

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

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members.vimga.org

September, 2021



Editor's Letter

A Summer of Challenges

Don't get me wrong. I love summer, but these past few months have been a tad challenging. The heat dome coupled with a broken water main, sorely tested my patience and muscles as we dug up the landscape to lay a new water line. Throughout, I looked to my plants and marveled that many made it — "a community of survivors" I thought (my family doesn't quite share my enthusiasm for the garden, so I talk to myself a lot).



Jan Thorsen

This word *community* has often been banded about. Yet in truth, never have communities been more important. One only has to look at this past weekend's virtual MGABC conference to know that the Master Gardening community is alive, well, and undertaking innovative ways of connecting. In our own VIMGA backyard there have been, and continues to be, an amazing group of dedicated members who have worked hard to keep our community thriving. Thank you!

This pandemic has halted our ability to meet new members in person and to say "hello" to old friends. Yet there are glimmers of hope that we will be able to gather again. For this, thank you for your continued support of VIMGA.

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.

Within this newsletter you will find a message from our outgoing president, Dorothee Kieser. We will be sad to see Dorothee go, but happy that she will stay on as lead mentor for the upcoming Master Gardener-in-Training course. Our AGM will be a virtual event once again on Saturday, Nov. 6th. And of course, you won't want to miss out on Jo Canning's advice for a changing climate. See you in November!

- Jan

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President's Message

President's Report:

Greetings and welcome to the rainy season. After the summer we had, which was stressful to many plants (although the warm weather crops like tomatoes and peppers liked it) it is good to get moisture back into the ground.

News on the VIMGA Front:

Deadlines for Interns:

Many of the interns from the class of 2019 will be graduating at our Fall AGM, having completed their Plant IDs, as well as advice and education hour requirements. That's great. While all Plant IDs must be completed by October 31, 2021, interns that still need advice hours have until next August to complete them to graduate at the 2022 AGM. Education hours must be completed in each calendar year. For those of you still needing hours there are wonderful and interesting possibilities listed in Jan's education portion of the newsletter.

Deadlines for CMGS:

Thank you to all who have managed to get and record their advice hours in during this year! The total of 15 hours is due on December 31, 2021. Please note too that CMGs are required to have 10 education hours each year. Given all the zoom presentations and workshops that have been available, I imagine you all have way more than that. But in addition to previous workshops and presentations, there are great education opportunities through the MGABC AGM on September 26th and the two day workshop "Fall into Gardening" starting October 23 and 24. See the Education section in this newsletter or look at a recent, informative email from Jan Thorsen and your education committee.

Awards:

The great reveal for the VIU award will be part of our AGM, as well as VIMGA's own Silver Spade award. I am excited to announce the winners.

Mentoring students to become CMGs: (A repeat request from June):

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 generally assist with the process of interns becoming CMGs. **Do consider becoming a mentor.**

I will be stepping down from the role as President to take on the role as Lead Mentor for the 2022 Advanced Gardening class. As a general rule, the VP (Mike O'Neill), becomes the next President in this circumstance and will fulfill the role for the remaining 1 year term. However if you (or someone you know) have a great urge to become President in the upcoming term, please let me know so it can be considered.

Happy Fall and hope to see you all at the AGM in November,

Dorothee



Notice to Members of the Annual General Meeting of Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association



The 2021 annual General Meeting will take place:

Saturday, November 6, 2021 at _____ am/pm? (tba)

The meeting will be held virtually in ZOOM format. The Agenda for the meeting and link to join will be sent to all members in the coming weeks.

Elected Board Positions to be filled:

President (1 year term)

District Member Representative - Nanaimo

Vice President (1 year term)

MGABC Representative - alternate

Volunteer and Appointed Committee Positions Available:

Continuing Education Chairperson

Sunshine Committee

Nanaimo District Planner (Mentorship Committee Chair)

If you are interested in any of these positions or want to know more please contact Mike O'Neill,

(mikeoneill@campbellclan.ca) chair of the nominations committee, or Dorothee Kieser, (dorotheekieser@shaw.ca)

VIRL Coordinator Position

As you know, Jo Canning is stepping down from this position. If you are interested in becoming part of this exciting program (and/or sharing this position with another VIMGA member). Check out the 2020/21 programme by logging on to the library site to see 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.

Code of Conduct

Our VIMGA bylaws state that one of the three requirements for maintaining membership in good standing is to “adhere to the Standards in the VIMGA Code of Conduct.” After a thorough search of the VIMGA Manual and archival records earlier this year, our Board members were unable to locate the VIMGA Code of Conduct, so a new version was drafted.

Most Extension Master Gardener programs have a Code of Conduct, including the Vancouver and Victoria Chapters of the MGABC. Some of the points that are covered in other Chapters’ Code of Conduct are already addressed in the VIMGA Manual, so to avoid duplication the VIMGA Code of Conduct includes only those issues that are not already outlined in the Manual.

A draft VIMGA Code of Conduct was accepted by the Board at the June Board meeting,. We ask that all members read and review the draft below. It is intended to be read and signed as new Interns join VIMGA. - *Martha Jean Clarke, membership Chair*

VIMGA Code of Conduct Draft

The VIMGA Code of Conduct is intended to support and encourage ethical and respectful behaviour within the Association for the safety and well-being of all members.

Respectful Community

VIMGA strives to create community volunteer activities where all participants are treated with dignity, respect, and without discrimination.

We value diversity, inclusivity, and courteous communications. Disrespectful behaviour, harassment, and bullying in any form will be addressed within the Association.

Ethical Behaviour

Members are required to represent the Association with integrity while participating in all VIMGA activities. Members are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner that enhances public trust and confidence in VIMGA.

It is the Mission Statement of VIMGA to educate the public using current science-based horticultural knowledge and environmentally responsible practices. Members are expected to provide research-based information at all VIMGA events, and cite references when using written formats.

Certification

I have read the Code of Conduct and agree to adhere and uphold the policies, bylaws, and standards of the Master Gardener program outlined in the VIMGA Member Manual to remain a VIMGA member of good standing.

Member:

Signed:

Dated:



Changing Gardens, Changing Climate - *by Jo-Ann Canning*

How did your gardens survive our first heat dome in June? This weather event was once considered a one in a 1,000 year event on our Island, yet the most recent global warming models predict it will happen every 5 to 10 years from this year forward. Ouch! These accelerating changes can feel overwhelming, especially after seeing some of our favourite green friends die off. But we are a hardy genus, whether rambling farm folk, carefully potted container planters, or veggie munching urbanites. We can flow with all these changes by rethinking our gardens.

Let's start with what we know. First, we Master Gardeners understand the principles of climate change, and how it will negatively affect our gardens if we maintain their present configurations. Second, we already mitigate effects of uncommon weather events, like covering half-hardy food crops with a row cover. Third, we understand techniques that help stabilize or slow climate change, like increasing species diversity. We know about rain barrels, rain gardens, mulch, and the annual sun window. If we take stock in autumn, the best time of year for this, we can plan to shift our gardens into resiliency in a changing climate.

The Four Rs of Garden Change: Review, Rejuvenate, Relocate, Replace

We observe all the time, yet often forget to connect the small things we've learned to everything else we do. Each is a starting point to control change. What went wrong this year? When? Why? Chris Southwick shared the following observations from her rhododendron woodland which illustrate how several decision alternatives can arise from a single, seasonal task, and a single genus of plants:

- The rhodos that seemed to burn the least were those that had *tomentum* (hairy covering on the top of their leaves), like some of the cultivars/hybrids with *R. yakushimanum* in their parentage.
- Those rhodos with shade or at least partial shade during direct sunlight in the middle of the day fared better than those without any protection during that hot time.
- Rhodos that had new growth or very young new shoots were vulnerable, so later-blooming cultivars seemed less prone to burning.
- Where I had pruned some overhanging conifer and Japanese maple branches, the underlying rhodos were more vulnerable and did not tolerate direct sunlight as well as those that were already hardened to direct sun. [Next year I won't] prune over hanging trees too early in the season.

Review to Renew

I suggest you begin with your garden journal, and jot down this year's observations. What went wrong, what went right, what did you stop doing? Was it hard-scape, sun window (right-plant-right-place), landscape management related? Categorizing activity this way points to some long-range design changes that can be done bit by bit. Now ask yourself, "In three years, what do I want in my garden?" Write it down for each area of your landscape. While we take care of the regular tasks, sometimes we see how easy it is to achieve larger ones.

Now you have all the data you need. The following is basic, but it works: write out a three-year plan on a timeline based on the problems you need to solve. When I had a big, complex landscape, I set up mine like a spread sheet: projects /actions /problems down the left column, the solutions timeline by season for three years, with costs across the top. Patterns emerged and it saved much time, money, and effort. Now that I have a simple container garden, a list with side notes and seasonal tasks suffices.

Renovate or Relocate

Can you relocate plants or swap out with others better suited to that location? If they can't be moved, will pruning or hard-scape solutions help, like a nearby trellis, pergola, rain barrel? Or try flipping over the sod (careful of feeder roots!) under a large deciduous tree and cover the area with mulch to the drip lines. It won't have to compete next year for summer water with thirsty sod, and the landscape will be less stressed.

Replace to Renew

Revisit xeriscaping principles. Replace thirsty plants, not all at once, just one at a time, or one bed at a time, following your lists or spreadsheet. Within three years, you can enjoy a garden of drought-tolerant plants filled with colour and pollinators. Group thirsty plants and keep a rain garden or barrel nearby so you use less water. Visit the Okanagan Xeriscape Association website for classes on xeriscaping and their very impressive plant data base.

Sometimes, things just gotta go. Change a thirsty lawn bit by bit into wide green paths between new perennial veggie beds (which take about 1/3 the water of a lawn) or a low-maintenance bed of ornamental grasses and a fig tree. Try evolving to a lawn that is better adapted to a warming, drier climate with an autumn weeding project. Each weedless hole becomes a planting spot for clover or meadow mix seeds. Autumn rains will keep the seeds damp, and every weeding shifts the lawn to something better.

And Finally, a Fifth R: Redesign from the Lists

If you can't mitigate extremes, embrace them. When I lived in the Southwest a Navajo neighbour said, "When water is scarce, do not beg the thunder god for rain, learn to drink less." Bit by bit you can shift your garden's design toward more resiliency. A hot spot can become a mounded rock garden of spring bulbs and succulents. A scorching driveway can sport a storage bench and self-supporting pergola made from fence lattice with a bamboo curtain hung at the back to shade a large window, then be removed when winter light is needed. A rain garden or quick shallow pond made from pond mats with a sluice gate at one end can make a boggy spot sequester enough water from winter rain to slow run-off or gravity feed trees. A cubic foot (30 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm) is 7.5 gallons, so it doesn't take a big area, or many small ones, to create a good reservoir.

What can you change to make your garden's leisure time more pleasant? Creating more shade with fast-growing weeping trees, like dwarf birch, cherry, crabapple, or elm will, with a little pruning, make blooming umbrellas when you take care to keep the soil from compacting with a repurposed wooden pallet through which the trunk can expand. In the meantime? Bean trellises or squash in planters on the pallet and an umbrella next to the young tree to protect you both from a scorching sun.

Sometimes, an emergency action can morph into a design plan or structure. It happened for me this year, with that bench and pergola project I mentioned above.

Now what?

Congratulations! You have started a workable plan that is inclusive, manageable or easily reprioritized. Take a breath. Make a few notes while you watch the squirrels, rabbits, flickers who play this time of year in the autumn evening. Soon the trumpeter swans will settle in the estuaries and specially planted fields where the wildlife-friendly grass and northern oats will feed them for the grey months ahead.

Area Representative Updates:

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



Mike O'Neill

A very warm and dry summer brought plenty of challenges to gardeners this year. Unfortunately we were still unable to get together in our usual activities of summer clinics and gatherings. A difficult task for our members to get their advice hours although plenty of opportunity for education which was taken advantage of by members. VIMGA came up with many ways to get advice hours although it was far from traditional for the most part. Anticipating that the coming year will see a change in our situation and allow us to get back to social and garden advice events for us.

-Mike

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

Greetings,

Not much news in our area right now.

District Member Representatives are the nominating committee for the AGM. Mike will be chairing but we are using my space to remind you that if you want to ascend to the following positions on our board you are welcome!!



Ruth Beilman

Nanaimo Member Representative, Vice-President, President, MGABC representative (alternate),

If you don't have time, no worry, we will be calling you over the coming weeks to talk about your ascension!

- Ruth

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

All northern members are on track to complete volunteer hours. Education hours should be complete as well.

The biggest update is we now have 5 certified MGs and 1 Alumni member. Deb Gurrad is fully certified. Congratulations to Deb for her many hours of hard work! Congrats also to Jane for a very active mentor role.

One final Comox Valley Horticultural Society MG Q&A virtual sessions will be held on October 4th. We are involving a MG from another region to research, write up and present several of the questions.



Cathy Lund

- Cathy

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



The Cowichan group has been fortunate to continue to educate in our group via email, Zoom and telephone contact in spite of the pandemic and necessary health restrictions. We have been able to continue to be available to answer questions from the Ladysmith and Saltair Garden Clubs, submit articles to the Take Five Magazine, participate in the Milner Garden Advice Line (GAL) and also address a variety of garden topics with the Nanaimo branch of the Vancouver Island Regional Library's webinars featuring our own master gardeners.

Some of our members, along with others from our Nanaimo group, participated in the Cowichan Fair that was held on September 18th and 19th. It was the first master gardener clinic held in over a year and a half!

Then, on September 25, we all got together at the Willow Street Café in Chemainus to celebrate the graduation of our interns: Joanne Barwise, Ute Holewa, April Johnston, and Laurie Untereiner.
- Jacqueline

Vancouver Island Library Virtual Seminars

Saturday, October 9, at 1 pm: Petal Walkers: Planting for Pollinators

Bees and flowers have co-evolved since the Cretaceous period. And that's what makes their relationship impressive and unique. This session will cover habitat requirements of pollinators, different kinds of bees, native plants to attract pollinators and some small and significant changes you can make to be the best pollinator attractant on the block. It's a big topic and this session will skim the surface just enough to stimulate your curiosity about these little superheroes and encourage you to plant something for them.

Presenter: Joanne Barwise (VIMGA)

This is a FREE course that will take place virtually on Zoom. *Please register in advance by clicking on

<https://virl.bc.ca/event/virtual-gardening-series-petal-walkers/register/>

Saturday, November 6 at 1 pm: Spring Bulbs: Low Maintenance Perennials for Sun and Shade

Presenter: Jo Canning (VIMGA)

This is a FREE course that will take place virtually on Zoom. *Please register in advance by clicking on

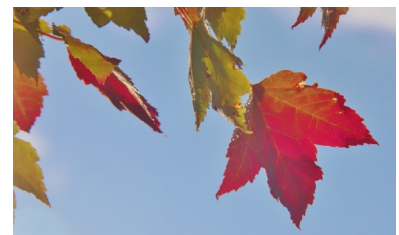
<https://virl.bc.ca/event/virtual-gardening-series-spring-bulbs/>



C. Tangutica seed head



Clematis tangutica.



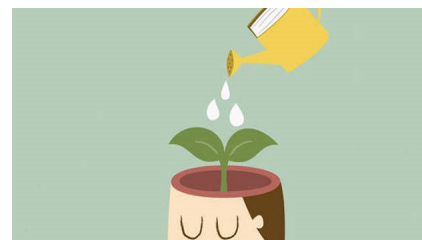
Autumn morning leaves

All pictures by Jo Canning

From your Continuing Education Committee.....

Here are just some of the opportunities to connect with others and build on your gardening expertise AND get your education hours!

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



Upcoming Events:

VIMGA Annual General Meeting, Saturday November 6th

This will be a virtual AGM event (not quite there yet folks!). Details will be forwarded to you soon. This year we are pleased to present Matthew Shepherd of the Xerces Society who will speak on the importance of pollinators.

Bring Back the Pollinators!

Bees are struggling due to habitat loss, pesticides, and disease, but the good news is that there are things we can do to make our landscape better for bees—and if we all do something, together we can have a big impact. Matthew Shepherd of the Xerces Society will introduce you to the diversity and natural history of North America's native bees, and present straightforward ways in which you can make your garden—or neighborhood or city—a pollinator haven. Find out how to select flowers, provide nest sites, and why you should avoid pesticides. There are also community science projects to join in and other ways to engage your community.



Matthew Shepherd

Matthew Shepherd

Director of Communications & Outreach, The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

Matthew Shepherd has spent more than thirty years working with people from all walks of life to create better places for wildlife. Matthew's career began in England and took him to Kenya before his arrival in the United States two decades ago. He has worked for the Xerces Society since 1999, initially at the vanguard of a national effort to protect pollinators, but now focused on communications, community engagement, and urban conservation. Matthew is author of numerous articles and other publications and coauthor of books, including *Attracting Native Pollinators* (Storey Publishing, 2011) and *Gardening for Butterflies* (Timber Press, 2016). He learned gardening at his mother's side and has created and maintained wildlife gardens everywhere he has lived.

2021 Virtual ARS Fall Conference

Fall into Gardening

October 23 and 24, 2021

Hosted by Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society and Nanaimo Rhododendron Society in partnership
with Vancouver Island Master Gardeners

**This virtual conference is at no cost and open to all interested gardeners -
members and non-members – anywhere!**

ARS 2021 Fall Conference *Fall into Gardening* Schedule:

Saturday and Sunday, October 23 and 24, 2021 at NO COST!!

Four presentations each day starting at:

9 am Pacific - 12 noon Eastern – 1:00 pm Atlantic – 5 pm UK – 6 pm CET

**All presentations will be recorded and available for our members in NZ, Australia & Asia to
view at a convenient time.**

Saturday Speakers and Topics:

Hartwig Schepker, Germany, <i>Sichuan</i> :	<i>A Plantman's Paradise</i>
Shannon Berch, BC	<i>Living Soils</i>
David Sellars, BC	<i>From Rhododendrons to Rock Gardening</i>
Don Hyatt, Virginia	<i>A Walk in the Woods</i>

Sunday Speakers and Topics:

David Millais, UK	<i>Conservation of Heritage Rhododendrons</i>
Linda Chalker-Scott, WA	<i>Landscape Mulches: The Good, the Bad, and the Just Plain Ugly</i>
Richard Dionne, QC	<i>Growing Rhododendrons in Québec's Harsh Winters</i>
Don Wallace, CA	<i>Fragrant Rhododendrons</i>

To Register:

Mailchimp at <https://mailchi.mp/9151e79e2a98/fall-conference-2021>

Please join us for this fall celebration of gardening!

Member Corner

At the recent 153rd Cowichan Exhibition and Milner Plant Sale

Martha Jean Clarke, our past Cowichan District Rep is now the membership Chair for VIMGA and the Sunshine Gal. She also created the VIMGA Facebook page for our members. Her flower arrangement came first and she also was awarded a Special Recognition Ribbon. Way to go Martha Jean!



All Cowichan Exhibition pictures submitted by Gwen Redcliff and Jacqueline Scherk.



Richard Bernier and Susan Lewis at the Milner Garden Sale.