



## Keeping lavender lovely When and how to prune

“Never prune in fall or winter and never cut to the ground.”

Lavender and other common plants such as artemisia have quite distinct pruning requirements compared with those appropriate for herbaceous perennials and shrubs. Lavender-type plants, which are classified as subshrubs and have a woody base, need to be pruned in either spring or summer to encourage new growth.



Pruning subshrubs in fall or winter can negatively affect them by stimulating new growth that can easily be killed in cold weather. Pruning in fall or winter also requires the plant to expend energy on growth that is discarded and then must be regrown in the spring. This kind of false growth exhausts the subshrub’s reserves, resulting in lost vigour, fewer flowers, and delayed bloom time.

It is even more important not to prune subshrubs back to the ground at any time. Doing so commonly kills the plant, as subshrubs seldom have sufficient energy reserves to regrow.

When and how to correctly prune subshrubs depends upon whether they bloom early or late in the season.

### Spring and early summer bloomers

The best time to prune early-blooming subshrubs is when leaf buds emerge in spring. Pruning when you first see new green growth allows you to remove dead flowers and branch tips without cutting out live growth. When flowers fade, these plants can be tidied up by cutting back to no more than three to five leaf nodes below a flower spike.

### Late summer and fall bloomers

In general, late bloomers should be pruned back to four or five leaf nodes above the ground before new growth occurs. The upper part of the stem usually dies or is damaged from the cold during the winter so cutting back the tops prevents these plants from wasting valuable energy on weaker growth. After a warm winter or when plants are situated in a sheltered part of a garden where the tops are undamaged by cold weather, pruning can be limited to deadheading and shaping to the preferred height.

### What about rosemary?

Even though many subshrubs such as lavender are also herbs and look similar to rosemary, the herb rosemary should only be pruned minimally, in the same way as many proper shrubs are pruned. After blooming, remove branches back to their bases without leaving stubs (you are actually cutting back to a branch collar); remove crossing branches; and open up the centre to allow good air circulation.

For more pruning information, including useful pruning diagrams, refer to “Pruning Subshrubs” in the March–April 2005 issue of *Fine Gardening*.

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# Letter from the Chair

September is here again and it brings a new season both for our gardens and for the MGABC. I hope everyone had a chance this summer to sit down for a moment to enjoy their gardens, and that you now feel rejuvenated and ready to start working and planning for next year.

Your Council has continued to work over the summer. The MGABC organization has grown, and I'd like to welcome the Prince George chapter, operating from David Douglas Botanical Garden. This addition brings the number of chapters in our Association to four: Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, Okanagan, and Prince George. An initiative with Victoria Master Gardeners is still under way.

As we review our organization in detail it shows us the diversity within the MGABC, similar to the diversity within our own gardens. Within the Association we have "plants" that need little tending because they seem to grow quite prolifically with very little care. We have "plants" that need constant fussing and care as the slightest change seems to nearly destroy them.

One "plant" that needs tending is individual awareness of the image we portray to the public. Sometimes, in our exuberance to pass on good information or to try to help others understand important issues, we may give the impression that the MGABC also represents other groups such as VanDusen Botanical Garden or the Vancouver Park Board. As Master Gardeners we must also be careful that those we talk to understand that we are speaking for ourselves, not on behalf of the Association. If an occasion arises when the MGABC

wants to make a statement on an issue, especially a political one, it will come directly from Council or an appointed representative. We are far more effective when we work within our various committees and groups who handle issues such as dealing with invasive pests and plants, reducing pesticide use, and helping to stop the spread of sudden oak death and the apple maggot. And these groups help to educate our membership and the public. They are much more effective than trying to act individually. We need to remain mindful that, as individuals, we can speak on their behalf only with consultation and discussion.

Another "plant" that needs tending in our Association's "garden" is the need to be careful about the advice we pass on to the public. Our policy is not to recommend any chemical pesticide. At a clinic, if, after all integrated pest management and non-toxic remedies have been recommended, something more is needed, then refer the client to the licensed garden centre staff. Please do not recommend any pesticide to anyone, even if you are a licensed dispenser in your day job. When you are at a clinic you are a volunteer Master Gardener and the MGABC does not recommend pesticide use.

The summer is almost over and the fall cleanup chores are just beginning. I hope that you will enjoy the changes occurring in your garden now, as the Association celebrates changes in our "garden"—they bring new opportunities for next year. As always you can contact me with your ideas or concerns.

—Lynne Christmas  
Chair

## Welcome to Prince George MGs

Through a partnership between the University of Northern British Columbia and the David Douglas Botanical Garden Society, the first Master Gardener Certification program got underway in Prince George in January 2008. The 22 participants who completed the first basic training class enjoyed learning from gardening experts about a series of topics all relevant to Northern BC, and they are now ready to share with the public environmentally responsible gardening practices and to promote the enjoyment of gardening through a variety of volunteer projects and activities.

Volunteer opportunities are coordinated and tracked by the David Douglas Botanical Garden Society. More information regarding the volunteer requirements for Master Gardener Certification is available from the David Douglas Botanical Garden Society. Please contact them at [mastergardener08@yahoo.ca](mailto:mastergardener08@yahoo.ca).

—Sheila Malbeuf  
President, David Douglas Botanical Garden Society



I hope that the summer was great for everyone. So many of us are still busy harvesting the bounty of our gardens. Personally, I'm already planning next year's clinics and signup procedures.

Next year I will be making some changes. Email signup will still happen early in February and the signup book will again be available at VanDusen Botanical Garden, but I want to try a more environmentally friendly signup book. Instead of one page devoted to each clinic, which uses too much paper, I propose to use one page for each venue and list all of the dates on the one page with corresponding boxes for signing up. The various geographic areas will still be divided and colour coded in the signup book and I will include a calendar showing special days and public holidays.

Last year we eliminated clinics on long weekends and on Mother's and Father's Days and moved the clinics held on the deck at VanDusen to Wednesdays and Fridays. These changes appear to have worked well. I hear from the Area Coordinators that clinics are still being cancelled for lack of Master Gardeners to fill them, so we must continue to work toward a clinic structure that meets our needs yet does not leave our hosts disappointed. It appears that clinics at farmer's markets are very popular, as are those held at Earth Day events, small plant sales, and of course, the ever popular Southlands, Phoenix, and GardenWorks nurseries. I do appreciate the response I have received from you when I have sent out a request to fill new venues.

Please let me know if you have ideas about ways we can make our clinic structure more accommodating. I am available at [mgsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:mgsecretary@gmail.com).

—Diane Hartley  
Overall Clinic Coordinator

## Three steps to a new nametag

If you've lost your nametag, you're in luck. As membership chair, I will be putting together a nametag order, and you are welcome to request a new nametag. Here's what to do:

1. Mail a cheque for \$15, payable to the Master Gardeners Association of BC, directly to the treasurer, Ron Fawcett, and note that it is for a new nametag. Please see the Master List for Ron's mailing address.
2. Email a message to [pataylor54@yahoo.com](mailto:pataylor54@yahoo.com) requesting a nametag after you have mailed the cheque. Tell me the name you would like to see on the tag and the address to which you want the nametag mailed.
3. Watch for your nametag in the mail. The tags will be ready within two months or less.

—Pat Taylor

## More About Bugs

Kwantlen University School of Horticulture is hosting a follow-up workshop on the successful bug gardening seminar held in the spring. The fall workshop will take place on Friday, September 19, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Langley Campus. The cost is \$100 (bring your own lunch). Registration is limited to 30. Please send cheques to Susan Lazar by September 10. Make cheques payable to September Master Gardener Workshop.

—Susan Lazar



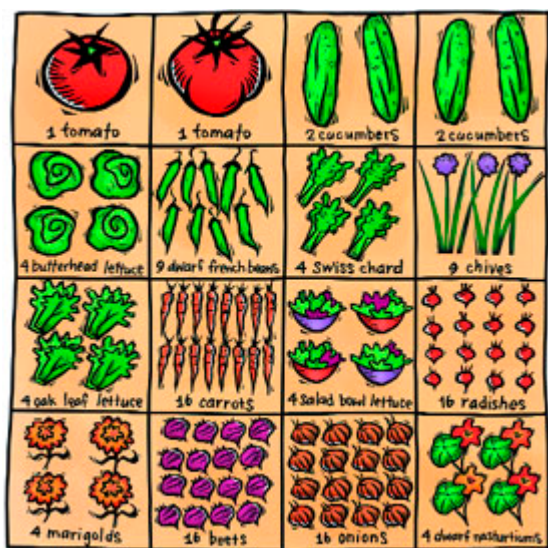
# A Square Foot Gardening Project in Kelowna

It's amazing the number of veggies and fruit our community garden produced this summer out of a 4 by 4-foot square garden using less land, less water, less time, less work, and fewer seeds. I and other volunteer gardeners at KLO Baptist in Kelowna followed the square-foot gardening plan outlined in Mel Bartholomew's *All New Square Foot Gardening* (Cool Springs Press, 2006), and planted the garden using a 1-foot grid.

This system of intensive vegetable gardening helped us plant only what we need. (Who can keep up with the fruit from three zucchini plants?) We also learned to garden going up; we built a trellis at the north side of the boxes and trained tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, and melons to climb, taking less space and allowing greater air circulation at the same time.

## Less water

Water availability in the Okanagan and elsewhere is becoming more of an issue and we need to learn to use less of this resource. Square-foot gardening requires less water for two reasons. First, the garden uses less land that needs to be kept watered and, second, the raised beds are filled with a mix of one-third peat, one-third vermiculite, and one-third compost. The peat and vermiculite both retain water like a sponge (excess runs off but what remains is held longer) and soil does not dry out as quickly.



Mel Bartholomew's grid of how many plants to grow in each square. From *All New Square Foot Gardening* (Cool Springs Press, 2006).

## Less work and time and lower cost

We found our square-foot garden required less work this summer because we began with weed-free soil and had 80 percent less garden area to maintain. We planted only the number of seeds in the seed package that we needed and saved on the cost of seeds (our package of carrots from West Coast Seeds contained 960 seeds, many more than we could use). Planting only what we needed also saved time as we did not have to go back and thin the rows.

The other factor in building only a 4 by 4-foot garden was that we could easily reach to the centre of the box and therefore we never trod on the soil, preventing compaction and the need to dig deeply in the garden.

The real key to the intensive planting was the square-foot grid built and placed over the garden. This grid (see illustration) shows visually what can be planted following Mel's chart or using the spacing and thinning information given on the seed packages. Using this information, we worked out whether it should be 1, 4, 9, or 16 plants that would grow in each square.

## MG as educator

After studying and researching this type of gardening last winter, in the spring I approached our congregation with the idea of developing a square-foot garden on some of the land at KLO Baptist. My proposal was that, as a qualified MG, I would teach volunteers how to do the gardening. They would each be responsible for one 4 by 4-foot box for their own use plus one 4 by 4-foot box for the food bank. Since this would be our first year, we did not want to make it too large a project. By May we had built 20 boxes and we have had 10 families volunteer to garden over the summer.

The plan turned out to be such a successful way to garden that we will add more boxes next year and open it up to more people, including those in the neighbourhood.

By the time you read this article the garden boxes will be in full production with regular harvesting under way. If you wish to drop in and have a look at the garden, please feel free to do so. It is located at KLO Baptist Church, located at 1370 KLO Road in Kelowna.

—Caroline Hill

# Want to create your own square-foot garden next spring?



The newly built square-foot containers in the spring

## Mel Bartholomew offers a few tips:

- Start your garden in an area that receives full sun at least six hours a day.
- Build the garden in a bed raised six inches (15 centimetres) and edge with lumber.
- Divide the space into 16 square-foot blocks and fill with a mixture of equal parts compost, peat moss, and coarse vermiculite.
- Plant only one crop per block. Depending on the plant's mature size, plan for one, four, nine, or 16 equally spaced plants per square foot.
- Only plant one or two seeds in each spot, and do so by making a shallow hole with your finger. Cover, but do not pack the soil.
- Water each square as required.
- Harvest continually. Once a crop in a square is finished, remove a trowel full of soil and replace it with the same amount of new compost, then plant something different.



The square-foot garden boxes in full production this summer

All photos by Caroline Hill

# Subshrubs: Why not prune in winter?

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In winter in coastal climates, subshrubs often do not achieve a true dormant state, but are quiescent or resting. From this state they quickly resume growth when the weather warms. Fluctuations in winter temperature can trigger new growth, particularly in a plant whose growth response has been primed by pruning. This tender new growth will be easily killed by subsequent temperature declines, so please wait until new growth emerges in spring for spring and summer bloomers or prune before growth appears for later summer and fall bloomers.

## Spring and early summer bloomers

English lavenders (*Lavandula angustifolia* and cvs.)

French lavenders (*Lavandula stoechas* and cvs.)

lavandins (*Lavandula x intermedia* and cvs.)

sages (*Salvia officinalis* and cvs.)

common oreganos (*Origanum vulgare* and cvs.)

lavender cottons (*Santolina chamaecyparissus* and cvs.)

marjorams (*Origanum dictamnus* and *O. onites*)

ornamental oreganos (*Origanum rotundifolium* and *O. laevigatum* and cvs.)

thymes (*Thymus* spp. and cvs.)

## Late summer and fall bloomers

blue anise sage (*Salvia guaranitica* and cvs.)

blue mist shrubs (*Caryopteris x clandonensis* cvs.)

Mexican bush sage (*Salvia leucantha* and cvs.)

pineapple sage (*Salvia elegans* and cvs.)

Russian sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia* and cvs.)

scented geraniums (*Pelargonium* spp. and cvs.)

southernwoods (*Artemisia abrotanum* and cvs.)

wormwoods (*Artemisia absinthium* and cvs.)

—Jane Sherrott

## Whatcom County MGs Extend Another Invitation

On Thursday, September 25, Whatcom County Master Gardeners invite MGs from British Columbia to their annual advanced training seminar on a variety of gardening subjects, including organic plant production and soil amendments. Kelly Dodsen, an entertaining speaker from Far Reaches Farm will also speak. He is fast becoming the next Dan Hinkley in the world of plant collectors. To register, please visit the home page at <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/mastergardener/> and look to the right side of the screen where Advanced Training is mentioned. We hope to see a lot of British Columbia MGs at our seminar in September!

—Linda Bergquist

Whatcom County Master Gardeners



The house at Hovander Homestead was completed in 1903



Whatcom County MG David Simonson welcomes everyone to Hovander Homestead



A bird's eye view of the waist-high planters at Tennant Lake Fragrance Garden

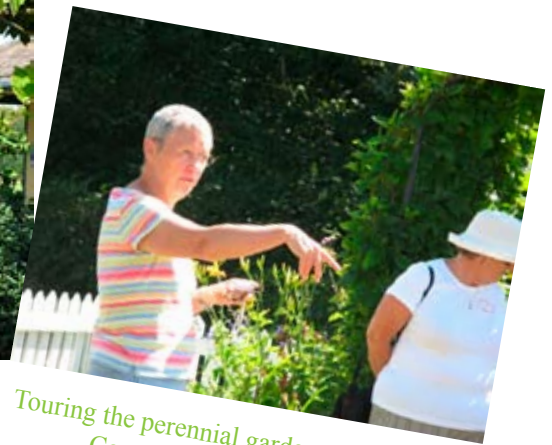
(see more photos and story on next page)



Judy in the weed identification garden in Hovander Homestead



State park warden Peter O'Ceán welcomes MGs to the Tennant Lake Fragrance Garden



Touring the perennial garden with Whatcom County MG Linda Bergquist

## Summer Road Trip Lower Mainland MGs tour Hovander Homestead in Ferndale, Washington

On Wednesday, August 13, 46 Master Gardeners from around the Lower Mainland boarded a bus at VanDusen Botanical Garden and headed south of the border for a summer field trip to Ferndale, Washington.

Our first stop was the Tennant Lake Fragrance Garden, where we were met by Peter O'Ceán of Whatcom County Parks and Recreation. He toured us through the fragrance garden, a cooperative project between the Chuckanut District garden clubs and the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission. The idea of a garden for the non-sighted was initially conceived in 1967 by two garden club members who persevered to see \$10,000 in initial donations from garden clubs.

In 1984 the wheelchair-accessible garden was planted with more than 200 herbs and flowers, selected for their fragrance and texture. Each of the plants in the raised planting beds has Braille signage and visitors are encouraged to brush the leaves to release their fragrance.

After a tasty lunch and margaritas at a local Mexican restaurant the group moved on to visit the next garden.

At Hovander Homestead we were met by Master Gardener David Simonson and more than 10 other MGs, who were on hand to guide our group through the demonstration gardens and heritage home. The gardens included a weed identification garden and vegetable, dahlia, herb and medicinal plant, native, annual, and perennial beds. There was a huge pumpkin patch and that morning the MGs had picked many pounds of vegetables to be donated to the local food bank.

Before we left the Whatcom County Master Gardeners hosted us with cool drinks and sweet snacks at tables set in an idyllic location in the shade of large walnut trees in the garden. The MGs were delighted to have us visit as ours was the largest delegation ever to tour Hovander Homestead.

A quick trip back through Canada Customs got the busload of gardeners home again in time for dinner.

The gardens are easy to find off the I-5. Just follow the map included on the park website at [www.co.whatcom.wa.us/parks/hovander/hovander.jsp](http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/parks/hovander/hovander.jsp). The Whatcom County MGs welcome more visits across the border from MGABC members.

—Judy Zipursky



# Newsletter

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

## Mission Statement

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

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

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

Newsletter layout by Wendy Jones.

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

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



# MG Calendar

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

General meeting  
**What's New at UBC Botanical Garden**  
Dr. Ingrid Hoff  
Joint meeting with VanDusen Guides

**Friday, September 19,  
9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Follow-up workshop  
**More About Bugs**  
Kwantlen University School of Horticulture, Langley Campus  
The cost is \$100 (bring your own lunch). Registration is limited to 30. Please send cheques to Susan Lazar by September 10. Make cheques payable to September Master Gardener Workshop

**Thursday, September 25,  
8:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

Whatcom County Master Gardener Annual Advanced Training Seminar  
Fox Hall, Hampton Inn  
3985 Bennett Drive  
Bellingham, WA  
Find out more at <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/mastergardener/>

**Monday, October 20, 7:30 p.m.**

General meeting  
**Plant ID**  
A presentation by Advanced Master Gardeners

**Wednesday, November 12, 9:30 a.m.**

General meeting  
**Annual general meeting**

**Sunday, December 14, 2:00 p.m.**  
Christmas party

## Master Gardeners Association of British Columbia Contact List 2008

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