

# CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

Issue 9

[www.vimga.org](http://www.vimga.org)

February, 2023



## Editor's Letter

Is it a Plane? Is it a Bird? Or is it a....

STINKBUG! Or to be more precise, a *brown marmorated stink bug* (*Halyomorpha halys*). I had been hearing and reading about this native pest from Asia but it was not until one landed on my forehead that I really took notice. "What is this doing in my house, ...in January?" Well it seems that they come indoors for warmth.

Thankfully they are in diapause and don't lay any eggs in the winter.

Since my brief encounter with this shield backed insect with an odoriferous smell, AND apart from my husband referring to me as "cyclops", I have been on high alert. I seem to be noticing more and more stinkbugs aimlessly flying about looking for another body part on which to land. Further investigation is imperative.

I can think of no one I'd rather direct my insect questions to than Bonnie Zand, the owner of Bonnie's Bugs IPM who will be our guest speaker at our next **Spring Education Day (SED)** on Saturday, March 11 at Nanoose Place. We are also pleased to welcome a panel of VIMGA Master Gardeners to give us their tips and tricks on growing vegetables. For more information on the day see pages 8 & 9.

We will also be having a plant sale and a 'loonie toonie' table at our SED. If you have extra plants and seeds, consider donating them along with garden books and other gardening related items. Bring your donations on March 11. Contact Mary [shakespeare.ms@gmail.com](mailto:shakespeare.ms@gmail.com)

Hellebores are a gardens best friend during these grey days. Check out Fern Hietkamp's interesting article on these versatile plants.

The public is invited to join us during the education portion (by donation at the door) for our day of learning. Please tell your friends and neighbours. All must register—including **VIMGA** members. To register, please contact Ruth at: [vicepresident@vimga.org](mailto:vicepresident@vimga.org)

See you in March.

- Jan



Jan Thorsen

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# President's Message

president@vimga.org

Presidents Note  
February 2023 Newsletter

Greetings CMG's and INTERNS,

Happy New Year to everyone. The year of the Rabbit brings us promises of Longevity, peace, and wealth. It is a nice thought for certain and I will welcome it, particularly the peace part!

We will have finished up our area clinic sign-ups by the time we meet at our SED on March 11. At the SED we will have the opportunity to participate in unfilled Island wide clinics that remain. Something I will be looking forward to. There are lots of interesting clinics outside your own area that you may never have thought of and it gets you a chance to meet other VIMGA members.

We have seen much adjustment in our numbers over the past few years and with that in mind I wanted to focus on our members this year and their needs. We have shown ourselves to be a resilient bunch with service to our members over the past few trying years. Now is the time to assess what should stick, what might change, and what new opportunities our members are looking for in public service and other areas. Beginning with our March SED we will be canvassing members to see what is working and what isn't so we can consider changes where necessary. Keeping in mind we will have new student intake in 2024. So this discussion is timely.

Speaking of the 2024 Advanced gardening course: we will need mentors for the new students. Mentors not only get a refresher in updated gardening knowledge, they get education and advice hour credits. And ..... you get to know a pleasant bunch of people with common interests!!

One of the goals this year is to update our VIMGA Member Manual and we are working to achieve that before our year end. Updates are necessary to record changes in how we operate our organization. We have changed

a lot of procedures since 2019 that need to be reflected in board position descriptions and meetings as well as clinics and policies.

Speaking of Board positions I wanted to let you all know that our Treasurer Jane Kerr will be taking a break this year and we will be looking for members for this position in October 2023. Also, we are looking for a Continuing Education chair. This is a chance to offer your skills to VIMGA as a board member and participate in helping us achieve our service to members and the public. Treasurer lessons are free, I think!! If you have any interest contact Jane or any board member to learn more! Also other positions, especially on some of our committees, would benefit from new ideas coming from members new to the topic.

Our Board has endorsed 2023 as the YEAR of THE MEMBER for VIMGA! I hope to see you all at our SED on March 11 to explore our member needs in a fun informal way, socialize, and enjoy our educational program for the day! Fun and Fabulous prizes for all!!!

All the best,  
Mike O'Neill  
President  
*Mike*



Mike O'Neill



January rainbow. J. Canning

## **VIMGA Qualicum/Parksville District Rep - Ruth Beilman**

**[pqn-rep@vimga.org](mailto:pqn-rep@vimga.org)**

**February 2023**



Ruth Beilman

We have started to meet at a different members house for coffee every two months. In January we met at my house and we had a great discussion! The next time we meet will include our sign up as well as the socializing.

We have 2 seedy Saturdays coming up – one in Qualicum and one in Pt Alberni.

Just a reminder that the MARS plant sale on April 22 and we are requesting members to donate plants or items.

Membership

CMG – 5; Interns - 4; Alumnus – 6; Lifetime – 1; Leave of Absence - 1

### **Introducing our new Vancouver Island Regional Presentations Coordinator**



Let me introduce myself to all the keen gardeners that are members of Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association: I'm Richard Bernier. I've taking over the lead from expert stewardship of Jo Canning with Vancouver Island Regional Library. Being new to the position has come with some challenges and a learning curve so please bear with me in this change over. I hope to bring some new ideas into this aspect of our relationship with VIRL and broaden what we can offer the gardening community. Wishing you all a great and productive year of gardening!

### **Upcoming Vancouver Island On-line Presentations**

<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>length</b>
Dorothee Kieser	Feb 6	<u>"My favorite vegetables and how to grow them"</u>	18:30	1.5
Deborah Gurrad	Mar 6	"Late winter Pruning"	1830 h	1.5
Jo Canning	Apr 3	"Growing Vegetables for Winter Storage"	1830 h	1.5
Dorothee Kieser	May1	"Growing Herbs"	1830 h	1.5

### My Favourite Vegetables and How to Grow Them

This talk will focus on the multitude of vegetables that can readily be grown in our area (Vancouver Island). It will teach you how to select the best varieties for your needs, how to start the seeds, tell you about harvesting times and do a bit of problem solving when things go astray.



**This is a FREE course that will take place virtually on Zoom.**

**\*Please register in advance by clicking on the REGISTER button.**

**\*Prior to the event, you'll receive the Zoom link that you'll need to join the class in your email. Please make sure to include an email address in your registration so that you can be sent the ZOOM link and other important information.\* NOTE: Registration confirmation is *not* automated, but will be sent manually prior to the event. As long as you have submitted the registration form, you will be added to the list to receive this email.**

### About the Instructor:

Dorothee Kieser has been a certified Master Gardener for many years. She brings to the library seminars her scientific approach (from her career as a biologist) as well as a wealth of experience from her own extensive home orchard, vegetable, flower, and rhododendron gardens. In addition to her volunteer work with the Master Gardeners, Dorothee is an active member the Beban Learning Garden (a large, local community garden which features a greenhouse), and has given numerous seminars on many gardening topics to gardening clubs and associations. Dorothee is the Past President of Vancouver Island Master Gardener Chapter (VIMGA) and is currently the Lead Mentor for the Advanced Master Gardeners' course given jointly by Vancouver Island University and VIMGA.

You can also register by going to the VIRL events calendar and typing in the keyword "gardening." Then you can scroll through each month.

<https://virl.bc.ca/calendar/2023-02/?tribe-bar-date=2023-02-01&tribe-bar-search=gardening>



Mauve crocus



galanthus

Pictures by Jo Canning





# Gardening Advice Hours



## Do you need Advice Hours??

A new year has started and with that there are opportunities to gain advice hours while sitting at your own computer.

VIMGA has cooperated for many years with Milner Gardens and Woodland (MGW) on a variety of projects. Two of those are writing articles for the MGW monthly newsletter. One type of article involves writing "answers" to Frequently Asked questions (FAQs), the other is to write a detailed plant description about certain plants growing in MGW. Each year, your VIMGA rep, Kay Howard, gets together with the MGW Head Gardener, Denise Winter to formulate FAQs and to pick plants to be described.

If you are interested: Each FAQ and each Plant Pick published in the newsletter gains you 2 advice hours. Please contact Kay Howard if you are interested in participating. She will let you know which FAQs or Plant Picks are available. She can be reached at [khoward@shaw.ca](mailto:khoward@shaw.ca) . Find examples on the next two pages.

### VIU's Milner Gardens & Woodland

#### PLANT PICK

#### by Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association

Latin name: Begonia grandis  
Common Name: Hardy Begonia  
Written by: Kim Hammond

Angel winged olive green leaves show off a pendulous spray of pink blooms that brighten its preferred part shade to shade garden bed. This being the only hardy begonia of the genus, it will survive frosts and most coastal winters. Moist slightly acid soils will give the best results.

Form: multi - branched bushy habit  
Foliage type: ovoid blade, pointed tips  
Height/Width: 30cm x 20 cm  
Hardiness Zone: Zone 7  
Exposure: part shade to full shade  
Flower Colour: pink  
Leaf Colour: olive green on surface, plum beneath  
Flower Time: September on  
Preferred Soil/watering: moist, rich organic soil  
Other: propagate by leaf blade cuttings or bulbils



Photo by K. Hamond

# APPLE SCAB

## What can I do to prevent scab in apples and pears?

**A**pple and pear scab are caused by different fungi, but their symptoms and management are similar. Apple and pear scab overwinters primarily in fallen leaves and in the soil. Fungus development is favored by wet, cool weather that generally occurs in spring and early summer. Fungal spores are carried by wind, rain or splashing water from the ground to flowers, leaves or fruit. During damp or rainy periods, newly opening apple leaves are extremely susceptible to infection. The longer the leaves remain wet, the more severe the infection will be. Apple scab spreads rapidly between 55-75 degrees F.

There are several techniques you can use to avoid apple scab in apples and pears.

Purchase resistant trees and avoid highly susceptible cultivars.

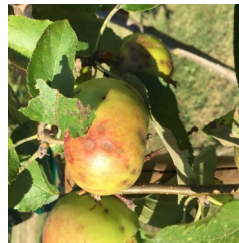
Do what you can to keep moisture on trees to a minimum. Infection can occur with as little as 6 to 9 hours of leaf wetness at optimum temperatures. Keep trees pruned to provide good air movement so that foliage can dry more quickly. Fruit trees should be located in areas of the home landscape that receive plenty of sun. Avoid planting fruit trees next to homes, hedges, and fences that not only restrict air movement, but also provide excess shade and inhibit quick leaf drying conditions.

Remove fallen leaves from the base of apple and pear trees. You can achieve good control of scab by simply removing the fallen leaves from under the apple and pear trees. Leaves may be safely composted away from apple and pear trees. You can also use a mulching lawn mower on fallen leaves, going over them multiple times. The goal is to chop the leaves up into very small pieces in order to hasten decomposition so the fungus cannot successfully overwinter on leaves and release spores in the spring.

Spread a 3-to 6 inch layer of compost under trees, keeping it away from the trunk, to cover soil and prevent splash dispersal of the fungal spores.

Practicing these techniques for your apple and pear trees may not eliminate scab, but they are good methods to help prevent scab from taking over your trees.

Photo provided by Wanda Brenton



# The Hellebore - A Wonderful Year-Round Plant

by Fern Hietkamp

First Published in "Take 5" magazine



Hellebore buds in Fern's garden

The hellebore is an excellent plant for gardens on Vancouver Island where our winters are short and spring starts early. Hellebores have a beautiful form and colour with blooms that last from February until May. The foliage is evergreen, so it's a plant that can be part of your year-round garden plan. A common name for hellebore is "Lenten rose", due to the rose-like flowers that appear in early spring around the Christian observance of Lent, the six-week period before Easter. The hellebore is in the *Ranunculaceae* family, the same family as buttercup. Hellebores are a good choice for the year-round gardener, as they can be successfully grown in most zones, are low-maintenance, deer resistant and reliably produce beautiful early flowers every spring.

A unique feature of hellebore is once the buds turn to flowers, their blooms face downwards. Many gardeners like to plant hellebore flowers on a hillside or in raised flower beds to better enjoy the blooms. Hellebores can be planted with companions from early flowering bulbs and rhizomes such as snowdrops, crocus, muscari (hyacinths), daffodils, trillium, to later spring/summer plants such as phlox and bleeding heart.

One thing to keep in mind is that hellebore has toxic properties. They are usually left alone by deer and rabbits due to the fact that the leaves produce poisonous alkaloids making them distasteful. Gardeners who have sensitive skin may want to wear gloves when handling the plant. Once planted, hellebores do well by being left alone, other than putting manure or compost around it once a year. Hellebores are tolerant of a wide range of growing conditions, and do best in partial shade with rich, moist and well-draining soil. They are an easy to grow perennial and once planted continue to bloom for a number of years.

When planting hellebore, don't plant too deeply, as this can affect flower production. The crown of the plant should be just slightly buried beneath the soil.

When new growth stalks start to emerge in late winter or early spring, remove old or damage foliage back to the base of the plant. Early in the year, an annual application of manure or compost will help hellebores have a good growing and flower production season. Hellebores grow actively in spring and fall and need plenty of water during these times. Heat makes hellebores go dormant, so less water is needed in the summer. Once planted, hellebores can be fussy about being dug up and moved, so it's best to leave them in place if you can. Hellebore can be susceptible to insects specifically harmful to the plant, and to some fungi. The best way to control either is to check the plant on a seasonal basis and remove dead or dying leaves.

One of the most interesting things about the hellebore is the range of varieties that are available at nurseries. Trials on hellebore cultivars produce new trends every year. There are ever different colours to choose from, increased plant heights, the development of outward facing blooms, and more exotic patterns of speckling, veining, and rimmed edges. As wonderful as the new varieties are, the true value of the hellebore as a **reliable**, hardy winter-spring blooming plant makes it already special, and an easy choice for your garden.



Fern Hietkamp

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## 2023 VIMGA Spring Education Day

### VEGETABLE GARDENING

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*“the good, the bad and the ugly”*



Date: **Saturday, March 11, 2023**

Location: **Nanoose Place Community Centre**  
2925 Northwest Bay Road, Nanoose Bay

Time: **9:30 AM to 2:30 PM**

Register: [vicepresident@vimga.org](mailto:vicepresident@vimga.org)

9:00AM – 9:30 AM Doors open—coffee/tea/meet and greet

9:30AM – 10:30 AM Welcome and VIMGA business

10:30—11:15 Break

Garden Bingo/Coffee/Clinic Sign-up (for those who haven't yet signed up)

Plant Sale/Loonie Toonie Table

**Public will be invited in at 1045 AM (by donation at door)**

11:15 AM – 12:15 PM **Presenter, Bonnie Zand**

***“Managing Pests and Encouraging Beneficial Insects: Lessons from the Field”***

12:15 PM– 1:00 PM **Lunch**

1:00 PM – 1:15 PM Climate Pledge with invited guest

1:15 PM – 2:30 PM VIMGA Master Gardener Panel

***“Growing Vegetables – tips and tricks and feeding ourselves”***

2:30 PM Closing Remarks



## “Managing Pests and Encouraging Beneficial Insects: Lessons from the Field”

Our farms and gardens are complex ecosystems, and the more we recognize that, the better our pest management will be! Understanding pest and beneficial insect life cycles, how their populations change over the season, and how climate affects them will enhance your ability to encourage the insects you want, and discourage those you don't. This talk will draw on two years of data collection from Vancouver Island Farms to illustrate some of the strategies that can be used to nudge your garden ecosystem in the direction you want!

Bonnie Zand is the owner of Bonnie's Bugs IPM, a private insect consulting company. She ran the Vancouver Island Pests, Pollinators and Beneficials Project, is a board member of the Native Bee Society of BC and is an instructor with the Master Melittologist program. In her spare time she likes to look for cool native bees and other insects, raise mason bees, instill a love of insects in her six year old daughter, nerd out on native plants, and hang out with goats, chickens and honeybees on her hobby farm.



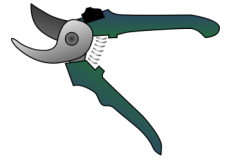
Bonnie Zand



The climate crisis is here. Forest fires, floods, drought and extreme weather events: the signs of the crisis are all around us, and if not addressed will have an increasingly devastating effect on our land, water, community and each of us individually. Three quarters of Canadians think Canada should be a global climate leader and are willing to change their lifestyle to reduce their climate impacts, and yet our personal emissions are among the highest in the world, on average more than 14,000 kg per person per year. Many of us are unsure what we can do to help.

The **Nanaimo Climate Pledge** aims to fill this gap by encouraging individuals and households to take effective action to tackle the climate crisis. The Pledge includes the 12 most important actions that we can take to make a difference, including changing how we eat, travel and heat our homes; how we vote; and how we invest and bank our money. Whelm King, the project's Program Manager, will be presenting at VIMGA's 2023 AGM at which he'll be discussing the state of the climate and how we can all be part of the solution. See you there! [www.NanaimoClimatePledge.ca](http://www.NanaimoClimatePledge.ca)

# PRUNING WORKSHOPS



We have now confirmed two pruning workshops at Richard Bernier's garden in Qualicum. The first will be on Tuesday, Feb. 21 and the second will be Sunday, Feb. 26. Both will begin at 1 pm and last 2-3 hours. The second one will also include a mini-workshop by Jo Canning on sharpening your tools in the field and will also be filmed for inclusion in the VIRL gardening series, to be broadcast on March 6. Jo cannot attend on Feb 21.

There are 15 people who have expressed interest but we could accommodate a few more, especially on Tuesday. Please suggest anyone who is interested and who has not already signed up should email me at [dgvimga@gmail.com](mailto:dgvimga@gmail.com)

Richard has suggested that people carpool if possible since parking is quite limited.

## **Do you want to learn how to prune Rhododendrons?**

The Nanaimo Rhododendron Society is hosting a presentation on pruning rhododendrons during their March 9<sup>th</sup> meeting (Beban Park Social Center Room 2, starting at 7:30pm). Scott Wiskerke, an excellent speaker and teacher will give the talk that evening. It will be followed by a practical demonstration on March 18<sup>th</sup>. That event will take place at Hailey Grove in Bowen Park (time to be announced). All are welcome to either or both sessions.

If you have not been to Hailey Grove to admire the old (and not so old) rhododendrons, this is a good opportunity to come and have a look and come again when they are in full bloom in the spring.

**For more information, check out the Nanaimo Rhodo Society at:**

**<http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>**





## HELP

### PLANTS REQUESTED

For the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society

Garden and Plant Sale

April 22 in Qualicum Beach.

Please pot them, label them and we will arrange for pick up or drop off.

Please contact Ruth [vicepresident@vimga.org](mailto:vicepresident@vimga.org)

Or

Dorothee [pastpresident@vimga.org](mailto:pastpresident@vimga.org)



# INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATION OPPORTUNITY

WSU Extension Master Gardener  
Program

*Cultivating plants, people, and communities  
since 1973*

[www.mastergardener.wsu.edu](http://www.mastergardener.wsu.edu)

[www.mastergardenerfoundation.org](http://www.mastergardenerfoundation.org)

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Advanced Education Conference <https://mglearns.mastergardenerfoundation.org> be held **September 27-30, 2023 in Tacoma, WA**, will be the final event of the 50th year celebration of the success and growth of the [WSU Extension Master Gardener Program](#). The flagship Extension program began in 1973 at Washington State University and has grown to become a nationwide and international program.

Presentation proposals are currently being accepted, and you could be an excellent contributor to the educational program of the conference.

We are looking for a diverse lineup of speakers on topics including environmental and social topics related to our nine [Program Priorities](#), the future of the Extension Master Gardener Program, diversity and accessibility, and/or developing robust partnerships. Each class session is 75 minutes in length. Share your knowledge and talents to help educate Extension Master

Gardener volunteers to teach research-based gardening and environmental stewardship practices in their communities. Together we all make a difference!

We hope you'll consider presenting at the conference and sharing this link with your colleagues. Please review the call for proposals details and submit your proposal by **March 1, 2023**.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

Cathi Lamoreux

2023 AEC Planning Committee Program  
Development Lead

[Historianmgfws22@gmail.com](mailto:Historianmgfws22@gmail.com)

## Key Dates:

Proposal Submission Deadline:  
March 1, 2023

Notification of Accepted Proposals:  
March 15, 2023

