



## Creating a Low-Allergen Garden

So you're a gardener and you're in a dilemma because you're married to a hay-fever sufferer. Have you ever wondered how you can have a garden that everyone will enjoy?

Having recently moved house I decided to research a low-allergen garden to enable my dearly beloved to sit outside on our new deck this summer, sneeze free!



My research into low-allergen gardens has been a bit of an eye-opener to me as a gardener. I'd already said goodbye to having fragrant cut lilies inside the house, and I was beginning to feel like some malevolent gardener planting beautifully scented formations only to see my husband politely nodding his appreciation while red eyed and sneezing.

Browsing the allergen websites I realized to my horror that, in an effort to reduce climate change by hanging out my washing every summer, I was actually exacerbating my husband's allergies when I brought the washing back inside covered in pollen. My heart sank. Why hadn't I thought of this?

It was at this point I found exactly the book I needed: *Creating a Low-Allergen Garden* (Mitchell Beazley, 1998) by Lucy Huntington. The author designed the first low-allergen garden in 1993 for the National Asthma Campaign and built it for the Chelsea Flower Show in England. Since then, several more low-allergen gardens have been displayed at Chelsea.

Here are some suggestions from Lucy Huntington.

**Plants to use** (pollinated by beneficial insects and birds)  
**Herbaceous perennials:** Hostas, sedges (instead of ornamental grasses), *Iris sibirica* (Siberian iris), *Astilbe x arendsii* (astilbe), *Anemone x hybrid* (Japanese anemone), and many herbs (not lavender)

**Shrubs:** *Perovskia atriplicifolia* (Russian sage), *Paeonia delavayi* (peony), *Rubus* 'Benenden' (flowering bramble), *Genista lydia* (broom), *Cornus alba* (dogwood), *Cotinus goggygia* (smoke bush)

**Hedging:** *Alchemilla mollis* instead of box or lavender, *Cotoneaster simonsii*, *Thymus vulgaris*, rhododendrons

**Trees:** Buckeye, horse chestnut, cherry, kowhai, *Stewartia pseudocamellia*

### Plants to avoid (wind-pollinated plants)

Wind-pollinating trees and shrubs such as hazel, red alder, poplar, sycamore, ash, and plane; birch and oak; wisteria; lupins; box; lavender; grasses; laburnums; Asteraceae (asters and daisies); goldenrod; and lilies

Ragweed and many weeds such as plantain and stinging nettles are wind-pollinated, so their removal will help.

When toiling with your vegetables, also consider the pollen they produce. Spinach, sea kale, and beetroot are members of the Chenopodiaceae family; lettuce, chicory, and endive, members of the Asteraceae family. Both family members produce allergenic pollen. Also avoid celery, tomatoes, sweet corn, and asparagus.

Myself, I've opted for a flower garden at the front of the house (albeit guiltily mulling over pollination) and a low-allergen garden at the back where the deck is situated. Well, marriage is a compromise isn't it?

—Natasha Etherington

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It can be quite challenging (and quite frustrating) to garden with deer in your neighbourhood. But careful plant selection can lead to a happy co-existence between deer and gardener.

Deer tend to avoid plants that have strong scents, bitter tastes, coarse, hairy, or prickly leaves, or caustic, milky sap. Sadly, this general rule can be of little help in the spring—as experienced gardeners have found to their chagrin—deer eat almost anything as they try to regain weight lost over the winter. Deer particularly favour plants with tender, new growth, so one option is to spray plants with a deer repellent that contains essential oils like clove, eucalyptus, or oregano, until new growth hardens up.

Deer's preferences change from season to season, and even from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, making it difficult to come up with a definitive list of deer-proof plants for a specific location. Both *The Twelve-Month Gardener* (Whitecap Books) and *Gardens West* magazine online have helpful lists of nursery varieties for B.C. gardeners.

Here's a list of B.C. native species that deer have been found to avoid. Many thanks to Lee Larking of B.C.'s Wild Heritage Plants, Paulus Vrijmoed of Linnaea Nurseries, Andrea Martinello of NATS Nursery, and members of Native Plant Society of B.C. who sent lists of native plants they have found deer avoid.

I apologize for the missing zone information for a number of plants. While comprehensive information is available on native plants, it describes specific growing conditions, but not specific zone information.

Quotes in the following descriptions are from *Wild Flowers of the Pacific Northwest* (Harbour Publishing) by Lewis J. Clark, a wonderful book on native plants from Alaska to Oregon.

This extensive list shows that a lovely, deer-proof garden can be grown with interest and delights throughout the four seasons.

—Jane Sherrott



## Co-existing with Deer

### Spring to Early Summer Flowers

*Abronia* spp. – native verbenas with yellow, pink, or white flowers (Zone 8)

*Allium cernuum* – nodding pink or white flowers (Zone 3)

*Amelanchier alnifolia* – white flowering shrub with edible Saskatoon berries (Zone 2)

*Aquilegia* spp. (Zones 3–6)

*Campanula rotundifolia* – cup-shaped blue flowers on delicate-looking, but tough plant (Zone 3)

*Chimaphila umbellata* – “arresting leaves immediately catch the eye,” pink nodding flowers in July (Zone 4); *C. menziesii*

*Cornus* spp.; *C. canadensis* – Creeping bunchberry (Zone 3)

*Crataegus douglasii* – small tree with white flowers, black fruit that stays on through winter as an important food source for birds (Zone 5);

*C. columbiana* – red fruit

*Delphinium* spp. – 18 B.C. species (some poisonous) (Zone 7)

*Dicentra* spp. – Bleeding Heart (Zone 7)

*Geranium erianthum* (Zone 3); *G. molle* (Zone 6); *G. pusillum* (Zone 5); *G. maculatum* (Zone 4); *G. robertianum* (Zone 6); *G. viscosissimum* (Zone 3) – indispensable B.C. natives

*Hypericum anagalloides* – dwarf St. John's Wort, flowers May until August, “Pleasing little plant ... cheerful groundcover in garden”

*Iris missouriensis* (Zone 8); *I. pseudacorus*, *I. setosa*, *I. tenax* (all Zone 6)

*Kalmia polifolia* – pink flowers (Zone 5)

*Lupinus arboreus* – Tree Lupine, handsome shrub (Zone 8); *L. bicolor*, *L. densiflorus*, *L. polyphyllus* (all Zone 4); *L. sericeus*, *L. latifolia* (both Zone 3) – range of flower colours

*Maianthemum* spp. – Wild Lily-of-the-Valley (Zone 5)

*Mimulus guttatus* – beautiful “Monkey Flower,” “spectacular native,” “showy flowers” (Zone 6)

*Paeoni brownii* – dark-red flowers (Zone 6)

*Philadelphus coronarius* – handsome shrub with perfumed white flowers (Zone 5)

*Potentilla* spp. – striking gold flowers (Zones 2–8);

*P. villosa* – “What a beauty” – sharply toothed leaves with silver edging, gold flowers with spot of orange at base

*Ribes* spp. (100+ species) – the “very fine” *R. sanguineum* draws migrating hummingbirds (Zone 5); *R. oxycanthoides* has striking, shiny black berries (Zone 2)

*Rhododendron lapponicum* – purple flowers on small plant (Zone 2)

*Scabiosa arvensis* – butterflies love the lilac-purple, flattened 45 cm flower heads (Zone 5)

*Sisyrinchium angustifolium* and *S. douglasii* – narrow leaved grass with interesting blue or deep purple flowers (both Zone 7)

*Trillium* spp. – “enchanting” (Zone 6)

## Fall Berries or Interesting Foliage

*Actea rubra* – handsome foliage, tiny, scented white flowers and “startling” bright scarlet or gleaming white waxy but poisonous berries set in clusters from July on (Zone 3)

*Arctostaphylos* spp. – ornamental evergreen shrub with attractive leathery leaves, pink flowers, red to black berries; *A. alpine* – shredded, papery, red bark (Zones 2–4)

*Arum* spp. – interesting flower, leaves, and berries (Zones 5–8)

*Aster* spp. – gold flowers in late summer and fall (Zones 2–5)

*Corylus cornuta* var. *californica* – Hazelnut (Zone 7)

*Helenium autumnale* – gold flowers in fall, “Sneeze-weed” since used as ancient snuff (Zone 8)

*Helianthus annuus* – common sunflower (seed from wild forms native to B.C. interior available)

*Liatris punctata* – Native Blazing Star (Zone 3)

*Prunus emarginata* – “Bitter Cherry” – papery bark, bright-red to deep-purplish fruit for birds, heavily scented (Zone 5); *P. virginiana* – “Choke Cherry” – long racemes of flowers, bluish-purple fruit (Zone 2)

*Rhododendron albiflorum* – bronze and crimson leaves in fall, red hairs on stems, white flowers (Zone 7)

*Rhus glabra* – large, tightly packed, deep-purple cones of flower buds, “burning” fall foliage (Zone 2)

## Other Interest

*Acer* spp.

*Angelica* spp. – large, handsome leaves (Zones 6–8)

*Aquilegia* spp. – a hummingbird favourite (Zone 2)

*Artemisia* spp.

*Aruncus sylvestris* – imposing feature plant (Zone 7)

*Asarum* spp. – attractive leaves, interesting calyx “flowers” (Zones 2–7)

*Berberis* spp. (Zones 5–7)

*Ceanothus* spp. – attractive, summer-flowering shrubs with blue or white flowers; *C. sanguineus* (Zone 3); *C. velutius* – heavily scented, evergreen (Zone 6)

*Cimicifuga elata* – “large, clusters of maple-like leaves immediately attract attention,” white flowers

*Clematis columbiana* – delicate vine with blue flowers (Zone 3); *C. ligusticifolia* – rampant (but not invasive), white flowers (Zone 5)

*Corylus cornuta* var. *californica* – long catkins (Zone 7)

*Elaeagnus commutate* – handsome, silver-leafed shrub, perfumed flowers in June, July (silver outside, yellow inside) (Zone 2)

*Erigeron* spp. (Zones 1–9)

Ferns (but not *Pellaea*)

*Gallium* spp. – common name “Bedstraw” refers to use as cinnamon-scented filling in mattresses (Zones 3–8)

*Gaultheria shallon* – Salal (Zone 5); *G. ovatifolium* – glossy, firm-textured leaves, paler beneath, saw-toothed margins

*Jeffersonia diphylla* – attractive lobed leaves, vanilla-scented seed pods (Zone 5)

*Mahonia aquifolium* (Zone 5); *M. nervosa* (Zone 7)

*Mentha canadensis* – native mint for tea (Zone 3)

*Monarda fistulosa* – Wild Bergamont, bright rose to purple flowers in July (Zone 3)

*Myosotis laxa*, *M. alpestris* – Forget-Me-Not

*Myrica californica* – evergreen, aromatic leaves with rusty pubescence (Zone 7); *M. gale* (Zone 3) – evergreen shrub with fabulous catkins

*Tolmiea menziesii* – unique “Pig-a-Back” plant with leaves in tiers on stems (Zone 7)

*Vaccinium ovalifolium* – evergreen huckleberry – “very fine shrub in all four seasons,” abundant pink flowers, deep-blue berries (Zone 4)

# Rhodo Primer

## Report from the Ultimate Rhododendron Conference



Photo: Vic Bentley

*Rhododendron* 'President Roosevelt'

I was fortunate enough to attend the Ultimate Rhododendron conference, held at UBC Botanical Garden, April 9–11, 2010. It was a teaching conference and an excellent opportunity to learn more about rhododendrons and azaleas.

The conference was led at different times by Douglas Justice (associate director, curator of collections, and research scientist at UBC Botanical Garden); Todd Major (a journeyman horticulturist, garden designer, writer, lecturer, and horticulture teacher); Roy Forster (curator of VanDusen Botanical Garden from its beginning in 1974 until his retirement in 1996); Gerry Gibbens (gardener of VanDusen Botanical Garden's Sino-Himalayan Garden since 1980 and recognized rhododendron expert, speaker, and educator); and Ron Knight (an award-winning retired biology teacher and past president of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society).

Here are the basics from the conference on general rhododendron requirements. Rhododendrons require the following to thrive:

- **Light conditions:** Rhododendrons can take both sun and shade, depending on the plant. The smaller the leaves, the more sun it can take; the larger the leaves, the more shade it can tolerate. Smaller-leaf rhododendrons,

such as dwarf rhododendrons, are best suited for home gardens, so consider this when placing a rhododendron in your garden. They will need more sun than you may think.

- **Wind exposure:** Rhododendrons are variably wind tolerant, depending on the plant. Small-leaf alpine rhododendrons, such as dwarf rhododendrons, thrive in unprotected areas. Big-leaf rhododendrons will need protection to prevent the wind from ripping apart their leaves.

- **Humidity:** Rhododendrons require humidity, especially the big-leaf varieties.

- **Soil pH:** Rhododendrons need acidic soil, ideally with a pH of 5 to 6.

- **Soil drainage:** Rhododendron roots do not like wet boggy soil, but prefer porous, well-drained soil.

- **Temperature:** Rhododendrons thrive in temperate climates such as ours.

- **Soil depth:** Rhododendrons have shallow roots.

- **Water:** Shallow-rooted rhododendrons need to be kept watered over a droughty summer. Drip irrigation works well since it puts water right at the roots, loses little to evaporation, saves time, can apply different water volumes to different areas, can adapt to any shaped planting area, and can be controlled on a timer. However, drip irrigation hoses are more expensive than regular hoses, they must be drained in the winter, and they are visible unless you cover them with mulch.

- **Mulch:** Shallow-rooted rhododendrons thrive when mulched, and the mulch allows birds to eat the vine weevils that can plague the shrub. If using wood chips as mulch, make sure you add a supply of nitrogen as well, since the wood chips require nitrogen to break down. If you don't add any nitrogen, the wood chips will use up what is in the soil, leaving the rhododendron deficient.

- **Ground cover:** Big-leaf rhododendrons thrive with all sorts of ground cover, but dwarf rhododendrons only like moss.

The Ultimate Rhododendron Conference was a wonderful learning experience and, if it is run again, I strongly encourage you to go. More information from the conference, this time on propagating rhododendrons, will appear in the September issue.

—Veronica Lanz

# Tributes to Two Special Master Gardeners

## **MG Bob Fitzpatrick— wore many hats**

Bob Fitzpatrick quietly passed away on the eve of Easter Sunday, April 4, 2010. Bob had been a Master Gardener since 1986, and graduated in our first class sponsored by VanDusen Botanical Garden. Over all these years, he has quietly, knowledgeably, and competently attended all his clinics, Spring Seminars, and Master Gardener meetings and special events. He couldn't attend our latest Spring Seminar as he was on oxygen; otherwise, he would have been there. Bob was an active member right up to the end.



During his lifetime Bob was a teacher, principal, lay preacher, village counsellor, and friend to all. He sang in many church choirs, played piano, and took violin lessons. He was a cancer driver and dispatcher with the Canadian Cancer Organization and he was recognized by the Canadian Red Cross for outstanding donations. He volunteered for many community events in Delta. He loved his garden and greenhouse and spent long and happy hours growing flowers and vegetables. Bob greatly appreciated the Life Membership that he received recently from the Master Gardeners Association of B.C.

Bob was 85 years old when he died, and he and his wife Jean had been married for 57 years. They have three children and four grandchildren.

Bob quietly touched all the people he knew in his lifetime. He left a legacy that showed us that here was a man who quietly lived his life with values of honesty, trust and, hardworking ethics, and with quiet, caring compassion for all who knew him.

**—Joyce McQuarrie**

## **Rita Lehmann— knowledgeable communicator**

I first met Rita in the spring of 1984 when we both took the Master Gardener Basic Training program, at that time offered by the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food. I quickly learned that Rita had a terrific knowledge of home gardening and found, while doing MG clinics with her, that she always had the answer at her fingertips. Rita was instrumental in getting the initial donation to start the Master Gardener program at VanDusen Botanical Garden.



Rita offered the program her vast gardening knowledge and her excellent ability to communicate. She spent many hundreds of hours marking the questions and answers handed in by five years' worth of Basic Training students; lecturing on winter vegetables; answering questions from students in the Floral Hall and on the phone; writing the section on indoor gardening for the VanDusen Master Gardener manual; advising when we ran into problems coordinating the Plant Information Line; coordinating Home Garden Consultations to raise money for the MG program; raising more money for the program by selling plants from her garden; growing unusual plants from seeds or cuttings and selling them; donating any honoraria she earned by speaking to garden clubs; preparing the poster for our first and only entry into the Variety Club auction; coordinating the start of the then Certified Master Gardeners Association; finding officers for the association for the first five years; serving as vice-chair of the association to keep it on track; acting as the Master Gardener contact for the VanDusen Botanical Garden volunteer committee, and the education committee; representing VanDusen Master Gardeners at the Oregon Master Gardener Conference in 1989. In recognition of her numerous, important contributions, Rita was the 1993 VanDusen Volunteer of the Year.

Rita set a high bar for volunteerism in the association and she will be sincerely missed. **—Derry Walsh**

# Books Highlighting New Plants for Canada

## **New Annuals for Canada**

by Rob Sproule

Softcover, 224 pages,

8.5-inches by 5.5-inches, \$21.95

ISBN 978-1-55105-841-2

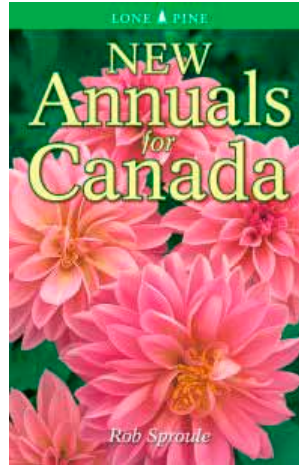
Lone Pine Publishing

This beautifully illustrated handbook features some of the many new varieties of annuals available today. These new varieties provide more vigorous growth earlier in the season than older varieties. Gone is the long wait between planting on the May long weekend and early July when the plants were large enough to bloom. Now with annuals sold at more advanced stages of growth and in larger pots, June gardens are filled with annuals in bounteous bloom.

The change in varieties and the manner in which they are sold has led to a sea change in the way annuals are used in the summer garden, suggests author Rob Sproule in *New Annuals for Canada*. High-performance annuals such as bacopa, introduced by Proven Winners in the early 1990s, and the Wave petunia, introduced by Ball not long after, led to a surge of container gardening.

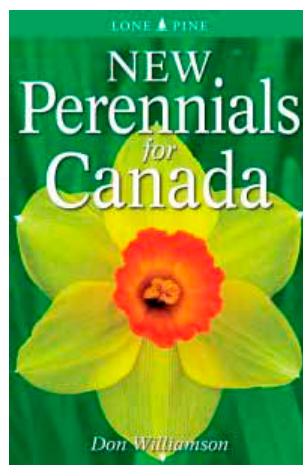
“Waves were even faster growing than bacopa, trailing 90 cm in a single season (even a prairie season),” writes Sproule. “Whiskey barrels, clay pots, window boxes and even wheelbarrows overflowing with Waves quickly became as common a sight as pots full of geraniums.”

Sproule guides gardeners through more than 450 new and popular varieties of annuals that are organized into three sections for easy container building: “thrillers,



fillers and spillers.” “Thrillers” are organized into Centrepieces and Grasses sections related to their position at the centre or back of the container. “Fillers” are set out as Upright Colour and Foliage sections, allowing the gardener to add a contrasting splash of leaves and texture to the container combination. “Spillers” are organized into Trailing Colour and Vines sections, to help the gardener put together a container that really catches the eye on the patio or balcony.

*New Annuals for Canada* is the perfect handbook to keep in your shopping bag when visiting garden nurseries this spring. Full-colour close-ups of the annual, as well as icons at each listing, tell the reader at a glance how much sun and water the plant needs, how much fertilizer to feed it and how aggressively the plant is expected to grow. This Canadian-produced book is well worth a look.



## **New Perennials for Canada**

by Don Williamson

Softcover, 288 pages,

8.5-inches by 5.5-inches, \$21.95

ISBN 978-1-55105-842-9

Lone Pine Publishing

In this full-colour and highly illustrated book, author Don Williamson encourages readers to push the limits of the hardiness zones in their area, exploring microclimates in their own yards, to introduce the many new varieties and cultivars that have changed the landscape of perennial gardening in Canada over the past two decades.

—Ann-Marie Metten

# MGABC President's Report

I have received considerable feedback on the Spring Seminar held March 7. This event has been, and will continue to be, discussed at Council level.

Lynne Christmas has done a remarkable job as event organizer for the past three years. To commission the speakers, brief them, evaluate the presentations before the event, to be overall event organizer at the same time, and to orchestrate all the other activities that are going on, such as the plant sale, vendors, refreshments, silent auction, registration, and so on, is a daunting task for anyone. So a big show of appreciation for Lynne's efforts is long overdue.

But ... it is apparent that we need to refocus on the original concept of an "update" for Master Gardeners, so that we can confidently continue with clinics well armed with the latest information on gardening hot topics and developments in horticulture.

There is an anomaly here. We have made the subject matter more general—dumbing down is a valid description—so that we can make the event more appropriate for the general public. Unfortunately, we failed to attract the general public this year, mainly due to our lack of publicity and marketing expertise (no-one volunteered to head up the publicity effort). So, I would agree that we have fallen between two stools. And, in making the event more general, we have made it less appropriate for Master Gardeners.

You may have noticed that many Master Gardeners volunteered on March 7: staffing the registration tables, running the raffles, attending to the plant sale, and so on. Getting volunteers on the day is not the problem; after all, we are a volunteering organization.

The problem is in the planning. Fortunately, responsibility for next year's event has been grasped by Susan Lazar (MGABC VP Special Events) and Susan is already busy putting together a committee that will review the successes and weaknesses of recent years. Very careful consideration will be given to the future selection of speakers and the content of their presentations. I am confident that Susan and her Special Events team will make next year's event very successful and of interest to all members throughout the province.

We need to get back to an event that is truly educational for our members and that prepares us for our community

outreach activities. Most importantly, after sitting for several hours trying to absorb a mountain of information, we must give our members something tangible to take away—specifically, **we must provide handouts that will enable our members to remember the majority of the content of the presentations.** The handouts should be designed to be of maximum use at clinics and community projects.

Of course, everything we do, we should do to the highest possible standard. But the Spring Seminar is also our great fundraising event and it gives the public an insight into our activities; therefore, we must maintain our highest standards.



In other news I am pleased to announce that we have been successful in registering our dogwood logo as a trademark. Although "Master Gardener" is an unprotectable term, our registered trademark may now help us to differentiate ourselves from other organizations. Where the dogwood logo is too large to be reproduced clearly, we can use MGABC® as a registered trademark. Thanks to Leslie Ann Ingram and Linda Sears for seeing this project through the nightmare labyrinths of the Canadian Intellectual Property Office. Linda will shortly be issuing a stylesheet for the correct use of these two trademarks.

—Barry Roberts  
MGABC President

Copies of  
**A History of the MGABC and Its Chapters  
1982–2010**

are available by post.

Please send a \$10 cheque to Barry Roberts  
13970 – 34th Avenue, Surrey, BC V4P 2A9  
A copy will be posted to you without delay.

# It's the Best-Kept Secret Garden in Brentwood

It is a misty Saturday morning in Central Saanich, in a quiet neighbourhood behind Butchart Gardens, and 12 Victoria Master Gardeners are discovering a local secret.

Master Gardener Donna Cottell, a founding member and ten-year veteran of the Victoria Chapter, has opened up her garden for an unusual learning experience: the design and planting of a green roof.

Cottell truly believes in sustainability and recycling. She also believes that anything is possible. When she embarked on managing the renovation of the house, she also saw an opportunity to create a roof garden on her carport.

Cottell's garden is an example of an extensive-type green roof. An extensive green roof features a thin growing medium, little or no irrigation, and little plant diversity. The growing medium is 40% black pumice, 40% sharp sand, and 20% special compost. To add visual interest to the garden, viewable from the house, she incorporated a berm for some elevation and placement of plants to create a tapestry of colour and texture.

There were many challenges for this project. Structural rebuilding of the carport was necessary and it had to be strengthened to pass engineering requirements. She

worked with a company that had leftover medium from another green project and was able to engage the right equipment (a slinger) to elevate it to the roof. By choosing and planting appropriate and interesting plant materials and marrying the inside of the house to the outside garden with viewing areas from the main entry foyer and the en-suite bath, the creation was complete.

Much of the plant material was purchased online from an Ontario company, Cavendish Perennials. The 23 named varieties of sempervivums are not like anything we have seen in local nurseries. With a number of special sedums, heuchera, and coloured grasses in the deeper berm area, a tapestry of colour has been created.

Cottell achieved excellent results by doing extensive research on the best green roof system, creating a pleasing layout and finding suitable plant material. A favourite resource was *Green Roof Plants* by Edmund C. Snodgrass and Lucie L. Snodgrass, published by Timber Press.

Now the secret is out, and Victoria Master Gardeners are feeling inspired to try their own green roofs.

**—Sue Wright  
Victoria Chapter**



*VMGA Donna Cottell's green roof from inside*



# Victoria Master Gardeners Celebrate 10 Years

The Victoria Master Gardener Association celebrates its 10th anniversary this year and at our March general meeting—our traditional time of recognition and celebration—we honoured two founding members: Donna Cottell and Dawn Sutherland. These two Master Gardeners were also recognized for their lengthy volunteer service at the Spring Update in Vancouver. But because both Donna and Dawn have been instrumental in leading the way for other Victoria Master Gardeners to enjoy their volunteer experiences, we also celebrated their contribution at our March recognition and celebration meeting. Donna was also recognized with an emeritus membership at our May general meeting, as she will be retiring from active status.

In addition to our 10-year recognition honorees, 16 members received their five-year gold leaf pins. Most of these honorees joined the association following the Spring 2005 Basic Training class, and they have continued to be leaders in the association since they joined. Some of them now represent our chapter at the provincial level.

A special honorary membership was granted to Richard Mosselman, who has been instrumental in promoting Plant ID at meetings and open gardens. Although life's priorities are pulling him away from the Victoria chapter, Richard leaves a legacy by example of continuous learning.



*Dawn Sutherland with her 10-year pin*

An organization is only as successful as its volunteer capacity. These 18 members alone contributed a total of 913 volunteer hours during 2009.

We are proud of our rich tradition as a chapter and the success we have achieved over the past decade. Thank you to Donna and Dawn for showing us the right way.

**—Sue Wright  
Victoria Chapter**

## What's Up and Coming in Victoria

Over the summer months the Victoria education committee will host a number of events to increase the plant knowledge and expertise of our members.

In June we will enjoy one of our local hidden gems for an evening of learning about its very special trees and shrubs:

- Dominion Brook Park is a unique 4.5-hectare park in North Saanich created by the Canadian Department of Agriculture as a public demonstration arboretum and ornamental garden in 1912. Plant material was ordered from well-known nurseries in Britain, France, Holland, Germany, Japan, and the United States.

- Of the hundreds of species planted over the past 98 years not all have survived, but an amazing number have grown to maturity. Info sessions will emphasize the wonderful collection of conifers and mature deciduous trees. In July and August two more events are planned:

- Master Gardener Carol Proudlove has an incredible perennial garden with prized hydrangeas as one of the outstanding features. She is constantly challenged to cope with the local deer population, but her attention to detail, her unique colour combinations, and her garden's plant diversity have produced a spectacular display for our members to enjoy. This promises to be a fun learning experience.

- The annual Victoria Conservatory of Music garden tour fundraiser attracts gardeners from all over the Pacific Northwest and beyond. Victoria Chapter members will provide volunteer clinic hours at all the gardens, as well as a Plant ID event at one of the gardens from last year's tour.

Please join us for one or all of these upcoming events.

**—Jan Hemming  
Victoria Chapter**

# Annual Conservatory of Music Tour Highlights Hilliard Garden

The Victoria Conservatory of Music annual Mother's Day garden tour is well known throughout the Pacific Northwest. Avid gardeners come from as far away as Idaho each year. This annual fundraiser attracts more than a thousand visitors to some very special private and public gardens.



This year Hope and Grant Hilliard were invited to show their garden known as Rosedale. The 10-hectare property features an exquisite 1865 heritage home that maintains many of the original architectural details.

Over the past 12 years, the gardens on the property have emerged from a hay field surrounding the house to a wonderful family home that features many themed garden rooms. Hilliard learned very quickly that in order to sustain her plantings from year to year, she needed more intense education and experience if she wanted to get it right. She graduated in 2004, from the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific Master Gardener program. This education accelerated her experience; enhanced her skill sets; and allowed her to practice, through trial and error, what works and what doesn't. Education helped her finally understand the gardener's mantra: "right plant, right place."

In addition to her education, Hilliard acknowledges that the Master Gardener volunteer opportunities and advanced education events have offered a continuous learning environment to augment and hone her gardening skills.

Hilliard has many colour-themed seasonal gardens on her property: dark green and silver foliage with white summer blooming flowers; a hot-sited bed that features autumn standouts such as sumac, sedums,



robinia, and witch hazel; a perennial border that highlights cool blue hydrangeas, delphiniums, and columbines punctuated with pink; and close to the blue-grey heritage house with its white trim, hostas and bleeding hearts mixed with Hydrangea 'Annabelle' and what everyone is talking about—the Incrediball hydrangea, a new and improved 'Annabelle' 'with strong, beefy

stems and massive blooms'. The breeding goal was stronger stems to eliminate flop. The bonus is amazing large white blooms.

If that isn't enough, Hilliard installed the "Garden of Eatin'"—part of the original, heavy clay field was converted to a veggie garden. Hope and Grant built raised beds utilizing lots of compost where she grows potatoes, carrots, cucumbers, peas, lettuce, raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, and rhubarb. A pruning demonstration highlights espaliered pear, cherry, and apple trees. She has it all.

But, knowing Hilliard, she is not a gardener who just sits back and admires her incredible accomplishment; she had a vision. After hosting many family weddings and special events on her property, she was getting many enquiries about opening up her place for others to enjoy. This vision has now culminated in an entrepreneurial adventure. Hope is an example of the diverse Master Gardener membership that we embrace. We are lucky in Victoria to have Hope Hilliard in our own backyard where she can share her passion with us. What a journey she has taken.

—Jan Hemming

# Report from Vancouver Island



*Spring Education Day: Handing out the MG Fact Sheets*

The Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association (VIMGA) is excited to report that our Spring Education Day, held on Sunday, April 11, in Nanaimo, attracted approximately 80 of our 95 or so members. It was a landmark day, so satisfying to see this high turnout of our members socializing and coming together for education.

We enjoyed current insect and disease wisdom from Linda Gilkeson, lively and entertaining views on organic food gardening from Dirk Becker, and interesting plant combinations from Jeff de Jong. Jeff must be complimented for his grace under fire; he turned massive technical glitches into a standup comedy routine and still left us with some good ideas. Big thanks to Tracey Wein, Pat Reilly, and Heather Crosson and their team for putting the day together.

During our Spring Education Day we displayed a number of completed Plant ID projects from the 2008 Basic Training program. These binders of 50 plant profiles are testament to the commitment and hard work of our students, who are entering their second year of certification hours. Congratulations on your wonderful work. We will refine the Plant ID project and offer it again for certification with the next course.

Another educational event during the spring was a series of pruning workshops organized and put on by our Duncan members. This local initiative is exactly what our geographically challenged chapter needs.

Next on the educational horizon is our Thursday, June 24 evening lecture in Nanaimo with Linda Chalker-Scott of Washington State University. Other chapters might also wish to look into ordering her new

book *Sustainable Landscapes and Gardens: Good Science, Practical Application* (GFG Publishing, Inc.). We have passed on our registration form to MGABC Chapter reps in case any other MGs wish to join us. This is going to be an evening event (5pm to 8 pm) with no business meeting, just education and socializing over goodies. Anyone interested in coming could also contact me directly at [polowich@gmail.com](mailto:polowich@gmail.com) and I will forward a registration form.

We continue to collaborate with Vancouver Island University to present the MG Basic Training Program. We are likely moving to an alternate year model, with the next course being offered in 2011.

To enhance publicity for our clinics we have purchased more banners and sandwich boards, and we have taken Victoria's Clinic Box idea and adapted it to suit our situation. Irene Toulouse has organized several Clinic Bags in a few trial areas. Among other things these bags contain a tablecloth, our banner, and an extra set of MGABC fact sheets. Positive feedback, so far. Some members are finding the sandwich boards more professional and effective than the banners.

We continue to look for ways to attract and keep committed members. Our valiant master planner, Irene Toulouse, has had to deal with a number of resignations, leaves of absence, and late membership renewals, unfortunately all well after clinic sign-up. This makes for a lot of work in filling vacated clinic spaces. However, in the case of leaves of absence we know that members sometimes have medical and family emergencies that cannot be foreseen, and we support them in taking the time they need. As Irene says, "Never a dull moment in this job!"

Slowly but surely we are adding volunteer opportunities that vary from traditional clinics, but we always need to rely on a core of the traditional clinics to supply straightforward certification hours for Master Gardeners in Training.

We look forward to concentrating on helping our Year One and Year Two students move forward to becoming keen Master Gardeners, and to bringing all our members more opportunities for education.

—Pam Harrison  
VIMGA

# Letter from the Vancouver Chair

Knowing that not all our members can attend our monthly meetings, I would like to take this opportunity to repeat my message from the May meeting. It concerns a rather worrying situation on the Executive Committee:

Just to remind you, the Executive Committee for 2010 comprises eight members:

Heather Nielson and I complete our terms of office at the end of 2010, but I stay on as Past-Chair for one more year. The Nominations Committee will therefore be seeking a new Secretary for 2011–2012 (all terms of office are for two years, except the Chair, who holds a four-year term).

John Bruce is our Treasurer for 2010–2011.

Frank O'Neill has been co-ordinating our workshops this year (Linda Beer's Vegetable Gardening in March and Linda Gilkeson's Pest Management in April; the topic of the next workshop, which is planned for September, will be announced shortly). But Frank is hesitant in taking over the Special Projects Chair officially.

Joyce Fitz-Gibbon and Cheri Trewin continue their good work in organizing and managing the community projects – an activity of growing importance to our association.

Elizabeth Taylor is doing excellent work as Clinic Co-ordinator.

Marie Pringle has decided that Executive Committee work is not for her, and although she has agreed to continue until the end of 2010, Marie will not be remaining on the Committee in 2011. The Nominating Committee will therefore be seeking a replacement.

Why all this background information? Because at the beginning of each year the Executive Committee is supposed to allocate the following jobs amongst its members: Chair-Elect, Vice-Chair and Second Vice-Chair. Unfortunately, as of mid-May, no current members are willing to volunteer for these three positions. These responsibilities are usually allocated in January, but as no-one was willing to volunteer at that time, I decided to let things slip, hoping that they would volunteer by mid-year. This has not happened. The lack of volunteers is about to cause some concern, as the VanDusen Botanical Garden Association wants to know who will

be on their Board of Governors next year (usually the MG Chair) and who will represent the MGABC on the VanDusen Botanical Garden Association Education Council (usually the MG Chair). And, of course, by now the Chair-Elect should be learning the ropes for 2011.

We are also looking for an official Special Projects Coordinator (although Frank O'Neill is making an excellent job of it, unofficially) and we have no-one as our Speakers for Meetings facilitator. We have our speakers scheduled for the remainder of 2010 but someone should, by now, be planning the speakers for 2011. Without speakers there would be little point in monthly meetings.

So, in summary, we **immediately** need a Special Projects Coordinator and a Speakers for Meetings facilitator. These do not need to be Executive Committee positions. Please contact me if you are interested in volunteering.

If you are interested in joining the current Executive Committee as Chair-Elect, Vice-Chair or Second Vice-Chair, please contact me and we will rewrite the Policies and Procedures manual to accommodate an extra head or two on the Executive Committee.

As the Nominations Committee appeals for volunteers to replace Heather and Marie on the Executive Committee, please be ready to put your name forward.

Further, if any two members wish to share one of the above positions, I am sure we can accommodate you. If we are to have a vibrant and active association in the coming years, it is important that members volunteer for these key positions. Longer-term members have already made their contribution; now it is the turn of our newer qualified MGs to step forward.

—Barry Roberts  
Chair, Vancouver Chapter

	2009	2010	2011
Barry Roberts		Chair	Past-Chair
John Bruce		Treasurer	
Heather Nielsen		Secretary	
Frank O'Neill			
Joyce Fitz-Gibbon		Community Projects	
Cheri Trewin		Community Projects	
Elizabeth Taylor		Clinic Co-Ordinator	
Marie Pringle		Resigns→	

# Vancouver Chapter Report

Congratulations go to the following VanDusen Botanical Garden Master Gardener volunteers who were acknowledged for their years of service to the Garden at the AGM on April 19. I checked the current membership list and hope I have not missed anyone.

10 years: Miriam Brownlow, Sue Damm, Dale Fitzpatrick, Diane Langmead, Dora Martin, Julianna Pasko, Selina Pope, Helen Tsepnopoulos

15 years: Lynne Christmas, Gillian Cramer, Irene Dungate, Wendy Fidgeon, Rosalie Fine, Marty McConnell, Jenny Newman, Marie Pringle, Joanne Tench, Carol Wong

20 years: Norma Johnston, Sharon Lampman, Patricia North, Linda Wright

25 years: Marie Bruce

Award of Recognition: Nini Taylor

Award of Distinction: Sue Damm, Lynne Christmas

## Upcoming Events

Please note the date change for the June garden party. All other chapter members are invited to our meetings and events. At this time no events are scheduled for July and August, but please watch for possible last-minute additions. Enjoy your garden this summer and see you all in September.

—Lynne Christmas

### MGABC members-only events

Saturday, June 19, 1:30pm

Vancouver Chapter Summer Garden Party, home of Barbara Phillips (ticket holders only)

Tuesday, September 14, 9:30am

Joint meeting with VanDusen Guides

Tuesday, October 12, 7:30pm

General meeting

### MGs, guests and public events

Sunday, October 3,

BUG FAIR

VanDusen Botanical Garden Floral Hall

Saturday, October 16

Garden Make-Over Design Principles Workshop



## *God made rainy days so gardeners could get the housework done.*

The clinic season is well under way for 2010, but please check your master clinic list for empty spaces that you can fill for us. Look particularly for clinics that only have a student signed on; there are too many of these. Remember that students have a high level of volunteer hours to fulfill before

they qualify as Master Gardeners. If you can help, contact the Area Coordinator responsible for that clinic.

A few more pointers:

- Look for clinics outside your normal “box.” We all

have certain locations we love to serve, but remember that new nurseries and plant sales want our help as well.

- Sign up for the mgclinics chat group so you know when members are looking for replacements or when new clinic opportunities are available.
- Take your volunteer commitments to clinics seriously. Honour your commitment to your fellow Master Gardeners and you strengthen our organization. If you know of a good place that might be interested in hosting clinics, let me know. I am always open to new opportunities.

—Elizabeth Taylor  
Vancouver Chapter Clinic Coordinator

# Okanagan Chapter Report

The snowbirds are back and, for those of us who stay home for the winter months, our skis are put away and our garden tools are out. As we do not garden in the Okanagan during the winter months and many of our Master Gardeners go to areas where plants are still growing and blooming, we sort of hibernate over the winter months.

Except of course for the executive committee. Throughout the winter we have been busy in a number of ways. We have worked and reworked our membership manual, which will be presented at our fall AGM. We have put in place a Project Proposal Application form for special projects. In response to the Shuswap Thompson Master Gardeners forming their own chapter, we changed the way our executive functions by now electing a full slate of officers; all of us are very keen on promoting the Master Gardener program in the Okanagan.

To that end, one of our Master Gardeners is working on producing a handbook to be used by all new students to help them become more familiar with all aspects of the Master Gardening program. In June some of our Master Gardeners will begin looking at revising the supplement that has been used in the past so that it is more adapted to gardening in the dry Interior. Thanks to many of our Master Gardeners and their involvement in various community projects, people are becoming more aware of Master Gardeners in the Okanagan and their role in supporting sustainable gardening.

## **More Master Gardener activities**

We opened our Master Gardener season with an education session on Gardening with Arthritis,

presented by Trudy Battaglio of the Arthritis Society and by Jackie Harris, an occupational therapist who works with the Arthritis Society in Penticton. The session was informative, not only personally, but we also learned how to encourage gardeners with arthritis to adapt their gardening methods and to take advantage of the resources that are available for gardeners with arthritis.

The nurseries are in full operation now and our Master Gardeners are busy advising gardeners. Some Master Gardeners are helping women at the Society of Hope homes in Kelowna establish some square-foot gardens. One Saturday other Master Gardeners helped the City of Kelowna with their NeighbourWood Tree program, which encourages more people to plant trees. The City offers five different types of trees for sale at a very low price; then Master Gardeners educate some of the new tree owners about how to plant and care for the trees.

In place of the June garden tour Communities in Bloom are sponsoring a "Get Growing Day," featuring a number of different tables from all aspects of gardening, including the Okanagan Master Gardeners. We will have plants from our own gardens for sale and will do a couple of presentations. This is also a good opportunity for us to promote our fall Basic Training program.

## **Educational opportunity July 7**

The Okanagan Master Gardeners will hold an Insect and Disease Identification Information and Training session on Wednesday, July 7, from 6 to 8 pm at the home

of Karen Anderson, which is located at 14051 Middlebench Road in Oyama. Hugh Philip of HG Philip IPM Consulting Service (and a retired entomologist with the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food) will be there to help us get some hands-on learning about sampling and identification of common insects and diseases of fruits, vegetables, and flowers. If you have a hand lens, please bring it along. As the gardening season progresses and you find an insect or disease you would like to identify, take a sample, freeze it in a plastic bag, and bring it along.

Please contact Carol Saunders at [saunders.associates@shaw.ca](mailto:saunders.associates@shaw.ca) by Sunday, July 4, to confirm your attendance.

## **Basic Training**

In the fall we begin our fifth Basic Training program in Kelowna on Saturday, September 11. The program runs until Saturday, December 11, with Thanksgiving weekend off. More information on this and when the information sessions are can be found on the Okanagan Chapter link at [www.bcmastergardeners.ca](http://www.bcmastergardeners.ca).

## **Gardens and Wines**

Also this fall we will host a small group of Master Gardeners at a weekend of Gardens and Wines. We are starting out with a small group as this is our first time doing it and, if it works well, we hope to expand it the following fall.

# Busy Cleaning Up Kelowna...



*Dr. Sharon McKenna*

## One Block at a Time

One of our Master Gardeners, Dr. Sharon McKenna, was nominated this year for the City of Kelowna Woman of the Year Award for her initiative in starting the One Block at a Time program. This program beautifies Leon Avenue, where homeless people gather for food, shelter, and to access social-service agencies. The Kelowna Gospel Mission is located on this street, as is the First Nations Friendship Centre, the Urban Outreach Health Clinic (the street nurses' clinic), and the drop-in centre. It is a street that has been abandoned by a number of businesses and had become very rundown. In the belief that homeless people need to have beautiful surroundings,

Sharon, other Master Gardeners, and volunteers transformed one block of Leon Avenue, with the intention to keep moving along Leon One Block at a Time.

Sharon McKenna, Suzanne Anderton, and other volunteers with the One Block at a Time group also received the Communities in Bloom 2009 Kelowna Green Thumb Award for the Best Street Revitalization Project. Further, they received the Mayor's Environmental Award for the Most Environmentally Dedicated Group. Good work, Master Gardeners!

—**Caroline Hill**  
**Program Coordinator**  
**Okanagan Master Gardeners**

## ...one block at a time



*Before: garbage can and planter at Leon and Ellis streets*



*After: Leon and Ellis corner cleaned up*



*Ki-Low-Na area: bare wall transformed with mural (in background)*

# Healing through Gardening

## VanDusen Botanical Garden Horticultural Therapy Certificate Program

People need plants. As gardeners, we know we benefit in so many ways from nurturing and cultivating plants. Now research is increasingly documenting the significant beneficial effects on the physical and psychological well-being of people as a direct result of gardening.

With the research comes the increased appreciation among the therapeutic community of the use of horticultural therapy as a tool for rehabilitation and for enhancing the health and well-being of a wide variety of clientele. Horticultural therapy provides opportunities for individuals to connect with nature while actively participating in their own healing process. Horticultural therapists creatively adapt and make accessible gardening and other nature-related activities to help individuals in hospitals, long-care facilities, schools, and adult day centres, as well as at community, rehabilitative, and mental health centres.

VanDusen's Horticultural Therapy Certificate Program provides 160 hours of training for professionals who wish to add horticultural therapy practices to their existing skill set, as well as for those wishing to pursue a career in horticultural therapy. This program is ideal for recreation and occupational therapists, activity workers, counsellors, health-care workers, teachers, landscape designers, and more.

### Program Learning Objectives

The overall objectives of the program are for students to (1) develop a repertoire of therapeutic methods for engaging with plants and nature; (2) adapt activities and gardens according to clients' functional abilities and therapeutic



Photo credit: Estelle Bogoch

*Horticultural therapy catches the Olympic spirit. Participants in an art project make inukshuks from leaves that they pressed and dried last fall.*

goals; and (3) develop a systems approach to horticultural therapy. Successful completion of all four courses in the program earns two points towards professional registration with the Canadian Horticultural Therapy Association (approval expected Summer 2010).

Instructional methods are based on learner-centred and collaborative approaches, with classroom time combined with field trips and use of VanDusen Botanical Garden. The lead instructor for the program is Shelagh Smith, who has worked with Master Gardeners on various community projects in extended-care facilities. Smith is a registered horticultural therapist, a long-time professional gardener with training in counselling, and a recent Master of Arts in Environmental Education and Communication. She also instructs for the horticultural therapy diploma program at Vancouver Island University and works for Vancouver Coastal Health.

### Interested, but would like a preview of the program?

This summer, on Saturday, August 14, VanDusen is offering an Introduction to Horticultural Therapy workshop instructed by Shelagh Smith. At only \$50, this is a great way to see if you are interested in pursuing the subject of horticultural therapy.

For information or for registration, please visit the Adult Education section of VanDusen's website.

—Gillian Drake in consultation with Shelagh Smith

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

### 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 next newsletter is July 30, 2010.

[www.bcmastergardeners.org](http://www.bcmastergardeners.org)  
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