



Newsletter

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Bee Deaths a Problem for Pollination

At the May 2007 general meeting, the Education Committee invited MGs to speak for two minutes on a topic that interested them. The idea was to share our individual knowledge with others. Here is what one MG presented. Perhaps it will inspire your own short presentation when MGs are invited to make similar presentations at another meeting this winter.



Pollination is critical to plant and bee survival—but also to our survival as a species. Recent reports of bee deaths remind us that honeybees are the new canaries of the coal mines and their fate presages our own.

According to the Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturalists, last winter 29 percent of all Canadian honeybees were lost, compared to previous national averages of just 15 percent. Here in BC, the figure was 23 percent. These losses potentially threaten not only honey production, but also Canada's \$5 billion fruit and crop production industry which relies on bees for pollination.

Agriculture and Agri-food Canada has estimated the value of honeybee pollination in Canada is more than \$1 billion a year and represents 21 percent of the value of about 26 selected crops. Some experts suggest that unusual weather patterns may have led to reduced production of late season honey on which the bees and their offspring subsist during the winter. Others suggest that mites, industrial farming practices, and the use of pesticides are damaging the health of honeybee populations.

Bee keeping has become increasingly commercial. Colonies of the Western honeybee or European honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) are hired out for pollination and are trucked from coast to coast (which may be a contributing factor in the spread of disabling viruses and mites). The price of hiring a bee colony for pollination has risen significantly over the past few years to the point where more money can be made renting pollinating colonies than by producing honey. Cheaper, imported honey from China and South America is driving down the price of locally produced honey and driving out local beekeepers.

Dr. Margriet Dogterom in the Fraser Valley is one of the world experts on bumble bee and mason bee pollination. Her commercial company, Beediverse Products (www.beediverse.com), works to bring the native North American mason bee (*Osmia lignaria*) and its pollinating effectiveness to home gardeners and commercial growers. She advises that we may need to turn to orchard mason bees for pollination.

"Mason bees are a great fit for home gardeners and owners of small orchards," said Dr. Dogterom. "You can start a mason bee colony in your garden by setting out nests and creating backyard habitats."

You can purchase mason bees and mason bee homes at local nurseries and stores such as Wild Birds Unlimited. Said John Morton, who owns the Oak Street location in Vancouver: "Native mason bees can help with pollination in the home garden, especially with raspberries, blueberries, and fruit trees. When I moved into my home in east Vancouver in 1987, a cherry tree in the front yard would literally hum with honeybees. Now I'm lucky if I see 10 honeybees pollinating at any one time."

Mason bees can improve pollination rates in the spring and throughout the summer. They may be an alternative to waning honeybee populations for home gardeners.

—Margaret Walwyn

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A Day in the Life of a Master Gardener

Well, the mad rush is over. The Master Clinic List has been mailed out to everyone and I have handed over responsibility to the Area Coordinators. Now I can relax and look forward to a lovely spring and summer of visiting nurseries, working in my garden, and enjoying the warm sunshine. But, oh, I just looked at my calendar and I have a clinic next weekend. I have to get organized well in advance so that I can catch those last few minutes of sleep in the morning before rushing off to the nursery.

What about the sign and a table display? Has the nursery been reminded that we are coming? Do they know how many of us to expect and will they have enough chairs? Do I have my books packed into my rolling case? Where are my Thermos and an extra sweater in case of cool weather? Will I need sunscreen; do I still have some? Do I have stuff in the fridge to make a lunch and where is my water bottle? Have I told the family that I won't be home all day?

The A to Z of clinic planning

What do I need to do? Have I contacted the other two volunteer Master Gardeners who will be doing the clinic with me? We need to talk about a lot of details. Have we decided who will bring the Royal Horticultural Society's *A to Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants*? It is such a heavy thing that there is no point in all of us bringing a copy, but somebody should bring one copy, if possible.

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At the clinic

Okay! I made it, I am here and the nursery has set us up in a nice area where we are clearly visible to customers and have enough space for all of our books and table displays. I am glad I brought my cushion for the chair; it is one of those ones with slats that are not terribly comfy to sit on for extended periods. The other volunteer MGs seem nice; I think it is going to be a good day. Among us we decide that everyone will write down their own questions and the student will write his answers as well. We take turns touring the nursery to familiarize ourselves with the nursery stock in preparation for questions about what is available. We set up our "Gardening

Questions" sign and put some pamphlets out on the table. I have a Pink Sheet prepared and ready for completion at the end of the day.

It's lunch time now and we have decided to just eat here at the table. We have been quite busy all morning; several gardeners have asked about what to plant in a particular spot and we have had a few questions that really required delving into our brains and searching our manuals. We had one man who wanted to get rid of the moss in his lawn. I think we convinced him that it would do no good to dump chemicals on it and he went away armed with information about lawn renovation and a little seed planted in his brain about the beauty of moss. People stop to look at our display of pamphlets and that gives us an opportunity to engage them in discussions about their gardening concerns.

The afternoon goes by quickly, lots of questions and chatting about gardening and the environment and some time spent discussing kids and grandkids. We spell each other off at roaming about assisting gardeners with their plant selections and questions.

Wow! It is already four o'clock; the day went by so fast. Before we pack up we complete the Pink Sheet and decide that I will take it in to VanDusen because I am going to be there tomorrow for a meeting. We answered 35 questions, the host was friendly and prepared for us and everything went well.

Wasn't that fun?

On the way home I think about the day and how glad I am that I decided in 1997 to become a Volunteer Master Gardener. It has become such a big important part of my life.

When I get home I make note of the date and hours spent at the clinic on my yellow Record of Volunteer Hours sheet that is stapled to the back page of my calendar. I know where it will be in October when I must submit it to Pat Taylor.

Now, what has my dear husband prepared for our dinner? Oh, no, that is the dream ending for the day. I will just heat up a casserole from the freezer and then put my feet up, tired, but happy.

—Diane Hartley, Overall Clinic Coordinator

Spring Inoculation

An Overview of this Year's Update

Cass Turnbull, one of the excellent speakers at this year's Master Gardener Update, has a theory that many gardeners were "inoculated" with the gardening gene as children; at some point in our lives it is bound to resurface. I lived with my grandmother as a child and can attest to the fact that my love of gardening began while I was digging in the soil beside her in the vegetable garden. Whatever it is that leads each of us to our passion for gardening, it is probably the same thing that draws us to membership in the Master Gardener Association and the need to share and learn with our fellow gardeners and the gardening public.

The Update provides an annual opportunity to meet with Master Gardeners from all over British Columbia. I moved from Vancouver to Vancouver Island last year and am now well aware that the volunteer work we do extends far beyond the Lower Mainland to include all parts of BC.

I had the opportunity to volunteer on the day of the event this year, instead of just attending as I had in previous years. The first thing that struck me was the overwhelming amount of time and energy that goes into preparing for the day. Plans began in May 2006 for this year's Update, with Barbara Bowers taking on the job of chair. She was instrumental in securing the engaging and informative speakers we enjoyed and also ensured that everything went smoothly from early in the morning until the last presenter left the stage.

Barbara had many wonderful people who helped to make the day memorable and whose spirit of commitment and volunteerism is to be commended: Susan Lazar coordinated the garden market vendors and ensured all the table setups for the venue were in place; Lynne Christmas emceed the event and provided education materials and printing; Kathy

Shynkaryk, Pat Taylor, and their group of volunteers swiftly moved everyone through registration; Janet Fraser was responsible for publicity, contacting wide and varied segments of the gardening community and preparing written thanks to the speakers; Lorraine Waring served as moderator for the panel discussion; Corinne Robinson and Jackie Morris assembled the impressive silent auction and were also responsible for the door prizes; Brian Campbell organized the compost sale and, with the help of Barry Roberts, sold 350 bags of Sea Soil between 7:45 and 8:15 am. An event of this size takes numerous people to make it successful and a big thank-you goes out to all of the other helpers and volunteers who supported this event.

The highly anticipated plant sale was organized and coordinated by Joan Bentley, with the knowledgeable help of Lindsay Macpherson. Months in advance, they sought choice items for the sale, with many of the donated plants coming from members' gardens, as well as from John Tuytel, a good friend and plant propagator who contributes each year. Colleen Martin and Shelley Deglan delivered the plants by 7:00 am, and Shirley Mulvenna, Joanne Tench, and Nigel Bunning (who was also responsible for the stage floral display) arrived early for set up and then helped with sales throughout the day.

I have yet to meet a gardener who is not always on the alert for a new plant to add to their collection. I was in the parking lot at around 8:30 am when my plant hunter instincts were aroused by a flat of plants being carried into the building by Doug Courtemanche. I spied about eight delicate and perfectly staked little plants that I was sure were about to find new homes before they even hit the plant tables inside.

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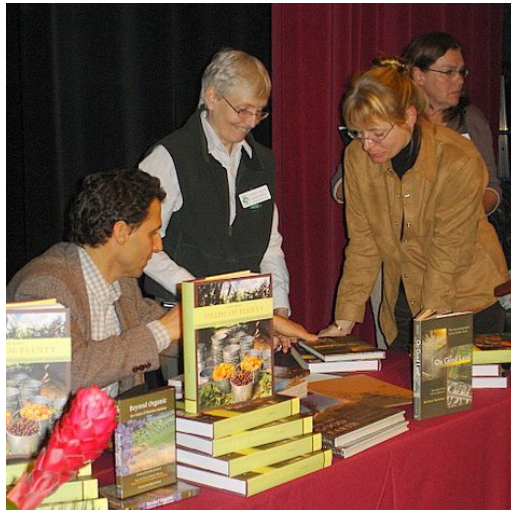
Photos: Donna Guilleman

Michael Ableman's Quiet Revolution

A Journey to the New Frontiers of Agriculture

Michael Ableman—organic farmer, author, photographer, and resident of Saltspring Island—spoke passionately about the “profound connection between human health and the health of the soil.” In response to his introduction by Derry Walsh, Michael reflected characteristic humour when he referred to the ages of his sons, five and twenty-five, as his own version of long-term crop rotation. Sensitive to his audience of Master Gardeners, Michael told us that the agrarian concepts he espouses for large farm plots are completely workable in smaller gardens.

The title of Ableman's latest book, *Fields of Plenty: A Farmer's Journey in Search of Real Food and the People Who Grow It*, reflects his philosophy of sustainable agriculture. Essentially, said Michael, we must find our way back to respecting the Earth and the people who farm it. After farming the same land for 25 years in Southern California, Ableman had to raise not only a million dollars but also community consciousness to preserve Fairview Gardens. He succeeded, but eventually the internal struggles of farming in a suburban environment became a burden. So the Ableman family moved to an historic 120-acre farm on Saltspring, with an original log house and outbuildings. Foxglove Farm sits in the heart of the



Michael Ableman signs books after his presentation

Island's watershed surrounded by pastures, creeks, and forest.

Ableman believes that a movement is afoot to redefine the food system, challenging the corporate control of the kitchen so that personal, social, and environmental health are no longer a casualty of eating. Collectively we need to ask many questions: How do we attract young people to farming? What will it mean to be a farmer in coming years? How do we begin to farm or garden within the ecological limitations of where we farm (water, climate change, fuel)? How do we survive and thrive financially while helping to assure that everyone has access to fresh food?

As an articulate advocate of a new agrarian movement, Ableman was inspired by the clarity of Goethe's famous quote, “Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.” Michael Ableman has

indeed dreamed boldly and powerfully, believing that “The ecology of the tiniest soil organism is inextricably tied to the whole field, to the farm as a whole, to the well being of the surrounding community and to the world.” His down-to-earth presentation resonated well with Master Gardeners attending this year's Update.

—Janet Fraser

Spring Inoculation—“A Booster Shot for the Upcoming Gardening Season”

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I resisted the urge to follow him in and, sure enough, a few minutes later a couple emerged, each holding one of the plants. I inquired as to what they were and they proudly told me they were tree lupins. As I admired them, the couple gave me a plaintive look and said they were pretty sure they were all gone. Plant addiction is a hard thing to explain to someone who doesn't suffer from it and to my knowledge there is no cure.

Over the course of the day, I witnessed numerous plants

head out the door to new homes; I saw old friends embrace and catch up on family and (of course) gardens; and we all heard exceptional speakers educate, inform, and humour us with their particular gardening expertise.

We may have all been inoculated into gardening in the past by whatever means, but we can credit the Update with giving us the yearly “booster shot” we need to go out and create another rewarding and memorable gardening season.

—Janet Sawatsky

Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott

Plants without Problems: A Good Place to Start

From the “hedge of death” through to “poodles and lollipops,” Linda Chalker-Scott took the Update audience through an interesting and practical explanation of how to select plants in an urban environment. Dr. Chalker-Scott is an extension horticulturist and faculty member at Washington State University, Puyallup, and has been involved with training Master Gardeners in Washington state for many years.

When selecting appropriate plants, Dr. Chalker-Scott considers native versus non-native plants, mature size of plant, and health of the plant on the nursery floor. Native plants aren't automatically the best choices for urban landscapes. With compacted soil, extremes of irrigation, and an abundance of artificial fertilizer, many urban settings are better suited for appropriate non-native species that can withstand these conditions. Gardeners can avoid many problems by choosing from the wide selection of plants that are non-invasive, provide habitat for wildlife, and add colour to the landscape.

Dr. Chalker-Scott stressed the importance of taking the mature size of a plant into account. She pointed out that in our coastal climate many trees and shrubs grow much larger than their tags would indicate.

Dr. Chalker-Scott explained the critical factors to look for when choosing plants in a retail setting, such as cleanliness and appearance of the nursery

itself. While we all look for healthy plants, she told us, if the stock is too perfect it could indicate an overuse of pesticides. The state of the roots, the trunk, and the branch structure, as well as the ratio of the size of the pot to the size of the plant, are all important factors in evaluating plants. Since mistakes in potting or pruning of nursery stock can never be corrected after the plants are set out in your garden, avoid buying “poodles and lollipops”—trees that naturally branch but have been trimmed up to a single stem with a mop of foliage at the top. Dr. Chalker-Scott has found that poor plant quality is the main reason for urban tree mortality.

When planting from container-grown plants, it is important to spread out roots that are girdled, circled, or kinked and to prune any that are damaged or dead. This will avoid the dreaded “hedge of death,” those sad lines of arborvitae that are brown and will never recover because of bad roots and planting.

By broadening your perspective in plant selection, choosing stock carefully, and anticipating how the plant will look in years, rather than months, you will be well on your way to a healthy urban landscape.

For further information, visit Dr. Chalker-Scott's website at www.puyallup.wsu.edu/~Linda%20Chalker-Scott/.

—Ron Clancy

Cass Turnbull's humour inspires serious gardening

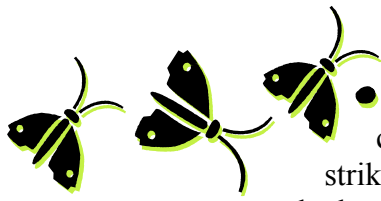
After hearing Cass Turnbull—crowned the queen of pruning—offer her three secrets for good pruning at the Spring Update I went home and butchered my forsythia. For a while it looked like I'd slaughtered the shrub that Cass called one the “short-sleeved girls of the garden,” but as she predicted it's beginning to come back.

Severe pruning is one of the saviours in the garden, Cass explained, and she recommended that we go about it in the following way:

- (1) Begin by taking out the deadwood.
- (2) Then remove some of the lowest limbs to create space between layers.
- (3) If the shrub still looks wrong, get rid of it; then be sure to plant the right shrub in its place by allowing for the shrub's mature size.

“The woody plants in your garden should look as good in the winter as we look in summer,” Cass said. “Work from the bottom up and the shrubs in your garden will soon be kicking like a French chorus line.”

—Ann-Marie Metten



Enjoy Moths in the Night Garden

Night-scented plants, architectural plants that create striking silhouettes in the dark, and plants with whites, silvers and purples which shine under the moonlight add interest to our night gardens. Moths, which are active at night, can also be enjoyed in the evening garden.

We often see moths frantically fluttering about near lit windows or porch lights. Some, such as the five inch (11 cm) Polyphemus Moth (*Antheraea polyphemus*) or California Silk Moth (*Hyalophora euryalus*) cause quite a lot of noise as they dive bomb a light. Some people believe that this flapping around light bulbs is causing some of the observed decline in moth numbers, since they appear to prefer this activity to mating and laying eggs.

The most natural way to observe moths in your garden is with a flashlight an hour or so after sunset. Check scented flowers first, including those listed in the accompanying sidebar.

You can attract moths by putting out rotting bananas or plums, or by “sugaring” tree trunks or fence posts—spraying them with a sweet, slightly alcoholic and highly aromatic mixture. (This may also attract slugs, beetles, millipedes and other creatures with a sweet tooth.) People have found success in boiling up mixtures of beer, molasses and sugar, or apple juice concentrate, sugar and wine. The effectiveness of sugaring depends largely on the weather, with hot, humid nights typically yielding the best results.

Some moth watchers like shining a light on a white sheet hung in their yard to view moths. It provides a nice background for observing those you attract.

In BC gardens, look for such large or colourful moths as *Hyles* sp. and *Eumorpha* sp. with pink and brown stripes; gold splotched *Anisota* sp.; tiger-striped Hera Buck Moths (*Hemileuca* sp.); striking eye-spotted *Paonias* sp., *Smerinthus* sp., and *Automeris* sp.; intricately veined *Hemaris* sp.; pink or yellow splotched *Deilephila* sp. and *Prosperinus* sp.; or boldly patterned purple, white and yellow winged *Dryocampa* sp. Moths with bright coloured wings flash them like a warning light when disturbed. The bodies of some moths also have interesting features;

for example, the body of the Hera Buck Moth (*Hemileuca hera*) has bright red and yellow hairs and the Sphinx Moth (*Sphinx chersis*) has a proboscis that is twice as long as its body.

Look for the Snowberry Clearwing Moth (*Hemaris diffinis*), which is commonly called the Hummingbird Moth because it hovers over a flower with rapid wing beats as it uncoils its long beak-like proboscis to feed. Observing this moth, which has see-through wings with gold edges, hover in front of a flower is a thrill for novice and seasoned moth watchers alike.

It is sometimes necessary to look closely to appreciate that you are observing a moth at all—*Sesia apiformis* looks virtually identical to a wasp, and is often mistaken for one. Its fuzzy, clubbed antennae—the feature that distinguishes moths from butterflies—and its slightly furry body are the clues that indicate that you are looking at a moth mimicking a wasp, not a wasp.

If you would like to identify moths that you see, the Government of Canada provides colour illustrations of moths found in Canada at http://www.cbif.gc.ca/spp_pages/misc_moths/phps/macroindex_e.php. Different moths will be present in your garden at different times of the year, so venture out throughout the warmer seasons.

—Jane Sherrot

Attract Moths with these Plants

Moth favourites include the following Great Plant Picks or Award of Garden Merit plants:

Buddleja davidii ‘White Profusion’
Caryopteris x *clandonensis* ‘First Choice’
Cynara cardunculus
Eryngium giganteum ‘Silver Ghost’
Hebe ‘Great Orme’
Jasminum officinale
Lonicera periclymenum ‘Graham Thomas’
Nepeta racemosa ‘Walker’s Low’
Nicotiana sylvestris
Oenothera fruticosa ‘Fyrverkeri’
Perovskia atriplicifolia
Syringa pubescens subsp. *patula* ‘Miss Kim’
Verbena bonariensis

Letter from the Chair

It was a good gardening day today, and as I was weeding, pruning, and raking, I spent some time thinking about this article. Wondering what you'd like to hear about, I looked back at earlier Letters from the Chair and noticed that the theme of change ran through most of them—change and growing.

It's all about change

“Change” means to “become or make something different” or “substitute or replace something.” But the definition I like best is “to pass from one state to another.” Isn't change what gardeners live for? To constantly replace one plant with another, to substitute one colour for another, to make the garden different? As gardeners we live with change every day, all year long. And as an organization of gardeners it follows that we are also an organization of change.

The Master Gardeners Association of BC is changing every year. The Council gets a few new members and the Basic Training Program adds 50 new members each year. New committees form to meet various needs: to take surveys for educational needs, to find out what our volunteers can do what, and to find out how we should count the volunteer hours that are so important to keeping the Association going. When these committees report, we listen to their recommendations. All the information gathered indicates that “passing from one state to another” is what we should be doing.

The goals that Council has set for the next couple of years complete some of the changes that were started in previous years: expanding the program to those in other parts of British Columbia who have asked for our help; continuing to improve communication among members; setting up a provincial council; and increasing public awareness of good gardening practices and our Association.

We're growing, too

“Growing” means “to make something,” “get bigger,” or “be able to develop naturally”—all definitions that pertain to our Association. And if you extend the analogy to gardening, you might say that we have cared for our Association as we care for our plants and gardens. When we plant seeds and watch them mature; we feed them with the proper nutrients for growth, we weed

around them to give them space to grow, and we pinch to help shape them, all in a protected spot. Then when they are ready we move them from the safe little pot out into the big world—our garden. There they are tended to with more nutrients, more weeding, and more pinching. If they don't do well in one spot we move them. We fiddle and tweak and putter in our gardens to make sure everything grows and nothing is ever left the same—it is always growing and changing.

Comparing that process to our Association, you will see that we are just at the stage for planting out into our garden. We have grown big enough that we don't have to stay in the protected spot any longer. But there are dangers in being put out into the garden—it might be too cold, too big, or too dark; but if we are watchful and take care, we can survive and grow.

How our members can help

The care we need comes from our membership. Everyone is needed, everyone can help, and no contribution is too small. The tiniest seed can grow into a lush, healthy tree, but it needs help—your help. I am asking everyone to get involved—to take care of our “garden” and to help make it grow. I look around and see lots of talent, energy, and hope. But I also see fear, though I am not sure what we are afraid of. Is it fear that the contribution might not be good enough? Fear that there is not enough space to grow? Or is it fear because it has not been done before?

You will be reading this letter just before summer, when lots needs to be done in your own garden. But may I ask you to take a few minutes to think about our Association and to see if you can find some time to help us out? You can help in lots of ways: writing articles for the newsletter and website, participating in MG clinics, joining committees both short and long term, volunteering as a council member, fundraising, helping at general meetings, or arranging events such as garden parties and tours. You could even help with the spring garden seminar, our annual Update. Just like your garden, the Association always offers something to do.

Enjoy your summer and your garden, but please also take some time to help our Association's “garden” grow and change.

—Lynne Christmas

Plans for the Future

Where are we going? Do we have any control? How much should we try to influence, guide, steer, or direct? These are questions that the Master Gardeners Association of BC Executive is asking as we envision the future of the Association. The following is excerpted from a planning document that appears in full in the 2007 annual report and on the Members' page of the website at www.bcmastergardens.ca.

The Master Gardeners Basic Training program was created in 1982 by professor of horticulture, Dr. Norma Senn. She ran the program in several locations around BC—in Vancouver, Nanaimo, Victoria, Penticton, and Kelowna—until 1984, when the government withdrew funding. The program started again in 1986 at VanDusen Botanical Garden, funded by a private donation. From a small group of graduates in the early 1980s, the number of Master Gardeners has grown to more than 500 and they are scattered widely throughout the province.

In addition to the Basic Training program at VanDusen Botanical Garden, Master Gardener training is offered in Victoria at the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific, in Duncan at Malaspina University College, in Summerland at Summerland Ornamental Gardens, and the latest began in Nanaimo in September 2004. With the exception of the Victoria program, the structure and content of these new programs is very similar to the one at VanDusen. As new programs have opened throughout the province, consultation, advice, and help from the original Basic Training course have been sought and given voluntarily. There will be an ongoing need for a central source to provide advice, guidance, and program review. This is essential if we are to maintain a degree of standardization that will result in high quality graduates.

An Island model

The Master Gardeners on Vancouver Island, who are quite widely separated geographically, organized the Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association in 2004. One of the motivating factors was the need to structure clinics and mentors for the graduates from Malaspina College. The members meet regularly for educational purposes to discuss items of mutual interests. They have a fee structure to support their administrative and meeting costs.

Of our more than 500 members, approximately 20 percent come to our monthly meetings. Perhaps this is just as well, since if more came we might be embarrassed because of inadequate seating. Many of our members in the

Lower Mainland live at a significant distance and are reluctant to make a 45 to 60 minute drive in inclement weather and congested traffic. It is interesting, however, to note how many come in large numbers to special events and to the Update.

There is a need for educational events to be organized closer to home. Who needs the long drive after a busy day? But who should be responsible? The Vancouver Island group has accepted the challenge by forming their own Association, which is affiliated with the MGABC. Other groups could do something similar, for example, in South Surrey, on the North Shore, or in Sechelt, and so on.

How do we put it together?

It has been suggested that the MGABC should be a central resource or umbrella organization. VIMGA, Summerland, VanDusen, South Surrey, the North Shore, and so on, would be affiliated chapters or societies, each with representatives on the MGABC Council. These representatives would be elected by the local chapters. The Executive of the Council could be elected by the general membership of all the chapters or could be elected by the Council from within its membership. The Council probably would only need to meet quarterly.

Local chapters

Each chapter would organize its own meetings, educational programs, community projects, workshops for members and the public, clinics, fundraising events, and so on.

Ideally each chapter would be affiliated with a local botanical garden.

How to make it happen

Individuals in the various communities must take the responsibility to organize the local membership. If the will to do this does not exist locally, then it will not happen.

—Jack Grant and Doug Courtemanche

A Master Gardener Writes from Creston

One of the challenges of maintaining Master Gardener volunteer hours after moving to a small, rural community in the East Kootenays came in finding a way to make myself useful in a region that had never even heard of a Master Gardener. This meant volunteering for any opportunity or event that seemed like it could help me to put my training to use.

As a result, I've started to write a Q&A-style column for the local newspaper. Local gardeners send me their questions and I answer them once a week for the duration of the growing season. The first column was published May 3 and the good news is that all the picky decisions that go into publishing a column for the first time have been made. The bad news is they insisted on taking my picture to run alongside the column. (I begged, but they took it anyway and I spare you the pain of running it in the MGABC newsletter.)

The annual Creston Valley Garden Festival will be held on July 14 and 15 and features, among other things, a day of self-guided tours of eight local gardens. I signed on to help with these tours, so they'll be a little less "self-guided" this year. It also looks like I'll be doing the guiding by the bus load (literally). That should be interesting.

As a result of being added to the Garden Festival's "board"—I'm afraid to ask what that means (they are very good at volunteering people for things around here!)—I've picked up a pen pal who is extremely interested in the MG program and evidently has the ability to relocate to the Coast to take Basic Training next spring. Feeling rather isolated out here, I've been feeding her all the info I can to lure her into the program. If that happens, there will be two of us out here and I'm beginning to think doubling the number of MGs in the East Kootenays may not be a bad idea.

I've also been invited to the next garden club meeting being held at the end of May. I'll be able to introduce myself and see what, if anything, I can do for them. What intrigues me about this garden club is that there are just over 5,000 people living in Creston and, from what I understand, the club has 50 to 60 members attending meetings on a regular basis; that's a pretty high percentage.

I think I may have volunteered for more things than I've told you about, but I'm laying low right now in an attempt to not stretch myself too thin. (Well, as low as one can lay when their picture is in the paper every week, that is.)

I have a feeling that as the columns start running, people will come looking for me instead of me looking for them. Things ought to get interesting then.

—Vanessa Farnsworth

Call for Nominations

At the 2007 November Annual General Meeting of our Association, we must elect or acclaim six members in the following key positions:

1. Chair Elect
2. First Vice Chair
3. Second Vice Chair
4. Treasurer
5. Member at Large
6. Member at Large

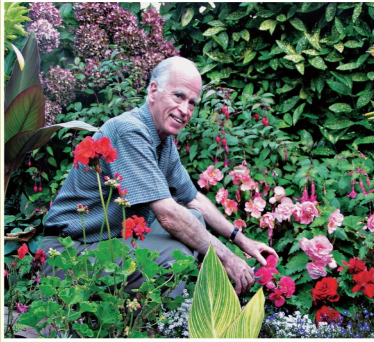
Please consider taking part in this important task for our Association. If you are interested in serving on Council, please feel free to contact me by telephone or by email at RonFawcett@VFEmail.net.

Should you wish to nominate a member, simply print the nomination form that accompanies this newsletter, download a copy of the nomination form from the Members' page of our website at www.bcmastergardeners.ca, or pick up a copy of the form in our mailbox at VanDusen. You are also welcome to contact any member of the Nominations Committee: Lorri Espetheth, Sally Maclachlan, Helen Brown, Bob Meighen, and myself.

Not to put too fine a point on this, but nominations either come from the membership or from the Nominations Committee. In order for your Council to remain effective in running our Association, it is important that you give this consideration.

—Ron Fawcett, Nominations Chair

GARDEN SENSE



Secrets of an
Experienced Gardener

ROY JONSSON

Roy Jonsson on Gardening

After teaching landscaping and gardening for more than 25 years, including instructing at MGABC's Basic Training course, Roy Jonsson found that few books covered the subject of horticulture in a straightforward and comprehensive way.

His new book, *Garden Sense*, will appeal to both beginner and experienced gardeners by helping them more fully understand the wonderful world of horticulture. The book deals with a wide variety of topics, including garden practices, planting procedures, and growth patterns that most garden books.

If you have ever wondered about the nitrogen-potassium-phosphorus

(N-P-K) values of fertilizer, why leaves turn red in the fall, the secrets of good composting, why plants grow up and roots grow down, or how to prune shrubs for better flower production, then this is a book you will come to value.

This book should provide the answers and explanations to the questions that most inquisitive gardeners are asking.

Roy has turned his lifetime of gardening experience into what has been described as an "invaluable gardening companion." To order *Garden Sense*, contact the author at roy_jonsson@telus.net.



Council Clips

Inspiring Junior Master Gardeners

Did you know that the MGABC has a complete set (six books) of the Junior Master Gardener program developed in Texas? Council decided to give it to the VanDusen Library to be available as reference material to anyone interested in developing programs for young people.

Also, in response to the common message of all the recent Update speakers to assist young people to get involved in the art of growing plants, an invitation has been extended to anyone (especially educators) to form a committee to develop a viable Junior Master Gardener Program under the auspices of the MGABC. Interested? Contact Lynne Christmas or any Council member.

An Updated Name

Council decided a name change is in order to more accurately reflect the day's activity. The Update should now be referred to as the **Spring Garden**

Seminar. Two positions are now open and must be filled immediately if the event is to be held next year:

- **Speaker Coordinator**
- **Event Coordinator**

Lots of support and assistance from former Update folk is available, so step right up and contact any Council member today!

Community Coordinator Needed

The **Community Coordinator** Position is open and ready to go for the fall of this year. Andrea Lebowitz and Alice Kilian, the current community coordinators, will be on hand to assist. Please call them or any Council member if you would like to get involved in this fascinating volunteer position, which combines the best of Master Gardening: community service and education.

—Susan Lazar

Book Review: *Container Gardening for Canada*

by Laura Peters, Alison Beck, and Don Williamson (Lone Pine Publishing, 2007), 224 pages

With many people downsizing and living in condominiums, apartments, or townhouses with patios and a smaller garden, containers are a wonderful way to create a miniature landscape that will bring pleasure throughout the growing season. However, where to begin?

Container Gardening for Canada is a compact, soft-cover book that is sure to help. Published just in time to inspire your early summer container planting, this book provides planting tips; preferred growing conditions; rules and principles of container gardening; colour, flowering time, height, spread, and hardiness for each recommended plant; and photographs, showing each plant in a container setting. The book is small enough to tuck into a bag on a visit to your favourite garden store or nursery.

Once plants arrive home, the book offers instructions on how to prepare containers for planting, how to plant containers, and how to maintain your container garden. In addition, it suggests more than 100 plants that are suitable for container gardening. Some plants such as *Hebe*, which are tender in most Canadian zones, must be overwintered indoors, but



the authors offer helpful suggestions about how to protect and insulate containers during the winter months.

I enjoyed this book but am hoping that a follow-up publication will offer more ideas about container design and ways to put containers together. I would also have liked more ideas for containers that tackle tough demands; for example, shade container planting, deer-resistant arrangements, and drought-tolerant planting. Complete plant lists for each of these arrangements would be helpful. Many experienced gardeners enjoy the creativity of designing with plants, yet, well-designed container plantings with plants lists can give inspiration to both novice and experienced gardeners alike.

Container Gardening for Canada, with its many colour photographs, has lots of information for the container gardener. Whether you garden on a window ledge or balcony, roof garden or patio, this reference book will inspire you to transform your space with colourful plants in pots.

—Ethelyn McInnes-Rankin

Master Gardeners,
their families, and friends
are invited to a
**Summer
Garden Party**

1 to 4 p.m.
Saturday, June 23

in the garden of Shirley McGrew
At 590 Kamloops Street, Vancouver

➤ RSVP roberts_bn@yahoo.ca by June 12



Newsletter

of the
**Master Gardeners' Association of
British Columbia**
Affiliated 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.

Newsletter layout by Wendy Jones Carere.

The MG Newsletter is published in March, June, September, and December. **Deadline for submissions** to the September newsletter is July 15, 2007.

www.bcmastergardeners.org
gardener@bcmastergardeners.org



MG Calendar

Tuesday, June 12, 7:30 p.m.

General meeting

Jessica Dawe

Bugs Build Better Gardens

Bring bugs for identification.

Saturday, June 23, 1 to 4 p.m.

2007 MG Summer Garden Party

In the garden of Shirley McGrew

590 Kamloops Street, Vancouver

Strawberry shortcake will be served

RSVP roberts_bn@yahoo.ca

by June 12

Tuesday, September 11, 9:30 a.m.

General meeting

Patrick Mooney

*Biophilia, Biodiversity, and Birds in
Your Garden*

Joint meeting with the VanDusen
Guides.

“Biophilia” is the word Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson coined to describe the connections that human beings subconsciously seek with the rest of life. Patrick Mooney teaches sustainable landscape planning and management, ecological restoration, design studio, and planting design at UBC.

Tuesday, October 9, 7:30 p.m.

General meeting

John Schroeder, founder and owner of Valley Brook Nurseries.

New Plants

Tuesday, November 13, 9:30 a.m.

Annual general meeting



Master Gardeners' Association of British Columbia Contact List 2007

Chair Lynne Christmas	Advanced Training June Pierson	Finance Karen Shuster	Plant Sale Coordinators Joan Bentley Loretta Barr	Web Masters Deb Dorey David Watkins
Past Chair Jack Grant	Basic Training (BT) Doreen Godwin	Fundraising/ Special Events Barry Roberts	Publicity —available—	Welcome Table Shirley Mason
1st Vice Chair Barbara Bowers	Bylaws Doug Courtemanche	Membership Pat Taylor	Selection (BT) Doreen Godwin	Writers Group Barry Roberts
2nd Vice Chair Jenny Newman	Clinic Coordinator Diane Hartley	Newsletter Editor Ann-Marie Metten	Speakers Group Linda Shulman	VIMGA (Vancouver Island)
Secretary Diane Hartley	Coffee Convenor Judy Zipursky	Nominations Ron Fawcett	Telephone/Email Colleen Martin Linda Wright	Chair Bob McTaggart
Treasurer Karen Shuster	Community Projects Alice Kilian Andrea Lebowitz	Picture Library Barry Roberts	Update Seminar —available—	Secretary Linda Rehlinger
Members-at- Large Susan Lazar Barry Roberts Janet Sawatsky Linda Sears	Database Manager Pat Taylor	Plant Information Line Sheila Watkins	Website Committee Karen Shuster	SMGA (Summerland) Program Coordinator Linda Sears
	Education Committee Jack Grant			