educational programming. Dr. Jane Goodall has been to the forest and has planted a tree there. The ecoforest is the only one of its kind on the west coast of North America. The property was purchased by Merv Wilkinson in 1938 and by 1945 he had decided to preserve it as an ecoforest. There have been many challenges but since 2016 it has been a working ecoforest using natural regeneration and selective tree harvesting to maintain an intact ecosystem. There is a restored homestead on the property which is a major source of income. Money is also raised through the community with the donation of time, funds and talent. Money is also raised through educational programs, grants and events. In 2023 they purchased an additional 6 acres and in 2025, 21 more acres were added. The future of Wildwood is guaranteed in perpetuity. There are public tours on the third Sunday of every month at 1 PM. Visit the web site at <http://www.ecoforestry.ca>

Katherine Miller moved adjournment at 8:45 PM.

# Mill Bay Garden Club

## Community Flower & Garden Show

### Silent Auction Donation Form

For Donor Use	
Donor's Name	
Date of Gift	
Are You an MBGC Member?	
Name of Business Contact:	
Donor Address:	
Phone No:	
Email:	
Gift Item	
Gift Description (Brief description of the item to encourage interest in the item)	
Gift Value	
Business Information. (A short promotional phrase to describe services or products offered by your business, if applicable)	

Please note: Donor Name will appear in the Silent Auction bid sheets and catalogue. Requests for anonymity will be respected. Contact information is used only by the Silent Auction Committee and is not shared or published.

Gifts are accepted for Auction at the discretion of the Silent Auction Chairperson.

#### For Club Use Only

Date Rec'd:		Rec'd By:		Item No:	
Committee Member Contact Info:					