



Master Gardeners Association of BC

Chapter Reports - 2021

Vancouver Island Master Gardeners

Membership:

- 76 total members: 55 active, 3 Lifetime, 7 LOA, 11 Alumnus
- Significant change in membership with fewer active members

Meetings:

- Our VIMGA Board of Directors continues to hold monthly meetings
- A small group of Directors and Students are re-vamping VIMGA's Mentorship Policy and Procedures
- Ad hoc committee has created a new Code of Conduct

Activities:

- We are again this year unable to plan in-person advice clinics due to current health restrictions with the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The four districts of our Chapter (Cowichan, Nanaimo, Parksville/Qualicum/Nanoose, and North Island) have all implemented virtual advice clinics. This has significantly supported our student members.
- All VIMGA members have had the opportunity to participate in the Milner Gardens Advice Line (GAL), Plant Pick articles and Frequently Asked Questions in the Milner Garden Newsletter. As in the past, all members are able to accrue volunteer advice hours by writing articles or preparing and giving presentations (now by video conferencing).
- Most members have found creative ways to accrue their required hours. Many of our 20 interns will be finishing their certification this year.
- In March a VIMGA Newsletter was created to communicate with all members.

Continuing Education

- VIMGA hosted several virtual seminars using Zoom and made them available to the public.
- VIMGA is working with the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society and Mt. Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society to plan the education portion of a “Fall Into Gardening” two half-day Virtual Conference on October 23rd and 24th. The sessions are free and open to not only Master Gardeners but all interested gardening groups. You must register to attend:
<https://mailchi.mp/9151e79e2a98/fall-conference-2021>

Community Partnerships:

- Our partnership with the Vancouver Island Regional Library continues with seminars planned into 2022.
- Basic Training Program with Vancouver Island University folks is being discussed to begin in January of 2022. It may be at least partially offered in person, otherwise it will be virtually.
- As per our “Activities” above, we continue to work with Milner Gardens and Woodland (Vancouver Island University owned and operated).

Issues:

- With continued concerns with Covid-19, our activities are still curtailed and some of our members who are reluctant or unable to work directly with the public even with Covid protocols in place have not been able to get all of their advice hours.

Submitted by:

Chris Southwick and Jacqueline Sherk

Chapter Representatives

Prince George Master Gardeners

While admittedly the winter was long, it was made brighter by virtual meetings and locally produced garden talks all via Zoom. Thanks to the generosity of other chapters, we were also able to access presentations from garden experts in Canada and around the world.

In March our chapter participated in an online Seedy Saturday with seed requests being mailed out. Good thing seeds do not weigh much! May saw Master Gardeners helping with the Garden Society's annual plant sale. Over wintered plants were rejuvenated and many of us started seeds or divided perennials from our gardens. Volunteers were on hand during the covid regulated sale days to answer questions from purchasers.

The university display garden woke up from winter and demanded many volunteer hours from MG's and other dedicated gardeners both for spring cleanup and ongoing maintenance.

Our new MGIT's completed their course at the end of June under the mentorship of three very knowledgeable, encouraging MG's. We are thrilled to have 12 enthusiastic new people in our chapter.

It seemed that we needed a breather to get our own gardens established and to water constantly as the heat dome even extended to us! At the end of July we held an outdoor social/meeting to welcome and get to know our new MGIT's. We played a short, garden themed ice breaker game, took care of business and toured our hostess' gardens. Pavlovas with fresh raspberries were a big hit. The afternoon concluded with an explanation and demonstration of hyper tufa.

Our August meeting took place at one of our MG's produce farms. Our hostess guided us through different areas, explaining the successes and challenges of this farm surrounded by a forest. We enjoyed sampling strawberries from her U-pick and were invited to pull up some turnips to take home.

Our fall plans include an outdoor gathering to make grapevine wreaths. Some of our members have volunteered to speak through the garden society's lecture series on overwintering dahlias, geraniums, tuberous begonias and gladiolas. A workshop is being planned to create Christmas floral arrangements using dried foliage from our gardens. We are hoping for regular meetings in an indoor venue but we will wait to see what the months ahead permit.

Submitted by Carol Salton, Prince George Chapter Representative



Victoria Master Gardener Association

We Grow Gardeners

victoriamastergardeners.org

Current Membership as of September 2021

119 Members: 62 MG, 21 AMG 12 Emeritus 24 MGIT (Year 1 - 11, Year 2 - 13) 1 Life Member; and 3 Honorary Members
(6 members withdrew, 4 members did not renew and 5 members LOA. The reasons provided were increasing family commitments, health reasons and temporary absence from the region.

The **2021 Basic Class** began in February 2021 using a blended format. With COVID restrictions in the late spring challenges to complete the practical portions of the course were successfully met.

There are 97 prospective students on the waiting list for Feb 2022 Basic Gardening Class

Activities 2020/21

Volunteer requirements were modified for a second year due to the pandemic.

Current requirements for Master Gardeners are completion of a minimum of 20 volunteer hours composed of: five (5) Continuing Education Hours; and 15 other hours, comprised of any combination of Continuing Education, Outreach and Supplementary activity.

For most of the year, F2F clinics were postponed, however, 6 in person clinics resumed in July 2021 at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific. (HCP)

New tablecloths and banners have been placed in clinic boxes.

New reference materials for clinic boxes have been prepared: Asian Hornet, Extreme Heat in the Garden, Mulching 101 and 10 Best trees for Small Gardens

The Virtual gardening **Mentoring Project** continued to provide advice to the public via email and provided clinic experience for our MGIT's

Sharing our Gardens Project – A clinic like experience for MGIT's; Involved MGIT's visiting MG's gardens and responding to clinic type questions on site.

Member Continuing Education (All events on Zoom platform)

Efforts were made to take Zoom advantage to arrange for out of area presenters.

General Meeting Educational Programs

- House Plants- Errynn Potter
- Fruit trees for the Urban Garden-Laurelle Olford-Doene
- Four Season Green House Gardening- Brian Russell & Faye Ford
- Lawn Alternatives- Annie Johansen – Farm co-ordinator West Coast Seeds
- Short pre or post meeting presentations provided by our talented members included Little Landscapes (Bonsai)- Holly Tucko and Favorite Aps for Plant Information- Nik Hill

Summer Education Program

- Seed Saving – Jill Bishop -Peterborough Ont.
- Dr.Sun-Yat Sen Garden Tour UBC Vancouver- Bob Wilmott & Hayne Way
- The Invasive Ants of BC and other Invasive Challenges – Dr.Rob Higgins , TRU

2020 Master Class

- Little Things That Run the World: Arthropods in Your Garden-Claudia Copley, Royal Museum of BC. The October day long workshop was extremely well received and attended by members of other Chapters.

Advanced Training Program (ATP)

Master Gardeners from other Chapters were invited to attend the courses as space permitted (offered via Zoom) and we were delighted to welcome them.

Core Courses: Botany (3 days)

Soil, Air and Water (4 days)

Electives: Waterwise Gardening – 1 day

Gardening with Native Plants – 1 day

Chapter Leadership

A virtual “job fair” was held at one of the general meetings where members could visit virtually with VMGA Committees to learn about the work done by that group. This generated new members for some of the committees and hopefully will result in leadership positions.

Community Partnerships

Mixing It Up 2021 Roots, Shoots and Leaves– 346 participants including attendees from other provinces and internationally attended this full day conference. The MIU Committee was able to creatively include most of the conference highlights virtually that attendees look forward to. It was a huge success not only in the programming but for the conference committee who provided an exceptional day virtually. MIU is scheduled every other year as a community educational initiative and fund raiser.

VMGA Participated with other Chapters in the virtual provincial **Seedy Saturday** weekend.

VMGA participated with the **MGABC Website Review**

Community Projects

Clinic Reference Materials, HCP garden Maintenance, HCP Tour Guides, Plant Propagation, Junior Master Gardening Program, Native Bee Pollinator Project, Slope Restoration - Camp Barnard, Share our Gardens, Grow our Knowledge, Tiny Gardens for Tiny Town, Virtual gardening Mentoring, You Asked Us.

Projects on hold due to the Pandemic: Royal BC Museum Herbarium, HCP Plant Labeling, Growing in Our Community, Planting with Seniors and Public Presentations.

Comments

In spite of the pandemic restrictions preventing the in-person activities that our members so look forward to and in person community volunteer service, the year was robust. We are fortunate to have within our membership MG's with strong technical skills (Lorna, Janette, Nancy K) who were able to electronically mirror our usual connections and celebrations. Our recognition ceremonies included our cherished VMGA traditions but also added enhanced opportunities for member reflections possible through Zoom. The Board included informal Zoom networking time at our meetings so that connections could be maintained. The COVID year has provided both opportunities and hardships.

Submitted by Nancy Willihnganz
Victoria Chapter Representative

Thompson Shuswap Master Gardeners

Membership:

- 30 total members: 18 Certified/Qualified; 7 Master Gardeners in Training; 2 LOA; 3 Alumni
 - There were 3 active member resignations during 2020/2021 due to relocation and family obligations.

Meetings:

- The TSMG chapter held bi-monthly meetings via Zoom throughout 2020/2021.

Activities:

- Since March 2020, TSMG followed provincial Covid-19 health restrictions and ceased in-person clinics.
- TSMG implemented once-per-month public presentations/advice clinics
 - All members (qualified and in-training) were encouraged to participate in virtual monthly clinics held in tandem with member presentations. This initiative served to help members, albeit minimally, secure project and clinic hours.
 - Eleven virtual PowerPoint presentations were prepared/delivered by qualified and in-training members on a wide variety of topics:
 - *What to prepare and grow; Spring planting tips and tricks; Composting for beginners; Roof rats in the garden; The world of herbs; Small space gardening and craft; Our friend the ladybug; Fostering a love of gardening in young children; Debunking popular garden myths; Vermicomposting.*
- TSMG encouraged members to write/research garden topics for TSMG Facebook page. Four members participated on a variety of topics:
 - *Seed starting indoors; Transplanting herbaceous plants; Growing spring vegetables in containers; Myth Buster Monday (ongoing).*
- 2021 Pollinator Counts
 - Six members volunteered to complete once-per-month pollinator counts, June through September.

Continuing Education

- TSMG hosted guest speakers at their Spring 2021 and Fall 2021 meetings:
 - Spring 2021 - Susan Mulvihill – Common Garden Pests.

- Members were encouraged to attend a dozen North American-based horticultural symposiums and workshops.

Issues:

- Due to Covid-19 restrictions, and despite efforts to optimize virtual opportunities, Master Gardeners in Training have not yet earned the required number of hours to advance to qualified status.

Submitted by Sherry Bennett for Audrey Baier
Thompson Shuswap Chapter Representative



2021 Membership:

- 414 members: 300 active and 72 students
- Represents a 4% increase in membership over 2020

Volunteer Hours

- Requirement for volunteering remained at 20-hours. Although data are not available for 2021, in 2020 our members on average volunteered 37 hours in 2020. We anticipate these numbers will be similar in 2021
- A total of 14,000 hours were recorded in 2020 of which 42% were outreach hours with the majority being project hours.

Clinics

- In 2021 there will be an increase in clinic hours, as clinics were set up in West Vancouver, community gardens and garden club events.
- As nurseries are not allowing clinics, we are looking into other opportunities to host clinics in the Lower Mainland.

Projects – 2021 Offerings

- 51 projects spread across the Lower Mainland, an increase of 25% over 2019
- The include Healing Gardens, Community Projects (such as community gardens), Food & Seed Saving Projects and School Programs
- 3,700 volunteer hours were generated by these projects.

Education

- Education was a key initiative for our Chapter as we became very comfortable with the virtual platform. The 2021 Educational Program incorporated the results of a detailed educational survey of our members, conducted in 2020.
- The Speaker Series, monthly zoom presentations, expanded our members knowledge on a wide range of topics including trees, bogs, pollinators, seeds, soils, to name a few.
- Spring Back was a great success, and we thank all the Master Gardeners who attended.
- Basic Training was run virtually and over 100 Chapter MG's audited the virtual sessions.
- Continuing Education is a top priority for the Chapter. A pilot program on Propagation offered virtually in 4 modules was initiated in August. 97 members signed up for the program and it is currently being evaluated. It is our hope to run more in-depth training programs in 2022.

Chapter Leadership

- Jill Wright stepped down from Council after 7 years of dedicated service to the Chapter. We miss her on Council; however, we know that she will continue to play an important role with the Chapter. Especially her focus on supporting the students - a priority for Jill.

Submitted by Julie Paul
Vancouver Chapter Representative