

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

Volume 1 Issue 5

members.vimga.org

December, 2021



Editor's Letter

Resilience

Lana Popham, the BC Minister of Agriculture has stated that the "resilience of farmers with the recent flood situation has been quite amazing". The sad and devastating toll of loss of human lives and livestock and damage to properties, can be difficult to comprehend. Yet, Popham noted, farmers have shown incredible resilience and many say they plan to rebuild and want to stay in the Fraser Valley. "The weather is changing, there's no doubt about it," she says, "and agriculture is usually hit first with those changes. And so it's not lost on farmers (and gardeners, I may add), that we have to do things differently."



Jan Thorsen

As the winter solstice draws near, I like to reflect on what to do differently in my own garden. What worked, what didn't, and WHAT was I thinking when I planted that? With resolutions of learning from the sage advice of more experienced gardeners, I have enjoyed the international flavour of our Zoom presentations. Yet I yearned for the immediacy of chatting with folks who garden where I live. So, VIMGA members, we are pleased to announce that our annual Spring Education Day will be held at Nanoose Place on Saturday, March 5, 2022. Our guest speaker is Douglas Justice from the UBC Botanical Gardens. Fingers crossed that this event will take place 'in person'.

At this time, the VIMGA Executive Committee wishes you all a happy holiday. Be safe, stay warm and most importantly, remain resilient.

- Jan

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President's Message

president@vimga.org



Mike O'Neill

Greetings Members,

I am pleased to be serving as president of VIMGA this year. Thank you Dorothee for taking on the role of Lead Mentor and Program Management Committee to our new Class of 2022!

We have come a long way in the last 2 years and in many ways this ordeal has enhanced our organization in collaborating with the greater MG community and the public even if our physical contacts have been limited. We are all looking forward to getting back together in face to face (or mask to mask) meetings though and it really seems the best way to do our thing, but technology is helping to connect us in new ways to achieve some of the results we need! We will continue to use digital communications to the advantage of our organization and membership.

There have been some outstanding contributions made by VIMGA members and at our 2021 AGM on November 6 we celebrated some. A very significant component of our celebration was the addition of 9 new Master Gardeners. This is our future and it continues to be one of the key focus points of our success. So many members work diligently to make sure VIMGA runs well, our members and the public are served. We are inspired by the our new Interns that join us in service. It is a testament to the great work our Intern intake team do and this includes a lot of VIMGA members both directly and indirectly.

With our new crop of students starting the VIU advanced gardening course in January we look forward to mentoring them and hopefully many will choose to join us in VIMGA. We will also celebrate more Class of 2019 Interns as they complete their advice requirements which were extended to December 31, 2022.

We are all excited to see the digital communication aspect of VIMGA grow within our membership. We are creatively adding to the ways we can communicate with our members and participate in the gardening community. VIMGA will continue to connect in traditional ways and I would very much like to participate in a hybrid meeting model where we can. It might be harder to accomplish than you think with the equipment needs; I am hoping that we can locate a meeting place that has a built in system or parts which we can use. If not we can patch something together with a lap top and microphone!

Not everyone could take advantage of innovative advice clinic models and that will mean some members have been unable to fulfill their advice requirements for 2021. Those members will have until the 2022 AGM to make up those hours in addition to their 2022 requirements. I want to remind everyone to get their dues in ASAP so we can clean up our books quickly and get back to the garden.

I have been impressed by the way we collaborate and organize our various roles in VIMGA. We have successful committees with members new and seasoned interspersed and we are trying to make sure those members that need a break are getting the necessary time for that. Very important!! We still have some interesting positions open and lots of room in your area of interest should you have the time to serve VIMGA. Many hands make light work.

So many new things have taken place, new forms of membership, innovations in the delivery of advice and clinic hours, development of our web site to give public access, public presentations by VIMGA members for education, and social media presence on Facebook to mention a few.

President's Message continued

I want to make sure that we continue to serve members in whatever way they need and VIMGA is ready and able to grow our contribution to public education using the most current scientific information available and our communities in as many ways as possible., After all this is what we do! If you have ideas or wish to share your thoughts you are always able to bring them forward with our committees and directors any way that works for you including attending our board and committee meetings which we have monthly.

For many this is a time of year to break and re-join our families for the season as best we can. For others it can be a difficult time, we all understand that. I wish you all the best and hope we can connect in the coming year to continue to do what we all love together. Support each other and those around us and we will all fare better and smile more. In my tradition, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all! - *Mike*

Recognition Awards

Certificates of appreciation for outstanding work done for VIMGA were given to Gwen Redcliffe and Jan Thorsen



Gwen Redcliffe



Jan Thorsen and niece

Silver Spade Award

The award this year went to Karen Bennet



Karen Bennett with
Chris Southwick

VIU Master Gardener Awards

On Feb. 2021 a fund was established as an award starting with the class of 2019. The interns had to apply and two deserving interns were chosen to be the first recipients. The awards were given to Joanne Barwise and Ruth Beilman. Congratulations!

Ruth Beilman



Joanne Barwise

THERE'S A NEW LOOK COMING IN THE NEW YEAR

For the VIMGA Website. When our website was originally developed, it operated, and continues to operate, as a members-only site: the first thing you see is the login page and you can't access anything on the site without first logging in.

The new site, however, is going to have a public face. Without logging in, members and non-members will have access to much more information about VIMGA and the Master Gardeners — who we are, what we do, where we came from and how to join us. Visitors to the site will be able to access gardening advice, events calendars, our newsletters, and there's a Resources page which contains links to other gardening clubs and organizations, plant databases, public gardens, and academic links (think botany and entomology). Public contact information is also included.

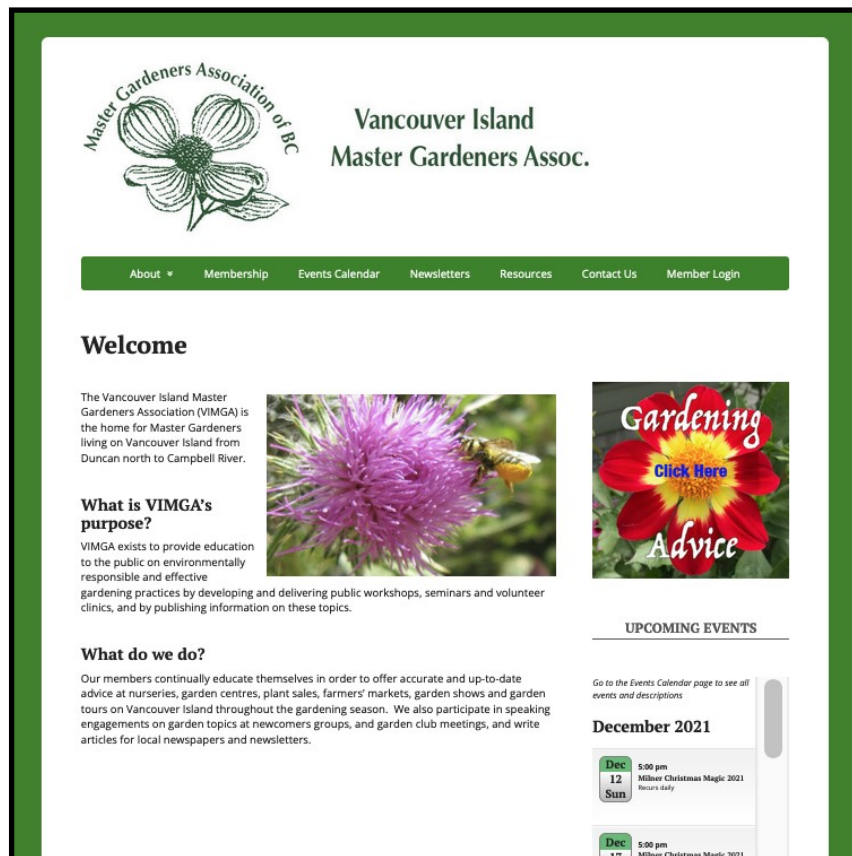
When you log in to the new site, you will have access to the familiar forms and reports: your Record of Volunteer Hours data, advice clinics creation and lists and summary reports. And there's more members-only information about VIMGA on the new site, including the complete members list with contact info, names and contact info for the Directors and all committees, group email links, and the Members' Manual.

Putting a site like this together takes a lot of work, and much of it is already done. But even more work is required to keep it going, so we will be looking for assistance from our members, particularly in keeping the calendars and the Resources page up-to-date and relevant. Updating these pages is not really technically challenging; the real work comes in finding the information, verifying it, and editing it to fit our website's format. Documentation is being developed and training will be provided for anyone who wants to take on the title Calendar Editor or Links Editor. If you are interested, please contact me:

webmaster@vimga.org.

Watch your inbox for more information and a preview link to the development site.

- submitted by Cam Smith



The public face of the new VIMGA website.

Native Plants Belong in Our Gardens

Native plants are all around us, so why would we even consider planting any in our gardens, especially since there so many beauties in the nurseries. You may even have the impression that native plants are too common, shaggy and unattractive...*au contraire*, our native plants are beautiful.



Not only are native plants the cool kids on the block, they support our native bees. Native bees and native plants have co-evolved since the Cretaceous period, 144 million years ago. We won't tinker with that relationship but as gardeners we can choose and align our garden plants to support the population and diversity of native bees.

There are about 450 species of native bees in British Columbia, 150 species in the Georgia Depression (the small area of southeastern Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and the Lower Mainland). Bees are hairy and are by far, the most effective pollinators. Native bees are solitary creatures, they do not have colony nests like honey bees; once fertilized, the females are on their own.

Did you know that seventy per cent of native bees nest underground? When you see holes, some with small dirt push-ups, watch it and you will likely see a bee going down into the ground with pollen. All native bees collect pollen, pack it with some nectar and lay the egg on top. Native bee species differ by how they seal-up and protect the pollen and egg chamber. Some bees use leaves, flower petals, tree resin, plant hairs or mud like the Mason Bee does. The mason bee is one of the above ground nesters which use hollow plant tubes as nesting sites, making several nest chambers in a stem. Don't clean up your garden too much, leave old plants stems cut 30 cm high, and some messy organic matter for the bees to overwinter under. And always leave some bare ground (without mulches) which gives them an opportunity to nest in your garden.

Bumble bees, on the other hand, are semi-social. There is one queen and a small nesting chamber, where her unfertilized females will assist in the rearing of the brood which could be about 200 bees over the summer. Vancouver Island has eight bumble bee species. You can enrich your gardening knowledge by observing and recording the bumbles you see in a citizen science program called, Bumble Bee Watch. <https://www.bumblebeewatch.org/>

Reap the Natives' Benefits

There are so many benefits to having native plants in your garden that you might jump up and down after you read this article, saying "Yes, yes, yes. I'm on it!"

- **You will save water.** Native plants have grown in our region for thousands of years. They are adapted to our regional climate—wet winters and dry summers. Once the plants have established, they stand up to the rigors of our environment-- tough enough to survive dry spells when the water bans are in effect.
- **You will have close encounters.** If you plant them they (the bees) will come. Native plants provide the food and shelter that pollinators are evolutionarily adapted to. Our native wildlife, especially birds, butterflies, pollinators, and other organisms, evolved with the plants here; many can only feed on plants they co-evolved with. Most bees and butterflies are generalists and that means they feed on nectar and pollen from a variety of native plants.

- **You will provide ecosystem value.** Natives provide the most value to our native pollinators. The plants establish a sense of place and supply a visual connection between your personal surroundings and your community's natural areas. Native plants are already established in balanced, local ecosystems, so they have little or no potential to become invasive pests in our wild and natural areas.
- **You will have a beautiful garden without pesticides.** Native plants are also easier to establish and will not require the use of pesticides. A diversity of native plants will help establish a native ecosystem that will balance itself out naturally with good bugs to control the bad. And an important note, do not use pesticides if you are planting for pollinators.
- **You are preserving diversity.** By planting natives, you are preserving the natural world in your own backyard. Gardening with native plants is one way to help promote and protect biodiversity.

Choose flowers with many flower heads and numerous small florets, such as Yarrow and Woolly Sunflower. Many pollinators, including butterflies, can perch on these flowers and drink the sweet nectar. Include late season bloomers such as Aster and Goldenrod, to ensure something is in bloom throughout the season. In a sunny mixed border, mix brightly flowering shrubs such as blue-blossom, red flowering currant, ocean spray, and mock orange; add more color with native iris, blue-eyed grass, camas bulbs, and Oregon sunshine. Use a groundcover of wild strawberry or kinnikinnick.

Native plants will give your garden a sense of authenticity. Understanding how they live in the wild can inform how you use them. There are native plants suited to every planting site from dry shade, sun-drenched rock gardens, boggy wetlands, shady woodlands, to refined perennial borders. There are native plant nurseries on the Island and you can easily find one through Google. One nursery that I make a special trip to is Satin flower outside Victoria. They have a great selection of plants and seeds and the staff are knowledgeable.

As you can see, there's more to native plants than meets the eye. Small patches of native plants may seem insignificant, but if each yard devotes a small area to bees, our neighborhoods will be season-long buffets of nectar and pollen that support a diversity of native pollinators.

- submitted by Joanne Barwise, Cowichan District



Sweat bee on coral vine flower, *Antigonon leptopus*

Their common name sweat bee was given to them because they are often attracted to perspiration but don't worry if one lands on you. These small bees are quite docile and have one of the least painful stings of any insect. Photo: Jim McCulloch; Source: www.threeforagers.ca



Leafcutter Bee

Leafcutters bees can be recognized by their furry light-coloured hairy bellies, which are designed to collect and carry the pollen. Source: www.threeforagers.ca

Meet Our Members

- submitted by Diana Walker

Every story has a beginning, a middle and an ending - I'll try to make mine brief.

THE BEGINNING; I was born in the beautiful, temperate climate of Ireland, many, many years ago. At the age of 7, although I didn't view it as a blessing until after the fact, we moved from Kilkenny to Dublin and I was elected to stay with my maternal grandparents during the moving process. The blessing was the fact that my grandfather was a botanist who insisted on taking me around his huge garden every day to introduce me to all his plants - all Latin names, mind you - no English. Needless to say, this helped me tremendously as time went on!

All this began to create a fascination with plants and I began collecting and reading up on wildflowers and grasses in the Irish woods and meadows. Walking to school each day, I would pick up leaves that fascinated me, and my teacher usually ended up with an odd looking floral arrangement on her desk! We had little contests at times in that school which suited me perfectly - picking, naming and making a display of grasses, flowers, leaves, etc. I was usually the winner!

When I was 15, my parents asked me what I wanted to do with my life - I said I wanted to be like Grandad which, of course entailed going to university. I was informed that was not an option as they had three other children to raise and couldn't afford it, and so I was placed in a secretarial school for a year. Although I was good at it, and the training enabled me to always support myself, it was not what I wanted to be.

THE MIDDLE: After five years of office work in Dublin, I thought far away fields looked greener and left for Canada in 1957. Getting married in 1959 and living in apartments in Toronto, working and raising two girls left little, read no, time or opportunity to garden - there weren't too many wild, or any other plants in downtown Toronto! Worse still, my husband was transferred to Timmins (455 miles northeast of Toronto) where not much grew at all!! We were there for 10 years before moving to Vancouver Island.

We bought a house on 3/4 of an acre in Crofton in 1981 and turned what had been allowed to grow into a hayfield full of snakes - front and back - into an award winning garden by 1984. Amongst other things, we had five ponds of different sizes and shapes; a Japanese garden, a fenced rose garden containing over 225 hybrid teas and the fencing was covered with old English climbers. There was also a sizeable vegetable garden! We won for three years in a row, but had to move then as the millions of resident snakes really got to me and I couldn't really enjoy being that close to so many of them! They especially loved lying in the sun alongside both the roses and veggies and I eventually refused to go gather anything from that area! After all, there are no snakes at all in Ireland!

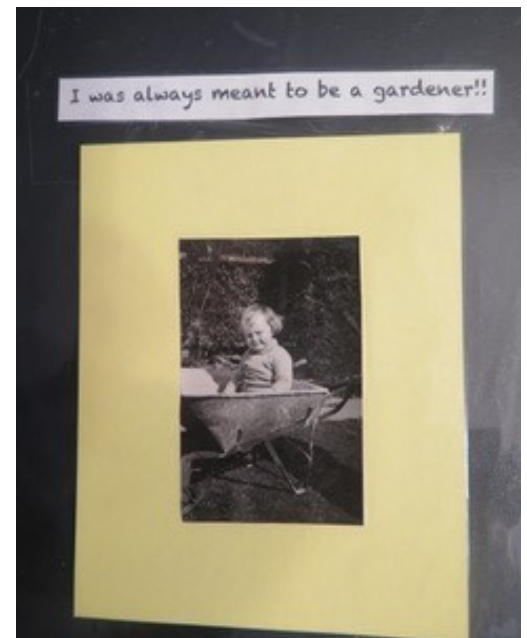
Moving to Nanaimo in 2000, I can't really recall how I heard about becoming a Master Gardener, but I did it in at VIU's Parksville campus in 2007/08. I absolutely loved it; my only regret being the loss of all those gardenless years in Ontario! I loved being a Master Gardener so much, I went on to take the Advanced MG Course at van Dusen Gardens in 2014 - for a total of 48 ferry trips! I used to bring a thermos of wine with me for the trip home to relax and think about the day's sessions - so r e l a x I n g!!

Clematis became my focus then; some of you may recall the presentations I did - again, overdoing things slightly, I had 168 of them in my garden at one time causing me to become permanently attached to balls of string and pruning shears!

Meet Our Members continued

THE END: A stroke in 2018 brought the physical aspect of gardening to a close - I was left with the inability to kneel down and one hand which refused to do anything but curl up in a ball. I was unable to hold anything in that hand, couldn't even tie a piece of string around a plant or get down and dirty to do some weeding. Needless to say, the pandemic really ended what little interest I had left - I so missed the clinics, the social contact and so many friends. Zoom just didn't do it for me at all!

So now, coming to a time in life where we must all decide to downsize, I wondered what to do. So now, coming to a time in life where we must all decide to downsize, I wondered what to do with the hundreds of books I had accumulated and enjoyed over the years. I wanted them all to have a good home and not end up in a thrift shop, but with fellow gardeners who would appreciate and enjoy them. So enjoy!!



Message from Master Gardener Wendy Strachan.....

I would like to thank all my friends and colleagues at VIMGA for their good wishes and lovely cards. A severe stroke turns one's life and one's family's life upside down. But we are alive.

Gardening is a joy I look forward to maybe in the summer. I have been lucky to have excellent rehab at Nanaimo hospital and they have scheduled me an extra 3 weeks, apparently because I am making such good progress - or maybe because I am so slow!

I am eating normal food now and can generally make myself understood when I talk. I can walk with a cane and am now working on my arm and hand. Rather necessary when there are weeds to pull and seeds to plant! I hope to see you in the spring. - *Wendy*

Welcome New Master Gardeners

A retired educator, I have wanted to be a Master Gardener for many years and finally, after moving to Vancouver Island in 2017, I was able to sign up for the training. I have loved everything about these last two years, from the Advanced Gardening Course to Garden Advice Parties to answering questions for the Milner Garden Advice Line to board meetings to educational presentations on Zoom. My special interests in the garden are pruning and growing vegetables. The things I would like to learn more about are pests and diseases and how to build good soil.



Debbie Gurrad

My first memory of wanting to garden was bringing home some California poppies from my great-uncle's house when I was nine and planting them. They didn't thrive but that didn't stop me. Even when I didn't have a yard or a garden, I collected house plants. At one time I had 65 of them, some bigger than I! Gardening is definitely in my blood — my 89- and 90-year-old parents are still puttering in their gardens. - *Debbie*

A BIG Welcome to New Master Gardeners:

April Johnston, Bob Esslinger, Debora Gurrad, Joanne Barwise, Laurie Untereiner, Richard Bernier, Ruth Beilman, Ute Holewa and Wanda Brenton

Message from Cowichan Area

Cowichan District says a warm goodbye to our new grad Laurie Untereiner. Laurie has appreciated all the support and new friendships in becoming a CMG. She will be moving in the new year to be closer to her granddaughter. At this time she will retire her membership and will continue using her knowledge of plants for her fibre arts venture.

After a years Leave of Absence, members who are also retiring are: Sue Marr, a member since 2004 who served as Cowichan's District Planner from 2012 to 2018, Dominic Turgeon a member since 2016 and Jen Arnold a member since 2017.

Judy Raimondo, a member since 2015, is taking a Leave of Absence next year.



Dahlia photo by Gwen
Redcliffe

A Year in Review

Because of Covid we reached our public with zoom. Thanks to Jo Canning's implementation and her presentations with the VIRL webinars, Joanne Barwise and Jacqueline Sherk also participated. Articles written answering questions from the Ladysmith Garden Club were emailed to their membership. The Virtual Advice Clinics brought our wide spread District (Ladysmith and surrounding area, Chemainus, Lake Cowichan, Duncan and Cobble Hill) together. We enjoyed sharing our research on the seasonal questions asked in the 20 sessions scheduled. We had fun attending our only public event at the 2021 Cowichan Exhibition Fall Fair, our graduation party in September at Willow Street Café in Chemainus and our Pizza Party in October at the home of Joanne Barwise.

The Future

We are looking forward to the face to face venues in 2022 albeit in "en plein-aire" (not to be confused with national naked gardening day). Cowichan is hopeful to receive a tent from VIMGA in the New Year for these out of doors events. Scheduled events are as follows: March 6 for the Saltair Seedy Sunday, March 12 is the Seedy Saturday with the Cowichan Green Community and the Ladysmith Garden Club Plant Sale is on May 7. Tentatively, the Ladysmith Rotary Garden Tour will book around the Cowichan Family Life Garden Tour's date May 22. The CFL Garden Tour is one of three Venues we share with the Victoria MG's. Dinter Nursery March – June, and the Cowichan Exhibition Fall Fair Sep 16-18 are the other two venues shared.

Our Members are stepping up to fulfill the role under our manual's description of District Planners. It states that 2-3 people can fulfill this opportunity in a District. We are suggesting the title "Project Planners". Our District have been given the gardening column entitled, "Gardening Hoe Down" in the Take 5 Magazine. As a pilot project, Joanne Barwise a new graduate is one of our Project Planners. She is encouraging our Cowichan members to contribute seasonal articles with photos monthly.

April Johnston also a new graduate, is the Project Planner for events in the Ladysmith and surrounding area. She will be our liaison with the Ladysmith Garden Club regarding presentation opportunities at the club. Joanne Barwise recently gave an informative and entertaining talk on her favourites "pollinators". There are several members in our District who are members of the Garden Club and will assist in answering gardening questions at the meetings or via email.

Congratulations are in order to Jacqueline Sherk who has successfully renewed her arborist accreditation.

- submitted by Gwen Redcliffe

VIU's Milner Gardens & Woodland

PLANT PICK

Originally submitted by Dorothee Keiser

Cyclamen coum is a early spring flowering tuberous perennial, a treat of colour when almost no other plants are flowering. It must have been a favorite of Veronica Milner, because one finds pillows of pink or white flowers throughout the Garden's rhododendron area. They are an excellent companion plant to rhododendrons, thriving under the same conditions needed by the taller shrubs.



Foliage type: Rounded kidney-shaped to heart-shaped leaves with entire margins.

Height/Width: 2-3 " (5-8 cm)

Hardiness Zone: Hardy to Zone 5

Exposure: Does well in sheltered, often woodland, settings, shade to semi-shade

Flower Colour: Variable: from white to bicoloured (white with pink mouth) to pink to carmine red

Leaf Colour: Deep green, often with silver markings

Flower Time: Winter to very early spring



At the 2021 VIMGA AGM, we discussed the new Covid-induced changes in answering GAL questions. Initially GAL was set up through a Memorandum of Understanding between Milner Gardens and Woodlands (MGW) and VIMGA. During March through September, GAL volunteers were at MGW one afternoon per week to answer telephone and e-mail questions, as well as giving advice on live samples brought in.

During Covid, this was no longer possible and we have now switched to a year-round email Question & Answer format. Questions from clients come in to the Milner address (GardeningAdvice.MilnerGardens@shaw.ca) and are distributed by GAL coordinator (Dorothee Kieser at this time) to VIMGA volunteers. She maintains a list of volunteers. For each question, two VIMGA volunteers from the list are responsible for providing an detailed answer. As a question comes in, it is sent to the next team of 2 on the list. The team coordinates their response so that a single, comprehensive write-up, complete with references is sent back to the coordinator. Answers are due 48 hours later. She sends out the answers to the GAL client, under the MGW format.

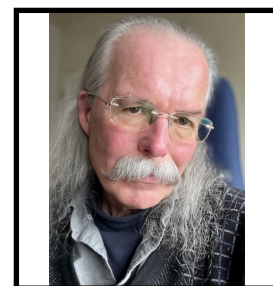
Occasionally, more information or photos are required to answer the question thoroughly. These questions are to be sent to the coordinator who will ask the questions for the original client and get the response back to the VIMGA volunteers.

You earn 1 advice hour per question answered. Please enter your hour(s) in the "Other Advice Hours" column of your "Record of Volunteer Hours".

If you have any questions or if you want to be added to the list of volunteers, please contact me at DorotheeKieser@shaw.ca

Area Representative Updates:

Cam Smith - District Member Representative Nanaimo
nan-rep@vimga.org



Cam Smith

Season's Greetings to all of our Nanaimo members! I've been watching one of our resident Anna's hummingbirds visiting our Mahonia x media for the past couple of weeks, apparently waiting for the flower buds to open. Finally it's happening and I hope to see her at those blossoms in the next few days.

Although the hummingbirds can't take much of a break, we human gardeners are taking a bit of a breather now, although I'm sure many of us are thumbing through seed catalogues and taking stock of nursery stocks, while planning spring plantings. I've finished insulating the greenhouse (clear bubble wrap) and am spending time there watching the microgreens grow while squishing aphids on the pepper plants.

As the Nanaimo District Representative, I'm your go-to guy for questions about how the organization works and for queries to the Board of Directors. My duties include keeping you informed of educational opportunities and VIMGA events, working with our Nanaimo District Planner (Chris Southwick), and organizing social events and meetings. (Watch for more on that last one in the new year.) Let me know if you have any questions or concerns about how we operate or what we're doing. I hope you all have a pleasant winter, that your gardens thrive in the next year, and that you enjoy the holiday season.

- Cam



Season's Greetings & Happy Holidays from Your Area Representatives



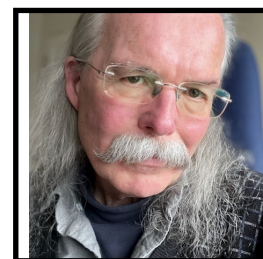
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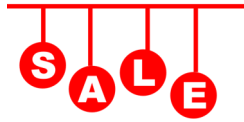
Cathy Lund



Jacqueline Sherk



Cam Smith



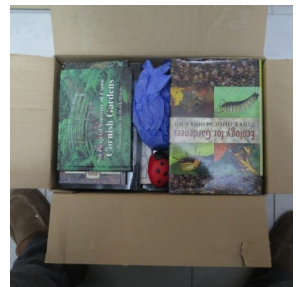
An Amazing Opportunity to Add to your Gardening Library!

Diana Walker is a long term member of VIMGA and is down-sizing her extensive book collection on gardening. She has decided to offer her books to fellow VIMGA members in a very unique way! Her collection involves 37 boxes each containing 25+ books. Each box will be made available for \$50.00 and part of those funds will be donated to VIMGA. That is only \$2 per book! The books are in excellent condition and many hard covers! Diana has also included a small garden surprise in each box.



If you want to get a chance to participate in this great offer contact Diana at 250-667-6964, or send an email to jodiwalk@shaw.ca, put in the subject line "Garden Books" and pick the box number(s) (1-37) you want and it will be held with your name on it for pickup.

The books are going to be made available on a first come first served basis so hurry now to get your chance at some great additions to your garden libraries! Once your order is confirmed you will receive detailed pick up instructions at a secure location.



MARS Plant Sale- A funder raiser for VIMGA

We have been offered to have a table at the MARS Plant sale in April 2022. MARS plant sales have always been an exciting event both for rhodoholics and for all plant lovers. To have a table there would be a great fund-raiser for VIMGA.

What we need from all of you is plants we can sell. The plea goes out to you to get interesting/unusual plants ready to be potted up for the occasion. Divide your perennials now in anticipation of the sale. When you seed annuals (including vegetables) next spring, prepare a few extras.

We also need a coordinator to arrange for pick-up of plants, setting prices, and arranging the table.

Give it some thought, it should be fun and it will help VIMGA.

VIMGA Spring Education Meeting

Where: Nanoose Place Community Centre, 2925 NW Bay Rd., Nanoose Bay

When: Saturday, March 5th, 2022

This is an all day event We are very much hoping that we can meet in person and there will be a PLANT sale. If this is not to be, we will meet virtually with a Zoom SED. Details will follow in the new year.

This year we are pleased to present Douglas Justice, from the UBC Botanical Garden, who will present, "**For the Love of Trees**".

Douglas had his initial exposure to horticulture in his parents' garden in Vancouver and at the family farm in Duncan. His passion for plants eventually led him into nursery work, then to degrees in horticulture and botany, which spurred him to pursue a career in teaching and public garden management. Douglas is Associate Director, Horticulture & Collections at UBC Botanical Garden. He teaches in UBC's Landscape Architecture program and in the garden's horticulture training program, and is currently working on a manual of Vancouver's cultivated woody plants.



Douglas Justice

Next Advanced Gardening Course starting January 4, 2022

In case you have friends or neighbours who have been asking you how to become a Master Gardener or, at least learn more about gardening, you can tell them that the Advanced Gardening Course will be starting in January 2022.

As in years past, the course is presented jointly by Vancouver Island University and the Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association. A new facilitator for the course has been hired: it is VIMGA's "own" Bob Esliger who recently graduated as Certified Master Gardener and many of you will know him. He is overhauling the course considerably and I am sure it will be a stimulating and fun educational experience and will be followed by some hands-on learning under the Master-Gardener-in-Training (internship) period.

The Course will run for 12 weeks (January through end of March) with each week having a Tuesday night 3-hour zoom session and a Saturday morning 3 hour session, either via zoom or as face-to-face field work. Expert speakers, such as Linda Gilkeson have been lined up.

Some of you are volunteering to be mentors for the course. This too has been overhauled with there being 3 kinds of mentors: 1) Continuing Mentors who accompany their students throughout the program, 2) Topic Mentors who are available to students to ask questions on a particular subject both during the course and during the internship, and 3) Plant ID project Mentors who help students with the plant ID requirement. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please let me know (Leadmentor@VIMGA.org). Advice hours are credited for each of the mentor activities.

More information on the course and how to register can be found at <https://pdt.viu.ca/master-gardener-program>. Registration is now open. Please contact me if you have any questions,

Dorothee Kieser