



MILL BAY GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER

Website: www.millbaygardenclub.com

Email: mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com

Next Meeting:

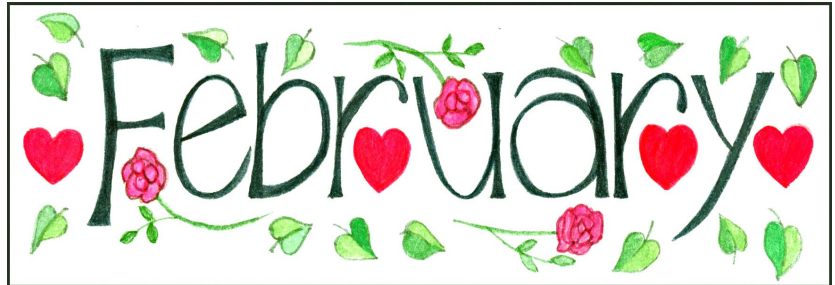
Date: **Tues, February 28th, 2023**

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 Speakers:

***** EXPERT PANEL *****

**This month MBGC members
will answer garden questions**

See page 3 for details

February Brag Table Theme:

Finicky February

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!



The Club Executive asks members to continue wearing a mask at all times (except eating and drinking) while in the Hall.

Thanks - this too shall pass!

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Meeting Helpers

Kitchen Helpers: Deborah, Robert & Laura
Treats from Deborah, Kathy,
Barb K & Glenda



** Helpers, please arrive by 6:30.*

**Remember to bring your
mug for coffee/tea!**

President's Message

Gill Keir

Hello all.

It is so nice to see the Snow Drops and Hellebores stretching up in the gardens.

The club has been given an annual \$500 rent reduction in return for keeping the Memorial Garden at the community hall in good shape (see page 6). Please consider volunteering for this and contact Katherine Miller for more information and dates.

Seedy Saturday is on March 11th at the Cobble Hill Hall, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. We use the table we have to give out information on the garden club to the community members who might wish to join us, and to advertise the Flower and Garden Show. We need volunteers. You can speak to me

about that at the general meeting or email me.

Just before we break for refreshments we will hear from Anne Leslie, a teacher from the Mill Bay Nature School. She is developing a sustainable garden curriculum and would like to make a "Proposal of Mentorship".

Finally, at the meeting, we will discuss the mask requirement. I will not take emails, neither will our newsletter editor, Dave Byrnes. If you want to make your opinion known, please attend the meeting – wearing a mask still for this one.

Looking forward to seeing you there,

Gill Keir



February 2023, Mill Bay Garden Club Agenda

- 1) 7:00 p.m.: Club Business
 - a) Approval of the agenda
 - b) Approval of the minutes of January 2023 Club general meeting
 - c) President's Report – Gill Keir
 - d) Executive Committee reports
 - e) Brag Table - Theme: Finicky February
 - f) Garden-related Questions with our Master Gardeners
 - g) Questions for the Executive?
 - h) Adjournment
- 2) 8:00 p.m. Speaker: **Expert Panel of Garden Club Members**

February's Speakers (Tuesday, February 28th):

MBGC Experts Panel

The speaker portion of the February meeting will be an 'Expert Panel'. The panel will take questions from members about gardens and gardening and do their best to provide helpful answers. The panel members are **Elaine Scott, Barb Kohlman, Fran Benton, Carrie Nelson** and **Dustin Carlson**. These five members bring a collective wealth of knowledge and experience in a wide range of garden topics. Members please bring questions about your most pressing garden issues to the meeting on the 28th. If people prefer to send in questions ahead of time, send them and the question will get to the panel.

FireSmart Assessments

Vice President Richard Nelson received the following email from Trevor Reid, the speaker at last month's meeting:

I am reaching out to you today on behalf CVRD FireSmart grant program. As part of this program, we would like to invite all Mill Bay Garden Club members to participate in our FireSmart Home Assessment grant program, which aims to reduce the impact of wildland fires on homes, communities and the environment. These home assessments will help you evaluate the fire resiliency of your property and provide you with practical recommendations on how to reduce your risk of fire damage.

The assessment will take approximately 30-45minutes and will be conducted by our FireSmart coordinators. They will review the landscaping and structure of your property, and provide you with a helpful assessment report that highlights any potential wildfire hazards and suggests ways to reduce your risk. The assessments are completely free of charge and will provide you with valuable information on how to protect your property and community from the threat of wildland fires.

If MBGC members are interested in scheduling an assessment, please reply to fire.smart@cvrld.bc.ca , and your preferred date and time. Our team will be in touch to confirm your appointment. You can also contact me directly for an appointment.

Trevor Reid, FireSmart Coordinator
Emergency Management Division, Community Services
Cowichan Valley Regional District

Committee Reports

Notes from the Library

Finally! We have two new books to add to our collection. They must be popular as I have lent out both of them even before our February general meeting on the condition that they are returned in time for our meeting.

Year Round Indoor Salad Gardening by Peter Burke and *Secrets Of Plant Propagation* by Lewis Hill are on the top of everyone's list of must reads this year. Come and check them out at the February meeting.

Please remember to return any book you have taken out! Also let me know if there are any gardening books on your wish list.

*Your friendly librarian,
Janice Rose*

Plant Sales

Hello Everyone,

Hope you are doing well? Days are getting longer and things are popping up all over the garden. Although it's still early, please keep us in mind if you have plants or garden related items to contribute to the Plant Sale Table at the February 28th meeting.

It's much appreciated. Thanks for your Bay Leaf cuttings, Carrie. Remember to please put your plants in pots and label with name and colour if known.

And to my other note, I have taken over the running of the Plant Sale Table at the Mill Bay Flower & Garden Show in June. I will add this reminder each month to keep you in touch. Please keep us in mind when you are potting up plants from your garden, or starting flowers and veggies. We would love it if you could grow a few extras or divide plants to contribute. And a huge thank you to Barb & Bernie Juurlink who have kindly offered their front driveway for storing the plants. I will be passing around a sign up sheet at the next meeting for those that would like to contribute plants or equipment and/or volunteer to help in the weeks leading up to the show. If you miss the meeting, please contact me by email if you wish to help.

*Thanks,
Kathleen Mercer*



Committee Reports (continued)

Kitchen News

Many thanks to Deborah, Kathy, Barb K and Glenda for volunteering to contribute treats for the February 28 meeting. As well, thanks to Cathy S for promising a coffee donation and to Deborah, Robert and Laura for coming along to help in the kitchen.

Please let me know if you need to cancel.

Judy

Bursary Committee

If you have an interest in the selection of candidates eligible for the Mill Bay Garden Club Bursary, please send an email or speak to Ann Baty at the February meeting. The committee would like to have at least one or two more members. The time commitment is mostly in the latter part of April and involves advance reading through the applications and a meeting on Zoom.

This year we have two \$500 bursaries to present.

Ann Baty

Need Some Fencing?

Someone donated a few lengths of deer fencing. Different heights. Lengths not measured, but may be useful for someone in their garden.

Will be available at the garden club meeting. Help yourself. For free or leave a small donation at the plant sales table.

Monika Morgan



A little ray of sunshine...

Club member and Librarian Janice Rose has stepped into the shoes filled for so many years by Mary Gale. Janice will send cards to members experiencing illness or loss on behalf of the Club, 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.



Committee Reports (continued)

Membership

Name tags. Just a reminder that I have name tags at the Membership desk you can fill out when you come in to the meeting and return to me after the meeting. That way I'll always have it for you next time you come. It helps people learn and remember each other's names which makes for friendlier and more personalized socializing.



We also have permanent name tags you can order. The permanent name tags, green in the pic, are available with a pin at the back for \$8.00 and with a magnetic back for \$11.00. Membership desk is on your left when you come into the hall.

Pat Spezowka

From the Memorial Garden

The garden in front of our meeting hall has survived the winter and is looking good. The next several years should see the results of all of the work, and new planting we did in 2022.

The committee running the hall has agreed to our request for a better financial return for all the work we do in the garden, on an ongoing basis. They have agreed to reduce our yearly rent by \$500, in return for our club continuing to maintain the garden.

So we will have to step up this year. There will be 3 - 4 work parties, likely two in the spring and another one or two in the fall. We need 6 - 8 people per work party, which are generally two hours or less in duration.

If you have not yet volunteered to come out and weed, rake, fertilize, etc., please consider attending at least one work party. Two hours, and great satisfaction. And the pressure is on to earn our rent reduction.

*Happy gardening,
Katherine Miller*

      **GARDEN RELATED VENDORS WANTED**      

WE ARE LOOKING FOR MEMBERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE A VENDOR AT THE
COMMUNITY FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW ON JUNE 3rd 2023.

Coming Events

Mill Bay Plantaholics 2023 Plant Sale

The 2023 Mill Bay Plantaholics Annual Plant Sale will again be online. Our customer base has become so large that it is just not practical to have an on-site sale any longer.

The plant and wooden garden novelties lists will be sent out to customers at 9am on **April 15, 2023**. Although there will be well over 1200 plants for purchase, one needs to be on the alert on that day to put in an order as things move very quickly. If you are already a customer you will receive the lists. Some funds are saved for the purchase of potting soil and seeds for the following year but all other proceeds are donated to the Cowichan Women Against Violence Society in Duncan to assist with the operation of Somenos House or to help fund other related programs.

Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Society, April 21 and 22

This organization has an annual sale which is always really great. The times for this year's sale will be April 21, 1pm-8pm and April 22 9am-3pm. It will be held at the Lambrick Park Church, 1780 Feltam Road, Victoria. It is a sale that one should not miss as it always has unusual plants and very knowledgeable members are present to advise you on your purchases. The event will include a judged show, club plant sale and vendors sale and a silent auction. Check their web site at www.virags.com for more information.

Cairnsmore Plant Sale, May 6, 2023

Remember that the proceeds from this plant sale help to maintain the gardens at Cairnsmore Place and Hospice House in Duncan. Save the Date! Plant sale on Saturday, May 6, 2023. The Volunteer Gardeners for Cairnsmore Place and Hospice House in Duncan will be returning to an in-person annual sale this year! We will have a large variety of plants for sale, Master Gardeners on site to answer any questions, and tours of the gardens for anyone who is interested. The annual plant sale is our major fundraiser and helps us buy plants, soil, compost, fertilizer, gardening tools, and irrigation equipment to maintain the gardens at Cairnsmore Place and Cowichan Hospice House. More information on the sale will be available in the spring. Thanks for your continued support!

Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society Annual Plant Sale

Saturday May 13. 10am - noon. Hundreds of rhododendrons grown by our society and companion plants. A list will be provided at a later date. Please contact us at the email below for more details.

2023 Cowichan Family Life Association Garden Tour on June 4th, 2023

Come join our Garden Tour Committee for fun and good times! Greeters, auction item coordinator, media relations, sponsorship, parking attendants, directional sign posters, poster distributors, Garden Tea coordinator, bakers and much more are all warmly welcomed. The CFLA provides free and affordable mental health services to Cowichan Valley residents and the Garden Tour is a major fundraiser. Come join the team and help your family, friends and neighbours get the services they need. Not to mention one heckuva wrap-up party.

Gardening Tips for February/March 2023

by Barb Kohlman

There is a lot to be busy with in the garden.

Taking good care of your garden tools will ensure they're in good condition when you need them. Why bleach them? No, it's not related to Covid-19. Cleaning hand tools that go from plant-to-plant will help prevent the spread of diseases with 10 to one mix---bleach to water.



Prune deciduous trees, shade trees, small fruits and fruit trees, ornamentals, evergreens {except pine which are suggested to be pruned closer to May}. Deciduous trees should be pruned during the dormant season when the leaves are off and before the sap starts to flow again. Flowering shrubs should typically be pruned immediately after flowering; pruning them now may result in cutting off this year's blooms. Roses, however, should be pruned when yellow forsythia shrubs begin to bloom. (they are just budding now.)

Set out Mason Bee cocoons and houses. Mason Bees are gentle, hard-working pollinators. Set out cocoons when temperatures are consistently about 10-13C or higher, and make sure they will have a food source near them when they emerge. Early blooming bulbs or winter heather are good options to have close by. Place Mason Bee houses in a sheltered spot under a house eave on the south or southeast side of your home (or similar location),

Plant out hardy hellebores, evergreen euphorbias, winter heathers and fragrant shrubs. Yes, you can plant perennials and shrubs now to enjoy for years to come. Early blooming plants provide much appreciated food for bees and other pollinators too. Remember the fragrance! *Viburnum* 'Pink Dawn', Chinese witch hazel, *Sarcococca*, *Chimonanthus* {wintersweet} and winter flowering honeysuckle are just a few of our seasonal flowering favourites.

Deadhead and clean up seasonal annuals. Fall-planted pansies, violas, bellis (English Daisies) and primulas appreciate a clean up to encourage re-blooming. When kept healthy, they will often bloom through to mid-Spring. Side dress with well-composted manure to give them a bit of a boost.

When starting seeds indoors, make sure you have an excellent source of light, good air circulation and a source of consistent warmth to get them off to a good start. Be mindful of timing too. Be sure to read the seed packages to determine the best timing for starting each type of seed so that they can be transplanted outdoors at the right time.

Hope this gets us motivated for the coming season.

Barb K.



GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

7:00 pm, January 24, 2023

Vice President Richard Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

First he read a message from President Gillian Keir who was absent due to illness. He also announced that we have a new Kitchen Coordinator, Judy Raimondo.

Judy Raimondo moved approval of the agenda; seconded by Dustin Carlson.

Kate Roberts moved approval of the minutes of the General Meeting of November 22; seconded by Janice Rose.

President's Report: Richard reported that we have received a letter from the CMS Food Bank Society thanking us for our donation of \$143.00 which was raised by Pat Spezowka's sale of Christmas decorations.

Executive Committee Reports:

Al Mikalishen announced that the Community Garden Show will be held this year on June 2-3, a week later than usual. He is looking for volunteers to help out, especially new members. He would like someone who knows Excel to volunteer. There is a broad spectrum of tasks that need volunteers so please get involved. This is a good cause since we donate much of the money we make to community organizations.

Plant Table: Kathleen Mercer asked us to bring contributions to the plant table to be sold at meetings. She also has a sign-up sheet for plant sales at the Community Garden Show.

Vice President: Richard Nelson reported that we once again had technical problems for tonight's presentation. This time it was because our projector is an old model that does not interface with the presenter's computer. Fortunately our speaker brought his own projector. Pip Woodcock proposed that the Executive Committee investigate and purchase a new projector that will be compatible with modern equipment. Seconded by Pat Spezowka. Carried.

Library: Janice Rose reported that to her surprise there were no new books for sale at the conference at the Mary Winspear Centre last Saturday, so she will go on a shopping spree with her \$400 book budget. Bill Herring has donated two of his favourite gardening books to the library. They are **The Vegetable Garden Displayed** and **The Fruit Garden Displayed**, both by the Royal Horticultural Society. Some folks who borrowed books pre-Covid have not yet returned them so Janice will be making some phone calls. Get Well cards were sent to Pat Stevens, Heather Jenkins and Al Mikalishen in the past month. Please contact Janice if you know of anyone who should get a card.

Speakers; Richard Nelson is hoping to have a presentation by an Expert Panel for the February General Meeting. If anyone is interested in participating please contact Richard.

Membership: Pat Spezowka reported 112 paid up members. There were no new members tonight.

Raffle Table: Stephanie Taylor said there was a good selection of things tonight so please buy raffle tickets.

Kitchen: Judy Raimondo is circulating a list tonight for you to sign up to help in the kitchen and to bring treats for future meetings.

Brag Table: Barb Kohlman showed us a vase of witch hazel in bloom, both yellow and red varieties. This has a pleasant scent and a tea can be made from the bark which has healing properties. There was also holly with lots of red berries, snow drops and winter aconite and a large leaf from Fatsia Japonica. She showed us a leaf from the fern polystichum satiferum divisitobum which had numerous buds along the leaf. New plants can easily be started from these.

Questions: Pat asked if it is too late to plant garlic now? It can be planted now and will still grow well. Should seaweed on the garden be worked in now? Leave it on the surface for now and work it in when you are ready to plant. It is good for beets. Be sure not to use seaweed from October when herring roe is on it.

We were warned that emails that look like they are from the executive are being used by scammers. Look closely and the email is not quite the same. Perhaps we should protect our Executive emails with a password.

The meeting broke at 7:37 PM for refreshment and reconvened at 7:55 PM.

Our speaker was Trevor Reid, a fire protection officer from the Mill Bay Office and a Firesmart coordinator for the Cowichan Valley. The Firesmart Program aims to increase ecology sensitivity and native species resiliency and to preserve and enhance biodiversity. He spoke about the Firesmart Plant and Landscaping program which will help protect your property during a fire. Free home assessments are available in the CVRD area. You can access this on line or contact Trevor Reid himself. This will not affect your home insurance rates but it will point out areas that need to be improved.

The raffle tickets were drawn.

Cecile Healey moved adjournment at 8:45 PM.

Duncan Seedy Sunday

This year marks Cowichan Green Community's 14th Duncan Seedy Sunday. We are thrilled to announce we are back at our favourite location at the Si'em Lelum Gymnasium (5574 River Road, Duncan, BC). With ample space for indoor and outdoor exhibitors, a large area for workshops, and lots of space for kids' activities, this year's event is guaranteed to be the biggest yet!

Duncan Seedy Sunday is a community event primarily focused on the exchange of seeds, but for many it is a kick-off to spring. It is a welcoming environment for master gardeners or if you are considering growing vegetables for the first time. You will find locally produced seeds, vegetable seedlings, herbs, native plants, and garden accessories. While you are at the event, join a free workshop or bring your kids! "This is our favourite event of the year," proclaims Judy Stafford, Executive Director of CGC. "When we planned the first event in 2009 in the old Mercury Theatre we had no idea that it would become so successful. After cancelling the 2020 event, and offering an online event in 2021, and a scaled back event outside in 2022, we are overjoyed to be back in full swing this Spring. We are excited about offering workshops again and we can't wait to see all those gardeners walking out with seeds and plants in hand ready to get planting!"

Admission to this event is \$2.00 and will run 10am to 2pm on **Sunday, March 19th**. We would like to invite everyone in the community to come check out this family friendly day.