

Thompson Shuswap Master Gardeners Report to AGM September 2017

Our chapter has had a very exciting and eventful year. Our members (30 active), have been an enthusiastic group, not only doing their required clinic hours (over 200 hours) at various venues throughout the area, but also participating in many different projects throughout the spring and summer.

One of the projects this year was bringing “Bee a Citizen Scientist” to the city of Kamloops. This initiative was spearheaded by chapter member Elaine Sedgman. The purpose of this project was to teach the MG’s and the public how to identify pollinators, survey the local Kamloops area, and contribute to local research on the subject. First, it involved a two-day training course given by Erin Udal. There was some lab work to identify the different pollinators. We then did a field trip on the Thompson Rivers University grounds identifying various pollinators. Secondly, it involved a four-month survey (June to September) done once per month in people’s own back yards and two surveys done in public parks. All the information was collated by a university student and will be presented to the City of Kamloops. This was funded by a TD grant and a City of Kamloops grant.

As part of the pollinator initiative, the MGs also participated in a week-long Eco Camp for young people, put on by the Big Little Science Centre. They were taught how to identify pollinators and do a survey of the area. They also learned about mason bees and built a mason bee house.

Another part of the pollinator initiative was an in-service for teachers held in the spring. The teachers were taught about pollinators and were given various ideas on how to incorporate the subject into the curriculum. Fifty teachers attended this workshop.

The City of Kamloops sponsored many workshops for the public put on by MGs. The workshops were as follows:

1. Composting and Transplanting
2. Planting for Pollinators
3. Seed Starting and Transplanting
4. Starting a Vegetable Garden
5. Rhubarb Stepping Stones
6. Square Foot Gardening

Every year the City of Kamloops hosts a Green Living Expo. This is a one-day affair for the public. MGs were front and centre. We had children making pots, learning about soil, and planting and caring for a seed. There were talks on rats and control methods, displays of square foot gardening, pollinators and other subjects.

In addition to all the workshops the city sponsored, MGs initiated workshops on:

1. Pollinators and Beneficial Insects
2. Planting for Pollinators
3. Sustainable Gardening Practices

4. Composting and Transplanting
5. Vegetable Soup Garden (done with the Boys and Girls Club)

An initiative started in Salmon Arm was involvement in a Community Teaching Garden. This was sponsored by the Family Resource Centre and the Food Action CO-OP. A master gardener was there to help with the planning, layout, care, maintenance and harvest. The time commitment was one morning a week from April 1- September 30. All the produce went to the Family Resource Centre kitchen and the Salvation Army. The participants were from schools (Grade Ones), First Nations students from Middle School, and Mental Health.

Lastly, we had a couple of tours in which MGs participated. We visited Spit Rock out of Lillooet. This nursery is run by a local First Nations group. They supply large corporations like Hydro and Forestry with native shrubs and plants to reclaim land that has been disturbed. We also visited a working Apiary run by one of our MGs.

As you can see, we have a lot of talented, creative, dedicated MGs!

Submitted by Sue Ackerman
Thompson Shuswap Chapter Representative