



Within a Hundred Miles—Home and Beyond

Community Food Security through a Sustainable Food System

Master Gardener Seminar, Sunday, March 16

9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Michael J. Fox Theatre

7373 MacPherson Avenue, Burnaby (Rumble and MacPherson)

Growing beyond the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides is a new movement that emphasizes the necessity for people to re-harmonize themselves with nature through our relationship with food and agriculture. *The 100 Mile Diet* is shorthand for the practice of buying only food and drink that was produced within 100 miles of our own kitchen.

This year's Master Gardener seminar, **which is open to everyone**, will explore how we can obtain a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self-reliance, and equal access for everyone. Speakers include:



Dr. Iain Taylor, professor emeritus of botany, UBC; past editor-in-chief of the *Canadian Journal of Botany*; author of *Genetically Engineered Plants: Interim Policies, Uncertain Legislation* (2007). In addition to his thoughts on genetic modification, Dr. Taylor promises to untangle confusion about what it means to be "organic."

Kim Sutherland, MSc, PAg, regional agrologist for the Fraser Valley, BC Ministry of Agriculture. Kim's current work is focused on ensuring sustainability of agriculture in the Fraser Valley. Additionally, she is charged with furthering awareness of the value of the Fraser Valley in the context of climate change, higher energy costs, local food, and food security.

John Bishop, chef, owner of Bishop's Restaurant, and cookbook author. Among his many accolades, John

won *Vancouver* magazine's inaugural green award for his work in supporting local sustainable agriculture. The dining fare at Bishop's is regional, seasonal, and organic (and famous). His latest book is entitled *Fresh: Seasonal Recipes Made with Local Foods*.

Gary King has been farming organically for two decades on four-and-a-half acres in the Hazelmere Valley, one hour east of Vancouver. He has supplied John Bishop's restaurant with produce for 14 years. Gary and John are book-end panelists who will, in turn, talk about sustainability on Gary's farm and then help us bring the same practices into our own kitchens.

At this year's Master Gardener seminar, take advantage of our compost sale, plant sale, book sale, silent auction, displays, and more! Cost is \$35 if paid before March 11; \$45 at door. For registration and information, visit www.bcmastergardeners.org.

See MG spring seminar contacts on page 2.



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Letter from the Chair

Your new Council met in January and set goals for 2008. New Council members jumped into tasks with both feet, which is very encouraging. We are continuing to work on communication requirements that will allow us to expand provincially and accept new members into the Association. We will continue to rely heavily on the newsletter, meetings, website, and "mgadmin" notices to keep members informed as the Association structure changes to accommodate a provincial council and local chapters.

One of the first steps in this transition is a change to our bylaws. The proposed bylaws have been circulated and we are preparing to vote on them at our April meeting. Should they pass, your Council is ready, willing, and able to do the work expected to implement a provincial council and local chapters. However, the membership will also need to take part in this transition in making the Master Gardener Association of BC a truly provincial association. For example, we will need to set up a local VanDusen chapter in Vancouver that operates independently of the provincial council. This might mean some Council members playing dual roles and attending extra meetings, or it might mean a few more people will have to take on new administration positions to lead the new local chapter.

In another matter, we are aware of the other master gardener programs being offered in the community and want to increase the public awareness of the MGABC. We are a volunteer organization with a passion for gardening. But we would also like people to realize that we are teachers, both of our own members and the public. We are volunteers who teach good gardening practices and earth stewardship to both adults and children. Our education mandate is for both ourselves and for the public and I think it would be advantageous to have a classroom at VanDusen that we can use for this purpose. I would like to find a way to hold another fundraiser for the VanDusen Botanical Garden Capital Campaign that provides funds for a classroom and raises public awareness for our program.

I ask that we remember that the changes in our Association are good, and that we welcome them. What would our gardens be like if nothing changed? Our gardens grow and evolve slowly over a month, a season, a year, or even longer but at other times the whole garden seems to explode in beauty. Our Association also evolves and grows. Come join us in our garden, take part, and help our Association evolve into a beautiful healthy provincial garden.

—Lynne Chrismas
MGABC Chair

Master Gardener Seminar Contacts

Here's who to contact to help out with the various initiatives at this year's Master Gardener seminar:

Jean Hobbs and Nean Boivin – Silent Auction
Janet Sawatsky – Billets
Joan Bentley – Plant Sale
Barry Roberts – Vendors
Janet Fraser – Publicity
Pat Taylor – Registrations

Ron Fawcett – Treasurer
Colleen Martin and Liz Haan – Speakers
Victoria Master Gardeners – Education Material
Nigel Bunning – Flowers
Brian Campbell – Compost Sale



It is that time of year again. Winter is retreating, spring is just around the corner, and we will soon be starting Clinics.

By the time you read this newsletter, email signup will likely be completed and the signup book will be at VanDusen until March 14. It will be placed near the Admin Office during the week and the shop cashier will have it on weekends. The signup book will then be at the Master Gardener seminar on March 16. That will be the last opportunity to make changes.

As in previous years the signup book will be a large binder divided into colour-coded geographical sections. A calendar is included at the front of the binder. Then a header page opens each section of venue address listings. Each clinic has a separate page and shows the number of Master Gardeners required for the clinic. Please clearly print your name, phone number, and MG status (1st year, qualified) when completing this form. Getting the master clinic list made up correctly depends on legibility.

Bring along your personal calendar when signing up for clinics so you can record your choices for future reference. Remember that changes can be made in the signup book anytime up to the Master Gardener seminar on March 16. After that date, you will be responsible

for finding your own replacement and notifying both Area and Overall Clinic Coordinators for any changes you make.

Remember the following:

- GardenWorks on 128 Street in Surrey is now closed.
- Bloom Nursery and Garden Centre (formerly Jones) in Richmond will be holding two clinics in May.
- There will be no clinics on long weekends or on Mother's or Father's days.
- The deck at VanDusen will have clinics only on Wednesdays and Fridays this year.

You will receive the master clinic list before the end of April. Please check that your information is correct and contact the Area Coordinator if changes must be made. If you have been designated as the Clinic Coordinator, please review the job description for that position. It will be your responsibility to call the other MGs listed for the clinic; to speak to the host; and to ensure that the pink form is completed and submitted within the timeframe specified (one week from the date of the clinic). You will receive a Clinic Information/Who Does What form with the master clinic list; please read it through to refresh and prepare yourself for the coming season.

Have a great year of clinics and thank you for your help in making this another successful year for us all.

—Diane Hartley
Overall Clinic Coordinator

Times have changed for the better, I think

Over the winter, as I was sitting in front of the log fire in my South Surrey home, the snow gently falling outside, I slowly thumbed through my father's old edition of *The New Illustrated Gardening Encyclopaedia* published by Odham's Press, London, in 1947. One item read:

ARSENATE OF LEAD. A stomach insecticide used for the destruction of caterpillars, beetles, sawfly larvae and all kinds of leaf-eating insects. A heavy white powder, very slightly soluble in water. It is best to obtain it from a reputable firm of insecticide manufacturers, as the home-made article, unless prepared with great care, is liable to cause serious scorching of the foliage. Arsenate of lead is sold in three forms – powder, paste and cream. The two latter contain more or less water, and more is required to form a spraying mixture than if the powder is used... The strength of the spraying wash depends on

the arsenic strength of the preparation, which is usually stated and guaranteed by the manufacturer. In arsenate pastes the amount of arsenic, expressed as arsenic oxide, is usually about 15%, and of such a paste from 4–8 oz. would be required to 10 gallons of water. Most makers issue instructions for the method of preparation of their particular products. Arsenate of lead should be applied as a fine, misty spray, the object being to cover the foliage without allowing the spray to drip from the leaves. Spraying should be carried out generally as soon as the pest is observed and while the leaves are still young. The small caterpillars are thus more quickly killed, before the foliage and buds have suffered serious damage.

Don't try this at home! My father died aged 52.

—Barry Roberts

Recycling Wisdom

What to do with those *%\$)@ black plastic pots

Every gardener I know keeps a stash of used plastic pots behind the garden shed and thinks each spring there might be the chance to reuse a few, maybe to pot up our seedlings if they sprout or our cuttings if they root. Over the years, because every plant our growers produce comes wrapped in a plastic pot, the pile behind the shed grows. What to do: reduce, reuse, or recycle?

Ways to reduce

The BC Agriculture Council and the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands along with our own BC Landscape and Nursery Trades Association are all working on ways to effectively reduce the volume of plastic pots our industry generates. The problem is in finding a cost-effective biodegradable material that can be substituted for plastic and still meet the lifespan requirements for most nursery production. At present, cost is the major obstacle; the cost of buying biodegradable fibre pots is 40 to 60 percent more expensive than buying new plastic pots. However, with research and new developments in this area, we can only hope that we find a real solution soon.

In the meantime we have two other options for all those pots when clearing out the shed: reuse or recycle.



Ways to reuse

By far the best option for the environment is to repeatedly reuse all the various sizes of hard-wall pots until ultimately we discard a broken pot. Spent pots can be recycled into our municipal recycle system whether by curbside collection or at our municipal recycle depot.

Most garden centres will not take back pots for recycling. Garden centres everywhere are asked to take back their customers' used pots and plastic trays, assuming that the pots will be reused by the centre or returned to the grower for reuse. Unfortunately, for most retail centres, this is not the case. The very real threat of spreading plant disease has made most retail centres discontinue the practice of collecting and reusing returned pots.

And, according to Hedy Dyck of the BC Landscape and Nursery Trades Association, wholesale growers are in the same situation.

"Because of the issue of transference of disease, pots cannot be returned to the wholesale nurseries," she says. " 'Clean stock' nursery programs will be a requirement in BC for most nurseries by 2010 and they will not allow the use of old pots unless they are washed and sanitized off-site."

At present the cost to wash and then sanitize used pots is double the cost of new, so check with your garden centre before dropping off used pots.

It may be that we need to adopt a provincial eco or recycle fee such as that currently collected for other types of containers. Such a fee, in turn, would help defer the cost of the collecting, sorting, and sanitizing necessary to reuse at the grower and retail level.

Yet a real need exists for plastic pots: our garden clubs and societies are often fundraising with plant sales and happily reuse pots of all sizes. But before dropping off your used pots to a local plant sale group, ensure the pots are clean and free of any old soil. To sanitize, see sidebar.

“Most garden centres will not take back pots for recycling because of the risk of spreading plant disease.”

Ways to recycle

Some plastic pots and trays are not tough enough for reuse and must be recycled. Almost every plastic pot used by local growers will have a recycle triangle on the bottom; those showing the numeral 5 can be recycled. These include flexible trays and cells used for annual bedding plants, four-inch round or square pots, and No. 1 gallon size right through to No. 7 gallon black hard-walled pots.

If you plan to recycle used plant pots or other agricultural plastic, ensure they are reasonably clean. Recyclers will not accept pots full of soil, sod, or stones or plastic trays covered with dirt. These pots will go straight to the landfill, so please hose off and stack pots neatly before placing them out in your municipal blue box program.

Most municipalities in Metro Vancouver will collect and recycle clean pots with other household plastic. From there they are taken to a recycling company such as Metro Materials Recovery in Surrey or to Merlin Plastics in Delta. These companies sort and bail such plastics and then ship or truck them, usually east, to plastic manufacturers that remake them into new products such as ice scrapers. With the new regulations on keeping recyclable plastics out of the landfills we can expect those municipalities not yet collecting and recycling plant pots to quickly upgrade facilities to do so.

Reducing the number of plastic pots we use is a long-term step, but reusing and recycling are steps we can take right now.

—Odessa Bromley



Groups accepting clean used pots for plant sales

- VanDusen Botanical Garden (pots 4 inches and larger can be dropped off at Gate 7, access off Oak)
- UBC Botanical Garden
- Vancouver Hardy Plant Group
- garden clubs everywhere
- school gardening clubs

To sanitize plastic pots

- Rinse each pot in a solution of 1 part chlorine bleach to 10 parts water





Report from Vancouver Island

The Vancouver Island Master Gardeners' Association's approximately 90 members completed a full roster of clinics and other volunteer opportunities in 2007 and our Master Planner and District Planners had everything in place for the 2008 sign-up meetings in February.

We continue to work toward making all our clinic experiences worthwhile, while adding volunteer opportunities outside the clinic format. New volunteer opportunities have been a challenge but ideas keep coming up for review and approval.

The biggest news for VIMGA is that we have signed a new three-year service agreement with Malaspina University College for the improved delivery of the Master Gardener Basic Training program, with the first course under this agreement being planned for fall 2008 in Parksville. We are especially proud of this achievement. It represents significant cooperative work with the staff of MalU, in order to create a document that reflects the needs of both organizations. Each group's needs and goals are somewhat different, but we both want to offer a strong sustainable course. This new service agreement incorporates detailed obligations on both sides, ensuring that the process is entirely collaborative. Agreement that the MG program exists for the development of MG volunteers, the incorporation of mentorship, and

the use of some screening tools are areas of great satisfaction to VIMGA. Also, we hope to add a new plant ID component to the basic training, an area we have felt was lacking.

We are excited to report that in the area of member education, on April 6 we are offering our first Spring Education Forum here on the Island, in place of our usual spring business meeting. The organizers are following the structure of the Vancouver Update, coupled with our own unique offerings.

In addition we will continue our open gardens plant identification walks for members, an informal way to earn

advice and education hours and get to know our colleagues.

We have also published an inaugural newsletter for our Island members, and hope to continue that initiative.

In early January we invited several members of MGABC to Nanaimo to meet with us to discuss the upcoming MGABC bylaw amendments and the evolution of MGABC into a truly provincial body. We can see that the speedy formation of local chapters in the Lower Mainland will be essential to this process.

**—Pam Harrison
President, VIMGA**



Bobbie Merilees, Brenda McGibbon, Rosanne Matheson, VanDusen Basic Training Graduating Class 2007

Advanced Training Electives

Commencing in February four Advanced Training Electives will be offered to those Master Gardeners who have completed the Advanced Training core program.

Location: Floral Hall, VanDusen Botanical Garden

Time: 9 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Cost: \$70 each

Entomology

Wednesday, February 13 and 20, March 5

Native Plants

Thursday, April 3, 10, and 24

Plant Disease Diagnosis

Thursday, May 22 and 29 and June 5

Shrubs

Saturday, May 24 and 31 and June 14

For more information, contact June Pierson.

Council Clips

Christine Allen, author of *Roses for the Pacific Northwest*, has been named an Honorary Member of the MGABC.

An updated version of the *MGABC Members' Handbook* will be available shortly.

A reminder that attendance at Cedar Series Lectures and the lecture portions of MG or one-hour long garden club meetings can be counted as education hours.

—Penny Koch

Cedar Series Lectures

Thursday, March 6

Japanese Cherry Trees in Vancouver with Doug Justice, Associate Director and Curator of Collections at UBC Botanical Garden.

Thursday, May 1

Spirit in the Grass: the Cariboo Chilcotin's Forgotten Landscape with photographer and author Chris Harris.

Both lectures take place in the Floral Hall at VanDusen Botanical Garden beginning at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available in advance from the Administration Office as well as at the door. Members \$10 and non-members \$15.



Rita Ourum, queen of composting and worm lore, visited the Queen Alexandra School garden program dressed in her worm costume complete with little red shoes, sunglasses (worms are blind), and wriggly worm earrings.



There was room for all God's creatures in Rita's world (and compost heap), including slugs, which are every bit as good as worms in terms of adding fertility to the soil, said Rita.

Rita Ourum made a huge impact on those around her in every way. She died in December 2007 and will be missed among the Master Gardeners who knew her.

—Sharon Hanna



Newsletter

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

Mission Statement

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

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

All other **newsletter correspondence** can be sent to the editor, Ann-Marie Metten, at ametten@telus.net.

Newsletter layout by Wendy Jones.

The MG Newsletter is published in March, June, September, and December. **Deadline for submissions** to the June newsletter is April 15, 2008.

www.bcmastergardeners.org
gardener@bcmastergardeners.org



MG Calendar

All events take place in the Floral Hall at VanDusen Botanical Garden, unless otherwise noted. Tickets for Cedar Series Lectures are available in advance from the Administration Office as well as at the door. Members \$10 and non-members \$15.

No monthly meeting in March

Thursday, March 6, 7:30 p.m.

Cedar Series Lecture
Japanese Cherry Trees in Vancouver

Doug Justice, Associate Director and Curator of Collections at UBC Botanical Garden

Sunday, March 16, 9 a.m.

Master Gardener Seminar (Update) 2008

Michael J. Fox Theatre
Burnaby South High School
7373 MacPherson Avenue,
Burnaby

Tuesday, April 8, 7:30 p.m.

General meeting
Growing Food in the City
Mary Ballom, Westcoast Seeds, and Brian Campbell

Thursday, May 1, 7:30 p.m.

Cedar Series Lecture
Spirit in the Grass: the Cariboo Chilcotin's Forgotten Landscape



Master Gardeners' Association of British Columbia Contact List 2008

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Chair Lynne Christmas | Advanced Training (AT) June Pierson | Finance Ron Fawcett | Plant Information Line Sheila Watkins | Web Masters David Watkins Deb Dorey |
| Chair Elect Barry Roberts | Basic Training (BT) Doreen Godwin | Fundraising / Special Events Barry Roberts | Plant Sale Coordinators Joan Bentley Loretta Barr | Welcome Table Shirley Mason |
| 1st Vice Chair Susan Lazar | Bylaws Doug Courtemanche | Membership Pat Taylor | Publicity Dana Richardson | Writers Group Barry Roberts |
| 2nd Vice Chair Penny Koch | Clinic Coordinator Diane Hartley | Newsletter Ann-Marie Metten Sally Maclachlan Wendy Jones | Selection (BT) Doreen Godwin | VIMGA (Vancouver Island) Chair Pam Harrison |
| Secretary Diane Hartley | Coffee Convenor Judy Zipursky | Nominations Janet Sawatzky Council Liaison | Speakers Group Linda Shulman | Vice Chair Sally Shivers |
| Treasurer Ron Fawcett | Community Projects Joyce Fitz-Gibbon Cheri Trewin | Picture Library Barry Roberts | Telephone/Email Colleen Martin Linda Wright | SMGA (Summerland) Program Coordinator Linda Sears |
| Members-at-Large Leslie Ann Ingram Dana Richardson Janet Sawatzky Linda Sears | Database Manager Pat Taylor | | Spring Seminar —available— | |
| | Education Committee Jack Grant | | Website Committee Karen Shuster, Chair | |