

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

Volume 1 Issue 3

members.vimga.org

June, 2021



Editor's Letter

Summer is Just Around the Corner

The rain is pelting down and I am very happy. No watering for me today! The long range BC weather forecast for June is predicting "wetter than normal conditions" but as we all know, gardening on Vancouver Island can soon turn to "drier than normal!"

One of the great things about being part of a gardening community is learning from others. Whether it be by listening to outstanding speakers, or chatting with our fellow VIMGA members via our Virtual Advice Clinics, I have continued to 'grow' as a gardener. An old Gardens West magazine reminded me of a quote by Richard Tirendi: "If you're the smartest one in the room, you're in the wrong room." The *Zoom Room* I may add.



Jan Thorsen

In this edition you will find important information about upcoming events, a message from our president along with regional reports and of course, how to log those clinic and education hours. Jacqueline Scherk and I have written an article on "landscape fabric" which we hope you will find useful. Also included is a special tribute to our long standing members who over the years have contributed so much to our VIMGA community.

A new feature is a salute to our new Master Gardeners. The first in the series is by Gwen Redcliffe from Cowichan. We look forward to reading about new members to VIMGA in upcoming editions.

To end, your education committee is working on the upcoming AGM in November. Stay tuned for an update of education opportunities including more ways to get advice hours.

Happy summer!

Jan

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President's Message



Since the last newsletter, VIMGA learned that VIU had received a sizable donation from a Vancouver Master Gardener (Liz Haan) for an award to students who are graduating as Master Gardeners. Since VIU had received the donation some while ago, it has accumulated interest and we will be able to hand out 2 awards of \$500 each at our Fall AGM. We are currently working on the selection criteria and the application form for interns and will be sending out more information before long. Please see the article on awards also in this newsletter...

More good news:

Long-standing Master Gardeners/VIMGA Members: Wendy Smith -20 years, Kay Howard and Gail Hudson-15 year. All have received their new badges and we are very happy to have such dedicated and active members. And grandest number goes to Jo Canning- 25 years. VIMGA has never encountered such an amazing feat before, so unfortunately we do not have an appropriate badge. The most sincere congratulations go to Jo for all the work she has done on behalf of the MG community. Most recently she has initiated and led the Vancouver Island Library series of gardening seminars which most of you will have participated in. And now she is looking for a VIMGA member to take over from her or at least help with the program. Please consider stepping forward-it does also give advice hours!

MGABC AGM in 2022:

VIMGA has agreed to host the 2022 AGM for the Master Gardener Association of BC. We had volunteered for 2020, but Covid interfered. So here is our chance to put on an exciting program. I hope that many of you will volunteer to help Jacqueline and Chris to get it set up.

Mentoring students to become CMGs:

It is time to overhaul the Mentoring Program for the Advanced Gardening Course and the intern period (formerly known as Master-Gardeners-in Training) of the next class to be held January-March 2022. I will be putting out detailed information on the "upgrade" in the future. We are considering having two groups of mentors: 1) "Mentor of the week" who is particularly interested and knowledgeable in the class topic of the week (e.g. pruning, roses..) and 2) "Continuing mentor" who will guide a group of 3-4 students during their intern period, help with plant IDs and mark them and general assist with the process of interns becoming CMGs. **Do consider becoming a mentor.**

Code of Conduct:

VIMGA is working on a Code of Conduct, something that many other MG chapters already have and details will be coming in the fall.

Lastly: A Reminder (probably totally unnecessary), please log your advice & education hours in a timely fashion. In each year: CMGs need 10 education and 15 advice hours and Alumni members need 5 education hours. To graduate, Interns need 65 advice hours in total; 10 education hours in each year; and completion of their plant IDs.

For students of the 2019 class, the time lines are as follows:

All plant IDs must be accepted signed of as completed by the Mentor of the intern by October 31, 2021.

For interns who wish to graduate at the fall 2021 AGM, plant IDs and 65 volunteer hours must be completed by August 15, 2021 so that their names can be passed on to VIU to issue the certificate.

For interns who have not completed their 65 volunteer hours by August 15, 2021, you will have until August 2022 and if all requirements are satisfied, you will graduate at the 2022 AGM.

Wishing you a happy, productive, and safe gardening summer,

Dorothee

Special Recognition Badges

20 Years Badge

Twenty years! Where has the time gone? I took my MG training back in 2001. I thought I would wait until I retired to become a Master Gardener but then I thought that my garden would be so much better if I took the course earlier. I enjoyed every class of the course I took at Van Dusen Gardens in Vancouver. I couldn't get enough of learning about soils, compost and beneficial insects...so much to learn! My gardening practices evolved over time and my garden in Langley prospered and was my happy place for many years. When I decided to retire in 2009 and move to Parksville on Vancouver Island I was very happy to discover that there were Master Gardeners there as well and I transferred my membership to VIMGA. Over the past 20 years I have attended wonderful seminars and conferences, completed many clinics, met many interesting people who shared my love of gardening and continued to discover that the more I studied gardening the more I realized that there was still more to learn! In 2019 I decided that I needed a refresher and took the Advanced Master Gardener course...again at VanDusen Gardens. I completed the core courses before I went to Australia for our annual visit to family. Unfortunately we experienced a drought, bushfires and the coronavirus which has prevented us from returning to Canada. Even though I am so far away I have continued to complete my education hours and advice hours. I am now learning all about the unusual Australian natives which grow here. Hopefully we will be able to return to Canada in the not so distant future and I will be able to continue with the Advanced Master Gardener electives and complete the course. I also look forward to getting together with you all once again. Until then stay safe and happy gardening!



Wendy Smith in Australia

15 Years Badge

I decided to become a master gardener after talking with Linda Rehlinger while volunteering at Milner Gardens. After achieving certification I spent about 6 years as a mentor which allowed me to hear the whole course all over again which I probably needed. For 3 years I shared the position of PQ Area Rep with Angela Einarson and between us we also did the job of District Planner. When Milner Gardens suggested opening the GAL line, Dorothee, Karen and I formed an ad hoc committee that oversaw the establishment and operation of that. For the last 3 years I have administered the publication of Plant Pick and FAQ articles which includes collecting, editing and submitting those for publication in the Milner Newsletter. This year my involvement has also been focused on the VACs on zoom.



- Kay Howard

Kay Howard in Croatia

Special Recognition Badges cont....

15 Years Badge

When I enrolled in the MG program in 2005, I had no idea what I was getting into! It's been great in so many ways. Advice clinics at the VIEX, seedy Sunday or the local Buckerfields all gave wonderful learning opportunities from other MGs and folks asking questions.

As District Planner I had the pleasure of organizing those advice clinics. Every annual meeting and open garden offered more inspiration. I have also been very involved in the local Hort. Society. I am grateful to be part of an organization that abounds with wonderful people who love to grow and help others do the same.



Gail Hudson

VIMGA Award Now Live!



Vancouver Island Master Gardener award for Interns completing the program in 2021 will be awarded in 2021!

We will award two \$500.00 cash payments to graduates of the Class of 2019 who have completed their program requirements to become a Certified Master Gardener. To be eligible Interns should have completed their plant ID's and all other aspects of the Intern program. Qualified applicants will be sent application forms in July via email and must submit them no later than September 1, 2021 to the VIMGA awards committee. The recipients will be selected from the applications received and announced at our November AGM. Awards will be sent directly to the successful applicants in January 2022.

"The award will be given to Master Gardeners in Training in their second year of the VIMGA Master Gardener Program. Applicants must demonstrate commitment to obtaining their Master Gardener Qualification by completing the program and provide a brief statement that demonstrates their enthusiasm, knowledge, and experience in supporting horticulture programs that benefit the community".

VIMGA Members Program Change to December 31, 2021!

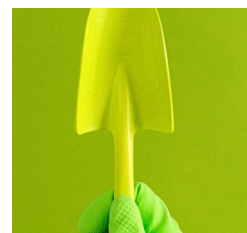
The Board of Directors recently changed our Member Program year end from October 31 to December 31. This change does not effect our fiscal year end which will remain as October 31 as our official year end under the Societies Act, only our member program year.

What this means to members is that **you will have until December 31, 2021 to complete your CMG and INTERN program requirements** whereas previously this date was October 31. (14 months for 2021 year) This change was made to facilitate our program administration which will provide our members with a simpler automated reporting structure in the future. It will have no impact on our program and events for members. Effective for our 2022 operating year the members programs will run from January 1 to December 31 each year.

Note that CMG Interns must complete their program requirements earlier to meet the criteria for our Vancouver Island Master Gardener Award for graduating INTERNS.

Golden Trowel Award

Hi Folks – As you know it is time for MGABC to invite nominees for the MGABC **Golden Trowel Award**.

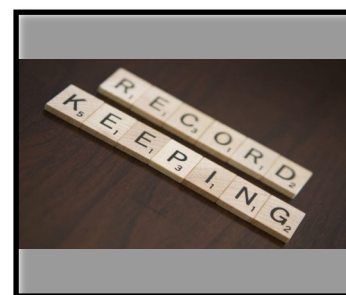


It is not a fillable form, so nominations may be submitted in any way that is convenient for the proposers. Please contact Jan at thorsenj@shaw.ca for the form.

Please circulate to your Executive Committees and Chapter members and ask them to submit nominations to lindaderkach@shaw.ca

Record of Hours Update

There is still some confusion about how to enter on the website the Advice Hours earned for the Virtual Advice Clinics. There are differing numbers of hours being claimed for the VACs and as many as 20 members are still being shortchanged. Here is the breakdown for how those hours should be entered.



- Every participant gets 1.5 hours for the event itself, entered in the Clinic Advice Hours column.
- The CC gets an additional 2 hours for prep, entered in the Other Advice Hours column.
- MGITs get an additional 2 hours for prep, entered in the Other Advice Hours column.
- All other CMGs participating in the VAC get an additional 1 hour for prep, entered in the Other Advice Hours column.
- Any CMG who logs in just to listen but not participate gets no hours.

Therefore CCs and MGITs should be getting a total of 3-1/2 Advice Hours for each VAC they participate in and CMGs should be getting 2-1/2 hours for each. PLEASE CHECK FOR ACCURACY THE HOURS ENTERED ON THE VIMGA WEBSITE FOR YOUR VACs.

It would be very helpful to the Board if everyone could get their hours updated on the website sooner rather than later. We understand that many of you keep track of your hours all year and then enter them toward the deadline in October. However, unlike “normal” years where opportunities to earn Advice Hours continue into the Fall, this year those opportunities are dwindling fast. The Board would like to know what the need is for members to earn additional Advice Hours while there is still time to arrange for them.

- *Debbie Gurrad, Regional Planning Coordinator*

A Special Welcome

This is the first in a series of welcoming new members to VIMGA. In upcoming issues we will introduce you to more of your VIMGA colleagues.

Cowichan District is delighted to announce the upcoming graduation this November for our **Interns: Joanne Barwise, Ute Holewa, April Johnston** and **Laurie Untereiner**. Many thanks to our CMG's willingness to conquer the zoom challenge to acquire the necessary credits. The congeniality of seeing each other was stimulating as well as immensely informative!

Laurie Untereiner

The Virtual Advice Clinics (VAC) are great! Our Challenge: Research 6 new questions for each session. Our collective experiential knowledge and ensuing dialogue between ourselves and the CMGs augmented the research findings! We screen share our resources and visual aids. I look forward to the educational potential of engaging the public in person, with email or on zoom. It's ironic, that Covid has brought us closer together.



April Johnston

My involvement in the Master Gardener program although challenging, has been a rewarding educational experience. As an executive member of the Ladysmith Saltair Garden Club, I can happily report that the articles written by our Cowichan Interns to answer the Club's gardening questions, were thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated. I believe all of us learned a lot in the research and writing of these articles. I look forward to future non-virtual contact with my fellow MG members!



Joanne Barwise

I am so grateful to my Mentor, Carla Sorensen, District Planner, Gwen Redcliffe and our Cowichan MGs. Your support that ensured our success has been inspiring and humbling. I have learned a wealth of information. Most importantly, I know that I am in a community of gardeners who love what they do. My 3rd and recent article on Slugs, has been published in Take 5 Magazine this June. My gardening focus on native plants and native bees will be presented in a webinar co-hosted by the Nanaimo Vancouver Island Regional Library and VIMGA called Petal Walkers: Planting for Pollinators in October.



Ute Holewa

By teaching we learn - by learning we grow (and so do the plants!)

Never truer than when a group of enthusiastic gardeners share knowledge and discuss plant challenges. What a steep learning curve,

participating in Milner GAL (Garden Advice Line) and the Cowichan VAC; love you all for your guidance and support!



- submitted by Gwen Redcliffe, District Planner

Landscape Fabric or no???

For many years, I thought that the best way to eliminate weeds and lessen my workload was to purchase landscape fabric—copious amounts of landscape fabric which often was referred to as geotextiles by helpful store clerks. What did I know? Not a lot apparently.

In March, Jacqueline Scherk and I had an interesting conversation with two of our presenters—Deb Jones (Rain Gardens) and Ken Nentwig—(Water Efficiency in the Landscape). We wanted to follow-up on the confusion of landscape fabric and geo-textiles. Terms that are sometimes used interchangeably. BUT there are discernible differences. According to SF gate <https://homeguides.sfgate.com/landscape-fabric-vs-drain-field-fabric>



*Some **landscape fabrics** and all drain field fabrics are **geotextiles**, but they are different products intended for very different uses; **landscape fabric** is used mainly as a physical barrier, and drain field **fabric** is used as a filter.”*

We thought perhaps Deb and Ken were disagreeing about the use of these fabrics in our landscape. Ken was advocating for and Deb against. Not so, says Deb who took notes of our conversation. Here is Deb’s brief synopsis:

- Landscape fabric is what's sold in stores as a weed barrier; we all agree it's terrible stuff, not effective, not conducive to soil & plant health.
- Geotextile's purpose is to keep different materials from intermixing with each other, while still letting water pass through.
- In rain gardens, geotextile is called for only when -- in addition to the soil-filled rain garden itself -- there is a rock-filled space **underneath** the garden. This rock-filled space, protected by geotextile, would be down **below** the 450mm/18 inch excavation depth that's typically recommended for rain gardens.
- In this application, the purpose of the geotextile is to keep sediments out of rocks, so as to preserve the open spaces among those rocks, where water can be held.
- Homeowners would rarely if ever go for this kind of rain garden construction, because we don't have the energy/equipment/money to dig down deep enough to install that additional rock-pit storage capacity.
- In other words, we should just follow the simpler design that's described in the Seattle Rain wise Factsheet and many other sources: excavate, scarify (a new step I learned from Ken), backfill with a spongy soil/compost mix, contour, plant, mulch ... done! (ensuring there's a safe overflow destination, of course).
- Ken Nentwig’s website is: www.rainwatercanada.ca
- Deb Jones can be contacted at: <https://waterbucket.ca/wscblog/2020/06/02/deltas-rain-garden-program-second-decade-of-citizen-science-in-action/>

To view a recording of our discussion with Ken Nentwig and Deb Jones on Landscape Fabric vs Geotextiles. Here is a link to the our Zoom directory in the VIMGA cloud <https://cloud.vimga.org/index.php/apps/files/?dir=/ZOOM%>

Landscape Fabric cont....

In addition, Deb says, I think I did get my point across that if a regular garden (not a rain garden) is already established, one can often simply disconnect a roof downspout and direct that downspout into the garden. Just experiment first by running a hose for a good while, to make sure the water doesn't pose a risk to a neighbor's basement or one's own—i.e. that it has a safe place to overflow to (natural area, ditch, catch basin in street) in case rainfall is particularly heavy.

Deb ends by stating that she appreciated Ken's confirmation of her own concerns that we aren't taking water issues seriously into account when we build. Flood and drought are the inevitable long-term consequences when we prevent rain water from soaking into the ground—on a large scale as a city, town, suburb or clear-cut. And yet, despite many historical examples of the folly of destroying permeable landscapes, we continue to put residential "design" and "fashion" ahead of hydrological sustainability.

As home gardeners and more importantly, Master Gardeners, it is necessary to get ahold of the uses of landscape fabrics, both pros and cons—especially during our Advice Clinics. I still witness newly landscaped projects, complete with landscape fabrics and holes cut out for junipers. Don't do it! I want to shout, I have made the same mistake! Better yet, learn from an expert. Linda Chalker-Scott is one such expert who has written about the myth of landscape fabric on her website: <https://gardenprofessors.com/landscape-fabric-a-cautionary-tale/> Linda cautions:

Like the perpetual dieter searching for a permanent weight loss pill, so we as landscape professionals and consumers continue to seek permanent weed control solutions. Unfortunately, there is no such permanent fix. We must remain "ever vigilant" in our battle with weeds and cannot rely on a product to do this passively. The fact is that weed control fabrics are not permanent and will decompose, especially when exposed to sunlight. Such fabrics are effective in agricultural situations, in annual planting beds, or where the landscape is regularly disturbed and the fabrics can be replaced when needed. For permanent landscapes, however, they are not a long term solution and in fact can hinder landscape plant health. Some of the documented drawbacks of these fabrics are listed below.

- *Geotextiles degrade in the landscape in as little as one year if unprotected from sunlight.*
 - *Any organic matter or soil on top of the fabrics will hasten their colonization by weeds; this precludes covering the fabric with anything but inorganic mulch like pebbles. It also requires continual maintenance to keep the fabric free of debris.*
- *Weeds will eventually grow on top of and through these fabrics, making their removal difficult.*
- *Landscape plant roots can also colonize fabrics, and they are damaged when the fabrics are removed.*
- *The aesthetic quality of landscape fabrics is minimal; it becomes worse as the materials begin to degrade.*

- submitted by Jacqueline Scherk and Jan Thorsen

Area Representative Updates:

Mike O'Neill - Nanaimo District Member Representative **mikeoneill@campbellclan.ca**



Mike O'Neill

Our current membership list shows the following information for the Nanaimo area:

Members – 33
Consisting of:
Regular Certified Master Gardeners - 18
Master Gardeners in Training – 7
Members on LOA – 2
Lifetime Members – 2
Alumnus Members - 4

Nothing has been going on socially with current COVID restrictions but things are looking up and we should be able to gather together later this year!

Having had a look at the completion of advice and education reports on the Web site. There are still many members that have little or no entries to date and I will be following up with those members as we move through the summer. Hopefully everyone is getting their education and advice hours and just have not entered them on to the form yet. If you need help let me know ASAP with an email.

Please note that if you have not or feel you might not achieve your requirements this year you need to reach out and get some help with that. There are plenty of opportunities for Education hours for members and Advice hours are being made available as restrictions relax and new ideas come forward.

PLEASE UPDATE YOUR MEMBERS HOURS REPORT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

Looking forward to changes that will let us get back to face to face meetings doing what we do best for our community. Offering sound advice and ideas for healthy and prosperous gardens!

-Mike

Ruth Beilman – Qualicum/Parksville District Member Representative **aruc@shaw.ca**

Members – 18
Consisting of:
Regular Certified Master Gardeners - 7
Master Gardeners in Training – 4
Members on LOA – 1
Lifetime Members – 1
Alumnus Members - 5



Ruth Beilman

Master Gardeners in Training have participated in our Virtual Advice Clinics (VACs) and all 4 consider this a very good learning experience. Successful program.

Hoping that restrictions end soon and we can have our Garden Advice Parties and socialize!

- Ruth

Area Representative Updates:

Jacqueline Sherk – Cowichan District Member Representative
jacquelinesherk@gmail.com

Members – 18

Consisting of:

Regular Certified Master Gardeners - 11

Master Gardeners in Training – 4

Members on LOA – 3

Lifetime Members – 0

Alumnus Members - 1



Jacqueline Sherk

All CMG's in Cowichan district will have achieved their advice credits by the end of June. Gwen reports that the 65 credits required by our Interns to graduate will be completed by the end of June. Achieved through Virtual Advice Clinics (35 hours) and articles written for the Saltain Garden Club (30 hours)

Cowichan intern Joanne Barwise has written three articles for the Take 5 Magazine and has become a "Certified Pollinator Steward" through the Pollinator Partnership of Canada. Cowichan intern, Laurie Untereniner, has completed VIU's "Horticulture Technician" program. Congratulations to Joanne and Laurie!

The Zoom sessions have helped us to feel connected as we endured the COVID restrictions, we will continue to meet virtually at times even as we return to normal.

-Jacquelin

Cathy Lund – North Island District Member Representative
cathy-lund@shaw.ca

Members – 7

Consisting of:

Regular Certified Master Gardeners - 4

Master Gardeners in Training – 1

Members on LOA – 1

Lifetime Members – 0

Alumnus Members - 1



Cathy Lund

All Northern members are on track to complete their advice and education credits.

Over 20 Virtual Garden Advice Parties have been completed. Overall it has been an excellent opportunity for everyone. Jane Kerr was the lead with a cross section of gardens ranging from acreage to small suburban lot with many common issues.

Our Comox Valley Horticultural Society MG Q&A virtual sessions are coming along. We held the second of 3 sessions on June 7th with an improved format sharing photos and better dialogue with people that had submitted questions. Our 3rd and final one will be held in September. Approximately 25 questions have been received for each 90' zoom session and are being addressed by 3 CMGs.

We have had 4 onsite GAP Clinics at our members gardens. This has been an excellent learning and social opportunity, we have one more planned for later this summer and the last one in September.

- Cathy

VIRL Seminars A Big Hit With Gardeners

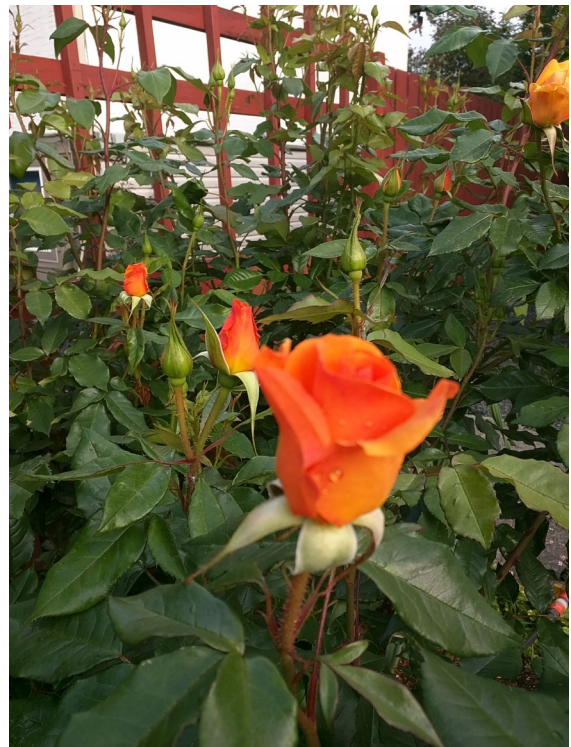
Report submitted by Jo Canning

We are halfway through our volunteer season in our partnership with the library. This year we offered an eclectic series, hoping to offer something for every gardener, and every subject has been well-attended. Audiences are at least three times as large as in-person seminars we've offered, averaging 60 attendees per session with the one on sprouts and microgreens topping the list at 176. In addition, the VIRL posts on *YouTube* have netted 835 viewers from November through May, with Chris' tour of her rhododendron garden leading at 222 views. All this with just 6 seminars! Kudos, fellow MGs!

Mike McNeill is in the process of posting the videos to our *icloud* account. While he is getting things all arranged and the techno-ducks in a row, you can watch any video on your laptop or phone, or plug in the earbuds and listen while you drive, or garden.

Log on to the library site by going to <https://www.youtube.com/c/vancouverislandregionallibrary>. Once there, click of the PLAYLISTS menu, then the "Virtual Gardening" heading, then "view full playlist." Your screen will go to the list, and each seminar will show when it was first posted, the length, and the number of views to date. Enjoy!

The next Zoom education session will be July 3, on winter vegetables. Register through the VIRL events calendar, and a reminder link to the zoom session will be sent to your inbox a couple of days prior to the event.



South Africa, a rugosa that blooms vigorously all summer and into the fall. One picture of a bud and one in full bloom. Delicate Fragrance. Needs hard pruning or lots space.

Pictures submitted by Beth Walrond

Member Corner



Submitted by Jo Canning



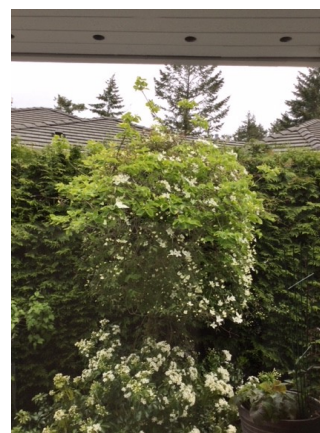
Submitted by Angela Einarson



Submitted by Jacqueline Scherk



Submitted by Jo Canning



Submitted by Antoinette
Rhemtulla
