

In the Garden

Plant Heroes for a changing world



Well, what did you think of that summer? Who knew it could get that dry and smoky? The climatologists tell us to get ready for more of the same as our climate becomes unstable. So, how about a garden that will withstand dryness, smoke, and climate extremes? Some plants are surprisingly adaptable to change.

One of the first that comes to mind is Santolina chamaecyparissus or Lavender Cotton. Our family calls it the stinky tennis shoes plant because of the aromatic oils in the leaves. I say leaves, but they look more like grey white stems. Here are the attributes — deer will not eat it, drought doesn't bother it, smoke does bother

it, and it looks very pretty. It has small button shaped yellow flowers that appear in June. It's a spreader so it will cover up all sorts of ugly spaces. The tricky bit about this plant is that it does not like damp poorly drained soil. In fact it will rot and die if it remains in this kind of soil. This plant also has insecticidal properties. It will chase the moths out of your wool blankets.

Trouble is it will also chase anyone else out too! It is very smelly!

Some other drought, deer, and smoke tolerant heroes include Corsican hellebore, Common Iris, Wormwood (Artemisia), Oregon Grape(native), New Zealand Daisy Bush, Lamb's Ear, and Yucca.

While we are on the

subject of change have a look at your garden and plan for next year. Did any area of the garden require a ton of water? Maybe that bed needs to have a rethink to include drought tolerant plants so you can save water.

This year I bought the best mulch I have ever had. That mulch really helped preserve the existing moisture in the beds. The mulch was a mixture of alder and maple fibre ground up to a fine consistency. Honestly my garden this year was saved by that mulch! Oh by the way- all the plants I recommend for tolerance to climate extremes are also resistant to the deer! Hurrah!

Come and complain about the drought etc at the Mill Bay Garden Club! Our meetings are the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Mill Bay Hall at 6:45pm. Everyone is welcome except the deer (and rabbits).

SECOND-SUNDAY MARKET AT THE EAGLES

Sunday October 14, 10am to 3pm

at The Eagles Hall in Duncan 2695 Boys Rd.

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