



MILL BAY GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER

Website: www.millbaygardenclub.com

Email: mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com

Next Meeting:

Date: Tues, March 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!**



March Speaker: Kathy Code on *Wildwood: History & Importance*

See page 3 for details



Inside...

- President's Report p 2
- This Month's Speaker p 3
- Executive/Committee Reports p 4-7
- Flower & Garden Show p 7
- Bernie Juurlink Article p 8
- Barb Kohlman's Tips p 9
- Last Meeting's Minutes p 11-12
- Silent Auction donation Form P 13

March Brag Table Theme:

Mixed Up March

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

The perfect garden is in the mind and the hands of each gardener. Whether an English Garden with profuse variety, colour and little formality or Italian style with ordered geometry and sculptured creativity, or the carefully curated Japanese style transforming a smaller space into an artfully meditative retreat - there is infinite variety in the conceptualizing and creation of gardens. Individual gardens lend individual gardeners the chance to express their vision dynamically. A free spirited extrovert will undoubtedly develop a markedly different planting than someone more methodical or introverted.

Some of us cannot tolerate any weed occupying some spot of open ground while others freely allow for transitions between cultivated and wild areas. Leaving a wild section of the garden might be seen as referencing what is the natural landscape of place or alternately an invitation for the unruly dominance of some vigorous natives to run rampant among carefully selected and nurtured cultivars. Commercial, world class display gardens like Butchart's benefit from the "borrowed landscape" (*shakkei*) of the

adjacent forested hills to extend the garden's horizons into the natural world. While I doubt that many among us would welcome the native, ankle raking, trailing blackberry, *Rubus ursinus*, or the fence leaping, coat grabbing invasive Himalayan, *Rubus discolor*, into the civilized space, the early blooming June Plum, *Oemleria cerasiformis*, or a mid-summer drift of Oceanspray, *Holodiscus discolor*, could be an easy care native addition.

All the variety in style and substance leads to one of the great joys of belonging in a gardening group, the chance to visit and be immersed in the unique garden creations of our compatriots. The constant sharing of ideas, designs and inspiration makes gardening a never-ending joy. With Spring unfolding buds into blooms this is the time to invite a few or many club members into your gardens to show off, to pick brains and to relish in the verdant season. You may well find yourself sharing plant divisions, planting pots and perhaps even mulch which is nothing less than spreading the joy around.

In Gardening
Richard

Mill Bay Garden Club General Meeting Agenda March 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
 - Silent Auction - request for referrals
 - d) Executive & Committee reports:
 - e) Questions for the Executive:
 - f) Brag Table: "Mixed Up March"
 - g) Garden related questions with our Master Gardeners

Break
2. Presentation 8:00pm. **Cathy Code on Wildwood**
 - h) Adjournment

February's Speaker:

Cathy Code on Wildwood Ecoforest

Kathy Code is the Vice President of the Mill Bay Garden Club and has been delighted with the responsibility to find the best speakers for our club each and every month. She is also the Chair of the Ecoforestry Institute Society, trustees and stewards of Wildwood Ecoforest and has served on the Board since 2014. Since 2020, she has been a Forest Defender with the Fairy Creek movement, setting up the legal team, finding the money and the lawyers and doing much of the original research and media relations in an effort to save the Old-Growth. She also volunteers for several other conservation organizations and is the Forestry Critic in Elizabeth May's shadow cabinet.

She has a deep interest in ecology and nurturing the cycle of life, both in humans and in nature.

Continued on next page ...

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...

... continued from previous page

Kathy is pleased to present "Wildwood: A Brief History and Its Importance as a Forestry Model" Wildwood is a 104 acre forest in Cedar, in the Yellow Point area. You'll hear about the tangled historical web of Wildwood and how it was kept in the public domain, along with the unique features and business model that make it a notable community asset and educational centre.

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

Coming Events

- **Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday:** March 21st, 10am-2pm. Cobble Hill Community Hall & Stu Armour Hall, 4550 Watson Avenue.
- **Duncan Seedy Sunday:** Sunday March 29th, 10am-2pm. Si'em Lelum Gym, 5574 River Rd., Duncan.
- **Mid Island Floral Art Club** April 9 meeting at 1:00 at St Mark's Church Hall, 138 Hoylake Road West, Qualicum Beach. Visitors welcome, \$6.00. Information Joanne 250-757-8969.
- **Cairnsmore/Hospice Volunteer Gardeners' Annual Plant Sale.** Saturday May 2nd from 9:00am, Cairnsmore Place, Duncan.

...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

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 Needed!

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 at MBGCmembership@gmail.com.

We hope to see you there!

Social Media

Happy Spring everyone,

Our Facebook page is developing well and members are starting to ask gardening questions. Now I would love to see our club members check in to our site as much as possible and answer these queries.

I have gone through our group membership list and found that a good percentage of our Facebook members are not MBGC members. I am happy to see this happening and I welcome you and encourage you to take part in discussions and maybe check us out by attending a meeting. Non members are welcome to attend a meeting to see what we are all about.

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/>

I look forward to hearing from you,

Pat

Memorial Garden

There will be no garden clean up in April

Committee Reports (continued)

Executive & Committee Positions Vacant for Next Year

EXECUTIVE ELECTION (at the AGM in June).

Those of us who are on the executive and its committees are charged with the task of moving forward the club's business. We are also to ensure there are enough people involved to run the club's business each year.

Our club could not function, or exist, without volunteers to give their time and take on the responsibilities for the club's activities.

For the coming year (2026-27) we need volunteers for the following:

Vice-President, Plant Table supervisor, Chair – the Flower and Garden Show, Chair – Membership.

These are one-year commitments, although the expectation has been for two years.

Please contact me or Bernie Juurlink to discuss these positions. I will address them at the general meeting too.

Thank you,
Gill Keir, Past President

From the Plant Sales Table - General Meeting

In spite of the snow, wind, and rain, many of you are well on your way to getting your veggie and annual seeds started, dividing up plants, and generally cleaning up your gardens after that terrific wind we had.

Whether you have a greenhouse, cold frame or cool window sill, seeds like onion and leeks can be sown en mass in small pots, to be put out directly in your garden when they are about 4 in high. Peas can be planted in trays to be transplanted out when about 6 in high. Brassicas, lettuce, chard, and spinach don't mind the cool weather start. Remember to plant early potatoes now. Start tomatoes and peppers in April inside or on a heat mat in the greenhouse.

Buy your seeds early to get the best selection. Besides Seedy Saturdays, there are many seed companies across Canada and locally to choose from.

Continued on next page ...

Committee Reports (continued)

... continued from previous page

Please consider starting a few extra plants to be shared with members at our general meetings. Healthy plants, big or small, in clean pots, are always welcome. Labelled plants are even better! Thanks for your donations!

NOTE - DAHLIAS! If you ordered dahlias from me last Fall and didn't pick them up, I will bring them to the Mar meeting. Each bag is \$5, proceeds to the club. If not claimed at the March meeting I will pot them up for the June sale. Tom E. 2, Angie S. 2, Kathy M. 2, Pat C. 2, Fran W. 2, Eva J. 3, Jo Ann M 3, Teryl 4. Thank you. *Carrie*

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 March 24th, 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.

From the Plant Sales Table - Flower & Garden Show

A gentle reminder to club members to please put a few plants aside, for the F&G Show plant sale, when you are seeding, dividing and propagating. The more information on the plant, the better. The colour, living conditions, or at least the name of the plant is very helpful. You will deliver the plants to the collection location in the two weeks prior to June 6th. More info will follow. Thank you all! Contact Katherine Miller if you have questions.

Do You Wish To Protect Your land For the Benefit of Future Generations? By Bernie Juurlink

Besides belonging to a number of environmental groups such as the Shawnigan Basin Society, I am also a member of Conservation Springboard Committee of the Cowichan Community Land Trust (CCLT). The CCLT is engaged in activities that promote conservation of land for future generations. Why promote conservation for future generations? For years the naturalist and ecologist Edward O. Wilson has said we must set aside 50% of ecosystems for nature to counter climate change and to maintain biodiversity. In 2019 Dinerstein and colleagues published a paper in the journal *Science* entitled 'A global deal for nature: Guiding principles, milestones, and targets' where they propose that we set aside 30% by 2030 for nature. This goal has been adopted by the UN, our Federal Government, Provincial Government and even the CVRD.

There are two major goals driving the objective of setting aside 30% of the land for nature by 2030. One is to sequester enough carbon to avert major climate changes due to the increased accumulation of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. The second is to maintain biodiversity. The planet is entering a biodiversity collapse crisis. Ecologists say that land set aside for nature must be increased to 50% by 2050. Considering only 8.5% of the land in the CVRD is protected, we have a long way to go.

You as an owner of a small property may ask what one can do in protecting nature? Probably little in the way of making any dent in carbon sequestration but you may be able to promote biodiversity. You may have a small Garry Oak meadow on your property or a small wetland. Small wetlands are critical habitats for amphibia. An example of an amphibian that is endangered is the Red-legged frog which is listed as of Special Concern in BC and the rest of Canada. If you have a wetland that becomes protected you can help this species to survive. Small wetlands also form habitat to many insects that provide sustenance to other creatures, for example, bats.

If you have been wondering how to protect such small ecosystems for future generations, then the CCLT may have the answer for you. The CCLT has introduced a new initiative called the **Conservation Springboard** which draws on the years of CCLT's work to preserve and safeguard land and waterways. The objective of this new initiative is to help private land title holders, both residential and business, who wish to protect land of ecological importance through covenants and other means and to explore potential tax benefits such as the Ecological Gifts program.

The CCLT invites you to start a conversation and let's see what can be protected together. All communications will be kept in strict confidence. Please contact the CCLT by email: info@cowichanlandtrust.ca.



Rana aurora: the Red-legged Frog

Gardening Tips for March-April 2026

by Barb Kohlman

April is a busy month in the garden, perfect for preparing your space for the growing season with tasks like sowing seeds, enriching soil, and maintaining plants.



Enrich Your Soil:

Add organic matter such as compost or well-rotted manure to improve soil quality. This is essential for healthy plant growth. About 2" is usually lots.

Sow Seeds:

April is ideal for sowing a variety of vegetable seeds, including carrots, peas, and lettuce. You can also start sowing flower seeds for summer blooms.

Divide Perennials:

If you have perennials that are overcrowded, now is a great time to divide them. This helps rejuvenate the plants and encourages new growth.

Lawn Care:

Repair bare patches by sowing grass seed or laying turf.

Pruning and Maintenance:

Prune any dead or damaged branches from shrubs and trees. This encourages healthy growth and prepares them for the warmer months.

Pest Management:

Keep an eye out for pests and diseases. Regularly check your plants and take action if you notice any issues. Offering better air circulation always should be the first step.

Watering:

As temperatures rise, ensure your plants are adequately watered. Consider installing a rainwater collection system to make the most of April showers.

Greenhouse Care:

Clean your greenhouse to remove pests and allow more light in. This is crucial for starting seedlings and maintaining healthy plants.

By tackling these tasks in April, you can ensure your garden is well-prepared for the growing season ahead, leading to a vibrant and productive garden throughout the spring and summer months.

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 February 24, 2026

President Richard Nelson opened the well-attended meeting (about 60 present) at the Community Hall at 7:00 PM.

Katherine Miller moved adoption of the agenda; seconded by Cliff Stainsby. Passed

Dave Byrnes moved adoption of the minutes of January 27; seconded by Al Mikalishen; Passed.

President: Seedy Saturday will be held on March 21 at the Cobble Hill Hall. The Community Flower and Garden show will be on June 5 and 6, 2026. Al Mikalishen brought out his sign-up sheet for the Show. He said we need about 100 volunteers over the two day period for a stint of about 2 1/2 hours each. Everything begins on June 5 with set up just before 10 AM. Preparation goes on through the day to prepare for the actual show on the Saturday. There will be about 700 attendees. We need people of all kinds, those with trucks to transport materials, people to help with displays, people to take entrance fees. There will be a new job this year since a vendor needs someone to sell plants. On the signup sheets, new members need to put down their name and email address-- if a seasoned member has changed email addresses, please put the new one down as well. If you have any questions see Al at the break.

Katherine Miller added that if you are dividing plants at home, please consider potting up a few for the Show now.

Committee Reports:

Vice President: Kathy Code said that tonight's presentation will be on pruning fruit trees.

Treasurer: Nothing new to report

Membership: Alicia introduced two new members tonight: Laura Baird and Emily Paxman. Volunteers are needed for the table at Seedy Saturday. Alicia also has a name tags and some membership cards ready for pickup.

Sunshine: Please let Janice know if any member is in need of cheering up. She sends cards from Jacquie Lawson and also by snail mail.

Memorial Garden: Heather thanked all those who came to help clean up the garden and spread mulch. There will be no clean up in March. If anyone has some spare gallon pots please give them to Heather

Social Media: Dave made a live link to the Facebook Page in the Newsletter and as a result several members have joined.

Minutes continued on next page

Library: Katherine has bought some more books. Tonight she showed us new books on orchids, roses and fruit and berry gardening.

Raffle: All of tonight's prizes are gifts from the membership. Please get your tickets 3/\$1 at the break.

Plant Sales: Carrie sold a lot of plants tonight. In the Flower and Garden Show there will be new categories for container plants and for design. Please take a look as soon as the new brochure is out. Carrie made a display pot to show us what you need to do in a couple of the new categories. She also showed us an illustration board of how flowers should be displayed.

Brag Table: Janice brought some of her organic eggs to encourage members to raise their own chickens. Fran Benton showed us a pot of different types of hellebore flowers. Hellebores are interesting plants.

Kitchen: Judy thanked Nick and Heather for the functional cover for the kitchen window now that the door is broken. She passed around a sign-up sheet. She needs two volunteers for March and several for April.

Car Pooling: Sally said no one has contacted her for a ride.

Garden questions: Cryptomeria are out of sorts during the winter and go brown but they recover in spring.

The meeting broke for refreshment at 7:30 and reconvened at 7:53.

Raffle: tonight's prizes were a soil sifter, a Sunflower set of a potholder and napkins, homemade bread, eggs and a bird house.

Kathy Code introduced our speaker Nat Emond, who is production supervisor at Dinter Nursery. Nat completed the Landscape Horticultural Program at the Horticultural Centre for the Pacific in 2019 and has been at Dinters for 5 years. Everyone received a handout "Basic Fruit Tree Pruning guidelines". Sharp tools are important-- a timely reminder since Woolly Buggers sharpening Service is with us tonight. Be sure to disinfect your tools after use to avoid transmitting disease. Nat explained the reasons for pruning, where to prune and the timing for various types of fruit trees. The following books on pruning were recommended:

Susan Poizner: Fruit Tree Pruning

Cass Turnbull. Guide to Pruning. Seattle, Sasquatch Books, 2012

Christopher Brickell and David Joyce. Pruning and Training. rev. new edition. DK Penguin Random House, 2017.

Barb Jensen 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:					