



MILL BAY GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER

Website: www.millbaygardenclub.com

Email: mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com

Next Meeting:

Date: **Tues, February 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!**



February Brag Table Theme:

February Survivors

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!

February Speaker: Amy Luck-MacGregor on **Soil Food Web Organisms**

See page 3 for details



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.



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President's Report

Richard Nelson

Mill Bay Garden Club is a high performance group. Our club has run the very successful Community Flower and Garden Show for many years as well as giving thousands of dollars in bursaries to deserving students and donating further thousands to community groups serving diverse needs in the Cowichan Valley. We have a presence at events like Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday and Cobble Hill Fair. The source of the club's success is our member's dedication and volunteerism. Volunteers appear at every general meeting early to set up the hall, to staff the membership table, prepare for tea, coffee and goodies at the break, lay out the plant sales, raffle table, brag table, library and so many other features of our meetings. And volunteers are also active at the end of the meeting to put away the

tables and chairs, sweep the floor and turn out the lights.

Our members show up to maintain the Memorial Garden at the hall entrance, and to spread the word at community events and to take care of one another through the tough times.

And what do these many volunteer members get from pitching in so willingly and continuously? They get conversation, ideas, camaraderie and laughter. They also get a vibrant, varied and active Mill Bay Garden Club in which it is a joy be involved.

Thank you to all of our volunteers, you make our club a joy.

Sincerely,
Richard

February 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
 - d) Executive Committee reports
 - i.) Robin Reid: Seedy Saturday
 - e) Brag Table: February Survivors
 - f) Garden-related Questions with our Master Gardeners
- Break
- 2) 8:00 p.m. Speaker: **Amy Luck-MacGregor on Soil Food Web Organisms**
 - h) Adjournment

January's Speaker:

Amy Luck-MacGregor on Soil Food Web Organisms

Amy from Spring Hill Soil Lab will lead an exploration into the soil food web organisms that are critical for nutrient cycling, plant pest and disease control, and soil structure. Supporting these organisms means we can grow without the need for artificial inputs. The focus will be on:

- what soil food web organisms look like under the microscope
- how to recognise if they might be missing from your garden
- practical strategies to restore microbial diversity and support living soil

It's a bit chilly to look at soil at this time of year but if anyone wants to bring in some compost or worm bin samples, feel free and we can put your new microbe identification skills to the test! If you are bringing in a sample, please collect it on the day of the talk. Take 5 separate tablespoons of material from 5 different areas and depths of your worm or composting system. Place in a clean ziplock bag and leave the top open for the microbes to breathe.

Bio:

Amy Luck-MacGregor is the owner/operator of Spring Hill Soil Laboratory in Duncan, providing biological analyses of soil and compost to support regenerative agriculture in B.C and beyond. She is at her happiest with her hands in the soil and is passionate about sharing the wonders of the soil food web and the connection between soil health, ecosystem health and human health with people of all ages. She is a Certified Soil Food Web Laboratory Technician and Soil Biology Consultant in-training at Dr Elaine Ingham's Soil Food Web School. You can find her at www.springhillsoil-lab.ca.

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...

Committee Reports (continued)

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

This indoor weather is a great time to get some reading done and we have the library to support you. A new book in the library is *Compost* by Charles Dowding, 2024. Simple information, based on the personal experience of the author, and embellished with effective charts and diagrams, provides a great introduction to the topic. He discusses types of bins, what can go in them, turning the compost, worms, moisture and more. This book will be available to borrow at the next meeting.

As always, please remember to return the items you borrowed last month.

Yours in reading,

Katherine



WANTED



GARDEN RELATED VENDORS

For

The Mill Bay Community
Flower & Garden Show

For more information, contact

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

Social Media

VACANT

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

Newsletter Editor

Dave Byrnes

mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com



Social Media

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

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

Position Vacant

Committee Reports (continued)

Membership

It is great to see many people renewing their memberships. This is what keeps the club going, so thank you each and everyone of you.

On that note, we will be one of the many vendors at the Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday, March 15th from 10 -2 pm. in the Cobble Hill community hall. Our goal - to let others know that the Mill Bay Garden Club is a great club to be part of.

We could use 2 or 3 more volunteers to help set up our booth, or sit at the booth (2 hours at a time) and/or to help take down the booth.

If you are available to volunteer, see me Tuesday evening at our meeting. I am the one that is there to greet new members, give them information, etc. I would love your help or just stop by to say hello so I can get to know more of you!

Your member coordinator

Robin

Memorial Garden Clean Up

Volunteers for the next Clean Up required!

Saturday March 8th

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.

Following the early spring clean up, I would like to get together a group of volunteers for the second Saturday of each month to maintain the garden.

Heather Jenkins

Save The Date

**Victoria Dahlia Society
Tuber & Plant
Sale**

**April 12th
1pm until sold out**

**Prospect Lake
Community Hall**

Car Pooling to Meetings?

Some MBGC members are not coming to meetings because they are uncomfortable driving on our local roads at night. Are you interested in catching a ride with someone, or even better, are you interested in giving fellow members a ride? A sign-up sheet will be passed around at the February general meeting, but in case you are not attending, you can send a message to the newsletter at mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com, stating your general location, and whether you need a ride, or are able to offer a ride to other members.

From the Plant Sales Table by Carrie Nelson

In spite of the cold, we were able to raise \$132 from plant, garlic, and glove sales at the January meeting. Thanks for your donations!

At this month's meeting, we might see a few spring delights and starts, but for the most part, we are looking forward to March, a busy month for starting veggie, herb, and flower seeds.

Given the threat of tariffs & the need to increase island food security, this is a good year to share your expertise on how to grow a garden and save seed. Growing root crops, onions, garlic, and squash will give you comfort come winter (but these are not usually started in Mar!)

Buy seed early for the best selection from retailers or Seedy Saturday, March 15, at CH hall.

Please consider starting a few extra plants to be shared with members at our general meetings or to donate to the MBGC sales table at the Community Flower & Garden Show in May. Ensure plants are labelled & their containers wiped clean when bringing them to the hall.

Below is a list of some plants you can start in March but there is ***no great rush for direct sowing*** if the weather is cold and wet. Check out the West Coast Seed catalogue or on-line for specifics.

NOTE: If you are game, try starting a few carrot & beet seeds indoors for transplanting out in April. I have not done this but I understand they transplant just fine.

Direct Sow Veggies in March:

Arugula
Broad Beans
Corn Salad
Cress
Garlic (to mid Mar)
Kale/collards
Peas (mid Mar)
Mustard
Radish
Spinach
Potatoes (Mid Mar, early varieties, soil temp 6C)

Start Indoor Veggies in March:

Broccoli
Cabbage
Celery
Choi
Leeks
Onions
Peas have better survival if started indoors fending
Peppers
Lettuce
Tomatoes

Direct Sow Flowers and Herbs in March:

Calendula
Poppy
Marigold (mid Mar)
Wild Flower Seed Mix
Cilantro
Lavender

Start Flowers & Herbs indoors in March:

Most *flower seeds* can be started indoors in Mar for transplanting out in late April & May (snaps, sweet peas, zinnias etc.)
Edible flowers: agastache, calendula, cornflower, hollyhock, marigold, nasturtiums, viola
Culinary herb seeds (with the exception of parsley)

Upcoming Seedy Weekends...

- Nanaimo Seedy Sunday: Sunday, March 2nd, 10am-3pm. NDSS, 355 Wakesiah Avenue, Nanaimo. Questions: seedysunday@nanaimofoodshare.ca
- **Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday: March 15th, 10am-2pm.**
Cobble Hill Community Hall & Stu Armour Hall, 4550 Watson Avenue, Cobble Hill.
- Duncan Seedy Sunday: March 23rd, 10am-2pm.
Si'em' Lelum Gymnasium, 5574 River Road, Duncan.
- Sooke Seedy Saturday: March 29th, 10am-3pm. Sooke Community Hall.
2037 Shields Road, Sooke.
- Coombs Seedy Sunday: March 30th, 11am-3pm. Coombs Fairgrounds.
1014 Ford Road, Coombs.

Gardening Tips for Feb-March 2025 by Barb Kohlman

When your forsythia is blooming it is time to prune your roses!

Hellebores are looking good even though they were covered in snow, Hope you have *trimmed* off all the leaves of the *Helloborus 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.

If you have not planted wind flowers – *Anemone blanda* in your garden there should be 4" pots available at the garden centers now. They are such cheery little daisy-like flowers blooming in my garden and in just a few years they will seed themselves into a nice patch.

For a tree that shows good now try *Magnolia stellata*— buds will start to break with star like flowers in white of pale pink in some cultivars. A small tree useful for a smallish space. And water well the first year to establish, I have not tried one in my current garden but may find a space soon.

Hope you are out enjoying the finish of the snow, are managing to get out in the garden between the rain squalls, and are planning at least one new space---small even counts cheers *barb k*





GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

7:00 pm, January 28, 2025

President Richard Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Norman Redcliffe moved approval of the agenda; seconded by Janice Rose. Passed.

Dave Byrnes moved approval of the minutes of November 26, 2024; seconded by Al Mikalishen. Passed.

President. The Betty Crocker spoon left behind at the Christmas Party found a home. The 2025 Christmas Party has been booked for December 16 in this hall. We have received a thank you note from Cowichan Women Against Violence for our financial contribution.

Some folks would like to make use of car pooling to get to the meetings. Would someone be willing to step forward to organize this?

Yvonne Amos has stepped back from the social media position. We need a volunteer to take over.

Bernie Juurlink announced that the CERCA (Cowichan Estuary Restoration and Conservation Association) needs volunteers for a bat survey. The volunteer will get one of 4 microphones which record bat calls. The volunteer will record for 2 nights a week for 2 weeks each month, from April to November. The volunteer will have downloaded software which gives tentative identification of the bat from the recorded call. Then the volunteer will enter the identification information, and the first bat and the last bat recorded into an EXCEL program. The information will be collected and tabulated. If you are interested please contact Bernie with your name and telephone number.

Flower and Garden Show, May 30 & 31. Al Mikalishen is looking for volunteers for the Plant Competition, Plant Sale, Silent Auction, the Vendors and the Strawberry Tea. . He passed round a sign up sheet. Please indicate your email address if you are new to the club or have changed your email address. The rewards of volunteering are many. You will also get to know more people in the club.

Janice Rose said that this is our 76th Flower and Garden Show. We have a Steering Committee which has already met once. We are redesigning the Exhibitor Guide this year. We need a Silent Auction chair person and a Plant Sales chair person.

Kathleen Mercer is stepping back from Plant Sales but will give the volunteer all the help she can.

Janice Rose has volunteered her yard to collect plants for the sale. Plants will be collected in early May.

Vice President: Kathy Code has lined up speakers for the next few months. She will be speaking this evening.

Minutes continued on next page

Membership: Robin introduced one new member this evening. Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday is on March 15 and volunteers are needed to man the table. Please contact Robin if you are interested.

Sunshine. Ann Baty has thanked us for the cards she received when her daughter was ill. Recently cards were sent to Monika Morgan and Alex Spezowka. Elaine Scott is ill. Those who wish to send her cards should give them to Barb Kohlman who will deliver them.

Memorial Garden. Heather said there would be no work party this month due to the cold. The work party is on the last Saturday of the month.

Library. Katherine Miller showed us a few new books. Some of the titles are as follows:

- Medicinal Mushroom of North America by Robert Rogers and J. Duane Sept. Calypso, 2023.
- Popular Wild Flowers of Coastal B.C. by Neil Jennings. 2020
- 100 Best Plants for a Coastal Garden by Steve Whysall. Vancouver, Whitecap, 1998
- Ornamental Ponds by Gerald Thom and Gordon Edmondson. 1996

Raffle. Stephanie said there were lots of great prizes tonight-- an ergonomic snow shovel handle, a sculpture a beautiful piece of stained glass.

Plant Sales: Carrie reported not a lot of plants tonight but she did have some extra large leather gloves.

Brag Tables: what's coming Up. Barb Kohlman showed us a small vase of yellow flowering witch hazel, a lovely display of heather, a box of kiwi fruit, and sprays of Nandina (Heavenly bamboo) "Firepower" and Choisya (Mexican orange blossom) "Sundance".

Kitchen. Judy needs one more volunteer for goodies for next month and she passed the sheet around for March.

Questions for Master Gardeners:

- How can I get my witch hazel to bloom. It is healthy and well fertilized. Put wood ash around it. Also use organic Bordon's fertilizer.
- It is too cold to prune roses now. Wait until it starts to rain. The same goes for fruit trees.

The meeting broke for refreshment at 7:42 and reconvened at 8:00 PM.

Kathy Code spoke on Lessons from my Ecological Garden. In 2012 she bought a piece of land in Cobble Hill that has a lovely variety of ecosystems including forest, wetland, flat land and some scrub. On the flat land she has built an orchard, large raised vegetable beds and a greenhouse. The beds are raised 12 inches because the soil underneath is clay. One of the joys is listening to and observing the birds, the trees and the wind. She loves to watch the many pollinators at work. She does a lot of mulching and uses tarps to control the weeds. The tarps are fun because they harbour a variety of snakes. She also has colonies of ants, spiders, frogs, African lizards and worms. Golden crab spiders are white with red markings. They lurk in daisies to catch their prey. She is striving to keep the grass down, to preserve the bounty from the garden and to develop a root cellar.

Katherine Miller moved adjournment at 8:45 PM.