



# MILL BAY GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER

Website: [www.millbaygardenclub.com](http://www.millbaygardenclub.com)

Email: [mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com)

## Next Meeting (ZOOM):

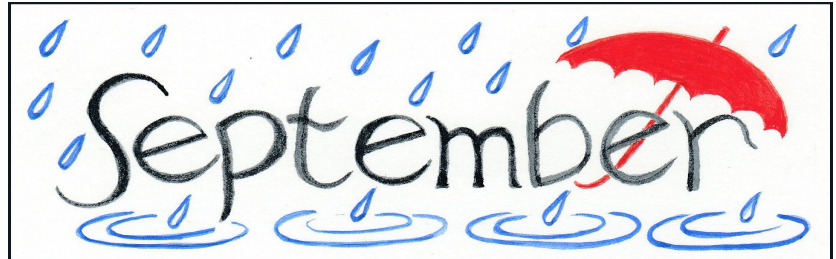
Date: **Tues, September 26, 2023**

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!**



## WELCOME, AND WELCOME BACK!

Welcome one and all to the first meeting and the opening of the Mill Bay Garden Club's 38th season!

## September Speaker:

**Malcolm Ho You**  
**On Tree Peonies**

*See page 3 for details*



## September Brag Table Theme:

### *September Survivors*

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. If you've never participated, give it a fling, be it flower, vegetable or fungus!

## A little ray of sunshine...

Club member and Flower and Garden Show Coordinator Janice Rose has stepped into the shoes filled for so many years by Mary Gale. Janice will continue sending cards to members experiencing illness or loss on behalf of the Mill Bay Garden 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.



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## President's Report - September 2023

Gill Keir

Hello members, and welcome to our new members.

I look forward to another Garden Club year, with opportunities to learn more about gardening - from our guest speakers, and from exchanging information on our experiences in our own gardens.

Then there are the opportunities to mingle and make friends: when we volunteer to keep the Memorial Garden in the front of the Mill Bay Community League hall

weeded, when we volunteer for the annual Flower and Garden Show, when we volunteer to bring treats to the general meeting break, when we volunteer to set up and take down tables and chairs for the general meeting, and when we volunteer on the Board of Directors.

The main social events of our year are the Christmas pot-luck dinner and our AGM in June.

All fun.

*Gill Keir*

### September 26, 2023, Mill Bay Garden Club Agenda (Tentative)

- 1) 7:00 p.m.: Club Business
  - a) Approval of the agenda
  - b) Approval of the minutes of May 2023 Club meeting
  - c) President's Report – Gill Keir
  - d) Executive Committee reports
  - e) Brag Table: September Survivors
  - f) Garden-related Questions with our Master Gardeners
  - g) Questions for the Executive?
  - h) Adjournment
- 2) 8:00 p.m. Speaker: **Malcom Ho You.**



## September's Speaker (Tuesday, September 26):

### Malcolm Ho You on the history and growing of Herbaceous and Tree Peonies

The speaker for our September meeting will be Malcolm Ho You. Malcolm operates a peony nursery in Saltair; he has been growing and grafting rare peonies for over 40 years. At the present time he has 375 peony specimens growing in his garden, the peonies range in bloom color from white, pink, red, yellow, dark burgundy, flame red, light lemon &etc.- he will be presenting on the history and growing of Herbaceous and Tree Peonies.



## For Sale!

### Pears and Squash!

Freshly picked Conference Pears 10lb for \$10.  
Also a large variety of squash available.

## Irrigation Equipment

**SALE – 3 Volunteers needed – contact Gill.**

We start this year with a one-off sale of micro-irrigation equipment donated by club members Norman and Gwen Redcliffe.

**The sale will be held at the hall, before the meeting, on Tuesday 26th. It will start at 6 p.m.**

I have attached a list of the supplies (at the end of the newsletter). These will be sorted into bags and priced. We will take cash, cheques and e-transfers (mbgcmembership@gmail.com). If you use this option, please indicate in the message box that it is for the irrigation equipment sale.

## Committee Reports

### Membership

The 2023-2024 Mill Bay Garden Club year is about to begin. I find that quite exciting. Welcome back to another year of garden clubbing. I hope all of you had a wonderful summer and are having a bountiful harvest this fall.

This summer the MBGC, once again, had a booth at the Cobble Hill Fair. It was a great success as we had a good number of interested people stopping by. This year we added a free draw and I think that helped bring in more people.

I want to thank the volunteers Gill Keir, Richard Nelson, Robin Reid, Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard who helped with set-up, manned the booth and helped with take down.



Photo: Dorothy Kennedy  
Photo right below: Pat Spezowka

I also thank my husband Alex who is my right hand man. There are membership duties, e.g. membership drives, that I couldn't do without him.

Our membership dues are still \$10/year. What a deal! I look forward to seeing you all at the membership table next Tuesday.

*Pat Spezowka*



### Notes from the Library

I am very happy to welcome Katherine Miller as our new librarian. Katherine comes with a wealth of experience as a professional librarian. Along with her passion for gardening this makes a winning combination.

She is eager to take requests for new and updated publications! Please visit her at our September meeting and make your wishes known.

Remember to return all books that were borrowed last spring.

*Your (retired) friendly librarian,  
Janice Rose*

## Committee Reports (continued)

### Plant Sales

Hello to all new and returning members of the Mill Bay Garden Club. I hope you have enjoyed the summer and are looking forward to returning to the September meeting.

I'm pleased to introduce myself and Carrie Nelson, your new Plant Sale Table committee. We will be taking over the duties of the Plant Sale Table from Monika Morgan.

At this time of year, it is a good time to go through your gardens to see if there are any plants that might need dividing or removing. If so, keep us in mind and pot up your extras to bring to the September meeting.

We will be setting up our plant sale table outside the meeting hall and will start the sale at 6:15 pm. Please remember to put your plants in pots and label with name and colour if known. Barb Juurlink will be bringing some small fig trees left over from the June AGM. As well there will be a cherry tree that Monika is donating. So hope we will see lots of plants from your gardens to add to the table.

Looking forward to meeting you at the meeting on September 27th.

*Kathleen and Carrie*

### Raffle Table

For the September raffle, a box of apples would be much appreciated, as it would make a great prize! Please call Stephanie if you can provide something.

*Stephanie Taylor*

### Treasurer's Report

Included at the end of this newsletter are the Financial Statements for our year that ended this past June 30. I will speak to the statements at the meeting.

For those members that wish to pay their dues by e-Transfer you can do so by sending your \$10 to [mbgcmembership@gmail.com](mailto:mbgcmembership@gmail.com). No security question is required as money transferred is automatically deposited into our account. Please specify who the payment is for in the message box on the transfer form as it is not always clear in the email who is sending the money.

*Gord Hamilton*

## Gardening Tips for September by Barb Kohlman

- Stop pruning and fertilizing, let your plants start to go dormant.
- Bring summer vacationing houseplants back indoors while the windows are still open. Check carefully for hitchhiking pests.
- Start fall clean-up in the flower beds, cutting back anything that has finished blooming or is diseased.
- Take cuttings to overwinter indoors or in the greenhouse.
- Photograph your gardens and containers for a record of the year's triumphs and frustrations.
- Give the compost one last turn, and make sure it is moist.
- Divide and move perennials (spring flowering ones, please!)
- Dig and store tender bulbs like: caladiums, cannas and tuberous begonias. Wait to do your dahlias till next month, they are probably blooming wonderfully still.
- Start planting spring flowering bulbs.
- I am adding mulch to the edges of my beds and in areas where nothing is planted to protect the soil. Wait to do regular beds till the soil has cooled to avoid keeping it unnaturally warm.



*Cheers – barb k*

## The Wild Excitement of Post Pandemic Seed Packs!

By Fran Benton

Well, did we have a good summer in the vegetable garden? Mine was awesome once we got past the horror of flea beetles on the beans and peppers. Oh my, the squash were fantastic, indeed they are still maturing and ripening off in the garden. The zucchini were also pretty amazing and thank the gods I only grew 2 plants!

The truly amazing thing this summer was the delight of strange things in seed packets. We all are well aware of the staffing problems businesses have had over the pandemic and onward. This leads to rather strange new worlds of growing stuff. This year I grew things that made me rock back on my heels and say WHAT? I mean WHAT?? I don't blame the seed houses but I think employee attention must be at an all time low. My buddy Lorill worked in a seed house and grow unit. She said that much time was spent by employees scrolling through social media when they should have been monitoring the packing process. This leads me to the surprise of planting out peppers that were in fact eggplant. How about the package of Salvia that turned out to be Shoo fly plant. My favourite this year has been Liz's monster pumpkin plants that produced mini pumpkins. Surprise!! Another fun surprise this year were the bush beans that in actual fact were climbing beans. Oh dear.

I must end this on a positive note! As a club we have the donation of many fine plants to our group. Among them were a bunch of Echinopsis "Elegant Lady". This is a really tough cactus that has amazing pink flowers. Mine has flowered all summer on the patio. The secret is to water lightly until it gets hot and then water it like crazy. They will flower all summer long and puff up into fairly big cactus. I will be bringing in these plants for the sales table.

Cactus care? Keep them inside over the winter (I keep them in the garage) and then put them back on the patio in May. Full baking sun is the kind of spot they love. Full disclosure here – I have caught a serious case of Cactus Fever and can hardly wait to meet a new member of the family. When I was in Southern California this year we drove past a store in the Morongo Valley called Cactus Mart. Heaven. Pure heaven. If you are planning a trip this year to Palm Springs and are going up the hills to see the Joshua Tree Park do not miss a stop at Cactus Mart. I will send you directions if you like. I discovered you are allowed to bring cactus into Canada because they are considered a house plant. If traveling by plane buy the Cactus Mart's 'dig your own cactus' mini cacti and stuff them in tissue in the toes of your sneakers. They will come through unscathed and you can have fun picking the spines out of your sneakers later.

Happy gardening!

## **Mill Bay Garden Club General Meeting May 23, 2023**

President Gill Keir called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM

Approval of the Agenda: Dustin Carlson moved approval of the agenda; seconded by Fran Benton. Passed.

Approval of the Minutes of April 25: Dave Byrnes moved approval of the minutes; seconded by Katherine Miller. Passed.

Bernie Juurlink announced that an election for the Mill Bay Garden Club executive will be held at the AGM in June. Pauline Dueck would like someone to take over her position as Facebook manager and Stephanie Taylor would like a co- chair to help with the raffle table. There will be a mini symposium on Cowichan Bay bats on June 5 at the VIU campus from 7 to 9:30 PM. All are welcome to attend.

Al Mikalishen again passed around a sign-up sheet for the Flower and Garden Show which will be at the end of next week.

Kathy Muirhead brought a number of lawn signs for the Flower and Garden Show and passed them out.

Membership: Gord who was filling in for Pat Spezowka this evening, announced that we have 2 more paid up members bringing our total to 131.

Treasurer: We have \$2542.00 in the bank; \$1000.00 for a bursary and a term deposit of \$1056.00

Raffle Table: Stephanie reiterated that she needs help in the fall.

Plant Table: Kathleen Mercer reminded us to bring potted up plants for the plant sale to Bernie's home on Butterfield Road, Mark your donations with the name of the plant, and colour and bring them as early as possible. Kathleen would also like help identifying and preparing plants for the sale.

Vice President: Tonight's speaker will be Lora Mirandin from Pollinators.org. The AGM will be held at Richard Nelson's home.

Library: Janice recommended two books of judging standards which will be useful if you are thinking of entering a plant in the Flower and Garden Show.

Sunshine: Janice sent a get well card to Kate Roberts

Kitchen: Judy passed around the sign up list for goodies and kitchen help for September and October.

Memorial Garden: Katherine thanked all those who helped spread mulch today at the community garden. She hopes to buy some native plants for the left side of the garden.

Brag Table: The theme of Fragrant May brought a profusion of lilac, peonies, Dutch iris, hellebore, Chinese wisteria and other fragrant blooms to the table.

Questions: Hollyhocks: some are perennial, and some biannual.



Peonies. The ants do not do any harm or bring any benefit. They are just there for the honey dew.

Chinese Dogwood tree that is not doing well could have a fungal disease.

Beware of the viburnum beetle on a snowball bush and get rid of them as soon as you see them.

Pip asked if anyone else would be willing to show their garden in Duncan during the Garden Tour.

The meeting broke for refreshment at 7:40 and reconvened at 8 PM.

The raffle was held.

Lora Mirandin of Polinators.org spoke on The Wings of Life; protect their lives; preserve ours. The mission of her company is to protect pollinators and their habitat. They provide Pollinator Steward certification. A program on "meadow makers" takes folks through the steps of changing a lawn into a meadow.

Pollination allows for seed production. Any animal that moves the pollen to fertilize a flower is a pollinator. Pollinators can be birds, bees, moths, butterflies, squirrels, wasps or flies. 90% of all plants and 75% of all crops require animal pollination. Pollination helps our ecosystems. It is important for food, pharmaceuticals, textiles and erosion control.

Bees are the most important pollinators in agricultural systems. There are 4000 native bees in North America. Honey bees are not native.

In the time of the dinosaurs there were no flowers. There were no bees. Pollen was sent abroad by the wind. Some species began to eat pollen and plants created flowers to attract pollinators. There were wasps that took pollen back to feed their offspring. Bees developed. They adapted to have hair on their bodies that would carry pollen more easily.

There are no feral colonies of honey bees in North America and they are not in decline. They are very important for agriculture and are managed by humans. They can be a detriment to our native bees because of competition.

Native bees are essential for our food and our ecosystems. We do not manage them and they are in decline because of loss of habitat, parasites, insecticides and climate change.

We can help native bees by creating habitat, getting rid of invasive species and parasites and by not using insecticides. Native bees need overwinter habitat and the right floral resources to survive.

Heather Jenkins moved adjournment at 9:10 PM.