

# Master Gardeners Association of BC Newsletter



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## Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden Moves Forward

The Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden, established April 2009, is located on 16 hectares (40 acres) of old farmland on a fertile plateau above the town of Sechelt. The land was once a horse farm and market garden after being completely logged off early last century.

In the early 1970s the property became Murray Nurseries Tree Farm and operated for many years, supplying the Vancouver nursery in Southlands and local landscapers. The property today has some glorious stands of mature deciduous trees the Murrays left behind.



*Sunflowers and garlic*

Liriodendrons, Amur maples, linden, and birch are but a few that provide a fall display that will impress any garden visitor. In the large ravine that runs along the back fence there are some of the oldest, mossiest, fern-draped big leaf maples on the Sunshine Coast. Meadows dot the crowded, overgrown rows of conifers, blackberry, and alder trees and ponds have been left to naturalize and support an abundance of bird life.

An exciting find is an exceptionally large stand of *Populus tremuloides* 'Vancouveria', identified by Doug Justice of the University of British Columbia. These trembling aspen grow from a single root mass and are a coast subspecies of the Cascades *P. tremuloides* that is nearly extinct because it competes with human development in its habitat at the edges of deciduous forests.

The Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden is a haven for the flora and fauna that attract naturalists, birdwatchers, nature lovers in general, community volunteers, gardeners of all ages, and of course Master Gardeners. The past year has been most productive in the old

homestead areas of the property. Clean-up parties and brush clearing reclaimed the veggie growing area. Old sheds were cleaned up and this prompted a regular children's program. After an old meadow was mowed, we were able to host special events to raise the garden's profile in communities along the Sunshine Coast.

This winter the garden was under construction. Grants had been received to repair the old road around the perimeter and to build the infrastructure necessary to admit paying visitors. This spring the Garden's activities will resume, and Master Gardeners will once again be part of a dynamic community

volunteer force.

The Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden is a MGABC Community Project that provides Master Gardeners with volunteer opportunities in many different areas. MGs work with Botanical Garden volunteers to identify, divide, and label plants and to advise shoppers at the annual sale, held each year on May Day.

Docents are needed to provide weekly walks, introducing visitors to the native flora and fauna. During a recent walk with ethnobotanist Fran Nahanee, we learned about many food and medicinal plants used by our First Nations people.

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## Letter from the President

Finally, this month will see the publication of our long-awaited MG Fact Sheets project. Sixteen titles written by 11 authors, 8 photographers, numerous checkers, one exemplary editor, and one project manager — all Master Gardeners!

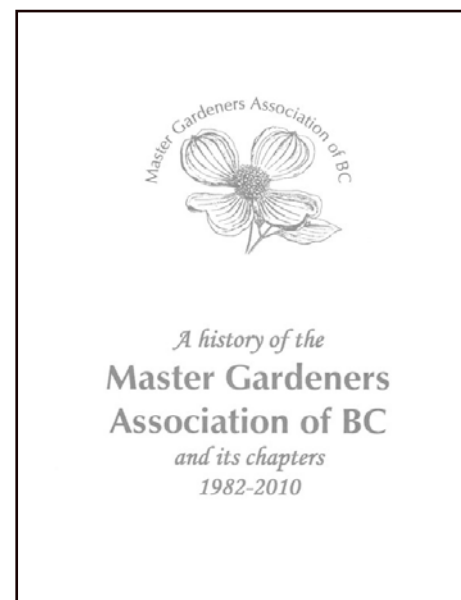
There are several purposes to the MG Fact Sheets project: (1) to provide gardening information to the public, (2) to raise the profile of the MGABC, and (3) to provide the public with a tangible and collectible item which informs them about the Master Gardeners Association of BC. The high quality of content and production reflects the high standards of Master Gardeners and differentiates the sheets from other throw-away handouts.

Every Master Gardener should receive a pack of 64 fact sheets (four copies each of 16 titles). These were distributed at the Spring Seminar and subsequently will be available through local chapters. Be sure to take them to all clinics you attend and make them available as needed. Other good opportunities for effective use are where the information will be shared, such as in schools, with community garden groups, and so on.

This is not a one-off, short-term project. The MGABC Council has already approved Series Two: a further series of titles for publication at the Spring Seminar in 2011.

A second publishing venture, the *History of the MGABC 1982–2010* will also be made available in March 2010. This is a compilation of the thoughts and memories of the founding members and former chairs as they recall their time in office. The *History* also includes the histories of the Basic Training and Advanced Training programs, together with histories of all the MGABC chapters. Although there are gaps in the history, this document answers many questions about who was responsible for what, who did what to whom, and how we managed our ever-changing finances.

Further, the *History* recounts the great accomplishments made by the founders and the early chairs and presidents as well as the subsequent efforts that enabled this association, and its chapters, to thrive over the past 28 years. Today we boast more than 800 members of the MGABC in six chapters across the province. That's



quite a success story for a volunteer organization. Don't miss it!

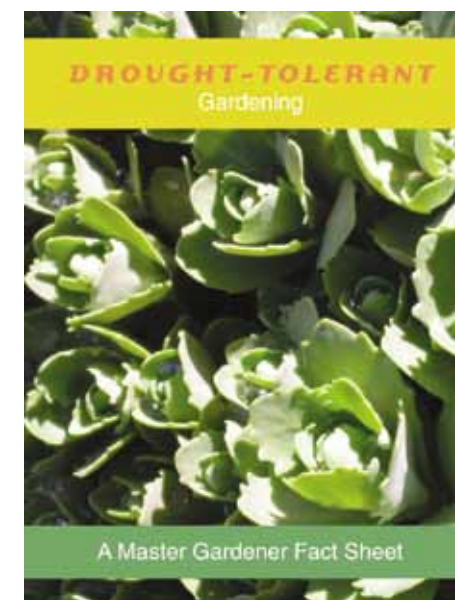
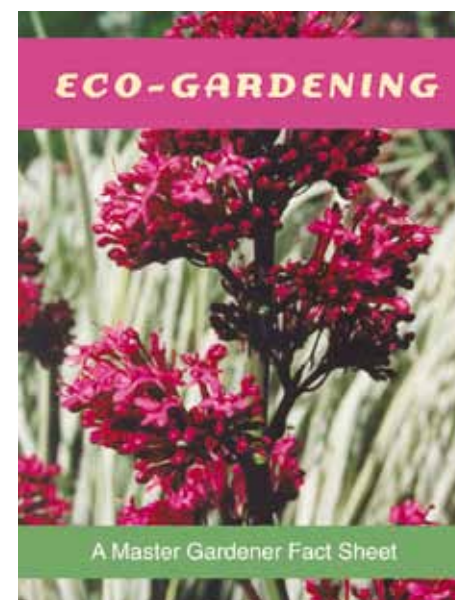
As I work my way through my second year in office, I am encouraged by signs that the Master Gardener movement continues to strengthen in British Columbia:

- The attraction of joining the Master Gardeners appears very healthy. In Vancouver, despite increasing the Basic Training program fee by 25% in 2009 and despite a rigorous selection procedure, the course is over-subscribed, with more than 50 students.
- The demands for our services are also more than we can accommodate. Garden centres appear to appreciate our clinics, and the number of requests from garden centres and other organizations for MG support at their events and activities is both challenging and gratifying. The Community Projects go from strength to strength.

If all chapters continue to strive to improve their profile with the public and continue to provide quality events and activities for our members and the public alike, we will continue to have a vibrant association.

—Barry Roberts  
MGABC President 2009–2010

## More about the Fact Sheets



The MG fact sheets were distributed at the 2010 Spring Seminar and will subsequently be available through your local MG chapter. Each Master Gardener will receive a package containing a total of 64 fact sheets: four copies of each of the 16 different titles.

A considerable amount of thoughtful time and effort went into the production of these valuable references. In the best interests of using them both effectively and economically, we have some suggestions for Master Gardeners when giving the sheets out at clinics and other public venues.

The first consideration is to find out if the information in the fact sheet will be useful to the interested party; for example, if a question is asked about roses, then it would be appropriate to offer a copy of the *Easy-Care Roses* fact sheet. But don't feel obliged to offer any additional title unless relevant questions are asked.

Pull the fact sheets out of your bag as necessary only when opportunities occur. The public are accustomed to helping themselves to handfuls of free handouts; do not encourage this by having all the fact sheets on display.

Some good opportunities for effective use of the fact sheets are where the information will be shared among several users such as at schools, within community garden groups, and so on.

Be sure to take these sheets to all clinics you attend and make them available as needed. They are great reference material and an effective tool for educating the public. They also provide valuable information about the Master Gardeners Association of BC.

—Barry Roberts

# Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden Grows Organic Food



...continued from page 1

A big initiative by MGs has been the large, organic, demonstration food garden where visitors are welcomed at every opportunity and introduced to organic food growing methods. In our first year we provided more than 450 kilos of produce for the Sechelt food bank. Touring the vegetable garden was a huge favourite of visitors young and old, as well as a great training ground for our three MGs in training.

On September 1 the MGs on the Sunshine Coast went online, providing an Ask a Master Gardener service for the Botanical Garden. This is a great research exercise, and we have our MGs in training partnered with a certified MG when answering questions online.

A new initiative for 2010 is the addition of a wheelchair- and walker-accessible vegetable garden for all ages, another fantastic chance for Master Gardeners to connect with our local community and to promote good stewardship of our land.

Come see us in 2010, when we are once again open for Saturday tours. To volunteer for this Master Gardener Community Project, please contact me directly.

—Odessa Bromley

## The Do's and Don'ts of Seaweed Harvesting

We grow wonderful vegetables in our gardens here on the Sunshine Coast. The climate is mild and we have a bounty of rich organic material available when the storms pile up seaweed in our creek mouths and along our beaches.

Recently we have been hesitant to harvest this gift from the sea in fear of destroying delicate herring eggs which may be attached to the kelp. The accompanying guidelines were provided by Steven J.

Colwell, senior habitat management biologist with the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

So I think we can safely harvest seaweed to supplement our soil and to provide 62 different minerals and vitamins to our plants. If you prefer to be on the safe side, one kilo of dried seaweed is equal to eight kilos of fresh and a little goes a long way in your garden.

—Odessa Bromley

### Guidelines for Wrack Line Harvest for Gardens

The wrack line (the line of seaweed left behind at high tide or after a storm) is an important food source for invertebrates, fish, birds, and mammals. The use of small quantities of the wrack line for supplementing personal gardens **may** have a minimal impact if the following practices are followed:

1. Harvest only post storm event, when there is an obvious overabundance of detached seaweed that has washed up.
2. Harvest for personal use at personal residence only. No commercial harvesting permitted.
3. No harvesting of live seaweed or seaweed that has an intact holdfast with attached substrate (holdfast is defined as the part of the kelp/algae that holds onto the sea bottom).
4. No harvesting of seaweed with attached egg masses (spawn).

The wrack line is an element of fish habitat. As such, large-scale removal from the marine environment may constitute a contravention of the *Fisheries Act*.

Steven.Colwell@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

**May Day Plant Sale**  
Sunday, May 2, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
5941 Mason Road, Sechelt  
[www.coastbotanicalgarden.org](http://www.coastbotanicalgarden.org)



## Pruning Wisteria Keeps It Under Control

On a recent lovely sunny day I went to help friends with a large, old wisteria that grows up the side of their farmhouse. They told me it wasn't blooming well anymore.

As you can see from the "Before" photo it was too late to advise not letting the wisteria grow out of control! Time to give it a rejuvenating prune.

A rejuvenating prune is best timed for winter (January or February in the Lower Mainland and on southern Vancouver Island). First, stand back and look at the overall shape of the wisteria. If you're pruning for someone else, don't forget to ask them where they would like their vine to trail and show flowers; then prune the entire plant back hard to the desired size and shape.

Begin by taking off any dead branches; then completely cut out thin, overcrowded stems. Now take off any stems that go behind pipes, electrical wires, or eaves, as they will gradually swell over the years and push these structural elements off the wall and off their supports. Take off about half of the new growth where it is running riot; then shorten each of the new shoots to about three or four inches, cutting just above the little fat buds to create flowering spurs. Take old spurs back to three or four buds as these are more flowering spurs (see photo). Old growth is darker, more textured, and starts to get the peeling woody outside to it. You can

braid extra branches into the main branches but keep in mind the overall shape you want to develop.

The second most important prune of the year comes in the summer after the wisteria has flowered. Prune the entire plant back, thinning it out well and leaving just one or two buds or nodes per branch. Take off long whippy growth that is extending the territory of the plant; these are the branches you shorten to three or four inches in January or February to create flowering spurs. During the summer prune, cut them back to about a foot in length. Keep vigorous, strong shoots that have set buds or nodes at their bases. Get rid of any branches that hang down and spoil the shape of the plant. To force the plant to branch more horizontally, make your cuts on a down-facing bud (even if you cut below this bud you will get new branches).

Giving wisteria two good prunings a year — once in midsummer after flowering and the other in January or February — will help to keep it blooming well. Also, every three years or so, give the vine a radical rejuvenating prune to keep it in shape. Wisteria responds best to stress, doesn't need much fertilizer, and shouldn't be overwatered.

I am looking forward to seeing the blooms across the farmhouse this year.

—Sandra Hewson



Before pruning



After pruning



Wisteria spurs

# Seedy Saturday in Kamloops

In the past there had been the occasional small seed exchange event in Kamloops, but such an event had not been held for a few years. In 2009 some of the Master Gardeners (only three in Kamloops) and the Master Gardeners in Training partnered with the Kamloops Food Bank and Food Policy Council to reinstate this event in Kamloops. With the help of a grant from the federal government's New Horizons for Seniors program, a Seedy Saturday event was planned.

In addition to the basic seed exchange, we had refreshments, door prizes, film viewing, and a series of all-day seminars taught by the MGs and MGITs. Topics included saving seeds, starting seeds, soil fertility, composting, starting a new vegetable bed, square-foot gardening, secrets for success in vegetable and container gardening.

We created a catchy brochure which we distributed widely, appeared on CFJC Television, obtained a quarter-page write-up in the daily newspaper, advertised in other area newspapers, and arranged public service announcements on local radio stations.

Although we were unsure how many might attend, we were overwhelmed when 250 people showed up. About 50 people attended each of the teaching seminars. The numbers indicated that more and more people are interested in seed saving. A broad range of age groups attended, with lots of young people interested in growing their own gardens.

This event was free to the public as our goal was to encourage everyone in Kamloops to start a vegetable garden in their front or backyard. We want to keep the event accessible to all so an entrance fee will not be employed. It is likely that in future years we will need to seek additional grants and donations, but for 2010, we still have funding and we went full speed ahead with the 2010 Seedy Saturday.

This year we improved the organization to avoid last year's glitches, developed educational displays, and organized seminars in two rooms on different topics throughout the day (taught by MGs and MGITs as well as by some local experts). We included a merchant mall for locally made gardening products (newspaper pot makers, wire support cages, and so on). In addition, other groups such as the Urban Hen Movement and Seeds of Diversity were invited to set up display tables.



Photo: Jo-Lynn Forbes

Seedy Saturday took place at Kamloops Heritage House in Riverside Park. It began with a seed exchange at 12:30 p.m. and continued with seminars until 3 p.m.

—Leslie Welch  
Thompson Shuswap Master Gardeners



## A Different Sort of Garden

In the winter Master Gardeners can still work with colour. A small group of Thompson Shuswap MGs gathered together to grow a different sort of garden. They sewed a quilt to comfort one of their fellow Master Gardeners as she fights for her health.



## The Hands in the Dirt Gang — A Bountiful Project in Kamloops

The seeds of the St. Paul's Community Garden Project in Kamloops were sown among members of a Food and Faith study group, who met regularly to discuss such issues as food sustainability and eating locally. One member of the group had a garden ideal as a yard share and I had the opportunity to earn volunteer hours as a Master Gardener in Training.

Three objectives for the yard share were proposed:

1. To grow and share produce.
2. To share produce with others.
3. To explore and promote ideas around food security and sustainability.

Work parties were held in the spring to prep and seed the garden. Then nine group members attended as their personal lives allowed, communicating through a journal, which was kept at the garden to record chores accomplished and produce harvested. Coffee and socializing at the garden was also a fun activity.

The wide variety of vegetables, flowers, and herbs grown made a beautiful mix of produce coming out of the garden. By the fall, the menu at our study group featured garden-grown butternut squash ginger soup and cornbread made from flour and dent corn (a variety of corn that is higher in starch and lower in sugar than table corn) that we had grown, dried, and ground.

Produce was shared among the gardeners, families, and friends. It was donated to several outreach programs and preserved for use in winter programs. Even the Cathedral's main flower bed hosted a huge 'Yellow Pear' tomato plant for all to share.

2010 will see the original garden expanded and a possible two additional yard share sites added as others are encouraged to reflect on food sustainability and the fellowship found "working in the dirt."

—Jo-Lynn Forbes  
Thompson Shuswap Master Gardeners



The Hands in the Dirt Gang



Kamloops yard share



**“I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden.” —Ruth Stout**

By the time you read this newsletter clinic signup will be complete. The signup book was at the Spring Seminar on Sunday, March 7, and included some new clinics on offer this year. There are early clinics in March at Gardenworks at Edgemont in North Vancouver; in April at Agriculture in the City at Metrotown; and for those who know something about greenhouses, at Western Independent Greenhouse in Burnaby. Art Knapp’s in Surrey has some March clinic time; and Gardenworks at Capilano is interested in people with knowledge about vegetable gardening for their April 3, 4, and 17 clinics, about fruit trees for April 24, and about winter veggies for May 8. Also note that the VanDusen private garden tour will be held in September this year.

You will receive the Master Clinic List in the mail by the middle of April or earlier. The first thing to do when you receive it is to check that all of your clinics are listed correctly and to ensure they are marked on your personal calendar as well.

If you have been designated as the Clinic Coordinator, please review the job description. It will be your responsibility to call the other MGs listed for the clinic; to remind the host that there will be a clinic on that date; and to ensure the pink form is completed and submitted within the time frame.

If you want more clinics, you can look at the Master List to find empty spots, identified by ~~~~. Telephone the Area Coordinator (listed on the first page) and ask to be assigned to the empty spot. He or she will let you know if the spot is still available. Do not just show up at the clinic as you will not get credit for the hours.

If you find you cannot attend a clinic that you are signed up for, it is your responsibility to find a replacement. There are several ways to look for replacements, one being MG Clinics, an email group expressly for this purpose. If you are not already a member of this email group, please send an email to [mgclinics-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:mgclinics-subscribe@yahoo.com); you will receive a response within a couple of days. Another way to find a replacement is to call classmates and offer exchanges; also, call the

Area Coordinator who may have the names of some MGs who are willing to take extra clinics.

MG Clinics is a forum for finding or exchanging clinics. It is not a forum for exchange of gardening information or questions. Please keep your messages short and to the point. Include the date, place, and time of the clinic you want or must find a replacement for. It is not required or desired that an extended explanation be included.

If you are able to take clinics on short notice it would be a great help if you notified the Area Coordinator of your willingness.

You will receive 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 some great clinics this year, and thank you for your help in making this another successful year for us all.

**—Elizabeth Taylor  
Overall Clinic Coordinator  
Vancouver Chapter**



## Vancouver Chapter



Photo: Laura Wells

Basic Training grad class 2010

Spring arrived early for the Vancouver Chapter and this year many have been out in their gardens well in advance of the Spring Seminar on March 7. MGs bought seeds at Seedy Saturday on February 27 and bought plants at the Spring Seminar.

Vancouver has a few events planned for 2010. Some are for members only, while others are open to anyone. Some are confirmed and some are in the works, so watch for more details as they are finalized. All members of all chapters are invited to attend. If you happen to be in town at the time, we’d love to see you. All events are held in the Floral Hall at VanDusen Botanical Gardens, unless otherwise noted.

### Members-only events

**Tuesday, April 13, 7:30 p.m.**

General Meeting  
Speaker: Bill Terry  
*The Poppy Family*

**Tuesday, May 11, 9:30 a.m.**

General Meeting  
Speakers: Joe Wai and Dr. Jan Walls  
*Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Chinese Garden*

Please save the dates below and then watch for more details in the near future:

**April**

Newcomers’ Meeting  
*Orientation on Participation plus Clinic Rehearsal*

**Tuesday, June 8, 7:30 p.m.**

Vancouver Chapter Summer Garden Party

### Public events

**Ultimate Rhododendron Conference**

**April 9 to 11**

UBC Botanical Garden  
Detailed information and registration at [www.rhodos.ca](http://www.rhodos.ca).

**Friday, April 30, 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

Workshop  
Speaker: Dr. Linda Gilkeson  
*Diagnosing and Managing Pests and Diseases*  
To register, phone Treasurer John Bruce.

There may also be a field trip to Bill Terry’s garden on the Sunshine Coast, so stay tuned for more information.

**—Lynne Chrismas  
Vancouver Chapter**

## Letter from the Vancouver Chair

The relationship between the Vancouver Master Gardeners and the VanDusen Botanical Garden Association is truly symbiotic. In a nutshell, the Master Gardeners benefit from the free use of meeting rooms and the library, and the VBGA benefits from our membership fees and volunteer services. And we both promote and support each other's events.

But there is much more involved and I am keen to grow this relationship with our host garden. Already, many of our members are dedicated to the garden, know it in great detail, and use this knowledge to become excellent guides.

On the other hand, I frequently hear of dissatisfaction among our members about the time they occasionally

spend at VanDusen clinics with no customers or where they feel like unpaid sales assistants.

So this year, please consider giving your volunteer hours to support the Schools Program at VanDusen. They are in desperate need of more assistance with the children. Helping children understand what they are being taught (while deterring them from eating worms and torturing caterpillars), would surely be more satisfying than sitting at a quiet clinic. Please give the Schools Program serious consideration and contact Gillian Drake ([educate@vandusen.org](mailto:educate@vandusen.org)) or Doyne Sillery ([cdsill@telus.net](mailto:cdsill@telus.net)) to sign up.

Community Projects are also a major part of our success in recent years. They are well supported but we need to keep it that way. Please sign up for the Community Projects and help us to raise our profile with these community groups.

A big thank-you to all members who helped to make Seedy Saturday on February 27 a great success again this year. We had a good turnout despite the distractions of the Olympics.

**Barry Roberts  
Chair, 2009–2010  
Vancouver Master Gardeners**



### Volunteer with VanDusen's Children's Education Programs

VanDusen Botanical Garden has a thriving education program designed to foster children's innate love for the natural world, while enhancing provincial curriculum requirements. Volunteer School Program Leaders are an essential component of this program, as they guide students through their discoveries in the Garden. Different programs are available for students in Kindergarten through Grade 7, with the majority of young visitors ranging from Kindergarten to Grade 4. Each program lasts 90 minutes in length.

School Program Leaders being accepted at this time are required to commit to conducting programs one scheduled day per week, from March through June 2010. In addition, training sessions prior to the start of programs are offered.

Days and times available:

Tuesdays noon – 2:30 p.m.  
Wednesdays noon – 2:30 p.m.  
Thursdays noon – 2:30 p.m.  
Fridays 9:30 am – noon

Please contact:  
Gillian Drake  
[educate@vandusen.org](mailto:educate@vandusen.org)

## Report from the Okanagan Association's Name Change Reflects New Location

The Okanagan Chapter is still relatively young and we have gone through various changes this year, including a full all-new executive. The most noticeable change to the public was a name change. Whereas we used to be known as the Summerland Master Gardeners we are now called Okanagan Master Gardeners.

Another change was to move the location of the Basic Training course from Summerland to Kelowna. Our education coordinator worked very hard and put together an excellent Basic Training course that began in January 2009. We enrolled 20 students, and 17 students wrote and passed the exam.

We also offered a number of extra opportunities for expanding our gardening knowledge. At our spring clinic we learned ways to conserve water in an Okanagan garden from Joe Fitzpatrick. A number of our MGs attended a tour of The Greenery, a local nursery that propagates all its own seed annuals rather than bringing them in from another nursery. Then in June we spent an afternoon with the owner of Elysium Gardens, walking through the display gardens and learning about plant combinations that work in the Okanagan. Also in June we held a public workshop, with presentations as follows:

- irises from Ted Baker of the B.C. Iris Society;
- Okanagan soils from Ken Salvail, who hosts a gardening show Saturday mornings on AM 1150 Kelowna; and
- bees from Ted Leischner, a corresponding member of CANPOLIN, the Canadian pollinating initiative.

At our fall meeting in October we spent another interesting morning with Ted Leischner, learning more about the bee problems and how as gardeners we can help the bees.

We are now in the process of looking at projects for the upcoming gardening season. We are also preparing to offer another Basic Training course, this time in September so that some of the Snow Birds are able to attend.

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



*MGs learn about plant combination at Elysium Gardens*



*Okanagan plant disease diagnosing clinic*



*Learning about coated seeds*

# Spring Seminar 2010: Seeing A World of Diversity in Our Own Back Yards

When the United Nations declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity, we decided to use this theme as the basis for our Spring Seminar, held Sunday, March 7.

Master Gardeners joined with family and friends to enjoy lectures by Jennifer Trehane from the UK, Don Burnett from Kelowna, and Carmen Varcoe from Vancouver Island. Their lectures demonstrated not only the worldwide diversity of the camellia but also the diversity of our own gardens

because of all the different growing conditions within our own province.

Each spoke with passion about their corner of the world. Jennifer toured us through the world of camellias, visiting China, Japan, Vietnam and Cambodia; the US (Philadelphia, the Carolinas, Georgia, and California); and Europe from the Mediterranean to the Baltic, including the UK. Her talk emphasized the diversity of camellias and the way the different countries, with their climates varying from tropical to cold climate, manage and enjoy these plants. Topics ranged from recently discovered species in Vietnam and Cambodia, to interesting research on cold-hardy camellias, to information about recently introduced varieties from China and New Zealand.

Don is certified arborist, certified tree risk assessor, landscape designer, and grower. Don's lecture on gardening challenges in the hot, dry Interior gave new perspective to some of the gardening challenges there that are different from those



Don Burnett recommended some unusual pruning methods

up North or on the Coast. One of his greatest passions is teaching and demonstrating the latest techniques in pruning and landscape design, as well as teaching several other popular gardening topics.

Carmen's background includes the designing and maintenance of the hardy plant garden at Glendale Gardens. She has chaired the advisory board for the University of Victoria's Finnerty Gardens and served on the executive of the Victoria Horticulture Society, the Victoria Rock and Alpine Society, and the Hardy Plant Group. She described herself as a "complete garden and plant junkie" and spoke on the vagaries of gardening on the Island. She included photos of her own garden, showing some of the damage by pests, animals, and weather as an example of the problems the Island gardeners have to deal with.

The day began with awards presented for 10 and 20 years of membership and service to

the association. Chapter awards for outstanding service and the award of merit were presented to Joan Bentley and Pat Taylor. Then, throughout the day, lovely door prizes, which had been arranged by Nigel Bunning, were handed out.

Master Gardeners who were unable to attend missed out on a wide selection of plants that Joan Bentley and her crew offered for sale. The compost sale sold out

even before the lectures started. Christine Duamel and Jill Buxton did an amazing job in two short months to amass all the silent auction items. A couple of new vendors offered products for sale, but we missed 32 Books, who decided not to attend this year. That meant a few emails and long-distance calls to Jennifer's US publisher, Timber Press, and to the distributor in Toronto, because we wanted to offer copies of Jennifer's book *Camellias: The Gardener's Encyclopedia*. We were able to get some copies for sale that we will make some profit on, and Jennifer graciously agreed to sign a copy for anyone who bought one.

I would like to thank all those who helped during the day, as well as to Pat Taylor, who played hostess to Jennifer while she was in Vancouver. I'd also like to thank all Master Gardeners who attended the Spring Seminar this year.

—Lynne Chrismas

## Vancouver Island Report

Of the 15 students who took the most recent MG Basic Training through Vancouver Island University (VIU), 11 have become members of VIMGA in order to embark on their first-year hours. This is fewer MGITs than anticipated, but we look forward to seeing these enthusiastic new students at our clinics.

Our total membership stands at 95, including new students and MGs on leave of absence. It always takes a while at this time of the year to finalize the membership list, but under the able direction of Diana Walker, our new membership chair, we have a good sense of how many volunteers are available and how many clinic hours to prepare.

A bilateral Program Management Committee is part of our Service Agreement with VIU. At least once each year, usually after each Basic Training course, we meet to discuss the most recent course and other day to day details of managing the classroom portion of the program. We discuss course frequency and the site each year, as well as issues such as homework and attendance. This time we also celebrated the greater emphasis on plant identification that instructor Jeff Dejong has introduced. We really value this collaborative approach to the course and enjoy working with Janet Germann, our colleague at VIU.

The next orientation will be held on Monday, August 30, with the Fall 2010 course starting on Saturday, September 18. The MGABC website contains a link to VIU's details of the program.

Master Planner Irene Toulouse is working hard under the mentorship of Linda Derkach to organize the 2010 clinics.

One new opportunity in the North Island, initiated by district planner Lorraine Waring, will see MGs assisting at a newly planted heritage grove in Courtenay. Our involvement in a Friends of the Forest project is expected to become part of a partnership over several years. Our initial involvement will include helping to organize two open house days during which we will assist the City of Courtenay parks department with the removal of invasive species, while educating the public in the value of an urban forest, and in the value of mulching. In the future other possibilities could include assistance with interpretive signage, help in spreading the word about the value of native plants in the landscape, answering questions, and leading interpretive walks for school children. We are looking forward to this nontraditional clinic opportunity and thank Lorraine for initiating it.

Also for the first time, at least two MGs, Pam Harrison and Tracey Wein, will speak at North Island College's series of gardening lectures offered through the Elder College.

The next big event for us is our VIMGA Spring Education Day on Sunday, April 11. It will be held at the Oliver Woods Community Centre in Nanaimo, with Linda Gilkeson as our keynote speaker, plus one or two other speakers from Vancouver Island. Our thanks to members Pat Reilly and Heather Crosson, who have stepped forward to co-chair this event.

Another member education event in the planning stages for the early spring is a pruning workshop, centred in the Duncan area, initiated by members Jan Yuill and Sandra Stevenson. This kind of locally organized workshop, still open to all members, is what we need for our geographically challenged chapter.

Finally, our garden tour and social in the Duncan area in July and the extra workshop with Linda Chalker-Scott on June 24 in Nanaimo will keep us busy once the spring is over.

—Pam Harrison  
VIMGA



### Victoria Master Gardener Chapter 2010 Events

#### All Year Long

Working Group Projects and Clinics  
Many Venues

#### Wednesday, May 19

General Meeting  
Spring Plant Sale  
Glendale Gardens

#### June and July

Members Open Gardens  
Several venues

#### July and August

Junior Master Gardener Program  
Glendale Gardens

#### Wednesday, September 15

General Meeting  
Fall Plant Sale  
Glendale Gardens



# Why Flower Gardening Makes Us Happier

In 2005 a study was published by the Society of American Florists partnered with the world-renowned researcher, Jeannette Haviland-Jones, Ph.D., of Rutgers University, on some ground-breaking research to examine the effect of flowers on human emotion and well-being.

Dr. Haviland-Jones says, "Common sense tells us that flowers make us happy, and now science shows that not only do flowers make us happier than we know, they have strong positive effects on our emotional well being."

In the briefest of overviews the five main points from the research are:

1. Flowers have an immediate impact on happiness.
2. Flowers have a long-term positive effect on moods.
3. Flowers make intimate connections.
4. Flowers are a symbol of sharing.
5. People who buy more flowers are happier.

The full publication is available to read on the [aboutflowers.com](http://aboutflowers.com) website. There are also more behavioural research studies such as the Home Ecology of Flowers Study conducted by Nancy Etcoff, Ph.D., of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, which reveals that people feel more compassionate toward others, have less worry and anxiety, and feel less depressed when fresh flowers are present in the home.

"Other research has proven that flowers make people happy when they receive them," Etcoff says. "What we didn't know is that spending a few days with flowers in the home can affect a wide variety of feelings."



Photo: Vic Bentley

*Allium schoenoprasum*

The 2006 Harvard study, conducted on behalf of who else but the Society of American Florists and the U.S. Flower Promotion Organization, uncovered three main findings:

1. Flowers feed compassion. Feelings of compassion and kindness for others increased in the 54 study participants, ages 25 to 60, who lived with fresh flowers for approximately a week.
2. Flowers improve negative feelings such as anxiety and worry at home. Study participants felt less negative when they had flowers in their home for just a few days. They placed flowers in rooms where they spend a lot of time, including their kitchens, dining rooms, and living rooms, and they reported enjoyed seeing the blooms each morning.
3. Flowers can boost energy, happiness, and enthusiasm at work. Having flowers at home

can make people feel happier and more enthusiastic in other areas of their life, including at work.

"As a psychologist, I'm particularly intrigued to find that people who live with flowers report fewer episodes of anxiety and depressed feelings," Etcoff says. "Our results suggest that flowers have a positive impact on our well being."

I wonder how long it will take for a Harvard researcher to realize the same value in growing vegetables?

**—Natasha Etherington  
Horticultural Therapist  
Graduate VanDusen 2009 and  
Master Gardener 2008**

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 June newsletter is April 30, 2010.

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