



MILL BAY GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER

Website: www.millbaygardenclub.com

Email: mbgcnewsletter@gmail.com

Next Meeting:

Date: **Tues, November 25, 2025**

Time: **7pm** (doors open 6:30pm)

Place: **Mill Bay Community League Hall**
(1001 Shawnigan Mill Bay Road)

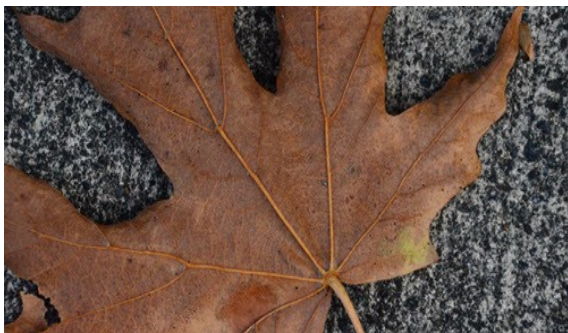
Activities:

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

November Speaker Joshua Blades

Gardening for the Next Generation

See page 3 for details



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November Brag Table Theme:

I'm Not Dead Yet!

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!



A little ray of sunshine...

Club member and Flower and Garden show chair Janice Rose sends card on behalf of the Club to members experiencing illness or loss, 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.



MBGC Christmas Potluck!

Tuesday December 2nd, 2025

This year's Christmas Potluck Dinner will be held on December 2nd at the Mill Bay Community League Hall. Doors open at 5:30 to allow time to set up your table and potluck item. Dinner begins at 6:00 pm. Bring your family, all are welcome!

Details:

- Turkey, Ham (with mustard mousse!), Punch, Coffee, Tea — all provided courtesy of MBGC.
- Members provide potluck dishes: appies, salads, veggies, desserts, etc. (Please bring a generous serving of your potluck dish AND A SERVING SPOON so that all can enjoy a taste!)
- **Bring your own plates, cups, cutlery, napkins — (No alcohol please)**
- **A cash donation box for the food bank will be on hand, should anyone wish to donate - no food items please!**

Fun Stuff:

- Table Centrepiece — theme is *"Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree"*. Create an arrangement for your table (*any candles cannot be lit*). Win one of three prizes!
- Bingo Reshuffle - everyone finds another person to fill their card!
- Raffle and Door Prizes — receive a FREE raffle ticket upon arrival. Prize number to be drawn sometime during the evening. Door prizes too!
- Gift Exchange — place an anonymous gift under the tree, get your number and be eligible to receive a gift. *Gift bags are encouraged, so we can get to the food while it's still hot!* Gifts should be *regifted*, and best if garden-related!
- Word Jumble / Carol Singing — Dustin Carlson will present the ever popular word puzzle. We are in need of singers to help lead caroling at the Christmas Party, just a few carols to round out the event. Song sheets will be available!

President's Message - November 2025

Richard Nelson

Christmas is coming early for the Mill Bay Garden Club with our annual celebration happening in the first week of December. I expect that for many this will be the first event of the festive season with all the parties and busy-ness yet to unfold. Hopefully the season will spread brightness and joy widely among you and yours.

The year has been filled with many positives for the Club anchored by our large, varied and engaged membership. The Memorial Garden looks great thanks to the regular monthly hands-on crew. General Meetings fill the hall with activity through the Club business, gardening advice and Brag displays. The break offers people a chance to pick up some plants, a drink and treat or to mingle and chat to such a degree that it is always challenging to bring attention back for the exciting Raffle and onto our generous guest speakers who invariably enlighten, inspire and even challenge our approaches to the gardening life.

With the community Flower and Garden Show fully integrated with the Mill Bay Garden Club in 2025 we also had a banner year in terms of

volunteerism, attendance and financial success. This success was in large part what enabled the club to give back to the community in a large way.

The year has not gone without the sad times when we lose members, our close friends and gardening companions. We can hope that those who have passed on join those already playing in gardening Heaven, Valhalla or Nirvana as you may imagine.

While 2025 is fading away into the dark days of winter many of us wonder what the next few months will bring, mild and rainy or bright, cold and snowy. Each change in the weather lends the garden a fresh perspective that reveals a unique beauty to appreciate and enjoy. The cozy indoor pursuit of dreaming and planning for the next gardening season is a perennial fascination of gardeners through the winter months.

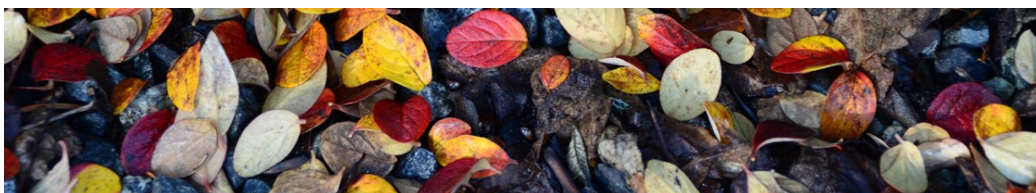
I wish you one and all good health and happiness through the season and into the New Year.

In Gardening,
Richard

Mill Bay Garden Club General Meeting

Agenda November 25, 2025

- I. Call to Order: 7:00pm.
 - a) Approval of the Agenda:
 - b) Approval of the minutes of the previous General Meeting
 - c) President's Message: Richard Nelson
Next Tuesday - December 2, Christmas Party
Sharpening in the Spring
 - d) Executive & Committee reports:
 - e) Questions for the Executive:
 - f) Brag Table: I'm Not Dead Yet!
 - g) Garden related questions with our Master Gardeners:
Break
2. Presentation 8:00pm. **Joshua Blades, Flowerstone Farm & Nursery**
 - h) Adjournment.



November's Speaker:

Joshua Blades: How to Garden for the Next Generation

Ideas for the home landscape to reduce impact and enhance conservation.

Speaker's Bio

Joshua Blades is co-owner with his wife Adria Lipsett of Flowerstone Farm & Nursery and Inherit Designs Landscaping. Joshua has been in the horticulture business for 23 years. In those years Joshua has designed, constructed and worked in countless gardens. He has also produced commercial & event cut flowers along with a vast array of garden plants for retail and design work.

Joshua has a keen interest in sustainable practices and environmental stewardship. He and his wife live in Mill Bay with their twin 13 year old sons Ewan & Arlen.

Executive Members

President

Richard Nelson

Vice President

Kathy Code

Treasurer

Gord Hamilton

Secretary

Carol Goodger-Hill

Past-President

Gill Keir

Committee Leads

Membership

Alicia Wonsiak

Flower & Garden Show

Janice Rose

Library

Katherine Miller

Kitchen

Judy Raimondo

Plant Sales

Carrie Nelson

Cont'd next page...

News and Committee Reports

Membership News

Treat Yourself to a Name Tag!

Order your Mill Bay Garden Club name tag for only \$15 by contacting Alicia at mbgcmembership@gmail.com.

Alicia Wonsiak
Membership Chair

Trouble in the Headwaters Public Forum

The Koksilah Watershed Working Group and the Shawnigan Basin Society are hosting a public forum on Forestry for November 29 from 3-5 p.m. at the Hub's gymnasium. For details, see the poster at the end of the newsletter.

Social Media News

Hello everyone,

Thanks to the members who have joined after my requests via meetings and newsletters.

Our Facebook page is developing slowly and we need a lot more members to make it an interesting site. If you still haven't joined us please do so, also invite your friends, they don't have to be a garden club member. Others are welcome to join and contribute to our page.

My vision for our club Facebook is a lively exchange of ideas, questions, answers and of course lots of posts and pictures of your gardens and plants.

Email me and I will send you an invite, go to our Facebook page and sign in or Click on the link below to join.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/g/179g2iN22r/>

I look forward to hearing from you,

Pat
Social Media

...from previous page

Committee Leads (cont'd)

Bursary

Ann Baty

Sunshine

Janice Rose

Brag Table

Barb Kohlman

Memorial Garden

Heather Jenkins

Raffle

Stephanie Taylor

Website Administrator

Gord Hamilton

Social Media

Pat Spezowka

Newsletter Editor

Dave Byrnes

Social Media

If you use Facebook, don't forget to check us out and "LIKE" us.

[https://
www.facebook.com/
share/g/179g2iN22r/](https://www.facebook.com/share/g/179g2iN22r/)

News and Committee Reports (continued)

From the Plant Sales Table

Just a quick note to thank the members who generously donate plants to the monthly meetings. So much more goes on than plant sales! The plant table is like a field of wild flowers, a buzz with information exchange between donors and recipients; it's like an urgent care facility where new and seasoned members can get advice on plant



care; and it's like a casino where patrons use their last loonie to take a chance on an unknown specimen! Its a place of laughter and a place to develop friendships.

On that note I'd like to thank Barb, Kathleen, Robin, and many others who help with set-up, sales and clean-up.

Enjoy the seasonal downtime and we'll see you all in 2026.

Carrie Nelson

Remembering Ruby Armour

Long time Garden Club member Ruby Armour passed away on November 13th, 2025. Ruby recently celebrated her 98th birthday. She was one of the founding members of the Mill Bay Garden Club and served on the Executive in a variety of positions for many years. Apparently she stepped up to be President at a time when no one else wanted the job! She will be remembered for her cheerful disposition, dedication and commitment to our club. Along with Mary Gale, Ruby was the first to be awarded the MBGC Outstanding Service Award.

Many members may remember the iconic duo! Ruby Armour (left) & Mary Gale (right) collecting money, without a calculator, at the Flower and Garden Show Plant Sale table.



From the Kitchen

Just the usual reminder for folks to bring their own cup for coffee time, and a big thanks to all the volunteers who signed up to bring treats and help in the kitchen.

Judy



Gardening Tips for December 2025 by Barb Kohlman

1. Harvest Winter Greens, Berries, Cones, and More

Spend some time in your garden harvesting winter greens, berries, pinecones, grasses, and other seasonal cuttings for winter displays

2. Clean Bird Feeders & Refill Them

Ideally, you set out bird feeders earlier in fall. By December, it's time to check them to make sure they are clean and full of seed. You should clean bird feeders roughly every two weeks to prevent buildup of bird droppings and other contaminants that can make birds sick.



3. Prepare Soil Now for Spring

Late fall and early winter are good times to prepare soil because many of the annuals and perennials have either been removed or have died back. This means you can more easily access soil around plants. Adding 2 to 4 inches of compost this time of year also provides ample time for the nutrients to begin to work their way into existing soil before you begin planting in spring. Use organic compost from your compost bin or a local nursery.

4. Try Your Hand at Plant Propagation

Plant propagation isn't as difficult as it sounds, especially if you start with plants that you can propagate by cutting such as evergreen trees, shrubs, and many succulents. It can help to dip the end of the root in a rooting hormone to stimulate roots before placing it in water. Put the cuttings and water near a sunny window. Roots will form in around 2 weeks. Once the root system develops lateral roots, you can move them to a pot with soil.

5. Avoid De-Icing Salts

De-icing salts can be harmful to many plants and soil in your garden, so it's best to just avoid the use of salts in your garden if possible. Instead, use a cordless snow blower to remove heavier snow along walkways, driveways, or patios (if we get any). Then apply traction granules that will help prevent slipping on icy surfaces.

6. Prepare for Deer

Deer are often more active during the late fall and winter months when food is most scarce. They go to great lengths to munch on plants during winter. Prepare for deer by checking your deer fencing to make sure nothing is broken. You can also use motion-activated deer sprinklers to help deter deer. Another option is to just accept deer and adjust your planting design to include deer-resistant plants. Winter is a good time to learn more about deer-resistant gardening so you can start adjusting your garden plans. Read Karen Chapman's book *Deer-Resistant Design* to get more information on planning a deer-resistant garden.

7. Get Your Plant Catalogs & Start Shopping

December is a perfect time to sit by the fire with a warm cup of coffee or a glass of wine, browse plant catalogs, and think about next year's garden

8. Plan Redesigns to Your Garden

With less going on in the garden during the winter, begin thinking about areas of your garden that you want to redesign, expand, or change.

Cheers,

Barb Kohlman

Mill Bay Garden Club General Meeting October 28, 2025

President Richard Nelson called the meeting to order at 7 PM in Mill Bay Community Hall.

Janice Rose moved acceptance of the agenda; seconded by Jim Wisnia. Passed. The President will add one item to the agenda tonight.

Gillian Keir moved acceptance of the minutes of the general meeting of September 23, 2015; seconded by Cliff Stainsby. Passed.

President: Richard explained that Bylaw #7 deals with charitable donations and how they should be dealt with. The bylaw says that the Executive should draw up a list of potential charitable organizations with the recommended donation and bring it to the AGM where it will be discussed and passed. That did not happen this year. The list of charitable donations was presented at the September General meeting and passed. The list was printed in the Newsletter. In accordance with the bylaw President Richard Nelson made a motion that the General Meeting approve the donations as presented by the Executive which are as follows:

- Food Bank \$1500.00
- Hospice \$500.00
- Nourish Cowichan \$500.00
- Somenos House \$1500.00
- Shawnigan Basin Society \$500.00

Randy Bouchard seconded the motion. Passed.

The Christmas party will be on December 2.

Vice President Kathy Code said that we have two speakers tonight, elder Ken Elliott and Genevieve Singleton.

Past President Gillian Keir reminded us that there will be elections for executive positions in June. Since she will be away at that time, she would like to put together a committee of three seasoned club members to find people to fill positions. Please consider helping out.

Membership: Tonight we have one new member Kathy Haire. Alicia also introduced Toni Handy who is here tonight. Membership cards are available to anyone who has paid and does not have one.

Sunshine: Janice has sent out two cards to members who are ill. If you know of anyone

who needs a card please let her know.

Memorial Garden: There was a good crew out a couple of weeks ago who quickly cleaned up the garden.

Media: The Facebook page is up and running. Please check it out.

Library: Nancy Bonner reminded us that books are available for self checkout before the meeting and during the break.

Raffle : Charlene is helping out tonight. Tickets are available at break.

Plant table: Carrie pointed out some interesting plants on the table tonight; grapes and 5 pots of bamboo. The bamboo are clumping and slow to grow. The preordered dahlias are here-- \$5 per bag.

Kitchen: Gill passed around the sign up sheet for goodies. We need help for November and January.

Car Pooling: Last year Sally Emory identified 12 people who were willing to drive but had no takers. If you know someone who needs a ride to the meeting please let Sally know and she will arrange a lift. She will also send out an email.

Brag Table: Orange is the New Black. Fran Benton and Dustin Carlson did the honours tonight. Dustin brought in several types of pumpkins and a tomatillo plant. Tomatillos grow quickly and are quite nice when they are ripe. There were also some ground cherries and a large red and green hydrangea flower. The very healthy fluffy ruffle fern was almost lost until the owner changed the soil and location. Small green tomatoes will ripen if they are shiny; if they are dull they will not. Blue green dead men's fingers (*Decaisnea fargesii*) are pods with several seeds. Dustin said this was a bad year for mushrooms but he brought in a tray of them He showed us an elfin saddle, an angel wing which grows on hemlock and chanterelles which grow under red cedar. He also had some lobster mushrooms which are russulas that have been taken over by a parasite and turned red.

The meeting broke for coffee at 7:35 and reconvened at 7:55.

Prizes from the raffle tonight included a gardening book, a pair of secateurs, a packet of bulbs with a tea towel and oven gloves and an art piece of driftwood with birds.

Kathy Code introduced the speakers Genevieve Singleton, an ethnobotanist and nature interpreter, and her friend and colleague, Ken Elliott an elder who owns a native plant nursery and has a great deal of plant knowledge. Ken spoke about his personal experiences and how important it is to approach plants with respect, to introduce yourself and explain your intentions. He grew up eating wild food which is no longer possible because of the changes to our world. He went through the public school system in Duncan which earned him grief both from the whites in the school and from members of his own Cowichan community. He got rid of any negative emotions by participating in sports.

Unfortunately at the behest of his parents he let go of his language and is striving to relearn it.

Genevieve dedicated this presentation to her husband Dave Polster who is a plant ecologist and restoration expert. The photographs were all taken by Genevieve, of flowers in the Cowichan Valley. Ken explained how his people used the plants as food and for healing. He also explained how they would take wood from a Big Leaf Maple to make paddles but would leave the tree intact so that it would heal and continue its life in the forest.

The following books were recommended for those wanting further information:

Plants of Coastal British Columbia by Jim Pojar. Lone Pine Press, 2004

Food Plants of Coastal First Peoples by Nancy J, Turner. Royal B.C. Museum, 1995

Invasive Flora of the West Coast by Collin Varner. Heritage House, 2022

Native Plants of British Columbia's Coastal Dry Belt by Hans Roemer and Mary Sanseverino, Heritage House, 2025.

Wild Berries of British Columbia by Fiona Hamersley Chambers. Lone Pine Press, 2011.

Janice Rose moved adjournment at 9:13 PM.