



MILL BAY GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER

Website: www.millbaygardenclub.com

Email: mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com

Next Meeting:

Date: **Tues, April 25th, 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!**

APRIL

April Speakers:

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

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

See page 3 for details

April Brag Table Theme:

Finally Spring!

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!

Check out our Brand New Website!

www.millbaygardenclub.com

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Meeting Helpers

Kitchen Helpers: You Know Who You Are!



*Please contact Judy Raimondo if
you can't make it.*

**Bring your mug for
coffee or tea!**

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

President's Message

Gill Keir

Hello Mill Bay Garden Club Members.

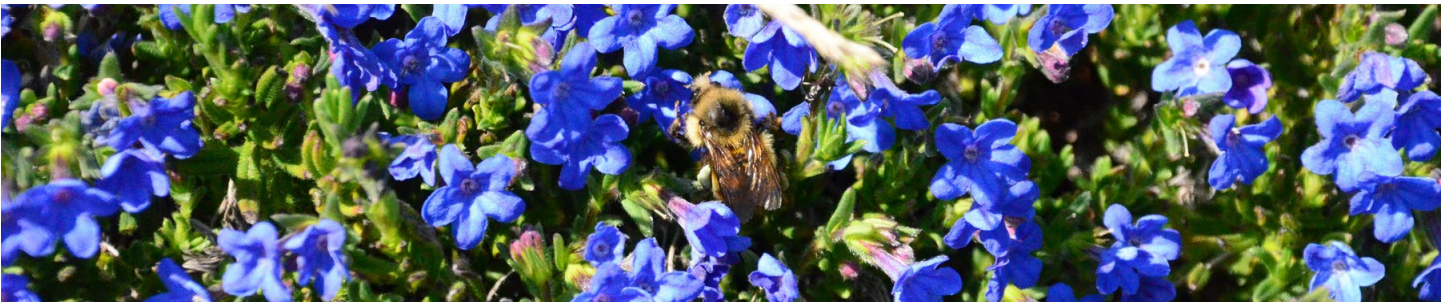
Spring has finally arrived and got the ornamental and fruit trees blooming. Lovely.

Our Community Flower and Garden Show is in 6+ weeks. Al Mikalishen will be bringing the volunteer list with him to the meeting and hopes to have it all filled in by the meeting's end. Please also consider donating a plant for the plant sale (Kathleen Mercer) and / or a donation to the Silent Auction (Mary Jean Morrison). More details available in this newsletter and future mailouts.

It is also time to enter the AGM into your calendars. It will be held on the property of Carrie and Richard Nelson on Baldy Mountain Rd the last Tuesday of June. It always a fun time with a wonderful pot-luck dinner. At this meeting we pick the new Executive of the MBGC. At the moment I don't know how many positions will be vacant, but even if they are full, you can decide you want to run for them.

See you next week.

Gill



April 2023 Mill Bay Garden Club Agenda

- 1) 7:00 p.m.: Club Business
 - a) Approval of the agenda
 - b) Approval of the minutes of March 2023 Club general meeting
 - c) President's Report – Gill Keir
 - d) Executive Committee reports
 - e) Brag Table - Theme: Finally Spring!
 - 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**

April's Speakers (Tuesday, April 25th):

MBGC Experts Panel

The speaker portion of the April 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 to nelsonrj@shaw.ca and the question will get to the panel.

Welcome to millbaygardenclub.com!

Thanks to some brilliant work by our own Gord Hamilton, the club now has a modern and very attractive new website.

Much more useful than the old site, there are links to coming events and copies of newsletters going back (for the moment) to 2016.

Give it a shot, and let us know how you like it!

The screenshot shows the Mill Bay Garden Club website. At the top is a green navigation bar with the text "MILL BAY GARDEN CLUB" and a menu with links: HOME, ABOUT US, OUR ACTIVITIES, RESOURCES, UPCOMING EVENTS, and MORE. Below the navigation bar is a large image of a garden with a path and a yellow bush. To the right of the image is a "WELCOME" section with the text "Welcome to the Mill Bay Garden Club" and a sub-header "Learn about and share gardening ideas with other others in the South Cowichan Valley." Below this are two buttons: "OUR NEXT MEETING" and "NEWSLETTER". Below the main image is a "SITE CONTENT" section with three columns. The first column is titled "Join Us at a Meeting" and features a photo of people at a meeting. The second column is titled "Supporting our Community" and features a photo of a garden. The third column is titled "Improve Your Gardening Knowledge" and features a photo of blue flowers. Each column has a "FIND OUT MORE" button at the bottom.

MBGC Outstanding Service Award

This new award recognizes members who have contributed exceptional service to our club over a minimum of twenty years. At our March meeting two members were recognized: Bill Herring and Elaine Scott.

Bill joined the club in 1992. For over 30 years he has provided leadership, mentorship, advice and guidance. He served as president for at least 5 years, helped start the newsletter, organized bus tours, hosted the AGM and frequently had garden tours in his own garden. For decades he has done the Q&A at our general meetings.

Elaine joined the club in 1998. She served on the executive for many years in a variety of positions. For 16 years has been the mover and shaker behind the Plant Sales at the Flower and Garden Show. This has been an outstanding accomplishment. For over 25 years she has enthusiastically shared her knowledge and expertise. Elaine has been a guest speaker, organized bus tours and hosted tours of her own garden.

Congratulations Bill and Elaine. Your spirit of generosity, leadership and dedication and helped create a truly exceptional club and we thank you so very much.

A Special Note. Only two other people have received this prestigious award. Mary Gale and Ruby Armour received their awards during Covid in November 2021 at a private ceremony.

A very special thank you goes to Pat and Alex Spezoka for their superb artistic talents. They created the most beautifully decorated cupcakes in honour of Bill and Elaine. The presentation of the cakes caught us all by surprise! A Special thank you goes out to Barbara Juurlink for capturing the evening with great photos! It was indeed a magical evening!



Photo: Barb Juurlink



Committee Reports

Plant Sales

Happy April! May the warmer and longer days ahead fill you with joy!

Finally the weather is warming and lots of plants are popping up in the garden. With that thought, please keep us in mind if you have plants or garden related items to contribute to the Plant Sale Table at the April 25th meeting. It's much appreciated. And a great big thanks to all those who brought plants to the last meeting. It was wonderful to see the tables full!

Remember to please put your plants in pots and label with name and colour if known.

And to my other note, I am sending out a reminder about the Plant Sale Table at the Mill Bay Flower & Garden Show on June 3rd. 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.

Starting in May, I am hoping you can start dropping off plants. Barb & Bernie Juurlink have kindly offered their front driveway for storing the plants. We will have a designated spot with signs for types of plants and pens & extra labels in case they are needed. And I will be there on the weekends to help out. Please put your plants in pots, with name and colour, if known. Of course, if the plants are tender, please keep them until the weather is warmer.

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 (rs58km@telus.net) if you wish to help. And thank you to those who have already agreed to help.

Thanks,

Kathleen Mercer

Plant Sales



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

Welcome to 5 new members who signed up at our last general meeting. They are Don & Mary Helen Deakin, Nancy Low, Paul Eagen, and Lynn Pammett.

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.

The Mill Bay Garden Club is now active with membership drives in 3 community events during the year. They are Seedy Saturday, MBGC Flower & Garden Show, and the Cobble Hill Fair. Our attendance at these events will now be the responsibility of the membership committee. Now that we have been gifted a display unit from the Heather Club our set up is very easy for these events and the number of volunteers needed is low. The response at these events, especially Seedy Saturday, has been very good. I already have the volunteers for our flower show but will need about 4 people that like to converse with the public for the Cobble Hill Fair on Saturday, August 26, 2023. That's a few months away but if you are interested please let me know,

Pat Spezowka

Membership Coordinator



Photo: Elaine Scott



Photo: Pauline Dueck

Coming Events

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.

Cowichan Valley Garden Club Spring Sale, April 29 [Cash Sales Only]

The Cowichan Valley Garden Club Spring Plant Sale is being held at St. John's Anglican Parking Lot, 486 Jubilee Street (corner of Jubilee and First Street) , Duncan on Saturday, April 29 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Cairnsmore Plant Sale, May 6

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, May 13

Saturday May 13. 10am - noon. St. John's Anglican Church parking lot – 486 Jubilee St, Duncan. Hundreds of rhododendrons, perennials and companion plants. Prices vary due to the wide selection of plants available. Knowledgeable plant specialists on site to answer your questions. Suitable parking available. For more information and a preview plant list contact cowichanvalleyrhododendron@gmail.com

Mill Bay Garden Club Flower Show and Plant Sale, June 3

June 3, 2023. 9am-2pm. This well-established community event is held each year at the Farmer's Institute Hall in Cobble Hill. Included in this event are a great display of flowers and vegetables that have been submitted for competition, a silent auction, garden related vendors and last but not least a plant sale organized by the Mill Bay Garden Club. It is a great place to spend an early summer's day. Master Gardeners from the Victoria Master Gardener Association will be on hand to answer your general gardening questions.

2023 Cowichan Family Life Association Garden Tour, June 4

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. If interested in any of these roles contact Tina Short at 250-710-2088 for details.

Gardening Tips for April - May 2023

by Barb Kohlman

Look after your finished spring bulbs for next year. Once they've gone over, resist the temptation to cut back the foliage. Instead, let it die and break down on its own and add **liquid fertiliser** all around the clumps. This will give you a better display next spring.



Remember to open greenhouse vents and doors on warm days. You can also damp down your greenhouse on

hot days to increase humidity and deter red spider mites (if we ever get some heat).

Optimise your watering regime — watering early and late to get the most out of your water — and start collecting and recycling water whenever possible.

Harden off half-hardy plants by leaving them outside during the day and bringing them back under cover at night for 7 to 10 days before planting outdoors.

Plant summer hanging baskets, adding good-quality compost, slow-release fertiliser and water-retaining crystals, to keep them in top condition. Protect them from late frost under cover. Try planting **petunia 'Pegasus Wine Splash'**.

Harden off **dahlias** and tender exotics such as **canna 'Tropicanna'** lilies for planting as soon as the risk of frost has passed.

Continue dividing herbaceous **border perennials** to improve vigour and create new plants.

Divide established clumps of **hostas** as they come into growth, or leave till they have started to dieback in fall.

Trim back spreading plants such as **aubrieta**, **alyssum** and **candytuft** (*Iberis sp.*) after they've flowered, to encourage fresh new growth and more blooms.

Lift **forget-me-nots** to prevent heavy self-seeding and reduce spreading.

Prune **penstemons** now — cut all the old shoots back to the base, providing there is new growth at the bottom of the plant. If there are no new shoots at the base, cut just above the lowest set of leaves.

Lightly cut back & tidy up **late-flowering honeysuckle**. Leave any big pruning jobs till late winter.

You've still got time to plant any container-grown evergreen **climbing shrubs** once the risk of frost has passed.

Cheers,

Barb K.

      **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.



GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

7:00 pm, March 28, 2023

Vice President Richard Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

He announced that masks and vaccination records are no longer necessary to attend the meeting. Also the Fire Protection Officer, the speaker at the meeting in January, has provided us with a number of Landscape Guides for anyone who wants one.

Tonight we have a new projector., The old one will be in the silent auction at the Flower and Garden Show.

Dustin Carlson moved approval of the agenda; seconded by Katherine Miller. Passed.

Al Mikalishen moved approval of the minutes of January 25; seconded by Janice Rose. Passed.

Al Mikalishen spoke about the Flower and Garden Show in June. There is a trophy to win and there are lots of opportunities to enter the things you grow. You do not have to be an expert to win. The brochure is available at Thriftys, Dinters and Buckerfields. Get a brochure and follow what it says. There is also a need for volunteers behind the scenes. Members should volunteer for the things they are comfortable doing. We need volunteers for Plant Sales, greeters, gofers, set up, take down and many other positions. He circulated a list for members to sign up to volunteer for these positions. There is also a need for items for the silent auction. Donations come from individuals as well as local businesses.

Membership: Pat Spezowka indicated that we have four new members tonight. That brings us to 119 paid up members.

Treasurer: Gord Hamilton said we have \$2700.00 in the bank, \$1000 in the bursary fund and \$1000 in a term deposit. This is after we paid for the new projector.

Web: Gord is currently developing a new Web page which will be an improvement.

Raffle: Stephanie Taylor reminded us that tickets are 3 for a \$1. If you would like to give something to the Raffle next month, tell Gord.

Plant Table: Kathleen Mercer said there were many wonderful plants for sale.

Library: Janice Rose has purchased three new books. Pacific Northwest Native Plant Primer by Kristen Currin and Andrew Merritt; Plant Propagation by Lewis Hill; Year Round Indoor Salad Gardening by Peter Burke.

Sunshine: Cards have gone out to Brenda Birch, Dave Byrne and a thank you to the Vancouver Island Heather Society for their gift of equipment.

Kitchen: Judy Raimondo needs helpers for April and May.

Brag Table: Barb Kohlman showed us the wonderful display of blooming hellebores. The double hellebores are lovely but do not usually have nectar. There were also a fern and pulmonaria (lungwort) on display.

Questions: When do you prune juniper? Don't be too aggressive; spread it out over several years and do not prune in August.

How can I get my lilac to bloom? They love lime and be sure to prune the suckers.

When do you cut back clematis? Prune after bloom. Prune late bloomers in the late winter.

Janice Rose presented beautiful plaques to two garden club members who were chosen by the executive to receive outstanding service awards. They are Bill Herring and Elaine Scott.

Bill has been a member since 1991- 32 years. He was president for at least 5 years and served in several other executive positions. He started the Newsletter and did the Question and Answer period at the monthly meeting for many years. He had a column in the Newsletter "Gardening Information by Bill" for many years. He hosted many Open Gardens, provided mentorship to many members and contributed regularly to the Flower and Garden Show.

Elaine has been a member since 1999. She was on the Executive for many years where she served as secretary, was a member of the Nominating Committee, produced the Newsletter and ran the Plant Sale Table. She also, along with Bill, led Garden tours to Seattle. She was always enthusiastic and positive. For this occasion Pat Spezowka made a display of delicious cupcakes beautifully decorated as flowers. The meeting broke for refreshment at 7:55 and was reconvened at 8:10.

Our guest speaker was Victor Vessely of the Westholme Tea Company in the Cowichan Valley. He founded Canada's only tea farm. To Victor tea is more than a product. It is an experience that contains all the elements of nature. He imports certified organic teas from around the world but since 2010 he has also grown tea. He has 11 acres in a low lying fen in Westholme. Currently he has 1100 tea plants. Tea comes from the evergreen plant Camellia Sinensis. Tea has a calming effect and also awakens cognitive awareness. The highest quality tea comes from the bud and the first two leaves of the plant which are harvested by hand. All teas whether white, black or green come from the same plant. The difference is in the amount of oxidation. White tea is air dried; black tea is fully oxidized; green tea is pan roasted. Puer is a fermented tea which is then pressed into cakes. It ages over time like fine wine. The Westholme Tea Company is open to the public from Wednesday to Sunday from 11 to 4 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

