



MILL BAY GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER

Website: www.millbaygardenclub.com

Email: mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com

Next Meeting:

Date: **Tues, February 24th, 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!**

February Speaker:

Nat Emond on

Pruning

See page 3 for details



February Brag Table Theme:

What's Up?

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 4-7
- Barb Kohlman's Tips p 8
- Seedy Saturday p 9
- Last Meeting's Minutes p 10-12

President's Report

Richard Nelson

Valentine's Day was gorgeously sunny if a bit chilly, as nineteen well equipped, enthusiastic volunteers answered Heather Jenkins' invitation to weed, prune, move plants and spread mulch at the Memorial Garden outside the hall. That many hands made for a quick clean up; Norm and Gwen Redcliffe headed off with a trailer load of weedy waste. Skip Whitfield suggested that we put white wooden crosses in the Memorial Garden in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the Tumbler Ridge tragedy of February 10. Skip's idea was gratefully received by the group.

The chilliness in the air on Valentine's soon turned to a wintry mix which certainly changed some plans for gardening activities especially for those of us living west of the highway. That bit of winter on the west coast will bring our plants more in time with a usual spring. Gardens were definitely getting ahead of the season. Climate change will no doubt keep us guessing and adapting for the rest of our gardening lives. The coming seasons promise a further set of complications with a switch in global weather patterns as La Niña is replaced by El Niño. I have found El Niño the favourable pattern since it gives us more moist and mild marine weather rather than the drier and more extreme continental flows characteristic of La

Niña. I hope that makes some sense.

Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday is coming up on March 21, we will need just a few volunteers to staff the Mill Bay Garden Club table spreading the word about our club and perhaps attracting some new members. And speaking of volunteer opportunities, the Community Flower and Garden Show planning is well under way and there will be a need for helpers in tasks of many sorts. Join in the fun and camaraderie for which the Show is famous.

In Gardening,
Richard



WOOLY BUGGERS SHARPENING
MOBILE BLADE MAINTENANCE

IS COMING TO THE MILL BAY GARDEN CLUB!

**TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 24TH**

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

Mill Bay Garden Club General Meeting Agenda February 24, 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
Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday March 21
Community Flower & Garden Show June 5 & 6
 - d) Executive & Committee reports:
 - e) Questions for the Executive:
 - f) Brag Table: What's Up
 - g) Garden related questions with our Master Gardeners
Break
2. Presentation 8:00pm. **Nat Emond on Pruning**
 - h) Adjournment

February's Speaker:

Nat Emond on Pruning

Speaker's Bio

I completed the Landscape Horticulturalist program at the Horticulture Center for the Pacific in 2019 and attained my Red Seal certificate in 2023.

I've worked at Dinter Nursery for approximately 5 years and am currently the Production Supervisor. I also do private gardening work occasionally.

Prior to my horticultural work I managed group homes and supported individuals with behavioral challenges for 20 years.

Horticulture is my therapy and I hope to inspire others to play in the dirt and appreciate nature.

Executive Members

President

Richard Nelson

Vice President

Kathy Code

Treasurer

Gord Hamilton
mbgcfees@gmail.com

Secretary

Carol Goodger-Hill

Past-President

Gill Keir

Committee Leads

Membership

Alicia Wonsiak
mbgcmembership@gmail.com

Flower & Garden Show

Janice Rose

Library

Katherine Miller

Kitchen

Judy Raimondo

Plant Sales

Carrie Nelson

Cont'd next page...

...from previous page

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

Social Media
Pat Spezowka

Newsletter Editor
Dave Byrnes
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

Cheers all,

We've had a lot of rain but also nice sunny weather so far this year. It's great to see the green shoots, flowers and buds coming up early. Thanks to our Facebook group we have seen many of those flowers and plant pics posted. I appreciate the postings and encourage you to keep it up.

Our Facebook page is developing well but we need more members to help keep it interesting and active. If you still haven't joined us please do so, also invite your friends, they don't have to be a garden club member.

And again I will say that the vision for our Facebook group is a lively exchange of ideas, questions, answers and of course lots of posts and pictures of your gardens and plants. Also would you please post upcoming events in the community that you think members would be interested in.

To join 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)

Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday 21 March - Volunteers requested!

Can you lend a hand?

Volunteers are needed for Seedy Saturday Cobble Hill on March 21st.

The Mill Bay Garden Club Membership Committee is seeking volunteers to help set up and attend our booth on Saturday, March 21st at Seedy Saturday to be held at the Farmer's Institute, 3550 Watson Ave. in Cobble Hill.

Please contact Alicia, Membership Committee Chair

We hope to see you there!

Upcoming Seedy Weekends...

- **Sooke Seedy Saturday 2026:** Saturday February 28th, 10am - 3pm. Sooke Community Hall, 2037 Shields Road (opposite the Legion on Eustace Road). Details at <https://www.sookefoodchi.ca/events/sooke-seedy-saturday-2026>
- **Nanaimo Seedy Sunday:** Sunday, March 1st, 10am-3pm. NDSS, 355 Wakesiah Avenue, Nanaimo. Questions: seedysunday@nanaimofoodshare.ca
- **Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday:** March 21st, 10am-2pm. Cobble Hill Community Hall & Stu Armour Hall, 4550 Watson Avenue, Cobble Hill.
- **Duncan Seedy Sunday:** Sunday March 29th, 10am-2pm. Si'em Lelum Gym, 5574 River Rd., Duncan.

From the Plant Sales Table - General Meeting

Wandering around the garden this time of year, I am giddy with the anticipation that comes with witnessing life pushing through the duff. The primula are budding up and the aconite, snow drops and mini iris are almost past!

If you want more plants such as clematis, hostas, and ferns, which are fast emerging, now is the time to dig the whole clump up and divide them.

Continued on next page

Committee Reports (continued)

Continued from previous page

Hosta and fern are quite easy to divide – teasing apart the clumps with a fork or lots of water and pulling them apart. Put 2-3 crowns in each pot or new planting hole with some manure, bone meal &/or a slow release fertilizer. Done!

Clematis take a little more care. They can be divided in the fall or early spring. Regardless of the clematis group (those you prune or not prune), it's easier to prune all vines to about 30cm (1 foot) when dividing them. The groups that bloom on last year's growth will have a recovery year but by pruning them back they will develop good roots and sturdy vines.

To divide clematis, dig deeply and try to get the whole clump and dip in a bucket of water to get most of the soil off so you can see where to easily divide the clump, leaving at least 1 leader with a root clump to pot on or replant in a new hole.

Dig a hole about 30cm wide and 45 cm (1.5 ft) deep. Fill the bottom 15 cm (6 in) with a mix of native soil, manure or compost, or high potassium fertilizer (5-10-5-or 5-10-10), or a slow release osmocote all purpose fertilizer. worked in the bottom 6 inches of the hole. Hold the clematis by the old stems while filling in around the roots for the next 6 inches. Tamp down and water in. Do not bury new green shoots or stems. Gradually fill in the remaining 6 inches with good soil as the stems harden off which will take most of a season. Clematis are heavy feeders, so once the last 15 cm is filled in you can top add manure or compost or fertilizer each fall directly around the mature hardened stems. Use only commercial fertilizer from March on, not in the fall.

For pots, use at least a 1 gal pot with any potting soil with a higher potassium # worked in, being careful not to bury any new growth. Potting up now in Feb/early March means plants should look leafy and ready for sale at the Flower Show in June. Pots should be in the cool shade and the vines in the sun. Or, put some mulch around the pots to prevent the roots from overheating.

Carrie



Committee Reports (continued)

From the Plant Sales Table - Flower & Garden Show

The plant sale table is always a popular destination at the Flower and Garden Show. Plant sales raise funds which are plowed back to the club to pay for speakers and other 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 do not donate invasive plants. The more information you can provide regarding colour, species or growing habits, the better.

More information will follow in the next newsletter, this is just a head's up for now. Thank you for your anticipated, welcomed and necessary support.

Memorial Garden

Many thanks to the 19 members who came and helped clean up and then bark mulch the Community Hall gardens. It was truly a morning of community work and great socializing. Many hands made light work of the task.

A big thank you to Paul and Mike Beltgens at Jemico in Chemainus who kindly donated the bark mulch. This a composted Alder and Maple Bark mulch ideal for adding biomass to any garden bed (\$26.00 a yard plus delivery. Jemico.ca)

Photos by Carrie Nelson



Gardening Tips for February 2026

by Barb Kohlman

Are you seeing the first signs of your garden waking up from winter?

Early blooming flowers bring much-needed color after winter, with daffodils, crocuses, hellebores, and camellias putting on a show.



As plants begin emerging, gradually pull back winter mulch to help them acclimate. Removing it over several days protects young shoots from sudden temperature changes, giving them a strong start for spring. A little tidying up now will set the stage for a vibrant and thriving garden.

Clearing old growth and finishing pruning tasks will encourage healthy new shoots and blooms. A little maintenance now will set the stage for a vibrant and thriving garden in the coming months.

Enjoy the spring bulbs now strutting their stuff, then when leaves die back trim them off, (add to the compost pile) and fertilize them for strong blooms next year. (I use the organic mix from Borden's Mercantile in Victoria). Just broadcast it over the area---no particular amount---just fling it out there---it is organic and will not cause harm – feeds the microorganisms and as they break it down it is released offering nutrients to all your plants.

Also, for an early splash of color, plant hardy annuals that thrive in the cool, damp weather of March, like primroses, violas, pansies, and cornflowers. These frost-resistant flowers are perfect for planting beds and containers, adding cheerful blooms while the rest of the garden wakes up.

Prune woody plants when weather warms up at the end of February – as they are still dormant. But not the roses---wait till the Forsythia blooms.

Get a head start on summer blooms by planting spring-planted bulbs like gladiolus, begonias, ranunculus, and calla lilies.

Early in the month, remove old, weak canes and cut bush roses back to 12–18 inches and shrub roses to around 3 feet for healthy regrowth.

(is this the rose expert advice---good thing to ask at question time at our meeting)

Early spring is the perfect time to divide and transplant overcrowded perennials that bloom after mid-June. Dividing now gives plants an entire growing season to establish strong roots before winter, leading to healthier growth and more abundant blooms next year.

Cut back ornamental grasses in late winter or early spring when new shoots start to appear. Pruning improves air circulation, reduces excess moisture, and lowers the risk of mold and mildew.

Prune evergreen shrubs now to shape them before new growth begins. Remove any dead, damaged, or crowded branches to keep them looking tidy and encourage healthy development.

Good gardening barb k

From the Cobble Hill Farmer's Institute

The Cobble Hill Farmers Institute warmly invites you to our 26th Annual Seedy Saturday on Saturday, March 21, from 10am–2pm. This much-loved spring gathering brings together gardeners, seed savers, local farmers, landscapers, growers, and garden- and land-based artisans to share plants, ideas, and a shared love of growing.

You'll find a wide variety of vegetable, flower, herb, and native seeds, along with plant starts, bulbs, soil and compost solutions, and practical gardening resources. At 11:30am, local gardener and soil advocate Tamara Dinter will offer an informative presentation on soil health, sharing practical tips for healthy, resilient gardens.

Whether you're planning your first garden or tending a long-established one, there's something for everyone.

Learn more at farmersinstitute.ca



**save THE
DATE**

**SATURDAY,
MARCH 21ST.
10am-2PM**

- ✔ Seeds (vegetable, flower, herb, native)
- ✔ Plant starts & bulbs
- ✔ Seed saving & sustainable growing
- ✔ Soil health, composting & garden tools
- ✔ Pollinator-friendly plants & practices
- ✔ Local food growers & small farms
- ✔ Garden-related knowledge, books, and resources

**Rooted in
COMMUNITY,
GROWING TOGETHER**



GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday January 24, 2026

President Richard Nelson called the meeting to order in the Mill Bay Community Hall at 7:05 PM.

Janice Rose moved adoption of the agenda; seconded by Dave Byrnes. Passed

Kate Roberts moved acceptance of the minutes of the general meeting of November 26, 2025; seconded by Jim Wisnia, Passed.

President: Richard announced that a sharpening company Wooly Buggers will be at the February general meeting. Put masking tape with your name on the tool that you wish to have sharpened and leave it with the company before the meeting. It should be done by the break-- or by the end of the meeting. A brochure with prices is available tonight.

Richard also thanked the faithful crew who come to every meeting to set-up and take down the chairs and tables.. We all appreciate your work.

Ride sharing: If anyone needs a ride to the meeting, contact Sally Emory.

Vice President: Kathy has speakers for every meeting up until next September. She has enjoyed her role as Vice President for the past two years and recommends it.

Past President: Bernie Juurlink, speaking for Gill Keir announced that we need candidates for the positions of Vice President; Membership Chair, Plant Sales Chair and Chair of the Flower and Garden show.. Please contact Bernie during the break or email Gill Keir (gillian.millbay@shaw.ca)

Bernie is also a member of the Cowichan Estuary and Restoration Society. The society is looking for people to help in their research into bats in the area. The society can provide an echometer which will attach to your smart phone to record and identify bat calls. See Bernie at the break if you are interested.

Treasurer: Gord was not present but his report at the Executive meeting indicated that all is well.

Membership: Alicia has membership cards and some name tags tonight. Three attendees expressed interest in the club; Rebecca and Kevin McKenzie and Gabrielle Eagles.

Newsletter: Richard thanked Dave for an excellent Newsletter.

Memorial Garden: Heather plans to do a cleanup and spread some bark mulch on February 10 at 10 AM. Please come and help.

Sunshine: Janice has sent out several cards to members in the past two months. She also delivered a card to Bernie Dinter who has been ill.

Minutes continued on next page

Flower and Garden Show: This flagship event for the community will be held on June 5-6 this year at the Cobble Hill Hall. The Committee is already working hard. Jennie Campbell and Shari Wilson will chair the Silent Auction. Jennie asked members to think about what they can donate in either goods or services to the event.

Social Media: Pat reported that the Facebook page is growing.

Library: Dave has donated a book on bats to the library. Maryann and Aaron Padolsky have donated 2 boxes of books on various gardening subjects. Katherine has bought several new books which include the following:

Butterfly Gardener's Guide by Claire Hagen Doyle. Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 2003

Striking Succulent Gardens by Gabriel Frank. Ten speed Press, 2021

Wild Flowers by Emily Carr. Royal British Columbia Museum, 2006

Practical Permaculture by Jessi Bloom and Dave Boehnlein. Timber Press, 2018

Raffle: Please get you tickets at the break. There are many lovely prizes tonight.

Kitchen: Tonight Gwen Redcliffe is in charge. She passed around a signup sheet for February and March.

Brag Table: Barb Kohlman is back, assisted by Dustin Carlson. There was a good variety of plants; flowering witch hazel; a pot of celery, kale, arugula and rosemary; ferns, cypress, a pink camellia, a pretty potted primula with a fuchsia in bud and an ikibana flower arrangement (this category will be in the Flower and Garden show this year). There were 2 indoor Clivia (one in bloom), some succulents and a pot of sprouted potatoes.

Ann Baty announced that Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday will be at Cobble Hill Hall on Saturday March 21. They are looking for vendors.

Heather said she is also looking for vendors for the Flower and Garden Show in June.

Questions for the Master Gardeners:

What to do with an amaryllis that has finished blooming? After they go dormant keep them dry. They will wake themselves up in the Spring. Water them and they will grow.

What to do with frozen flowers on a viburnum? The plant will produce more buds and flowers.

Scotch Pine. It is dropping a lot of brown needles. Carrie said she recently lost one that started with a needle drop.

The meeting broke for refreshment at 7:40 and reconvened at 7:57 PM

The raffle prizes were drawn; pruners, a pate set of 2 bowls, a blanket and a butterfly book.

Kathy Code introduced Bryan Emery, proprietor of Bryan's Specialty Plants, a specialty plant nursery in Victoria. He spoke to us on orchids in September. Tonight he gave us a lively illustrated presentation on cacti and succulents. Cacti have areoles where spines can form. A large number of euphorbia have spines but are not cacti. Cacti like a free drawing mix, bright light but not harsh sun. Some atypically grow in a jungle-like environment so they require more water. There are even some hardy cacti which are native to Vancouver Island-- like *Opuntia fragilis*. Some succulents have spines. A succulent is any plant that can store water in its leaves or stems. Bryan showed us photographs of many succulents, including lithops, conophytum, caudiciform, haworthias, aloe, sedum, aeonium, crassula and echeveria. Hydrogen peroxide 3% which is available in pharmacies is a good way to control bacterial growth in the soil. It will not harm the plant.

Bryan also had a collection of beautiful succulents for sale.

Gwen Redcliffe moved adjournment at 9:00 PM.