



MILL BAY GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER

Website: www.millbaygardenclub.com

Email: mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com

Next Meeting (ZOOM):

Date: **Tues, April 26, 2022**

Time: 7pm

Place: Your desk or a comfy armchair
in your home

Activities:

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

APRIL

April Speaker:

Solara Goldwynn

**Regenerative Agriculture for
the Small Scale Food Grower**

See page 3 for details

New Executive Members Still Needed!

Elections to the new Executive take place at the AGM in June. Many position holders are willing to continue, but several important positions need to be filled, including President, Vice-President and Secretary. Please think about volunteering for one of these, or any of the other positions listed in the **Call for Nominations** on page 4.



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“Sunshine Mary”

Our esteemed Life Member Mary Gale, has for 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.

Janice Rose has temporarily stepped into this role, and is continuing to send cards to members until Mary returns.

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.

Janice's phone number is 250-743-5897



President's Report - March 2022

Bernie Juurlink

The arrival of a male Rufous hummingbird at a feeder in our yard on March 19th convinced me that spring was here; hence, the snow-laden landscape on April 10th was a complete surprise. But salmonberries in bloom and the observation that the fertilized eggs from Coho salmon transported into Shawnigan Creek by the Mill Bay and District Conservation Society have developed into salmon fry assures me that Spring has arrived.

I was also convinced that Covid-19 was going away and that our April Club meeting would be in person. The Omicron variant has spawned new subvariants such as the BA.2, which is rapidly becoming the dominant strain of the virus. With the availability of the Covid-19 antigen self-tests, PCR testing for Covid-19 has been greatly reduced. Vancouver Island Health Authority has stopped posting on their Covid-19 dashboard. We no longer have good data on how many people on the Island or elsewhere in Canada are currently infected. We do know that as of April 14th there were 364 people in BC's hospitals with Covid-19. We also know that wastewater testing for Covid-19 viral load indicates that many parts of Canada are experiencing the 6th Covid-19 wave. So far, there has been no wastewater testing on Vancouver Island and we do not know what the current situation is, although we are, again, seeing outbreaks in a large number of long-term care facilities. I am beginning to have the suspicion that Mother Earth is trying to get rid of its pesky humans that are so disruptive for all its other creatures.

The Executive in its April 12th meeting decided that it was safest to go with another Zoom meeting.

Our AGM is coming up on June 27th. Hopefully, we can meet in person. Please make sure your membership is up to date. The membership fee of \$10 can be sent via eTransfer to: mbgcmembership@gmail.com, or by cheque to: Gord Hamilton, 1287 Mile End Road, Cobble Hill, V0R 1L5 or dropped off at Pat Spezowka's home at 2561 Seaview Road, Mill Bay V0R2P1 (tel: 250-743-2756).

Our Club could not exist without volunteers to take on responsibilities. We need people to volunteer for a number of positions on the Executive, including President, Vice President, Secretary and Plant Table Supervisor. Please consider volunteering for one of these positions.

Weather had precluded a Wildwood Tour in the earlier part of April. I had proposed April 30th as a possible tour date; however, Barry Gates has another commitment on that day. So, it is very likely that Saturday, May 7 will be the day of the tour. I will keep you posted.



April 26, 2022, Mill Bay Garden Club Agenda

- 1) 7:00 p.m. Speaker: **Solara Goldwynn** speaking on Regenerative Agriculture - chaired by Cliff Stainsby
- 2) 8:00 p.m.: Club Business
 - a) Approval of the agenda
 - b) Approval of March 22, 2022 minutes
 - c) President's Report – Bernie Juurlink
 - d) Executive Committee reports
 - e) Virtual Brag Table
 - f) Garden-related Questions with our Master Gardeners
 - g) Questions for the Executive?
 - h) Adjournment

April's Speaker (Tuesday, April 26)

Solara Goldwynn via Zoom

Regenerative Agriculture is defined as going beyond organic, a type of agriculture that is more than sustainable. The Rodale Institute (the leading small-scale regenerative organic ag research institute in North America) lists soil health, animal welfare, and farmer and worker fairness as the three pillars of Regen Organic Certification. These principles of regenerative agriculture can be applied to our own food gardens for increased yields, and for greater resilience to increasing climate instability. This presentation will provide hands-on examples of regenerating landscapes and how to boost your food growing potential.

Solara Goldwynn (She/Her) is Co-Owner of Hatchet & Seed, an edible landscaping and food growing consultation business in Victoria BC. Since 2010 H&S has worked with homeowners, municipalities, community organisations, schools and post-secondary institutions to design, build and maintain abundant, resilient food ecosystems. Solara is also the Food Systems Manager at Royal Roads University, a master's student in Environmental Education & Communication at RRU, and a momma.



Call for Nominations from Acting Vice-President Cliff Stainsby

Hi, all you members of the Mill Bay Garden Club; gardening savants, one and all.

We are coming to the end of our year and our Annual General Meeting is imminent. At this meeting we choose an Executive for the following year. Although the salaries are immense, surprisingly the election process is usually not at all contentious. Any Club member can run for any position on the Executive. And, usually, we have only one or two positions to fill. This year though we have four positions to fill.

We require nominees for the four positions listed below. If you or someone you know is willing (dragooning is acceptable, maybe necessary) to occupy one of these esteemed positions (and thereby enhancing your/their resumes) please let me know ASAP. Send me your/their names and contact info, and the position you/they wish to occupy in an email with the subject line 'MBGC Executive nominees' to this address - cliffas@shaw.ca.

The four vacant positions are:

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary
- Plant table supervisor. Organizing plants for sale at meetings is the easy part. And, whoever takes this on will have the assistance of those who have done this in the past.

The holders of the remaining Executive positions have volunteered to run again. But, they can be challenged by anyone in the club. If you wish to occupy one of these positions please notify me as above.

These positions are:

- Treasurer
- Membership
- Newsletter
- Website
- Facebook
- Raffle
- Librarian
- Memorial Garden
- Bursary

As the MBGC believes in equity, both gender and task (as well as the other grand virtues - disingenuousness, occasional hard work, mucking about, nonsense, etc), each position on the Executive receives an identical, albeit exorbitant, salary with clearly excessive benefits. For at least the next term the Executive has determined to extend its magnanimity. So those interested in holding any of these positions can rest assured they will be treated very, very respectfully. (When contemplating this treatment refer to the virtues listed above.)

Sincerely (believe that or not, it is entirely up to you)

Cliff Stainsby (current and obviously highly incompetent incumbent Vice President)

Committee Reports

Membership

Welcome to new members from nearby and far away!



Joining this month:

- Jennie Stevens
- Lynn McKenna
- Stacey Robertson

Welcome to the Mill Bay Garden Club!

Plant Sales

Looks like it's not a go yet for our in-person meeting end of April. Disappointing, but we all want to remain safe & thankfully we can still garden outside.

First: A big THANK YOU to all who purchased Bill Herring shelled peas this month (Provided by Norm Redcliffe) We raised \$150-great funds to go towards our community charities.

I was hoping to bring a few spring perennials to our meeting. I have a few snow drops, hellebores, & primulas for \$5 & \$7. If you are interested contact me at 743-1915 or email at davidmorgan80@shaw.ca If you have some items you would like to donate let me know.

We also have lots of 5 gallon buckets that are handy for garden totes.

Take care until we meet & happy gardening

*Your friendly plant sales team
Monika Morgan & Sharon*



Committee Reports & Upcoming Events

Library Report

It's time! Our books have been out in circulation for over two years!

Imagine this: 80 books are in circulation presently. Now's the time to spring clean your book cases, shelves, under beds, and anywhere you keep your gardening info. Then contact our librarian, Janice Rose at aretiredrose@gmail.com to arrange for delivery or pick up.

Many, many thanks.

Your friendly librarian

Janice Rose

Upcoming Events

- **Horticulture Centre of the Pacific's Spring Plant Sale.** 23-24 April, 9am - 4pm. Visit hcp.ca for details.
- **What Can Mother Trees Teach Us About Climate Justice?** 21 April, 4-5:30pm. With Suzanne Simard, Hannah Askew, Kevin Barlow, Danielle Ignace Flossie Baker. Free public talks. Register online at eventbrite.ca and search for "climate justice"
- **Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Annual Plant Sale & Flower Show.** 30 April, 10am-2pm. Free admission. More info here: <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/truss-show/>

Send a Get Well Card to Mary Gale!

Mary Gale, one of our pioneer MBGC members has fallen ill and has been in the hospital since mid December. Over the last thirty years she has sent hundreds of cards to garden club members who needed a bit of a pick-me-up. Please join us in helping lift Mary's spirits by sending her a get well card.



More Plant Sales by Norman Redcliffe

Dear MBGC Members,

The "planting out" season is already upon us for some varieties and rapidly approaching for the balance, such as dahlias.

This year we have split several perennial plants and packaged seeds which are ready for delivery to members.

As you may be aware, the CVRD has been most helpful in permitting us to obtain and recycle used plastic containers for adaptation to pots in which to grow the plants for sale to the MBGC membership.

The potted plants and seeds we have available this year are:

- Monarda - aka BeeBalm and Bergamot which is a flowering perennial growing to about 4 feet in height. It attracts hummingbirds and other pollinators to its beautiful bright red flowers from June to September. It is easy to care for too.
- Phlox - We have two varieties (Pink and Mauve) which over the years have spread into about a 6 square foot patch. ****Note: it is therefore not possible to guarantee the flower colour of the plants we are dividing this year -**

a) "Beautiful Pinky", pink as its name suggests

b) "Franz Schubert", Mauve

Both have beautiful flowers, and maybe some cross pollination has taken place - I guess we'll find out later this year!

- Rudbeckia Goldsturm - aka Black Eyed Susan which is a long flowering perennial growing about 14" - 18" high. It is a very pretty and easy to care for plant with a long display season.



We are also offering Dahlia Tubers again this year and have 15 varieties presently at the first stage of showing "eyes" which will become the stems of the adult dahlia plants. These will be sold at \$10.00 per plant and we hope to have forty or so for sale in May or earlier if ready.

- Cimicifuga - aka Fairy Candle and Black Cohosh. These grow to about 42 inches in height and have perfumed flowers on arching stems from early to late summer.

Seeds:

We have "Bill Herring" garden pea seeds at \$5.00 per packet of 25 seeds.

Bill Herring germinated pea plants - 15 in a pot ready to plant out for \$5.00 per pot.

Pacific Giant Dark Blue Delphiniums, growing to 6 feet in height at \$5.00 per packet or \$5.00 per plant.

Giant Zinnia seeds, mixed colours, growing from 2-4 feet tall. Long flowering annuals \$4 for approx. 30 seeds.

Quick to germinate and easy to care for.

"Topsy Tom" heritage tomatoes, either at \$5.00 per packet of 20 seeds or \$5.00 per plant.

Advanced notice of this letter has been sent out to the members who have registered for the Voluntary Confidential Direct Contact List. If you wish to be included in the advanced notices please supply your email, phone number and street address to redclifferesearch@gmail.com

Norman Redcliffe
Redcliffe Research



2022 Flower and Garden Show News

Our Flower & Garden Show, the first since 2019, is just 5 weeks and 5 days away! Later this week, Dave will send out a general mail-out that lists the volunteers we need, the donation form for the Silent Auction, a memo on what kinds of donations you could make, and if you wish to be a vendor - remember it must be garden related.

Thanks

Gill Keir

Mill Bay Garden Club Tips April 2022 by Barb Kohlman

We have been having colder weather so many of our plants are a little slow to wake up this season, but the ones who have, are holding their beauty for longer. Great plus!

I am going to concentrate on bees in this “listing”.

Honeybees you probably know things about. Wild bees hive in walls of houses, in trees, or in any large cavity. These colonies build honeycombs and store honey.

Adult bees use nectar for energy, and they feed pollen to their young.

Bees' visual acuity is greater for blues, yellows and white flowers. Though in distance scent is probably more attractive with colour source used up close.

Flat shape or cupped enables bees to access the nectar, and incidentally gets covered in pollen.

Bee friendly annuals:

Bachelor buttons, Galardia, California poppy, Icelandic poppy, and basil, cilantro, cosmos, sunflower.

Bee friendly perennials:

Agastache, aster, monarda, black-eyed susan, butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), Nepeta, Dahlia, hardy geranium, lavender, Oregano, penstemon, salvia, thyme.

Bee friendly shrubs;

Chaste tree, Chitalpa (more like a tree—check it out if you have room for it), cotoneaster, Chilopsis, escallonia, Hebe, holly, mahonia, manzanita, mock orange, saint John's wort (be careful--not the groundcover, invasive one), sweetspire, Ceanothis.

Bee friendly trees:

Acacia, chokecherry, flowering crab apple, hawthorn, Japanese maple, magnolia, Styrax (my favourite I think), black locust.

And remember native plants for native bees!!!!

Barb Kohlman



GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

March 22, 2022

Via Zoom

Call to order : 7:02 p.m.

Acceptance of Agenda – moved by Janice Rose, seconded by Cliff Stainsby

Acceptance of Minutes from March 8, 2022 – moved by Monika and seconded by Dave

Comments – no changes

Bernie Juurlink: Covid restrictions are easing. Possible in person meeting in April. Need response from membership before next executive meeting to indicate memberships desire for either in person or zoom meeting. Either email or call Bernie with position.

Cliff Stainsby: Executive positions in need of filling. President, Vice President, Secretary, Plant Sales. Anyone can run for any position positions posted in newsletter. We need four nominees. Please email cliff with subject line MGBC elections. You can nominate yourself or someone else. Member should consider helping the club by running.

Al Mikalishen: Flower and garden show to be held May 28 set up to be May 27. Committee has met a number of times and preparation is going well. We need volunteers! 75 people at least for Friday and Saturday

Bernie says they are arranging plant sales for the flower and garden show and need plants by May. Anything you can split or dig up from your yard would be appreciated. Drop to Bernie's house.

Mary Jean Morrison: Organizing silent auction hoping members will donate services, plants, garden related items. Businesses will contribute some but have had many pressures during the last two years so we would appreciate members helping out.

Monika: Plants required if meeting in person in April for the plant sale. Against any plants you can dig up and divide would be appreciated. Bill Herring pea seeds are available. Contact Monica. 25 peas for five dollars. Very prolific peas

Pat: three new members have signed up this month.

Gord Hamilton: we have approximately \$4000 in the bank and \$1000 in a bursary

Brag Table

- Janice rose: hellebores and Heathers
- Pat: Christmas cactus. Third time blooming in six months
- Barb: Pulmonaria- Raspberry Frost, primula vulgaris- Oakleaf
- Cliff- African Violets

... continued



GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

March 22, 2022

Pauline asked if anyone knows a good arborist. Elaine recommended “Flying Dutchman”.

Pauline says something is chewing small holes in her cherry tree leaves. Barb says it could be a fungus. Clean up the leaves in fall and destroy. Carefully remove all affected leaves.

Glenda asked about putting dog faeces in the compost. It’s necessary to track the temperature to avoid disease transmission. Also let it sit for at least six months. Cliff suggested hot composting would kill good organisms. Glenda says she hot compost and it’s a real boost to the plants. Danielle offered a different perspective as a biologist. There’s no difference between hot and cold composting after a couple of weeks. Laura says hot composting works faster and takes up less space.









Elaine reminds us about Heather sale on April 2 it will be the last sale. Specialty varieties available. Information in newsletter.

Norm Redcliffe: plant sales. Five dollars per plant. Plants available Goldstrum Rudbeckia Monarda and Phlox.

Bernie reminds us about Wildwood tour still time to sign up.

Bernie calls to adjourn. Monika seconds. Meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

2022 Dahlia & Perennial Plants for Sale by Norman Redcliffe of MBGC

	<p>Dahlia : Creve Coeur</p> <p>AA SC R RD24 Available : 3 Price : \$10</p>		<p>Dahlia : L'Ancrese</p> <p>BA W Wh6 Available : 5 Price : \$10</p>
	<p>Dahlia : Mo Chant</p> <p>NR2020 Seedling CO R/Y Available : 1 Price: \$10</p>		<p>Dahlia : Embrace</p> <p>BB SC BR BR1 Available : 5 Price: \$10</p>
	<p>Dahlia : Sonic Bloom</p> <p>BB ID DB DR7/RD22/OR3 Available : 4 Price: \$10</p>		<p>Dahlia: Hollyhill 6 in 1</p> <p>B LC V YL12/RD24/WH3 Available :2 Price: \$10</p>
	<p>Dahlia: NTAC Eliza</p> <p>CO DB DB18/LV11/wh1 Available: 7 Price: \$10</p>		
	<p>Monarda (4-5 ft)</p> <p>Aka Bee Balm Available: 30 Price: \$8</p>		<p>Cimicifuga (4-5 ft)</p> <p>Aka Black Cohosh Available: 21 Price: \$15</p>
	<p>Phlox (Pink/Mauve) (3-4 ft)</p> <p>Available: 52 Price: \$8</p>		<p>Rudbeckia (30 in)</p> <p>Aka Black-eyed Susan Available: 21 Price: \$8</p>
	<p>Giant Zinnia seedlings (4 ft)</p> <p>Available: 12 Price: \$7</p>		<p>Bill Herring Garden Peas (15 plants in each container)</p> <p>Available: 12 Price: \$7</p>

These plants are now available directly from Norman by phone on 250-597-7692 or email @ redcliffereesearch@gmail.com. These will also be available at Dinter's "EARTH DAY SALE", Friday 22 April.



Nanaimo Rhododendron Society

Annual Plant Sale and Flower Show

Beban Park Centennial Building

Saturday, April 30th - 10:00 am to 2:00 pm



The plant sale hosts vendors and growers from all over Vancouver Island, specializing in rhododendrons, unique and interesting perennials, alpine and woodland plants, bulbs and seeds....

Members enter rhododendron trusses to the flower show – illustrating the great variety of rhodo blooms and foliage, hybrids and species. Judges will choose the best in each category.

Join us – admission is free

A great place to get a beautiful plant for your garden, for a friend, for Mother's Day....

For details of the event, see: <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/truss-show/>

**Linda Chalker-Scott, Ph.D., Extension Urban Horticulturist and Associate Professor,
Puyallup Research and Extension Center, Washington State University**

The Myth of Permanent Peatlands:

"Peat moss is an environmentally friendly organic amendment essential for many horticultural purposes"

The Myth

Peatlands are specialized types of wetlands whose value to human civilization has been recognized for centuries. Perhaps the most continued use of peatlands is as a fuel source: chunks of peat are cut from bogs, dried, and used for cooking and heating purposes. Though many societies have turned to other forms of energy production, this practice continues today especially where other fuel sources are absent.

Peat moss, a principal plant component of peatlands, has also been an important part of the horticulture industry; it's used as a soil amendment both in gardens and container plants and as an aesthetic topdressing for potted plants and floral arrangements. Consisting primarily of *Sphagnum* species, peat moss has an amazing capacity to hold water like a sponge, slowly releasing it as the surrounding soil dries out. Since peat is 100% natural, it must be a truly "green" gardening product – right?

The Reality

The "greenness" of any product is determined both by the environmental friendliness of the product and its method of production. Unfortunately, there is no economically realistic, environmentally friendly way to harvest peat moss. This is a natural resource that accumulates at the glacially slow rate of 0.5 – 1.0 mm per year, or about 0.04 of an inch. Peat harvesting involves the removal of deep layers of peat that have literally taken centuries to accumulate. In fact, since harvesting implies sustainability, it is more accurate to describe commercial peat removal as mining.

While peat used for fuel can be necessary for human survival, that used for modern horticultural purposes is not and therefore represents luxury consumption. For consumers to make an informed decision about whether or not to use peat moss requires an understanding of the roles peatlands play in the environment. Like other wetlands, these systems help purify and store water. Perhaps most important is that they are the single largest terrestrial store of carbon, equivalent to 75% of all carbon in the atmosphere (CC-GAP, 2005). Paradoxically, the destruction of peatlands is not yet recognized as a significant part of global climate change.

Most damaging to educational efforts regarding peatland conservation is industry assertions that there are no substitutes for peat moss in horticultural applications. Similarly, there is often a perception that this natural resource cannot be diminished; sales material from one local peat producer claims their supply of peat from a 150-acre lake is "virtually limitless." One industry group asserts that "peat is still the only affordable and readily available substrate that can be used to grow all kinds of plants....It is still the underpinning of the horticulture industry, worldwide."

The focus by many peat moss producers is on restoration of peat bogs with little, if any, mention of viable alternatives.

Peatland restoration

Peatlands degraded by mining activity do not revert to their former functionality; changes in hydrology and physical structure are hostile to *Sphagnum* re-establishment. Recently, degraded peatlands have been restored through the blockage of drainage ditches, seeding with *Sphagnum*, and application of a mulch layer to reduce water loss. When degraded peatlands are restored, the ability to hold water is improved but CO₂ continues to be released by high levels of bacterial respiration, which represents the decomposition of mulch and other organic matter. It takes a number of years for the photosynthetic rate of new peatland plants to outpace the respiratory rate: until this happens, even restored peatlands represent a net loss of carbon to the atmosphere and thus contribute to greenhouse gas production. These results have been reported by more than one research team, representing global peatland research.

Peat moss alternatives

While the efforts to restore degraded peatlands are admirable, it is more environmentally and economically sound to reduce luxury use of peat and promote viable alternatives. Contrary to what some peat moss producers claim, there are many economically feasible, environmentally sustainable substitutes for horticultural peat. International research on peat alternatives dates back at least 30 years and has identified a plethora of materials whose easy availability, low cost, and sustainability make them attractive substitutes for peat moss. These materials, alone or in combination, ranging from traditional materials such as composted bark, yard and agricultural wastes, and livestock manures to more current waste products including brewing waste, coconut coir, olive mill waste, pulp and paper sludge, municipal solid waste and sewage sludge, and even foam cubes. These materials have been used in the rooting and/or production of many plant materials, including vegetables, annual flowers, houseplants, woody ornamentals, and timber species.

Granted, there have been initial problems with some of these materials, including high levels of heavy metals or salts, or suboptimal carbon:nitrogen ratios. Research continues to address these problems, refining the methods needed to produce high-quality alternatives. In fact, many of these alternative substrates have repeatedly performed better than peat in terms of plant vigor and quality. If this isn't enough of an incentive to switch to peat alternatives, consider these other documented benefits:

- Economically sustainable when using locally produced materials
- Reuse of agricultural and timber waste products that otherwise contribute to landfills
- Ability to decrease fertilizer applications by using a more nutrient rich medium
- Increased drought resistance of transplants when grown in media with less water holding capacity than peat moss

Peatland conservation

In 1971 the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was established in response to public concern over increasing degradation of wetlands, including peatlands. The Convention's mission combines conservation with sustainable use of wetlands through international action and cooperation. The Coordinating Committee for Global Action on Peatlands (CC-GAP) was established by the Ramsar Convention in 2002 "to monitor and guide global action for peatland management." This was a formal recognition that "peatlands are a vital part of the world's wetland resources" as well as their "importance to the maintenance of global diversity and for the storage of water and carbon, which constitute a function vital to the world's climate system." Among the *Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands* published by CC-GAP are these two:

- "Citizens should be provided with information and educational materials that will enable them to make informed choices concerning lifestyle and consumer behavior compatible with the wise use of peatlands."
- "Research into, and development of, appropriate sustainable alternatives to peat in, for example, horticultural use, should be encouraged."

It is important to recognize that the Ramsar Convention and its affiliated groups do not promote a hands-off approach to peatlands. On the contrary, CC-GAP encourages sustainable use of peatlands, described as "those uses of mires and peatlands for which reasonable people now and in the future will not attribute blame." Such uses balance natural resource conservation and carbon protection with economic needs.

Some countries have more quickly responded to the global crisis of degraded peatlands. In the United Kingdom, for example, much of the peat extraction for horticultural purposes has been reduced or eliminated. The UK Peat Producers' Association and the mushroom industry (the second-largest user of horticultural peat) have commissioned research on peat alternatives and develop peat-free products. Many UK websites, including Kew Gardens, carry information on peat alternatives.

Finally, some countries such as South Africa have neither peatlands nor resources to import peat moss. These countries have managed to find suitable substitutes for horticultural peat moss and have sustainable plant production industries. To suggest these substitutes do not exist is deceptive; to destroy a natural resource for luxury consumption is unconscionable.

The Bottom Line

- Peatlands are biodiverse ecosystems with important environmental functions in water quality and carbon storage
- Degraded peatlands are environmentally non-functional, resulting increased water loss, poorer water quality, and decreased storage of atmospheric carbon
- Restored peatlands are partially functional as they can reduce water loss, but they contribute even more to global CO₂ production than degraded peatlands
- Peat moss is a non-renewable resource whose replacement takes centuries
- Horticultural peat moss can be reduced and/or replaced by using a number of available materials that are both economically feasible and environmentally friendly
- Consumers need to be fully informed as to the environmental function of peatlands as well as alternatives to horticultural peat moss

Additional Web Resources

CC-GAP. 2005. Peatlands. Do You Care? Coordinating Committee for Global Action on Peatlands (CC-GAP). Available at <http://www.imcg.net/imcgpubl.htm>.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. <http://www.ramsar.org/>

Ramsar Handbook on Peatlands: Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands.
http://www.ramsar.org/lib/lib_handbooks_e.htm

K. Weider & D. Vitt. On-line Boreal Peatland Bibliography. Accessed June 29 2006.
http://www.peatnet.siu.edu/BP_A-G%20Lit%20listings.htm

For more information, please visit Dr. Chalker-Scott's web page at <http://www.theinformedgardener.com>.