



MILL BAY GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER

Website: www.millbaygardenclub.com

Email: mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com

Next Meeting:

Date: **Tues, March 27th 2018**

Time: **7pm** (Doors open 6:30pm)

Place: **Mill Bay Community League Hall** (1001 Shawnigan Mill Bay Rd)

Activities:

Business Meeting; Members' Forum; Gardening Q&A; Library; Raffle; Plant Sales; Guest Speaker; Socializing!



March Speaker: Chris Southwick

**The Genus Rhododendron:
Beauty, Diversity and Culture**

See page 3 for details

March Brag Table Theme:

Poppin' 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!



Kitchen Duties:

1 litre of 2% milk: *Judy Raimondo*

Cookies/Snacks: *Dot Garbet, Kim deBree & Diane Peters*

Kitchen Helpers: *Carol Goodger Hill, Grace MacDougall & Judy Raimondo*

Set-up/clean up*: *Al and Wendy Mikalishen, Heather and Nick Jenkins*

** please arrive by 6:30.*

Inside...

- President's Report p 2
- This Month's Speaker p 3
- Executive Reports p 3-4
- Barb's Gardening Tips p 5
- Fran Benton's Column p 6
- Upcoming Events p 6-9
- March mtg minutes p 10-11



***DON'T FORGET!
bring your mug
for coffee/tea!***

President's Report

Ajay Oppelaar

Howdy fellow gardeners, welcome to spring! Hellebore and daffodils are blooming, fawn lilies are showing their early leaves and the grass may need a mowing soon. And still there is frost every night at my house.....

There was a fast but not furious executive and committee meeting last week. There was little business to attend to other than the flower and garden show and nominations for next seasons executive. A bit of a wrap up on our presence on Seedy Saturday and a discussion of how to structure helpers for Bill Herring to mentor in his garden. On Bill Herring mentoring I will defer to Janice Rose about reporting on possible sign up and scheduling.

Seedy Saturday was a really well attended event from what I saw. In the main hall there was a pretty steady stream of people and many of you were in the crowd as well. Pip and I along with Marie Cooke and Gill Keir talked to dozens of locals about the show in May, and about what the MBGC is all about.

And what is the club all about? For most of us it's coming together with like-minded people who want to learn something about plants and gardening here in our little slice of Canadian paradise and to get out and meet your neighbours and get involved in the community. These were my reasons years ago. That and I thought I might have something to add by sharing my skills. With my joining, indeed I was asked to share my skills and knowledge with the club by sitting on the executive.

On the executive and committee we are charged with the task of moving the club

business forward and assuring a chain of succession to insure that there are people involved on a level so we can conduct business and remain a viable organization. This looks to be in jeopardy now as we look forward to a new season next September.

For the uninitiated, at the close of last year's season, there were no members willing to stand as vice president or president for the coming 2017-2018 season. In the face of a leaderless season looming, Cliff and I, both past presidents, agreed to take on these rolls for one year only. Our roles end in June, and we need people to hand these responsibilities to at that time.

I'm not going to beg, because it's not my style. However, I am not beyond groveling at the feet of the amazing person who says "yes, I can do that". Just don't abuse the gratitude please.

Seriously, we need three vital positions filled: kitchen, Vice President and President. Help us out, please; we don't like to think of what may come if there are no nominees. Neither Mary-Ellen nor Cliff, nor I will be able to carry on these roles next year.

See you all next week, should be a great speaker on a very popular topic and we expect a well-attended meeting .



March's Speaker:

Chris Southwick on The Genus Rhododendron: Beauty, Diversity and Culture



Chris Southwick had the good fortune to be born into a family that loves the outdoors, gardening, and rhododendrons. Her grandparents were Ted and Mary Greig, who were pioneering rhododendron and alpine plant enthusiasts on Vancouver Island. They passed on an appreciation for plants to their son Jim and their daughter-in-law Jean, Chris's parents.

Chris has been gardening all of her adult life and her first garden was a vegetable patch in an old horse corral at a homestead called "Mooselick" eight miles off the Alaska Highway at Milepost 428 in northern BC.

Joining the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society in 1994, Chris became involved with that chapter and served as program chair, treasurer, vice-president, president, and board member for most of the years since joining the Society.

She has co-chaired the annual Show and Sale, judged shows for other Island clubs, and was co-chair of the 2012 Fall ARS Regional Conference. She was honoured with the NRS Bronze medal in 2008. As a rhododendron species proponent, Chris currently serves on a committee that is helping to create a species garden at Milner Gardens and Woodland in Qualicum Beach, BC.

She recently became a certified Master Gardener to carry on learning about plants and giving back to the gardening community. She is currently the president of the Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association.

Chris built a new home in 2008 on just over half an acre. She enjoys sharing her garden of several hundred rhododendrons; including many dwarf species rhodos, many native flowering plants, ferns, Japanese maples, dogwoods, primulas and... vegetables.

As part of Chris's presentation she has the audience use some of her hand lenses to look closely at the rhododendron leaves. Could members kindly bring a hand lens if they have one? Even a regular magnifying glass would do. Chris has several, but the more, the better.



"Sunshine Mary"

Our esteemed Lifetime Member, Mary Gale, has for a very many years, been sending cards and kind words to those members who are experiencing illness or loss.

She does this on behalf of the Mill Bay Garden Club, bringing a spot of sunshine into what is often 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 Mary know and she will send a card on our behalf.



Committee Reports and News

Plant Table

Spring has sprung!

Bring in some of your extra perennials to share at the plant sales table!

We will have a few buckets of alpaca gold again. If you have an empty bucket please return it so we can fill it up again:)

We will also have a few garden magazines for a very nominal fee if you want to peruse while planning your garden this year.

*Your friendly plant sales team,
Monika Morgan & Sharon Martin*

Notes from the Library

As always this is a reminder to return your borrowed items to the library at our next meeting. Our books on PRUNING are the most widely requested so if you have one please make sure it comes back.

*Your friendly Librarian
Janice Rose*

Membership News

The Club extends a warm welcome to the following new members who joined at the February meeting:

- Deb Monkman
- Gudrun Weinstein

News: Esquimalt Garden Club closes

For 54 years, the Esquimalt Garden Club was an integral part of the local gardening scene. Now, due to an aging and declining membership, the organization is closing its doors in 2018. **Immediate past-president Sharon McKie notes, "Most of our membership are in their mid-80s and we cannot fill our executive positions, therefore we have no choice but to fold."**

Source: Newsletter of the Victoria Horticultural Society, February 2018.



Flower and Garden Show 2018

The 2018 edition of the Mill Bay Flower and Garden Show will be held on Saturday, May 26th. **For anyone donating anything to the Silent Auction, Dorothy Kennedy, Silent Auction Chair, requests you to send her a description of the donation.**

Gardening Tips for March by Barb Kohlman

Came across this tip — but have not personally done it!!!!!!!!!!!!

Pick any weeds out there (in spring), fill a large garbage can with about 1/3 weeds and 2/3 water. Cover and let sit for about a week. You now have green manure to use when watering your plants. Best to dilute it, probably — 10 to 1 should be good. This is a direct nitrogen source so should only be used when the plants can use it as in now when they are starting their spring push — and don't overdo the watering as too much nitrogen (not used) will move through the soil and could flow into and damage riparian areas.

P.S. it will smell -- anaerobic decomposition.

Send Them Off!!!!!!!!!!

- Put petroleum jelly around the base and tops of your plant containers.
- Watch Mr. Slug (Mrs. too) having to muster all his energies to get past this gummy barrier — stick or slip for the slug.

Lightweight row covers offer a tidy and effective organic means to prevent insect damage to crops. See our local nursery for choices for products.

Plant Those Cool-Season Veggies Now

UBC garden instructor Egan Davies says any vegetable where you're eating the leaves, such as spinach, arugula or kale, are considered cool-season plants. They can be planted outdoors now. "Then anything you eat the fruit from, like tomato or any of the squashes, those plants are warm-season," he said in an interview with North By Northwest's Sheryl MacKay.

"Even if you're starting them inside, those plants need heat and it won't warm up in most parts of the province until April or May, so you might start them off in April, and plant them out in May."

Don't Over-Water if You're Starting with Containers

With plants growing in containers, you should make sure they dry-down in between waterings, or things like soil fungus can grow.

"The best way to know when to water is to lift the container and feel how heavy it is," he said. "So water it, and then lift it to see what that feels like, and everyday, just pick it up and lift it and you can see how heavy it is and you'll notice it starts to get really light. Most plants really can wait until the pot is really, really light."

Cheers — barb k



Funny in the Garden by Fran Benton

Recently I changed some volunteer activities because they lacked the one thing that is most important in my life- they weren't funny. I am cursed with a mad sense of humour that has gotten me in a lot of trouble in past. HOWEVER, I could not survive without my sense of funny. It's gotten me through so many of life's challenges. The garden provides much of this amusement from spectacular pratfalls to oddly shaped carrots. Nature is so goofy sometimes!



My weekly list of funny includes this gem. We all struggle with keeping squirrels out of the bird feeder. I like squirrels, even the invasive grey ones, but I like the little birds even more. Our entire neighbourhood shares the fun of watching all the critters at the feeders, especially the hummingbirds. Our seed feeder provides a big challenge as the squirrels constantly try to raid it.

My very funny husband invested in an extremely cool feeder called a Yankee Flipper. Oh excellent! This feeder has a bar on it that will spin around when the squirrel grabs it. The squirrel usually goes around once or twice and then flies off onto the ground. Squirrels get dizzy fairly easily and the feeder usually loses its allure. Then the squirrel has to be content with the rain of food dumped on the ground by the Juncos and Nuthatches. However, every so often you get a squirrel that tries to defy the odds and hangs on hoping the spinning will stop. And it doesn't. This inspires howls of laughter from everyone who watches. I think even the Nuthatches are sniggering! There are so many different ways to fool the squirrels and so many products. Check out this website for some Canadian products - <http://www.forthebirdsnatureshop.ca/> Most garden centres have knowledgeable staff who can discuss this problem with you too! Just so you know, no squirrels were harmed in the writing of this article, although a few were very embarrassed.

We will not be embarrassed to see you at the Mill Bay Garden Club meeting on Tuesday March 27th at 6:45, Cobble Hill Hall. Did I mention we have coffee and tea as well as cookies?



Vancouver Island Heather Society Annual Sale

Plan to attend the March 24, 2018 annual Vancouver Island Heather Society sale at the Stu Armour Building, Cobble Hill Fairgrounds (Fisher Road). **Note the slight change in venue.** The sale will begin at 10:00 AM and last until noon or sold out. Experienced buyers will advise you that it is essential to get to the hall prior to the sale starting in order to get the best selection. There will be many unusual varieties on hand including *Calluna vulgaris* spring tips, foliage colour and bud bloomer varieties, *Daboecia* and *Ericas*. In addition, starter kits consisting of nine plants and a planting diagram will be available. Members of the Society will be on hand to help you make your choices and members of the Victoria Master Gardener Association will be there to answer general gardening questions.

For more information on the sale and on the Vancouver Island Heather Society visit the web site at www.bcheathersociety.org



Mill Bay Garden Club Plant Sale

MAY 26, 2018. 9:00 to 2:00 AT THE COMMUNITY FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW

Your plant sale committee would like to encourage you to think about what plants you are going to donate to the plant sale, pot them up, label them and make sure that they look great. Plants potted up early will have loads of time to establish their roots and look great.

As you know, the money that the Club makes from the plant sale helps to support our contributions to projects ongoing in our Community. Our club is very community minded and the sale is important to us.

This year we are hoping that we get loads of plants for sale. We kindly ask you to refrain from donating invasive plants. Sometimes you may not realize that your plants are invasive. The Committee will help you out and remove any plants from the sale that it considers to be invasive.

So, once the rains stop and you begin to tidy up your garden, think about the plant sale and pot up extra plants that you might have.

Thank you one and all.

Elaine Scott

Upcoming Events

- MILL BAY PLANTAHOLICS PLANT SALE: **Saturday, April 14, 2018** from 9am to 2pm at 2836 Oceanside Lane, Mill Bay (east off Trans Canada Highway at Kilmalu, south on Church Way, east on Welch Road, and south on Oceanside Lane). Proceeds from the sale will be divided between the Malawi Girls on the Move program (where the money will provide a scholarship for a young Malawian woman to complete her secondary school education), and Somenos Transition House – a program of the Cowichan Women Against Violence Society. A great selection of healthy plants will be available for purchase. Members of the Victoria Master Gardener Association will be on hand to answer general gardening questions. Cash or cheque only.
- The Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society's Annual Spring Flower Show takes place on Friday and Saturday **April 20 & 21** at Cadboro Bay United Church in Victoria. See the poster at the end of this newsletter for details.



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More Upcoming Events

- The Cowichan Valley Garden Club is holding it's annual plant sale on **April 21** at St John's Church Hall 486 Jubilee Street in Duncan. The sale will run from 10:00 am until 1:00 pm or until the plants sell out. Admission is free.
- Cairnsmore Place Volunteer Gardeners 10th anniversary plant sale takes place from 9am til noon on Saturday, **April 21** at 250 Cairnsmore Street in Duncan. There will be hundreds of plants ready for planting. And this year there is a special focus on hostas, more than 100 will be for sale. You will also find a fun selection of wood crafted garden ornaments fabricated by our volunteers. And master gardeners will be on hand to answer your questions. All proceeds are used for the maintenance of the gardens.
- The Cowichan Valley Garden Fair takes place on Saturday, **April 28**, from 10am til 2pm. For more info see the poster at the end of the newsletter or visit www.CowichanValleyGardenFair.com.
- The 3rd Annual Vancouver Island Homesteading Fair will take place on Saturday and Sunday, **May 5 and 6** at Cobble Hill Community Hall, from 9am til 5pm both days. We have a full schedule of fantastic presentations related to 'Earth conscious, sustainable living'. Backyard veggies, seed saving, soil health and compost are topics you can expect to learn about. There will be vendors and musicians also onsite. Entrance is FREE, donations appreciated! Keep in touch with us on facebook.com/homesteadingfair.
- Dumont Events and Tours is presenting a series of four five-day tours to Haida Gwaii. Dates are June 4-8, June 11-15, September 17-21 and September 24-28. Participants will be visiting a couple of local gardens as well. A brochure is attached to the end of the newsletter.
- And some March workshops happening at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific that may be of interest to MBGC members (visit hcp.ca/events for more details):
 - The Nature of the Native Plant Garden Workshop, Saturday **24 March**. Participants will learn about Victoria's local ecology, including its abundance of unique plant species well-suited to home gardens, and the wildlife that depend on them. Edible, deer resistant, and drought tolerant species will be highlighted.
 - Native Plants and their Uses, Saturday **April 7**, 1:00 - 2:30pm. Have you ever considered what role our Native Plants have had in forests, meadows and streams? Join a walk and talk through the Native Plants Garden and learn to recognize some of the many plants that were used by First Peoples and discuss their many uses.

Still More Upcoming Events

- Healthy Soils Workshop Series: Effective Microbes for the Garden. Saturday **April 7** from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. This class can be taken on its own or as part of our Healthy Soils Series. Using probiotics in the garden? If you already like the concept of compost tea, you will love learning about Effective Microorganisms (EM). These cultures have similar health benefits in the garden as yogurt has in the gut. Explore how to make and use a fascinating microbial inoculant. Participants should bring a clean empty 1-liter plastic bottle with lid to take away a sample of their own.
- Getting Started with Backyard Beekeeping Workshop. Sunday **April 8** from 1:00pm - 4:00pm. In this workshop we will cover the basics of how to start your first colony. We will look at the various parts of the hive and what is involved in setting up and maintaining your colony in your first year. We will talk about some of the potential challenges and ways to mitigate these. The favourite plants that honey bees are attracted to will also be covered.
- Visit the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific at hcp.ca and click Events for information on these and other HCP events.

Garden Tours... this year featuring **Gardens As They Are (still seeking volunteers!)**

Each year several members of the Mill Bay Garden Club open their gardens for other members of the Club to view. In the past, members have been interested in both ornamental and food gardens. Typically people who opened their gardens put in considerable effort making them showpieces.

This year, however, we are inviting members to open for viewing their '**Gardens As They Are**'. This means no need to obsess about weeding and deadheading and pruning and mulching and hiding tools and other gardening paraphernalia. Simply identify a day and time and location and a little information about your garden (e.g. it focusses on ornamentals, perennials, roses, rhodos, veggies, heathers, weeds, obnoxious smells etc) and send an email with the information to the Newsletter for publication (mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com). This is a chance for Garden Club members to see what others are doing in their gardens and for those showing their gardens to receive advice/input from those coming to view.

In the past, these viewings have been very popular with our members. We hope that by emphasizing '**Gardens As They Are**' that more members will show their gardens, more members will view the gardens, and more gardening information will be exchanged.

Cliff Stainsby

Mill Bay Garden Club

General Meeting Minutes Tuesday, February 27 2018

Call to Order: 7:08 pm

Acceptance of January 2018 Minutes

- Moved: Norman Redcliffe
- Seconded: Al Mikalishen
- All in favour, Carried

President's report: Ajay Oppelaar

- Gillian Keir needs a publicity person for the garden show asap.
- For next season the club will need a vice president and president.
- We need the people in place by June
- Seedy Saturday administration has changed and if they want us to be in the other hall we will not be attending.

Vice President's report: Cliff Stainsby

- Eco-Sense tour \$20 fees are due. The tour is on April 8, 2018.
- Our speaker in May can't make it. Barb Muntin will be speaking about roses in May.
- Volunteer sign ups for next month were handed around.

Treasurer's report: Marie Cooke

- \$793.90 in bank account. \$1000 held for scholarship.

Secretary's report: Fran Benton

- Request for writer for the Cowichan Press articles.

Newsletter and Membership: David Byrnes

- Newsletter notice has notice of life for Elaine Bliss.
- Gudrun Weinstein new member.

Library: Janice Rose

- Lots of great new books from the donation!

...Continued on next page

Plant Sales: Monika Morgan

- It's a bit sparse! Hurry up spring!
- Alpaca poo! Lots of nice items!
- Lots of good things on offer!

Kitchen: Diane Reagan

- Sign up sheet distributed

Historian: Mary Gale

- Elaine Bliss has passed away. Bill Herring has had a heart attack.

Members Forum

- Dustin has a house tour on west 2777 East Shawnigan Lake road. Dustin will be posting pictures of this development.
- Janice spoke about Bill Herring needing help with his garden. Two people at a time could come and help him. Please let Janice know if you are interested. There will be 2-hour shifts.

Brag Table: Barb Kohlman

- Oh boy that was a thin collection of items, hurry up spring!

Q and A

- **Q:** Fungus gnats, yellowy garlic, and moving garlic, planting garlic now? Buttercups in lawn?
A: *Diatomaceous earth, Epsom salts, and taking soil with it, yes plant it now, too much water in lawn (buttercups like heavy wet soil).*

Coffee Break

Raffle

Speaker: Pip Woodcock "Greenhouses, Garden Rooms, and other Gems"
Fran Benton's "Big Island Landscape"

Adjourn: 7:45p