

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

Volume 1, Issue 1 members.vimga.org

December 2020



President's Message

Board of Directors- thanks to all who volunteered to serve VIMGA and move us forward.

Several new initiatives are being discussed: addressing our needs to stay in touch with each other and especially to connect with our MGITs and other new members is key here. How to accumulate the necessary volunteer hours , especially to allow MGITs to graduate, is also high on the list.

Finally, thanks to all who have worked hard while on the Board for VIMGA but who are now stepping down and welcome to the new Board members.

For now I am looking forward to a quiet season, (some) garden chores done and other things thriving in my winter vegetable garden (which Linda Gilkeson calls "the larder").

Wishing you all a safe, healthy and well winter season,

Dorothee



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- Mike O'Neill

The **AGM** was a different one this year and everyone was Zooming it up. We had a lead up Zoom practice session that was a bit of fun and helped some members navigate more confidently with Zoom which was our goal. 48 Members joined us for the official "elections" and to celebrate our members.

Carla Sorensen, our secretary, could not attend the meeting and thank you Cameron for stepping up to be our secretary for today.

The AGM was opened by our past president Chris Southwick and presentations were made by our outgoing treasurer, Cameron Smith, and our incoming president, Dorothee Kieser. District member reports were presented by Martha Jean Clarke for Cowichan Valley, Mike O'Neill for Nanaimo, and Toine Rhemtulla for Parksville/Qualicum/Nanoose. Mark Fleming gave a report for the North Island as the District Planner, highlighting their growth to 7 members and their first Zoom social organized by Cathy Lund.

Cameron presented the financials for VIMGA and the 2021 budget. He also introduced the incoming Treasurer Jane Kerr.

Martha Jean introduced the incoming Cowichan District Rep, Jacqueline Sherk. Ruth Beilman will be taking over as

Parksville/Qualicum/Nanoose rep. Mike O'Neill will be staying on as Nanaimo Rep as well as vice-president.

The regional planning coordinator Dorothee, she celebrated Cameron Smith's excellent work on our computer systems and their benefits particularly for the RPC. She reported 73 active members in VIMGA compared to 54 for 2019! Advice hours were down from 1488 in 2019 to 303 in 2020. A glaring reminder of our current situation. Debora Gurrad will be our incoming RPC.

Dorothee presented the Lead Mentor's report highlighting the challenges this year for our 19 MGITs, we are being challenged to figure out how to deliver our program to them due to Covid 19 restrictions.

Our Continuing Education Committee will be co-chaired by Jan Thorsen and Wendy Strachan this year. Jacqueline Sherk and Chris will share the MGABC Rep role.

Karen Bennett reported on the Garden Advice Line from April 14 to October 27, 174 advice hours through GAL this year. Many of the GAL volunteers were MGITs.

Kay Howard reported on Plant Pick articles and FAQ written

by members. Details coming later.

Nominating committee report was given by Mike O'Neill and the slate of candidates elected by acclamation. Positions unfilled at this time are North Island Rep, Nanaimo District Planner, Lead Mentor, previously Paul Lawry, and Sunshine Committee, previously Shannon Baptie. Thank you for your excellent service Shannon and Paul!

highlights

Working on ways to fulfill our programs for members in the coming year will be a priority for us. Members encouraged to submit ideas.

MGITs are granted an additional year to complete their required 65 hours. Identifications are due September 2021 but advice hour requirements and graduation time are yet to be determined.

All Four Districts had almost all clinics cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Our membership is growing and our VIMGA remains strong and active!

Our VIMGA Community



After hearing our wonderful honorary member Linda Gilkeson's talk at our MGAGM the volunteers at the Milner Gardens Food Garden felt inspired and got busy!

After having a challenging spring and summer at the garden due to the pandemic, we decided to try to do a tidy up in the garden in hopes of a fruitful spring and growing a garden in 2021!

Our fearless leader, Geoff Ball got on our new bobcat and brought us some amazing compost/soil and shredded wood from the back forty. These gals, Sally Shivers, Angela Einarson, Liz Cullen, Heather Crossen, Cyanne Bertoia, and new volunteer Katherine Fouchard spent a day weeding, liming, adding soil to the raised beds and putting wood chips over all the paths to keep the weeds down. We also got in a bed of garlic for the kitchen at Milner. It was an amazing day of fun, comradery, and hard work but all agreed it was a job well done!

Our dream for the food garden is to create a demonstration garden for visitors to learn good sustainable gardening practices that will create excitement in the public to start a vegetable garden of their own.

Would you like to help? Please contact Angela at einaron@outlook.com. We would love to have more MG's involved in this wonderful project. We typically work on Thursdays but are looking for more help on any day!

- **Liz Cullen**



and the **AWARD** goes to

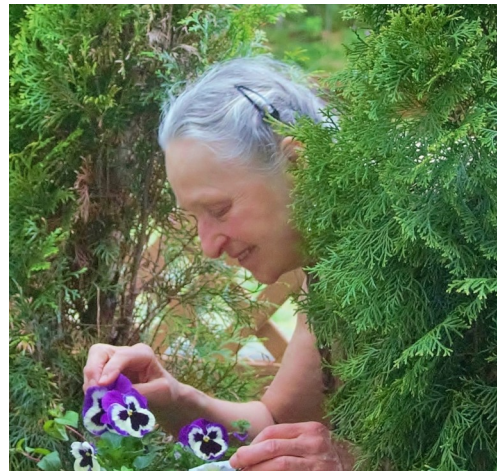


SILVER SPADE

Our second annual **SILVER SPADE AWARD** is awarded to **Chris Southwick**. Chris follows our new president, Dorothee Kieser in claiming this honour.

CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

Karen Bennett & Jo Canning



LIFETIME MEMBER

Paul Lawry

Rain Gardens—Why Should I Care?



Deb Jones' ditch-scaping project outside her home.

Ditch envy anyone?

Following up on our recent AGM education event, 'What is a Rain Garden, and Why Should I Care', brought my memory back to the first time I heard the term, 'rain garden'. Those two words together formed an enchanting picture in my mind of a beautiful garden shining in the rain. Living on the south coast of BC and being very familiar with rain as an all too common weather event, I wondered what was being implied.

Well, rain gardens as it turns out, are really about waste water management, and while that doesn't sound very inspiring, the fact is that rain gardens really are inspiring. They're inspiring people like you and me, and businesses and communities to change the way we think about water and where it goes when we don't want it. If we didn't know before, we have learned now that the water that drains off of our roofs and driveways and roads mostly enters drains,

pipes and culverts and eventually all ends up in our creeks and waterways.

Too much water all at once is never a good thing, especially for fish and other marine life. And that is where the rain garden comes in. Instead of polluted run-off being funneled into pipes and overwhelming our creeks, it can instead be used to provide life-giving moisture to natural or planted areas that can benefit from it. That beautiful garden shining in the rain can be mine if I want it to be, or as Deb Jones explained in her presentation, whether it is a beautiful garden or just down-spouted water to an area of your landscape, you are already benefiting the environment and protecting fish.

We thank Deb Jones for her excellent presentation and her strong environmental consciousness. If you didn't see the presentation, you can view a recording on the

VIMGA members website.

members.vimga.org

Footnote: There's more! If you were inspired to hear more about 'ditch-scaping', our newsletter editor, Jan, has discovered a 2003 article that Deb wrote for Pacific Horticulture magazine that is very detailed in Deb's own ditch-scaping experience. It's a great read, especially if you're a DIY person! - **Jacqueline Sherk**

<https://www.pacifichorticulture.org/articles/a-tale-of-three-ditches/>



Another view of Deb's ditch.

Special Recognition & WELCOME to New Members

15 years: Heather Crosson, Kay Howard, Gail Hudson, Richard Kuhn

20 years: Kim Hammond, Wendy Smith

25 years: Jo Canning, Jim Taylor

New members:

Fern Hietkamp, Jacqueline Sherk

The Master Gardeners in Training Class (MGiT's) of 2019

Danaca Ackerson, Laura Amour, Jamie Baird, Joanne Barwise, Ruth Beilman, Richard Bernier, Wanda Brenton, Tracy Cochrane, Bob Esliger,

Debora Gurrad, Ute Holewa, April Johnston, Adele LaBrie, Karen Laity, Susan Lewis, Elaine McGuinness, Laura McLeod, Thea, Miller, Kathie Tolson, and Laurie Untereiner

Slate for VIMGA Board and Committees 2020 – 2021 (Green: New enrollment)

Nominations for Elected Positions:

President: Dorothee Kieser
Past President: Chris Southwick
Vice President: Mike O'Neill
Secretary: Carla Sorenson
Treasurer: Jane Kerr



Picture from Dorothee. Kieser.

Appointed Committees/Positions:

Regional Planning Coordinator: Debora Gurrad
MGABC Rep: Jacqueline Sherk / Chris Southwick
North Island Representative: Cathy Lund
Parksville/Qualicum/NanOOSE Representative: Ruth Beilman
Nanaimo Representative: Mike O'Neill
Cowichan Representative: Jacqueline Sherk
Membership Chair: Martha Jean Clarke
CEC Chair(s): Jan Thorsen and Wendy Strachan
North Island District Planner: Mark Fleming
Parksville/Qualicum/NanOOSE District Planner: Karen Bennett
Nanaimo District Planner: OPEN
Cowichan District Planner: Gwen Redcliffe
Garden Advice Line: Karen Bennett
Plant Pick Articles: Kay Howard
Badge Officer: Margaret Graham
Program Management Committee: Dorothee Kieser, Karen Bennett
Lead Mentor: OPEN
Sunshine Committee: Martha Jean Clarke

Contact your VIMGA Board executive@vimga.org

Advice Hours



WAYS TO GET ADVICE HOURS

- **Garden Advice Line for Milner Gardens (GAL):** Opening in March
- Re: ways to get advice hours... in addition to the 2 opportunities at Milner, we also have presenting a library seminar which will earn a member between 4 and 6 volunteer hours. Offering articles on the web page is another possibility.
- **Garden Advice Parties (GAP):** This is a traditional clinic held in a private garden by a two or three member VIMGA team, at least one of whom is a CMG. Usual length is two hours. GAP's are usually initiated by members of the public at face to face clinics. For more information, go to your Member Manual, page 38.
- **ZOOM:** Ever thought of running your own ZOOM meeting either by yourself or with a buddy? While the prospect may seem daunting, remember VIMGA members have vast areas of expertise. Jo Canning has been giving education talks at the Nanaimo Library (pre-covid) and now in zoom format. Jo is looking for speakers on the following:

Vines for the Northwest: natives, annuals, perennials, edibles (3 or 4 speakers)

The World Food Organization at the UN reports that this coming year may see an increase in big food shortages worldwide. Sooooo we are focusing this year on as many food crop seminars as we can. We've already presented on sprouts. We have **seed starting, winter veggies**, maybe **squash and pumpkins**.

Jo is also looking for:

Tomatoes: (*some ideas might be*) varieties for salads and sauces, growing in-ground and containers, and winter storage varieties for your larder.

Beans, beans, beans: (*some ideas might be*) bush, vine, horticultural, perennial, and how to dry your harvest.

Asian greens: a year-round harvest of fast, easy and nutritious foods

The best berries for the backyard garden (1-3 speakers)

Herbs: the edible landscape perennials and annuals and how to preserve them for winter feasts (1-3 speakers)

If you have experience with any of these please let me know and we'll get started. For every hour or portion you speak, you get 4 times the volunteer hours i.e., for each hour you get 5 hours credit total. Thanks for considering working with me on this community outreach. Contact Jo at sun-coast-pearl@telus.net

- **Library Sessions** are posted on their website: <https://virl.bc.ca/calendar/>



Education Opportunities

Looking for ways on how to get your 10+ hours of education? Well, look no further. Here are just some of the opportunities to connect with others and build on your gardening expertise.



- Striking the Balance, "Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere". It is a fairly long presentation, but well worth watching to the end where it connects to the information from our VIMGA Presentation on Rain Gardens. I am so excited about the whole concept and how we as Master Gardeners can really make a science-informed difference to our communities and ultimately our planet's well-being through our gardening expertise and know-how. Enjoy on these dark and rainy days.
- **Chris Southwick** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOHStZSVGbc>

Following video suggestions from **Diana Walker**

- What comes to mind when you hear the word "saffron"? The colour yellow? The fact that it's used as a flavouring agent? Or that it's very expensive? My guess is the third option—the cost! So why is it so expensive? Well, if you watch the following video, all will be revealed! Hope you find it interesting. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fP2WUnBjmkk>
- Many years ago while on a visit to Barbados I discovered Myristica fragrans—the tree on which both nutmeg and mace grow—fascinating. Nutmeg is actually the seed of this tree and is found inside a plumlike fruit hanging from the tree. This seed is covered in a lacework of red arils which, when peeled off and dried, actually become mace!! <https://youtu.be/fFpANc-n6aA>
- If you've ever used cloves in your kitchen, there is so much to know about this wonderful spice. First of all, the clove tree is Syzgium aromaticum (SIZ-ID-GIUM0 from the Myrtaceae family and, secondly, cloves have a whole lot of good things going for you, if you eat two a day! Because they contain eugenol, or clove oil, they can do everything from freshening your breath, treating toothache, and more rarely, if taken orally, treat gastrointestinal and respiratory complaints!
<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/benefits-of-cloves>

To round off our education sampling, check out **Linda Chalker-Scott's internet sites**

- On Linda's webpage, she maintains a listing of downloadable horticultural myth columns.
<http://www.theinformedgardener.com>

The Garden Professors blog. There are almost 8 years' worth of archives in this science-based forum. Simply search the site using the search box in the upper right hand corner:

<http://gardenprofessors.com/>

- The Garden Professors Facebook group. If you join this group (you must have a Facebook account) you can post your question, which will be more quickly answered by one of the hundreds of participants. There is also a search function (the little magnifying glass in the upper right hand corner). Linda manages this group and if there's any misinformation provided she will correct it:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/GardenProfessors/>
- WSU's Gardening in Washington website. This resource has only current, peer-reviewed publications, most of them as free downloads. Much of this information is useful outside of Washington state as well. <http://gardening.wsu.edu/>



*I have taken one of
OSU's free courses and
found it useful.*

- Dorothee Kieser

Oregon State University (OSU) <https://workspace.oregonstate.edu/>

Have a number of courses starting in the new year. Many of these courses fill up well ahead of time, so make sure you don't miss out! Classes can help you train in the critical fields of e-learning, permaculture design, writing and more!. And all of these courses allow you to train with OSU expert instructors in a convenient online format. There are some free courses online as well as paid.

Gaia College <https://www.gaiacollege.ca/>

Offers paid courses to advance your master gardening expertise. Online courses start in January, May, and September and run 14 weeks. All graduates are welcomed into the Gaia community with lifetime access to resources and online forums – it's easy to update your skills!

From your Continuing Education Committee.....

Want to build on your knowledge of rain gardens????

Ken Nentwig (retired landscape architect and educator) will give a one hour ZOOM presentation on "Water Efficiency in the Landscape."

When: Saturday, February 6th at 10 a.m.

Spring Education Meeting, March 2021 (SED)

We are very much looking forward to having Brian Minter as our guest presenter to talk about "What's New in Food Gardening?"

More information on both events to follow.

CEC Committee Members: Wendy Strachan, Jan Thorsen, Mary Shakespeare,
Chris Southwick, Jacqueline Sherk and Liz Cullen

odds & sods



Summer-Flowering Bulbs
Shared Order
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Canna, Callas and More!
Order Together in 2020

Pay on Arrival in 2021

We Buy Bulk and Share Shipping
Costs!

For more info Contact

jacquelinesherk@gmail.com



From the Native Bee Society The [Native Bee Society of BC](#)

is currently looking for volunteers to join their Board of Directors & Committees and also to expand their general membership. They would absolutely love to have some VI Master Gardeners join their team!

No matter where you live, you can join a day of garden learning. Victoria Master Gardeners present Mixing It Up in the Urban Garden, a well-regarded conference, for new and seasoned gardeners. On January 30th, 5 phenomenal speakers will discuss the 2021 theme: *Roots, Shoots & Leaves*. The 2021 conference will be presented virtually from 8 to 4:30ish, including connecting with vendors, a gardeners' chat room, a Silent Auction, and much more. Find conference details on our [Mixing It Up page](#). Know enough already? Register now at [Karelo](#)



what is VIMGA's purpose?.....

VIMGA exists to provide education to the public on environmentally responsible and effective gardening practices by developing and delivering public workshops, seminars and volunteer clinics, and by publishing information on these topics.

In these unusual times, your VIMGA Executive has introduced another way of "Cultivating Community" and communicating with our members via this newsletter. Our wish is to make this a viable source of information for you. Please give us your comments and consider submitting an article or picture.

Many thanks from your newsletter committee:

Jan Thorsen, Jacqueline Sherk, Mike O'Neill

Send all submissions to thorsenj@shaw.ca