



## First annual general meeting a success Victoria MGs host 2009 AGM

For a dramatic fusion of East and West, Russell Nursery created a special display that set an elegant tone for the 2009 annual general meeting of the Master Gardeners' Association of British Columbia held at the Mary Winspear Centre in Sidney on Thursday, November 26.

Russell Nursery combined the spare winter branches of *Betula nigra* 'Little King' (Fox Valley Dwarf Birch) and 'Cully' (Heritage Birch) with the architectural forms of conifers and bamboo. *Pinus thunbergii* 'Yatsubusa' (Japanese Black Pine) backed mounds of *Pinus mugo mugo* (Mugo or Mountain Pine) and contrasted with varieties of bamboo and a red slash of *Nandina domestica* 'Gulf Stream.' Lush greens of *Fatsia japonica* (Japanese Aralia) and *Asplenium scolopendrium* (Hart's tongue fern) helped create a sense of peace and serenity. Thank you to Russell Nursery, which is located on Wain Road in North Saanich, not far from the BC Ferry terminal.

MGABC President Barry Roberts welcomed 86 MGs to the AGM. He announced a membership of 806 in six chapters and then highlighted a variety of projects from MG chapters around the province. An extensive financial report illustrated revenue and income, especially concerning the creation of the first series of permanent fact sheets, available to members at the 2010 Spring Seminar and/or through your local chapter. Thanks were made to Lynne Christmas and Doug Courtemanche for their exceptional commitment.

The Victoria Master Gardener Association was pleased to host this meeting under the leadership of Jan Hemming and Hope Hilliard, with support from Susan

Lazar of the MGABC. More than 35 percent of the VMGA's 117 members were involved in the AGM, the first to be held away from Vancouver.

Visitors were entertained by displays from the VMGA, Glendale Gardens and Woodland, and the BC Iris Society. Numerous vendors offered early Christmas shopping as well.



*Charming boot display at AGM*

Large round tables sparkled with beautiful white and glass arrangements by Ramsey and Ramsey Flower Merchants of Oak Bay. A beautiful natural holiday table in gold and green created by Victoria MG Renee Newell was also on display. A light supper featuring a cup of soup and finger foods was served by a team of Victoria MG volunteers.

Earlier in the day, 58 people participated in a Lunch in the Greenhouse in West Saanich at Glendale Gardens and Woodland, followed by a tour of the gardens, located at the Pacific Horticulture College, site of the VMGA Basic Training course.

Ted Baker, president of the BC Iris Society, spoke about Iris and their Companion Plantings, which include peonies and hellebores, as well as roses grown on trellises as background plants. After this iris-based visual treat, a quick auction of some special iris plants concluded this very enjoyable MGABC AGM.

—Donna Cottell

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# Letter from the President

As we age, we can keep our brains fit by exercising them. If you really want to test the agility of your brain cells, then I recommend that you delve into the world of plant names. Not the botanical names, as they are scientifically well organized following the binomial nomenclature system originally devised by Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778) and according to the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants (ICNCP [1952]).

Instead, try understanding the use of plant patents, trademarked plant names, and the application of plant breeders' rights (PBRs). In Canada, the Plant Breeders' Rights Act (1990) is administered by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

## Trademarking plants

As though Monsanto has not done enough damage to the integrity of the horticultural industry, it is now the turn of plant breeders to antagonize and confuse the gardening public. I believe that the original intention of trademarking plants and/or registering them for PBRs was to enable the original plant breeders to recover some of their extensive development costs before the whole world was able to propagate their newly developed plant. That would be fair enough. But now plant breeders are trying, and succeeding, in trademarking plants that have been around for years.

For example, *Rosa* 'Korlanum' was hybridized by Kordes, Germany, in 1985 but not trademarked. It is now marketed under three different trademark names, each owned by a different company: *R.* 'Surrey'<sup>™</sup>, *R.* 'Sommerwind'<sup>™</sup>, and *R.* 'Vente d'été'<sup>™</sup>. So you could buy four differently named plants and still have only one cultivar. This is exactly the opposite effect that the ICNCP intended. And, of course, trademarked plants tend to carry a higher price tag than unregistered plants.

## Divide them not

Being a good (master) gardener you are probably in the habit of taking cuttings, or divisions, of your plants that may succumb to a severe winter—or those which you need to propagate as a donation to the garden club plant sale. Vegetative propagation of trademarked or PBR-registered plants is not allowed—by anyone, for any purpose.



*Caryopteris x clandonensis* 'Miniblue'

## Using trademarked names

Further, a trademarked name is never a true botanical name and should never be used as such. Of course, plant breeders would like their trademarked names to become the generic names, as this helps the marketing of their plants.

Plant tags will have to get bigger to carry the botanical name, patent number, trademark name, and common name; for example, "*Caryopteris x clandonensis* 'Miniblue', PP 146748 Petit Bleu<sup>™</sup>, Bluebeard." Confusing? It's just another backward step in trying to get the public to use the correct plant name.

I certainly do not welcome this further confusion of plant names. Personally, I will make every endeavour not buy trademarked, patented, or PBR-registered plants. In any case, the heirloom cultivars that have survived the test of time are often better than the mass-produced modern cultivars. Perhaps we should have an MGABC policy on this subject.

—Barry Roberts  
MGABC President 2009–2010

# A beautiful launch of province-wide meetings

A big thank you to all who attended our 2009 AGM in Sidney, and to all those who helped organize it.

In the transition year of 2009, the work of the MGABC Council has been demanding but we have achieved much. I would like to take this opportunity to thank retiring Council members Lynne Christmas, Penny Koch, and Leslie Ann Ingram. These three dedicated Council members have completed their terms of office and have been assiduous and indefatigable in their duties.

We welcome four new Council members for 2010: Nini Taylor, Joy Posyniak, Rebecca Black, and Leslie Welch. With our partially new Council for 2010, I am confident we will be willing and able to address the new objectives we set ourselves.

—Barry Roberts, President

## Elected to MGABC Council for 2010

Barry Roberts (President)  
Jan Hemming (President-Elect)  
Ron Fawcett (VP Finance and Treasurer)  
Heather Nielsen (Secretary)  
Susan Lazar (VP Events)  
Linda Derkach (VP Education)  
Linda Sears (VP Planning and Governance)  
Sheila Malbeuf (Prince George)  
Pam Harrison (Vancouver Island)  
Linda Sears (Okanagan)  
Jan Hemming and Hope Hilliard (Victoria)  
Leslie Welch (Thompson-Shuswap)  
Wendy McIntyre (Vancouver)  
Joy Posniak (Director at Large)  
Nini Taylor (Director at Large)  
Rebecca Black (Director at Large)



*Sue Wright and Bill Shaw enjoy the Russell Nursery display*



*Dawn Sutherland with more beautiful displays*



*Ted Baker, president of BC Iris Society, with Randy McEwen*

*Photos by Nancy Phillips*

# Report from the Okanagan

## A Year of Firsts and A Year to Build On

April 4, 2009, was the date the Summerland basic training class wrote and passed our final exam. The result: 18 new master gardeners in training. I was one of them. A lifelong love affair with the garden, along with a persistent creative streak, fuelled the projects I have been involved with on behalf of the Okanagan MG chapter this year.

Clinics were available; however, because of an injury that makes it difficult to sit in one place for long I knew that all of my volunteer hours could not be at clinics. A plan was going to be required (which would include clinics) but which would also include other activities that would be achievable for me given the disability. The plan began with making an inventory of my interests then cross-referencing those interests with the names of people and organizations I thought might help me.

### Garden club presentation

The very first project on behalf of the Okanagan chapter was teaching container gardening tips and techniques to a garden club. After five hours of preparation for the one-and-a-half hour presentation—*ka-ching*—six-and-a-half hours later I was on my way.

### West Kelowna Communities in Bloom

Perhaps another opportunity existed with West Kelowna Communities in Bloom; I had become a committee member earlier in the year.

The District of West Kelowna Communities in Bloom is an equal partnership that has existed for five years. The partners include the District of West Kelowna, the Westbank First Nation, and the Westbank Chamber of Commerce. We are distinct and separate from the City of Kelowna, our sister community across Okanagan Lake.

At the next Communities in Bloom meeting, I quietly offered that, instead of staff, maybe Master Gardeners might judge the local Most Beautiful competition this year. Committee members jumped on the idea.

It was easy to find three other MGs keen to be involved: Ginny Dournovo as the senior MG and my mentor, Pat Zander, Imelda Nagel—one senior MG and three MGs in training. We are the first MGs to volunteer with the District of West Kelowna Communities in Bloom. We spent two great days together evaluating residential, strata, and commercial properties. A fair bit of preparation was involved; there were phone calls to registrants to set



*Sparks in the community garden*

appointments, plot the routes (and drive them ahead of time), and set criteria for our judging, as well as photos to be taken at each property, scores to be tallied, and then descriptions to be written for the District.

### Feature planting, too

Then a phone call came in from the parks department manager with a proposal. Would Ginny and I consider doing a landscape design for the feature planting area at the new civic offices in time for the grand opening and, would there be a possibility of another landscape design for the feature planting area under a beautiful log pergola at the entrance to new Towne Centre Park? The criteria for both: the District needed something spectacular. Oh, and the grand opening for the new park and the ribbon-cutting ceremony would happen while the national communities in bloom judges were on tour in the community. Plus, there would be dignitaries from all levels of government in attendance. No pressure at all!

Ginny and I got right down to work. We selected appropriate plants and Ginny priced and ordered them while I prepared a colour-coded scale drawing. Ginny also put together some choices of annuals for planters and I prepared the scale drawing for that too.

District staff did the installations. With the planting now in place we are told that the District receives daily compliments. You can imagine how proud we are.

### **Landscape plan for Westbank First Nation**

Then came another opportunity: we were approached to do a landscape plan for the Westbank First Nation on a high-profile property bordering Highway 97 as it passes through the Westbank area of West Kelowna. Again, Ginny and I met to choose plants and I did the design plan. Staff at the Westbank First Nation did the installation, and we are told they are very happy with the area. Some great news arrived recently that the Westbank First Nation wish to continue working with us in the future.

### **Sparks of inspiration**

Ginny and I were also involved with our local Sparks group, part of the Girl Guides of Canada. We worked with these five- and six-year-old girls in April, planting seeds into trays for future planting in their plot at the Towne Centre Community Garden. In late May, we showed them how to transplant the seedlings into their garden. That same evening, the Great Pumpkin Caper got under way with the planting of pumpkin seeds along a berm at the garden. Each girl planted two pumpkin seeds herself. I had prepared some kid-friendly compost information for them to take home, along with a veggie-themed colouring sheet, and some vegetable garden information geared to young children. It was an extremely fun project.

### **Feedback and successes**

In mid-October, my committee member's copy of the National Judges Evaluation Report for the community became available. There were many positive comments and West Kelowna received a five-bloom rating. MGs were mentioned in the report. The judges said: "The efforts of the local Master Gardeners at the Towne Centre Park, District of West Kelowna Civic Buildings, etc. are exceptionally well done." The judges recommend to the District of West Kelowna that they "continue to build on the very successful, effective, and excellent Master Gardener Program."

### **More opportunities**

The more people I met along the way, the more variety of opportunities there were. There was a chance to assist with judging the Kelowna Communities in Bloom Green Thumb competition; judging an event for the Kelowna Garden Club; an opportunity to work on the One Block at a Time project; a trip to Harrison Hot Springs for the provincial Communities in Bloom



*Before and after at the West Kelowna Civic Building*

conference; participation in some very interesting clinics; and assisting with registrations at a community garden and supervising the planting of fruit trees there. The latest project, also this October, was to be one of two delegates presenting to the Mayor, Council, and staff of West Kelowna about a proposed community garden in my own neighbourhood. The presentation was very well received. We were swamped by reporters as we left Council Chambers and were able to give a number of interviews on the community garden project. The excitement continues to build as we prepare for what we hope will be the opening of the new community garden in time for the 2010 planting season.

My successes this year as a new MG in training result significantly from the amazing support of my mentor, Ginny Dournovo, who was there through all the schemes and who willingly signed off the hours. Thank you, Ginny. And thanks to the District of West Kelowna, who extended an invitation to our group of four MGs to return next year.

This has been a year of successes and a year to build on.

**—Heather Doheny  
Okanagan Chapter Master Gardener in Training**

# Report from Vancouver Island

“Running hard to keep ahead of deadlines, we remember the Washington State University MG Training course credo ‘quality over quantity’”

The Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association has had a successful 2009 season, and our current membership includes 98 master gardeners.

## New MGs in training

A new basic training class is running at the Paine Horticultural Center in Nanaimo, a facility of Vancouver Island University, with our new instructor Jeff Dejong. Jeff has a healthy interest in teaching plant identification, and we are glad that component is receiving a higher profile. We continue to enjoy the instruction of Barb Kohlman, but Barb is only teaching selected modules now and no doubt enjoying a well-deserved change of pace.

Class size is down this year to 15, and we are pleased that Vancouver Island University supports running the class with this smaller number. Our screening and interviewing processes have increased retention of members through and beyond their student hours. Also, we again have a full complement of mentors in place, headed by Kay Howard, with Angela Einarson, Sandy Atkins, Patricia Cuttriss, Diana Walker, and Heather Crosson. These qualified MGs work in pairs to attend each class and mentor small groups of students.

## October AGM

Our focus has been on training our new students to be the best MGs they can be. At our October 18 annual general meeting we shared ideas on how to be a responsible clinic member, how to make clinic tables more attractive and accessible, and how to increase our profile in the community. The Executive plus members Don Wright, Barb Samarin, and Paul Lawry were instrumental in this work. The AGM committee of Don Wright, Sandy Atkins, and Tracey Wein did an excellent job of organizing this day, especially given that our speakers had to drop out at the last minute. We were forced to react with resilience and flexibility to fill in for our members with an extended and valuable forum on clinics, plus an excellent video on propagation, wisely tossed into the mix by member Linda Rehlinger.

## Events past and future

With our membership spread from Campbell River to Mill Bay and some of the islands, providing more frequent educational and social opportunities for our members



*2009 VIU/VIMGA Basic Training Program Instructor  
Jeff Dejong*

continues to be a challenge. During a welcome day of pure socializing and enjoying gardens, VIMGA member Ed Demelo hosted a wonderful July tour of the gardens of Shawnigan Lake School, plus several other gardens in the Duncan area.

We have invited Linda Chalker-Scott to speak in June 2010, at which time we hope to gain a more in-depth understanding of what is meant by “sustainable gardening” and how that label fits with all the others in this era of branding. We do not label ourselves “organic”; instead, we offer environmentally responsible and current advice on gardening practices. We are looking forward to a dialogue with Linda on this topic.

## Our own web page

We are pleased to have our own chapter page on the MGABC website, with a simple link to our course provider, Vancouver Island University. The MGABC website committee has accomplished a lot in improving the website’s accessibility for individual chapters of the Association.

# “Keep an eye on the Vancouver Island chapter on its web page on the MGABC website.”

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## **Staying Committed**

We continue to struggle to find and keep committed Executive and Committee members, but we find that in this we are not really different from other chapters, and even the Association as a whole. Little by little we are involving newer members in order to reduce the number of hats more experienced members have to wear.

When a new class takes place every year we find ourselves running hard to keep ahead of all the deadlines, while remaining true to the Washington State University MG training course credo of “quality over quantity”; however, we also wish to develop a strong and consistent profile for the basic training course, which is a collaboration between Vancouver Island University and the Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association.

We are pleased that the course will be offered again in the fall of 2010, with an orientation in late August. Please keep an eye on our webpage on the MGABC website for location of the course in either Nanaimo, Parksville, or Cowichan, where it is offered on a rotating basis.

**—Pam Harrison, Outgoing President, VIMGA**



*Hands-on practice in the rain for Jeff's MGBT students in the 2009 class*



*Member Lyn Collins presiding over the plant sale table at the VIMGA AGM*



**“Let no one think that real gardening is a bucolic and meditative occupation. It is an insatiable passion, like everything else to which a man gives his heart.” —Karel Čapek, *The Gardener’s Year*, translated by M. and R. Weatherall, 1931**

It is that time of year again, so soon! Time for us to think about next year’s clinic scheduling.

Email signup will take place from Sunday, January 24, through to

midnight on Saturday, January 31, 2010.

The signup book will be at VanDusen Botanical Gardens from Tuesday, February 2, until Tuesday, March 2. Look for the book near the administration desk during the week and at the reception area during the weekend. The last date for signup will be at the Spring Seminar at the Michael J. Fox Theatre on Sunday, March 7.

### **Email signup**

For email signup, please send your requests to [mgcliniccoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:mgcliniccoordinator@gmail.com) and list your choices in order of preference, stating location and date. Use the dates from the 2009 master clinic list to determine the 2010 dates as the number of locations of clinics will stay the same. If there are major changes to dates, I will let you know. I will do my very best to give you what you request. When emailing, please include your name and MG status (for example, first year, second year, or qualified master gardener [QMG]) in the body of your email; I may not recognize you from your email address.

### **The clinic signup book**

Please ensure that your name is printed legibly on the line in the clinic signup book; if I can’t read your name it will not appear correctly on the master clinic list. Also, please be sure that you enter your phone number and your MG status (for example, first year, second year, or qualified master gardener [QMG]).

### **Making changes**

When you sign up for clinics, please be sure that you have your personal calendar with you and that you write down the dates you have committed to clinics. If you must make changes after signing up you will be able to physically go back to the book, cross out your name, and choose another clinic anytime up to and including the spring seminar in March.

The master clinic list will be made up based on the information in the signup book on March 7. After that date you will have to find a MG to replace you at the clinic,

and you will have to notify the area coordinator and the clinic coordinator of the change.

### **The master clinic list**

When you receive your master clinic list in late March or early April, please check that the information is correct and that it matches the dates recorded in your calendar. Please check to see if you are listed as the clinic coordinator (anyone can be, regardless of MG status) and, if you are, be sure you review the job description of clinic coordinator.

A few clinics are held before the master clinic list is published. These include the Chilliwack Outdoor Decor Show, held March 26, 27, and 28; various Gardenworks locations at Loughheed, Capilano, Mandeville, and Edgemont, which start clinics mid-March; and the Seedy Saturday at VanDusen and in Powell River in February. Please contact me during the email signup if you want to work at these clinics.

Do not panic if you miss email signup; there are always spaces available and often new events come up throughout the season. There are other ways to acquire your hours as well, including the many worthwhile community projects you could contribute to. They are listed in the clinic sign-up book, along with contact details of the person in charge of the project. As well, writing articles, or handling the plant line inquiry at VanDusen Botanical Gardens, are other volunteer options.

### **Something to think about**

If you have a flexible schedule you might want to give your name to an Area Coordinator as a backup person who would be able to fill in at a clinic on short notice. It would really help prevent cancellation of clinics.

If you have any suggestions or want to request a clinic at your garden club or plant sale, please send them to me before the middle of January 2010.

Thanks to you all for making this job enjoyable by being so patient and understanding.

**—Elizabeth Taylor  
Overall Clinic Coordinator**



# Vancouver Chapter

## Letter from the Chair

Looking back on 2009, by any standard we enjoyed a very active year. We had seven monthly general meetings (July, August, and December we were on holiday; March was the spring seminar; and June we hosted the summer garden party). During these seven general meetings we had seven outstanding speakers: Daniel Mosquin, Harry Jongerden, Gwen Odermatt, Bruce Hemstock, Dr. Alan Reid, Ron Long, and Joan Viner of the Arthritis Society.

Congratulations to Susan Lazar for organizing these speakers and a big thank you to all the volunteer members who support the monthly meetings with audiovisual expertise, refreshments, raffles, plant sales, and as greets as well.

In February, Lynne Christmas, with the help of approximately 20 volunteers, brought us the most successful Seedy Saturday ever.

Susan Lazar, chair of the special events committee, was also busy bringing us such events as:

- Visit to Terra Nova Garden (June)
- Visit to Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre and YWCA green roofs tour (July)
- Visit by Whatcom County MGs and tour of three South Surrey gardens (August)

- Gardening with Vegetables workshop with Egan Davis (September)
- Bountiful Urban Garden (BUG) Fair (October)
- Visit to Riverview Trees Field Trip (October)

Another big thank you on behalf of the membership to the outgoing Council members: Susan Lazar, Leslie Ingram, Lynne Christmas, Ron Fawcett, and Penny Koch.

We start 2010 with a full set of Council members:

John Bruce (Treasurer)  
Heather Nielsen (Secretary)  
Elizabeth Taylor (Overall Clinic Coordinator)  
Barry Roberts (Chair)  
Joyce Fitz-Gibbon (Member at Large)  
Cheri Trewin (Member at Large)  
Marie Pringle (Member at Large)  
Frank O'Neill (Member at Large)

I am truly looking forward to working with the (mostly) new team. It will be hard to repeat the success of 2009, but we shall endeavour to do so.

—Barry Roberts  
Vancouver Chapter Chair

## Don't Get Caught Sleeping

### Key Dates to Remember for Vancouver Clinics

Email signup  
Signup at VanDusen  
Last day for signup  
Notify area coordinator about changes

January 24 to midnight January 31  
February 2 to March 2  
March 7  
After March 7



# BUG Fair at VanDusen

## First Bountiful Garden Fair was well attended and organized

Saturday, October 3, was a sunny, bright but crisp and chilly day, 12 Celsius according to the disc jockey on the oldies-but-goldies radio station I listen to in my car. But tell that to our brave master gardeners sitting at display tables outside the Floral Hall at VanDusen Botanical Garden. It felt more like 5 Celsius ... and then the wind picked up. Brrr!

But inside the hall it was toasty warm and teeming with activity. On first—and lasting—impression, the Bountiful Urban Garden (BUG) Fair was a cornucopia of wonderful and valuable information on everything gardening. Which display to look at first? Every display was well marked with yellow signs to direct you to your immediate need for information: native plants, healing gardens, garden design, container gardening, vegetable gardening, composting, insects, kids' corner, and of course the dependable master gardener panel.

The public attended in throngs, gazing in wonder at the gorgeous container gardens, zen-ing out with healing garden paraphernalia, waving branches of diseased plants at the master gardener panel, and checking for worms in the compost. Got kids? They were kept busy with temporary tattoos, drawing and colouring, and pin-the-spider-on-the-web games.

Braving the chill were those lucky enough to get seats (or standing room only along the railing) at the special lectures and presentations on the Floral Hall deck. Information and advice flowed, and attendees flocked around the presenters after each lecture for more, more, and more information.

And when the urge to buy hit, as it hits every good gardener at a garden event, there were dahlias, cannas, varieties of annuals and perennials, flower photo cards, and jewellery to choose from.

The BUG Fair was well attended, well organized, and a huge credit to the more than 60 master gardeners who participated. Let's see it again next year.

—Mark Avrum Drutz



*Kids found lots to do at this year's BUG Fair*



*Sheila Jones and Wendie Kottmeir*



# Community Projects



*Master gardeners, community volunteers, and students from Graham Bruce Elementary spreading leaf and paper mulch in their garden beds in the Children's Learning Garden at the UBC Farm.*

This has been a year of change for the Vancouver chapter's community projects. Two long-term projects are being put to bed. Barb Warner has done such a great job with the Burnaby Youth Custody Services project that they have decided to hire a full-time coordinator.

On the down side, the North East Mental Health Team is moving to a new location that unfortunately has no garden space; however, Tom Heah, the project coordinator has nothing but praise for the MGs who volunteered with his program. He says, "Thank you for working with our program and for connecting us with such dedicated, hard-working, and creative individuals. You can also be very proud of the effects of the gardening program on many people's lives. I look forward to working with your group again in the future."

It has also been a year for new projects, so in addition to the community projects outlined in this article, please look for additions on the community projects page of the Vancouver section of the MGABC website.

Overall, master gardeners have contributed to the success of more than 18 community projects throughout the Lower Mainland. One hundred and eighteen qualified master gardeners and students donated an amazing total of 2,300 hours of volunteer time. As well, they also supervised 120 community volunteers, who contributed more than 1,200 hours to the community projects.

At each site, qualified master gardeners and those in-training offered service to the community while educating participants to the satisfaction of gardening and protecting the environment. The benefits, of course, go both ways, as participants come to understand more about the natural world around them and as gardeners

hone their skills while enjoying participation in worthwhile community endeavours.

## Range of projects

A variety of programs and locations are available if you are looking for a community project to volunteer with in 2010.

Six projects are associated with schools and work with children; these include two new projects—one at UBC Farm and one at Irwin Park Elementary School in West Vancouver. Another project assists women and their children who are fleeing abuse. Four others contribute to the quality of life of long-term residents in hospital locations as participants learn new skills and appreciation for the therapeutic benefits of gardening.

A hospice project offers solace to patients and their families and friends.

Burnaby Lake Regional Park, Richmond Nature Park, and Mahon Park in North Vancouver are the location for three specialty gardens that focus on butterflies, native plants, and community involvement.

An exciting addition to the community project roster is the Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden, which will provide opportunities for qualified master gardeners and students who reside in this area.

Food gardens have also become a strong focal point, with one existing project and two proposals focusing on food production and community gardens.

Last, but not least, the healing garden committee is active in six community locations and continues to

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# Community Projects

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compile a comprehensive resource library focusing on the nature of healing gardens.

The following are brief descriptions of the current projects currently open to volunteers.

## **KidSafe Project**

Coordinators: Carol White and Alison Kelly

The KidSafe Project helps create safe havens at times when schools are closed. The project serves up to 400 at-risk students who are enrolled in five Vancouver inner-city elementary schools. The KidSafe program introduces children to food gardening and promotes food security within the community. Currently, volunteers work with groups of students to plan, plant, and tend the garden, which is located at Florence Nightingale Elementary School in Mount Pleasant. KidSafe also has an established native and non-native food garden at Sir William Macdonald Elementary School in Grandview-Woodlands.

## **Queen Alexandra School Gardening Program**

Coordinator: Ian Lai

The award-winning project at Queen Alexandra Elementary School in Grandview-Woodlands works with K–7 students in a 10,000-square-foot garden that includes vegetable beds, butterfly and wildflower gardens, small fruits, annual, perennials, and trees. There is also an active composting program. Activities include growing food, weeding, watering, and preparing food from the garden. Salads are featured in the summer and soups in the winter. Master gardeners can volunteer for a single three-hour session or attend weekly during the months that the program runs. Queen Alexandra School has a culturally diverse student population and experience has shown that the children love to garden.

## **North Poplar School Garden**

Coordinator: Heather Ross

The Abbotsford School of Integrated Arts North Poplar Campus invites community members to volunteer to care for the garden, and over the past year master gardeners have begun to consult with them about restoring and maintaining the garden, which had

become quite overgrown. Master gardeners' tasks include assisting teachers and students in Grades 3 and 5 with choosing and caring for plant material and giving advice to students and community members for the spring and fall clean up of the garden.

## **Terra Nova Schoolyard Project**

Coordinator: Ian Lai

The Terra Nova Schoolyard Project in Richmond works with K–12 students to create an environment that promotes fresh food, healthy eating habits, and personal and social responsibility. Activities are aligned with current school curriculum and provide exciting opportunities to discover and reconnect with the earth. Master gardeners lead groups of six to eight children in gardening activities and provide expertise on all aspects of gardening.

## **Marguerite Dixon Transition House and Second Stage Units**

Coordinator: Helen Tsepnopoulos

This community project is a horticultural therapy program that assists staff and residents of facilities for abused women. The coordinator organizes gardening activities for the project volunteers throughout the season. Master gardeners work with residents and staff, providing advice and gardening instruction. Helen, the project coordinator, would like to grow more food this year and expand the program to include composting. A master gardener with a passion for composting would be appreciated.

## **Banfield Extended Care Pavilion**

Coordinator: Shelagh Smith

Banfield Pavilion is the extended care unit at Vancouver General Hospital. It has a large rooftop garden, greenhouse, entrance garden with hanging baskets, and three north balcony gardens. Under the direction of a horticultural therapist, master gardener volunteers meet every fifth Saturday to provide residents with an educational, storytelling, and sensory experience in the Banfield garden. The residents expressed their appreciation by saying that the sessions are interesting, educational, and fun. Volunteers who are fluent in Mandarin or Cantonese would be an asset to the program.

# Community Projects



*Pre-Schoolers from Crabtree Corner helping with berry picking*

## Pearson Long-Term Care Facility

Coordinator: Judith Howard

Pearson Hospital, located in South Vancouver, is a long-term residence for patients who use ventilators or wheelchairs. Master gardeners help to enhance the quality of life for residents by upgrading the quality and variety of garden areas onsite. In addition to ongoing pruning and maintenance, two new gardens have been created. The team would like to involve more volunteers from the surrounding community with the planning and maintenance of these gardens.

## Yaletown House Intermediate Care Facility

Coordinator: Shelagh Smith

Yaletown House is located in the heart of Vancouver's Yaletown district. It is a three-storey building in the shape of a "U" with a protected courtyard garden, a greenhouse, and a rooftop garden. Master gardener volunteers provide gardening assistance and instruction to residents.

## Inglewood Lodge Friendship Garden

Coordinators: Aileen Taylor and Mary Johnson

The Inglewood Lodge is located in West Vancouver on Taylor Way and is a care facility offering different levels of care. The friendship garden was funded and created as a therapeutic space for the residents by caring relatives and other community members in 2005. It is a respite for visiting friends, family members, residents,

and staff. Community members volunteer to care for the garden and, over the past year, master gardeners have begun to consult with them about the specifics of maintaining the garden.

## St. James' Cottage Hospice

Coordinator: David Stemler

The Cottage is a beautiful 10-bed facility for terminally ill adults that is situated in Harbour Park overlooking Burrard Inlet and the North Shore mountains. The grounds are filled with planters and flowerbeds for the enjoyment of residents, their families, visitors, and staff. Master gardeners help create garden beds, trouble-shoot pests and diseases, and advise on plant selection, location, and maintenance. They also share their wealth of gardening information with residents and visitors. David and Carol, the hospice staff person who also volunteers many hours with the gardens, would like to have some MGs for February and March next year to help get the gardens off to an earlier start.

## Burnaby Lake Nature House

Coordinator: Judy Wellington

Burnaby Butterfly Garden is located next to the Nature House on Burnaby Lake. The garden is planted to attract birds and butterflies and is an attractive venue to inform visitors about butterflies, their habitats and food sources. Master gardener volunteers assist with garden maintenance and also give advice and information to park visitors, including school children who attend educational programs in the Nature House.

## Mahon Park Stewardship Project

Contact: Shirlene Cote

The Mahon Park Stewardship Group restores and enhances a 26-hectare forest in North Vancouver. The Native Demonstration Garden is an interpretive garden designed to educate the public about native plants. Master gardener volunteers provide information on the plants and coordinate community work parties which occur once each month over a period of six months. Master gardeners contribute to the improvement of the demonstration garden and to the ongoing education of the work-party volunteers. *...continued on page 14*

# Community Projects

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## **Richmond Nature Park**

Coordinator: Rich Kenny

The Richmond Nature Park, located on Westminster Highway, consists of 200 acres of the raised peat bog—a remnant of the unique temperate wetlands that once covered large portions of Lulu Island. The majority of the Nature Park is maintained in a natural state, where visitors may explore the bog via a series of meandering trails. The park is currently developing Wildlife Gardens to demonstrate sustainable gardening practices that enhance wildlife habitat in urban areas. Master gardeners are needed to participate in this garden project by advising on plant selection and placement, assisting with some of the planting, and becoming an integral part of the garden program by speaking to the public about the importance of gardening for wildlife. Volunteers would be appreciated year round for this project.

## **Sir Charles Tupper Greenway**

Coordinator: Judy Zipursky

The Tupper Greenway, which is the length of one city block, was completed in March 2008 and is located in Vancouver between Fraser and Main Street on East 23rd Avenue. The Greenway was created with input from students, teachers, and community members. The master gardeners (Healing Garden Committee) have created maintenance manuals and continue to assist the community with ongoing plant care. As Judy points out: “A highlight of this project is seeing the different ways in which community members utilise and enjoy the Greenway.”

## **YMCA Rooftop Food Garden**

Coordinator: Juliana Pasko

YWCA Vancouver’s Rooftop Food Garden supplies healthy, nutritious food to women and children in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. The garden provides an example of what can be done to solve nutritional poverty and food security issues. This innovative project began in 2006. More than 450 kilograms of fruit and vegetables were harvested in 2008 and the totals for 2009 have yet to be tallied. The goal is to produce 1 tonne of food per year by the next three to five years. Food production from this garden relies completely on volunteers who plant, care for, harvest, and deliver the produce.



*St. James Hospice Cottage Gardens*

## **Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden**

Coordinator: Odessa Bromley

The Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden was established in April 2009 and has had a very successful first year. Master gardeners worked with volunteers in identifying, labelling, and providing growing and planting information for plants being sold at the Gardens, provided online horticultural information, and assisted in the organic demonstration garden, which produced more than 450 kilograms of food, which was donated to the Sechelt food bank. The master gardeners also hosted several special events. As Odessa points out: “There are never enough volunteers to spread the jobs around.”

## **Intergenerational Landed Learning Project at UBC Farm**

Coordinator: Hannah Buschhaus

This project is designed to connect school children with elders in the community who have gardening or farming experience in order to promote environmental stewardship and intergenerational learning. Master gardeners who participated in this project provide gardening advice and expertise to the community volunteers and the children. Activities include preparing

# Community Projects

the soil, transplanting, composting, weeding, watering, and harvesting. More than 225 children and 50 elder volunteers are actively involved with growing their own food.

## The Healing Garden Committee

Coordinator: Judy Zipursky

This committee, which is run by a very enthusiastic and energetic coordinator, now has 18 members. The group provides their expertise as needed and has seen two of their “seedlings”—the Sir Charles Tupper Neighbourhood Greenway and the Inglewood Lodge Friendship Garden—grow into independent community projects. The committee has continued working on four projects from last year: the Union Gospel Mission Healing Garden, the St. Andrew’s Church Biblical Plant Garden, the Cityview Church Garden, and the Edmond’s Community School Garden. Committee members have also been involved with two new projects this year, including the City Hall Healing Garden and the Mount St. Joseph’s Hospital Garden. The committee, which originally focused on research, cataloguing, and development of materials relating to healing gardens, now offers its expertise on the establishment and maintenance of healing gardens in the community. The members also attend committee meetings and visit established healing gardens to further their self-development.

## How the projects work

Each community project has a designated coordinator who sets up the schedule of activities and keeps track of volunteer hours. The coordinator contacts potential volunteers to discuss the specific details of the project and provides an orientation to the goals and needs of the program. The schedules, tasks, and activities vary from project to project. Some require work every week while others have less frequent time commitments.

Once a commitment has been made to a project and its coordinator, it is important that this commitment be honoured in the same way as you would a plant clinic. These programs depend on master gardeners and their expertise.



*Hannah Buschhaus (2nd yr MG, back left) and Doayne Sillery (MG, back right) join a community volunteer and his group of John Henderson Elementary students to identify plants and help clean up their garden bed at the end of the season*

## Starting a project

If you know of, or work at a site that combines community service with gardening educational opportunities and you think that it might become a community project, please contact the Community Project Coordinators Cheri Trewin or Joyce Fitz-Gibbon for more information. They will discuss the potential project with you. A project will only be considered if there is an onsite coordinator (preferably a master gardener) who is willing to take responsibility for coordinating the volunteers, recording the hours, and administering the project. If there is a coordinator and the project includes both education and service, the coordinator in consultation with Cheri or Joyce will design a description of the project for inclusion in the roster of projects that is presented to the master gardeners-in-training in the spring. These projects will also be available with the clinic sign-up book.

## A final word

Community projects count toward a master gardener’s or student’s required volunteers hours, but more than that, they are a satisfying and enjoyable way to share knowledge, build skills, and give back to the community.

—Joyce Fitz-Gibbon and Cheri Trewin  
Community Project Coordinators



## Newsletter

of the Master Gardeners Association  
of British Columbia  
in Association with  
VanDusen Botanical Gardens Association

### Mission Statement

The Mission of the Master Gardeners Association of British Columbia is to provide information about gardening to the community and to educate people about environmentally responsible gardening practices.

Please send all **contact information changes** to Pat Taylor, membership chair.

All other **newsletter correspondence** can be sent to the editor, Ann-Marie Metten, at [ametten@telus.net](mailto:ametten@telus.net).

Newsletter layout by Wendy Jones.

The MG Newsletter is published in March, June, September, and December. **Deadline for submissions** to the March newsletter is January 30, 2010.

[www.bcmastergardeners.org](http://www.bcmastergardeners.org)  
[gardener@bcmastergardeners.org](mailto:gardener@bcmastergardeners.org)



# MG Calendar

## Chapter Wide Events

**Sunday, March 7, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

Spring Seminar

Michael J. Fox Theatre

7373 MacPherson Avenue, Burnaby

The public are welcome to this all-day event

Cost: \$45 (registration by February 25) or \$60 (registration at the door)

**October 11 to 14, 2011**

Charleston, West Virginia

Colour It Green in a Wild and Wonderful Way

International Master Gardener Conference

Find out more on the West Virginia University Extension Service website at

### Vancouver Christmas Potluck

Sunday, December 13, 2:00 p.m.

Christmas Party Potluck

Bring your mug and a treat to share

Floral Hall, VanDusen Botanical Garden



## Seedy Saturdays slated for throughout the province in 2010

The Seedy Saturday at VanDusen is hosted by the Vancouver chapter of the Master Gardeners Association of BC. Speakers include three Master Gardeners on the topics of soil, bees, and veggies for beginners and small areas. The vendors area is being expanded, so if interested please contact Lynne Christmas. There are no scheduled road closures or restrictions due to the Olympics.

Saturday, February 6, 10–3  
Qualicum Beach Civic Centre

Saturday, February 13, 10–4  
Lillooet Friendship Centre

Saturday, February 13, 10–3  
Salt Spring Island Farmer's  
Institute

Saturday, February 20, TBD  
Victoria Conference Centre

Saturday, February 27, 10–4  
VanDusen Botanical Gardens,  
Vancouver

Saturday, March 6, 10–3  
Florence Filberg Centre, Courtenay

Saturday, March 6, 10–3  
A.L. Fortune Secondary School,  
Enderby

Saturday, March 6, TBD  
Robert's Creek Hall

Saturday, March 13, 10–3  
Rutland Centennial Hall, Kelowna