

Prince George Master Gardeners Report to AGM – September 2017

Prince George Master Gardeners hosted the MGABC AGM in September 2016 with lots of enthusiasm and northern pride. We celebrated that we had 100% attendance of our chapter MGs, thus giving us a quorum for the meeting. YEAH for us! It was great to host in the north and the celebrations took us from wine and cheese on Friday to garden tours all day Saturday including a rain garden, and a tour of the Northern Lights Winery, with sampling many of their fruit wines. Sunday we held the AGM with many guest speakers including the unveiling of plans for the botanical garden at the University of Northern British Columbia.

During the fall and winter season we took advantage of "the weed free lectures" arranged by the education committee of the David Douglas Society for members and their garden friends. In the north we are fortunate to have no weeds to deal with during those months, thus we learn and dream about next season's successes with monthly guest speakers. We meet monthly for our chapter meetings, enjoying each other's company, viewing the host garden, having formal and informal education, and a variety of book reviews. Our chapter's greatest asset is the cohesiveness of the group, always offering a helping hand and advice, and a mutual attitude of "getting it done".

We have 25 members as of October with a combined total of 275.75 education hours, 246 advice hours and 1,500 non-advice hours. But as in all chapters, some folks will always do more, depending on health, family and work commitments. We know this as we have audited some members who are under reporting actual hours!

We get together to package self-saved seeds for Seedy Saturdays, start enough seeds around Valentine's Day that we nurture along for four different plant sales. We also do outreach to Burns Lake and Quesnel Seedy Saturdays, and we give presentations for growing vegetable gardens 100 feet from your back door to beginning and advanced gardeners. We host education panels at the library and this year we are supporting the university outreach education on seed-starting, weed identification, square-foot gardening and preserving the harvest. As well, many of us sit on many community committees that are garden-related but do not qualify for volunteer hours.

We graduated a class of new students this spring and now we have ten MGITs. They will bring new ideas and energy to our chapter. We are looking at ways to offer a Junior Master Gardener program and advanced training for MGs in the North. One of our members is hosting Hydroponic and Soil Workshops over the winter months. It's incredible that we still find time for our own gardens.

Submitted by Christiane Hirt
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