



# 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, January 27th, 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!**

## January Speaker: Bryan Emery on *An Introduction to Succulents*

*See page 3 for details*



## January Brag Table Theme:

### *Winter Wonders*

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.



## Inside...

- President's Report p 2
- This Month's Speaker p 3
- Executive/Committee Reports p 4-6
- Barb Kohlman's Tips p 7
- Fran Benton's Column p 8-9
- Last Meeting's Minutes p 10-11

## President's Report

Richard Nelson

Happy New Year to everyone in Mill Bay Garden Club. I hope you all successfully slogged through the onslaught of the Pineapple Expresses that drenched us into the new year. The moisture that we truly need seems to come all at once. These last couple of weeks of clear, dry days really lifted the spirits, bringing enthusiasm for winter pruning and just to get out in the sun for a wander through the garden.

This is a great time of the year to assemble seed supplies and organize them into a series of start times. Begin with the slow starters and the cool season lovers, I am thinking of Dianthus, Alyssum, Marigolds, onions, leeks and peas (sweet and garden). Getting an early start will give you an edge on having more specimens ready for entry in the Flower and Garden Show (Sunflowers anyone?) and get you to glorious bouquets and fresh veggies early in the season. It is so thrilling to see the tiny sprouts filling out on the window sill or in the greenhouse with great promise for a season of plenty. The tender, heat loving beans, squash and tomatoes are best held off and timed for planting out late in May. West Coast Seeds have an excellent chart in their catalogue to help with the timing of a wide variety of plants. I encourage all gardeners to take care in ramping up the physical activity toward spring. Take time to warm up before getting into vigorous work – gently stretch

while you amble about the garden planning and dreaming on the garden you will create. Starting those clean-up tasks early in the season and limiting the time spent on any particular type of work will allow the muscles and joints to adjust to activity. Resist the urge to fork over a wide patch of ground but rather do small sections over several days. I speak from the experience of seasons past where over enthusiasm has lead to lower back pain that made standing up straight difficult. A physiotherapist has recommended stopping vigorous exercise 15 minutes before you are in pain - it was not explained how to gauge that point.

The Flower and Garden Show group has commenced meeting and planning toward what will hopefully be another successful event on June 6. This event has benefited tremendously through the generosity of members volunteering, contributing plants, donating items to the silent auction and of course entering your best in the show. Thanks to the splendid participation, the Flower and Garden Show is a huge contributor to the donations that Mill Bay Garden Club is able to provide to community groups. Thank you to everyone for your participation and support.

In Gardening,  
*Richard*

# Mill Bay Garden Club General Meeting Agenda January 27, 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  
    Sharpening at the February meeting  
    Thank you to the set-up and take down crew
  - d) Executive & Committee reports:
  - e) Questions for the Executive:
  - f) Brag Table: Winter Wonders
  - g) Garden related questions with our Master Gardeners

Break
2. Presentation 8:00pm. **Bryan Emery on Succulents**
  - h) Adjournment

## January's Speaker:

### **Bryan Emery: An Introduction to Succulents**

A basic overview of these highly adapted water storing plants, from bold beautiful plants for the garden and planters to odd and unusual collector oddities.

#### **Speaker's Bio**

Bryan Emery, proprietor of Bryan's Specialty Plants, started growing plants when he was ten years old, continuing to grow and cultivate flowers since then. It is truly a labour of love, with particular interest in unique plants and the "diversity in the plant world."

His collection has been evolving for over 25 years: annuals, perennials, houseplants, cacti, succulents. He has worked hard to offer new plant material into our market. Based in Victoria, BC, Bryan's Plants ships plants throughout Canada.

Bryan's home garden was featured in the Victoria Conservatory of Music's 2022 Musical Mother's Day Garden Tour. He is active in exhibiting entries in Cacti and Succulent societies, the VI Rock and Alpine Society and the Victoria Lily Society, where he won the 2023 Show Grand Prize for his vast number of amazing entries. He can also be found selling plants at many shows and cool pop-up plant sales in Victoria, such as the popular Plantaholics Sale.

## **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

*Cont'd next page...*

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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)

## 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 garden club readers

Thank you for making such good use of the library. I'm trying to keep the collection relevant so please let me know of any special requests for books or topics. Remember to cross off your name when you return your books each month and happy reading!

*Katherine*  
*MBGC librarian*

### Social Media

Hello everyone,

Thanks to the members who have joined after my requests via meetings and newsletters.

Our Facebook page is developing slowly and we need a lot more members to make it an interesting site. If you still haven't joined us please do so, also invite your friends, they don't have to be a garden club member. Others are welcome to join and contribute to our page.

My vision for our club Facebook is a lively exchange of ideas, questions, answers and of course lots of posts and pictures of your gardens and plants.

Email me and I will send you an invite, go to our Facebook page and sign in or Click on the link below to join.

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

I look forward to hearing from you,

*Pat*

## 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)

### Volunteers Needed for the New Executive and Committees

Time to consider joining the Garden Club's Executive or a Committee of, for the 2026-2027 year.

The Executive will need a Vice President.

There will be vacancies on some Committees:

- Chair of the Flower and Garden Show,
- Chair of Plant Sales (only for the general meetings) and
- Chair of the Membership Committee.

\*\*\*\*There are candidates for the membership and plant sales committees. That doesn't stop others from putting their names forward.

Bernie Juurlink has joined me on the recruiting committee, and we'd be pleased to discuss the vacancies. I won't be at the January meeting, but Bernie will. My contacts are listed in the newsletter and I can forward Bernie's if you'd like to speak with him.

*Regards, Gill , Past President.*

### Membership News

Treat Yourself to a Name Tag!

Order your Mill Bay Garden Club name tag for only \$15 by contacting Alicia at [mbgcmembership@gmail.com](mailto:mbgcmembership@gmail.com).

*Alicia Wonsiak*

*Membership Chair*

### Memorial Garden Clean Up\*



**\*Weather permitting**

**Saturday February 7th 10.00 am**

Happy New Year to all! 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*

## Committee Reports (continued)

### From the Plant Sales Table

January is often a time for folks to contemplate their gardens in a dreamy nostalgic way, imagining a succession of annual & perennial blooms, and a forever supply of leafy vegetables. Make that dream come true means sowing seeds and dividing plants soon!

Relocating those beautiful Shasta daisies and Hostas, or potting up a few plants for the club sales can be done when the soil can be worked up. Potted divisions will recover quickly if given some shelter from excessive rains or placed in a greenhouse. Elevating hostas will reduce slug damage. Use a light soil mix with optional slow release fertilizer or compost to speed root recovery.

If you have an excess of plant starts, either seedlings or rooted cuttings, please bring them to the club meetings to share. Any contributions are greatly appreciated. Please label & wipe pots clean or put in plastic bags to ease clean-up. Thank you.

Make those dreams a reality!

*Carrie*

### Flower and Garden Show June 5 & 6, 2026

SAVE THE DATE! Our 77th Flower and Garden Show is on June 5&6, 2026 at the Cobble Hill Hall. We are really looking forward to another great show with a huge variety of activities including flower and vegetable displays, a silent auction, plant sales, outdoor vendors and the annual strawberry tea.

Stay tuned for more information!

*Janice*

### Upcoming Seedy Weekends...

- **Qualicum Beach Seedy Saturday:** February 7th 2026, 10:00 am-3:30pm, Qualicum Beach Civic Centre, 747 Jones Street, Qualicum Beach.  
Learn more: <https://www.qbseedysaturday.ca>
- **Victoria Seedy Saturday:** February 14th 2026, time tbd, Crystal Gardens, 713 Douglas Street, Victoria. Admission by donation.
- **Nanaimo Seedy Sunday:** Sunday, March 1st, 10am-3pm. NDSS, 355 Wakesiah Avenue, Nanaimo. Questions: [seedysunday@nanaimofoodshare.ca](mailto:seedysunday@nanaimofoodshare.ca)
- **Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday:** March 21st, 10am-2pm.  
[Cobble Hill Community Hall & Stu Armour Hall, 4550 Watson Avenue, Cobble Hill.](#)

# Gardening Tips for February 2026

by Barb Kohlman

**Bring in the Bees** You don't have to keep honeybees to have a garden that's filled with bees. Attract bees to your garden by planting flowers they love. Be sure to use plants that flower through as many seasons as possible: spring (mustard, manzanita, bay laurel, calendula, borage), summer

(rosemary, cherry, columbine, blackberry and raspberry, thyme, clover, coreopsis, cosmos, catmint, Agastache, lavender), late summer and fall (salvia, zinnia, mountain mint, milkweed, echinacea, aster, sunflower, sneezeweed). All the plants will provide forage for bees and fill your garden with liveliness. The bees will also improve the production rates of your crops. More specifically, consider native bees too. They are great pollinators.

**Cut Flowering Branches** Bring early floral color into your home by cutting flowering branches such as saucer or star magnolias, forsythia, quince, flowering cherry, crab-apple, and dogwood. If the branches are still in bud, then place the entire branch in room temperature water overnight (around 8 hours). This will help coax them out of dormancy. Then remove the branches from the water, re-cut them, and set in simple glass containers filled with water.

**Plant Landscape Roses** Landscape roses are tough plants that often rebloom throughout the year. Plant landscape roses in large swaths and groups to add drama and abundant color to your garden

**Cut Back Ornamental Grasses** Just before new spring growth begins is a good time to cut back ornamental grasses. Waiting until this time in late winter or early spring ensures that grasses look stubby for the shortest period possible. Lush new growth will return soon as the weather warms. When cutting grasses back, use garden shears to cut grasses to 1 or 2 feet high, Once you cut back grasses, add a layer of compost around grasses and water them well to help stimulate growth.

**Prune Trees and Shrubs** Pruning deciduous trees and shrubs in late winter or early spring while they are still dormant is a good way to promote lush spring growth. Pruning should be done to promote plant health, maintain size and shape, and to allow sunlight to reach plant foliage. To begin pruning, remove dead, broken, or diseased branches. Trim the outer canopy for shape. Then open up the structure by removing any crossing branches

**Happy New "Gardening" Year**



## Love Those Arbutus! By Fran Benton

The iconic *Arbutus menziesii* is one of the most handsome trees in the Pacific northwest. The smooth red bark that peels to show a green new layer is so attractive. The tough shiny green leaves makes it a popular tree to admire in the wild. However it can be tricky to propagate and even trickier to get growing in the right spot. Arbutus is what my dear old mum called a fussy old trout. It likes excellent drainage, lots of sun, rocky gravelly soil, and hates having its roots disturbed.

I have written in past about the fungal blight that has attacked the Arbutus.

The surprise is that they have not all died off, in fact they have sprouted from their trunks and grown new branches and leaves.

Arbutus lives here at the extreme northern part of their range. They are found as far south as Mexico, giving this tree one of the longest north-south ranges of any North American tree. Arbutus is Canada's only native broad-leafed evergreen tree, and usually resides not farther than 8 km from the ocean.

I get very whiny and defensive of our arbutus when people cut them down or prune them badly. But lets be honest here – nothing makes better firewood than Arbutus! It burns hot and long. Fortunately for the Arbutus, its wood is not really interesting to the forest industry.

These are truly sculptural trees that do so much for the local environment. But, let's face it, they are messy. First we have spent flowers falling on the grass in spring, then we have last years leaves, then we have peeling bark. Irritating to rake but I'll put up with it. Well, to be honest, Mr. Big does the mowing and the composting so, umm, what can I say. I still love them. A few years ago I took a road trip to Arizona. Much to my surprise there are buckets of arbutus all along the Interstate 5. As you approach Arizona you start to see more of Arbutus's eleven other relatives. In BC we have an Arbutus relative, the shrub Hairy Manzanita. In garden shops everywhere we see the Strawberry tree *Arbutus Unedo*.



Our Arbutus is a plant that seems to defy propagation. I have tried numerous ways with

cuttings and seeds to no avail. However they sprout all around the base of the fir trees when the bastard squirrels bury the red berries.

Here is one very odd characteristic of Arbutus. Like the Eucalyptus trees of Australia, Arbutus has a lignotuber. This lump of growth at the base of trees allows the tree to be burnt and then re sprout from its lignotuber. A fellow coastal tree, the Redwood Sequoia sempervirens also has lignotubers.

Some of you may grow an Arbutus relative in your gardens. The attractive shrub Hairy Manzanita is an excellent native plant. It likes light open well drained soils.

Manzanita does not tolerate deep shade. How about that name. Reminds me of a neighbour I had back in Saskatchewan. He was definitely a Hairy Manzanita!

The Salish people of the island used arbutus bark and leaves to create medicines for colds, stomach problems, and tuberculosis, and as the basis for contraceptives. The tree also figures in myths of the Straits Salish.

I am always interested in the ancient origins of trees. Arbutus is quite ancient. It evolved from an ancestor 39 million years ago. What a great plant!

**WOOLY BUGGERS SHARPENING**  
MOBILE BLADE MAINTENANCE  
IS COMING TO YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

**KITCHEN CUTLERY**  
\$1 .12 per inch under 10 inches  
\$1 .25 per inch over 10 inches  
\$6 minimum  
\$10-\$15 Food Processor/Mandoline Blade

**THE GREAT OUTDOORS**  
\$15 Hatchets  
\$20 Axes  
\$25 Splitting Mauls  
Grass/Pruning Shears  
\$10 Single hand tool  
\$15 Two handed tool  
\$10 EDC  
\$10+ Hunting/Fillet

**TIP REFORMING AND BLADE REPAIR**  
\$5-\$10 extra per item, based on severity of condition

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**WOOLY BUGGERS SHARPENING**  
MOBILE BLADE MAINTENANCE

**IS COMING TO THE MILL BAY GARDEN CLUB!**

**TUESDAY  
FEBRUARY 24<sup>TH</sup>**

TOOL DROP-OFF @ 6:30PM  
CASH OR E-TRANSFER ONLY PLEASE



## GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday November 25th, 2025

President Richard Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:01 in the Mill Bay Community Centre.

Norman Redcliffe moved adoption of the agenda; seconded by Sally Emory: Passed.

Janice Rose moved acceptance of the minutes of the general meeting of October 28, 2025; seconded by Al Mikalishen. Passed.

President's Report: Richard reminded us of the Christmas party which will be next Tuesday, December 2. Ann Baty recommended that we have a tool sharpener come to the monthly general meeting in the spring. Richard has arranged that he come to the Community Hall before a meeting and sharpen any tools that are brought to him. They will be ready after the meeting. It was decided that March would be a good month.

Past President: Gill, who could not be here this evening, has formed a Nominating Committee to fill any vacant positions on the Executive before the AGM. The Committee which consists of Gill Keir and Alicia Wonsiak needs one other member. The committee has been formed early because Gill will be away in May.

Car Pooling: Sally Emory has one request from a member who lives in Cowichan Bay for a ride to the meetings. She needs a volunteer to offer a ride.

Treasurer: Gord said our finances are in good shape. We have \$2300 term deposit as a safety net for future years of the Flower and Garden Show; \$3900 to fund upfront costs of the next Flower and Garden Show; \$3790 in the Bursary Fund. We gave two \$1000 bursaries last year and one bursary is still outstanding. We also have \$3700 in the General Account.

Membership: Alicia introduced two new members this evening; Mary Pritchard and Kylea O'Connor. Anyone who needs a Garden Club name tag should let Alicia know and she will order them. They are \$15 each.

Sunshine: Janice sent a birthday card to a 98 year old member who shortly thereafter passed away so she sent a sympathy card to the family. This outstanding member started with the original Garden Club and worked very hard to build it into the club it is today.

Web: Gord reported nothing new.

Library: Katherine Miller thanked Nancy Bonner for taking over while she was away. She introduced several new books including the following:

Bulbs: the four seasons by Brian Mathew. Pavilion Books, 1998

*Minutes continued on next page*

Luschiim's Plants by Dr. Luschiim Arvid Charlie and Nancy J. Turner. Harbour Publishing, 2021.

Medicinal Plants of the Pacific Northwest by Michael Moore. Santa Fe; Crane Books, 1993.

Water Gardening in Containers by Helen Nash and C. Greg Speichert. Sterling, 1999.

Hedgerow by Eric Thomas and John T. White. Dorling, Kindersley, 1983. This book is older but has beautiful illustrations.

The Elements of Organic Gardening: Highgrove, Clarence House, Birkhall by HRH the Prince of Wales, Stephanie Donaldson and Andrew Lawson. Weidenfeld Nicolson, 2007

Raffle: Tickets are available at the break for tonight's prizes.

Plant Sales: Carrie reported lots of evergreen branches for decorating, also some garden gloves and red Cana lilies for \$3.00 a bulb.

Kitchen: Judy needs some volunteers to help in the kitchen during the Christmas Party. Please volunteer during the break.

Christmas Party: Dustin said everyone should come to the party and bring a dish to share. Also please bring a gift in a gift bag. Doors open at 5:30. We will eat about 6:30.

Brag Table : The theme tonight is "I am not dead yet" so we had several plants that have survived the uncertain weather. Fran Benton and Dustin Carlson showed us a confused hellebore in a pot; a vase of several types of blooming rhododendrons; a Fire Island hydrangea in a California redwood vase and the huge leaf of a Bird of Paradise plant. The inconsistency in the weather causes stress in the plants which is why they are blooming now.

The meeting broke for refreshment at 7:30 and reconvened at 7:55.

Richard showed us a Tilley hat that was left at the last meeting and is still unclaimed.

The raffle tonight included a set of handmade greeting cards, a book on roses, a clay pot and a Christmas cactus.

Richard introduced Joshua Blades, tonight's speaker who is the co-owner of Flowerstone Farm and Nursery and Inherit Designs Landscaping. He spoke about how to garden now for the next generation. His interest is in sustainability and environmental stewardship. Good garden decisions today will impact the next generation. He described the benefits of dry gardens, of using natural materials in landscaping, using native plants and building hedgerows. He also suggested a native meadow in one section of your lawn is a beneficial thing to do.

Dustin Carlson moved adjournment at 8:40 PM.