

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

Issue 10

www.vimga.org

June, 2023



Editor's Letter

Perfection???

I often find beautiful garden books and magazines that make me gush and think "I too can do this." Well I must be living in some kind of alternate universe because perfection in my garden seems at times non-existent. Or I do achieve a pleasant arrangement only to forget the maintenance part. How many times have I been stabbed by a phormium, sported a series of white splotches from euphorbia juice or planted a dwarf conifer only to observe that my cute baby has grown into a monster overtaking the house. Were those nursery tags lying?



Jan Thorsen

While the perfect garden hype can trigger my creativity, it can be a tad overwhelming. I recently read a book called "Big Dreams, Small Garden" by Marianne Wilburn that helped bring me back to a semblance of reality. Ms. Wilburn's practical advice of "more is not always better" and "being creative is not just about a constant stream of ideas and inspirations—it's about solving problems" was a life-line to this beleaguered gardener. The author points out that gardening is a process and a dream you can execute at your own pace. Cultivate a spirit of contentment and enjoy your garden now. Amen to that!

As Summer Solstice draws near, I wish you all a wonderful and relaxing time in your garden. Again I would like to thank our many contributors—this newsletter wouldn't be possible without you.

- Jan

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President's Message

president@vimga.org

June 2023



Mike O'Neill

Greetings VIMGA Members,

Summer is here and live clinics are in full swing. I must say participating in live clinics is my favourite activity as a master gardener volunteer. Getting a chance to interact with folks and listen to our shared knowledge is where I learn the most! It is a great pleasure to work with our knowledgeable VIMGA members and students. It is my favourite, but we have so many great ways to gain advice hours and share our knowledge with the public. Thanks to our committee members for organizing and staging these many programs, your work is very much appreciated.

We recently completed a survey of our Alumni members which gave me an opportunity to hear from our Alumni on how this category is working for our membership. No surprises on the responses and the summary of questions and responses are posted in this newsletter for your review. This category is serving us well as far as those members that responded are concerned.

Of local interest recently is the proposed development of "Harewood Plains" located just on the outskirts of Nanaimo. Many have cried foul in the development of this area that contains a delicate eco system along with other natural benefits. Members can access information on this new development by going to the Nanaimo Area Land Trust (NALT) site @ <https://nalt.bc.ca/harewood-plains/>. We will have more on this in our fall newsletter.

We have a new advanced gardening class starting at VIU in January 2024 and I hope many of you will consider being mentors for our next crop of students. I encourage you to step up and support these students during their course completion. We hope many of them will join us as Interns on the path to becoming a VIMGA member and a volunteer master gardener. On that note, we will be celebrating a number of new Master Gardeners this year as they finish their final plant ID requirements and get certified.

Our highest honour for members is the Silver Spade award. Our past recipients, D. Kieser, C. Southwick, K. Bennett, and J. Canning will

make up the selection

committee in selecting a nominee submitted by you. The nomination form and submission information will soon be posted on our web site for you to complete and submit to the committee by September 30th, 2023.

Speaking of awards, interns are invited to apply for the Vancouver Island Master Gardener Award which recognizes those graduating interns with an award of \$500. This award was established by donation from Elizabeth (Liz) Haan of Vancouver BC on Oct 15, 2003sd. The fund is administered by Vancouver Island University Foundation for the benefit of students continuing on with the Master Gardener program through the Vancouver Island Master Gardener Association following completion of the VIU Certificate Master Gardener Program and in their 2nd year of internship. Two applicants will be selected to receive the award from our graduating class of 2023. We will post this application on our website as well for our graduating interns.

I want to encourage you to consider helping out with VIMGA member services and administration. We are looking for members to consider taking on a role on the board or in committee positions. Please answer the call and contact your district representatives, (the nominating committee), with your interest. Many hands make light work.

In closing, I wish you all the best in health and happiness this summer. We look forward to meeting in person again as a whole group for our AGM in November 2023 and celebrating VIMGA members and all they bring to our organizations success and we will present a revised VIMGA Members Manual to you with many changes since our last revision in 2019. As always if you have any ideas or questions feel free to contact me at: president@vimga.org anytime.

- Mike

Our March Spring Into Gardening Gathering Memories



Congratulations to Jo Canning, this year's recipient of The Silver Spade Award

Photos courtesy of Ruth Beilman

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL PLANT DONORS



Thanks to all of you who donated and participated, VIMGA had 2 very successful plant sales.

The first was on April 22 in Qualicum Beach where the Mt Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society had its annual show and sale.

VIMGA had a grand selection of plants: ornamentals, houseplants, veggie starts. We did very well and by the time MARS deducted their 20% we made \$434.40.

All leftover plants travelled to the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society show & sale on May 13 and VIMGA got another \$184.40.

The grand total came to \$618.80- a proud achievement thanks to all you generous donors who "made" the plants.

The photo shows 1 of the 3 car loads of plants being taken to the MARS sale.



Again: thank you and let's see what we can do next year. As the seasons progress, keep the 2024 fund raising sales in mind.

Happy Summer,
Ruth and Dorothee



We need 1 gallon pots for the 2024 sale. Folks could start collecting now and let me know when they have a stash. Contact Dorothee for pickup

dorotheekieser@shaw.ca

Area Updates

Qualicum/Parksville District Rep - Ruth Beilman

pqn-rep@vimga.org



Ruth Beilman

We have been very busy this spring. The Milner Gardens food garden group is holding an amendment trial. Four beds are amended by Milner Staff – the Master Gardeners do not know how the beds are amended. They are growing alyssum, marigold, tomatoes, lettuce, 2 tomatoes, cucumber and swiss chard. An assessment checklist has been created and they monitor for vigor, fruit production, pest damage and general appearance – weekly until the end of September. Signs are being created to detail the trial.

We met at Diane's in her garden under a large cedar on a hot afternoon. So good to see everyone. We will meet again in September. Membership

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

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VIMGA Cowichan District Rep

cow-rep@vimga.org



Jacqueline Sherk La-

This month and the balance of last since our April/May report, our members have attended clinics at Dinter Nursery, the Ladysmith/Saltair plant sale, the Cowichan Valley Rhodo Society plant sale, the dysmith Rotary Tour and the Cowichan Family Life Garden tour.

A clinic held at Dinter's on Saturday, June 10th ended early due to rain that persisted throughout the morning and was growing worse by noon.

The Cowichan Family Life Tour included seven gardens and was a huge success for the charity with 650 tickets being sold (sold out!). Eleven of our Cowichan members were involved in the clinics. The venues were excellent according to attendees we chatted with at our tables. Coming up on June 21st, we have a GAP planned for my own home in Lake Cowichan. We hope to have a good turnout and a nice weather day for the event.



MG Judy Raimondo at Garden #5 at the Sold out Cowichan Family Life Garden Tour on June 4, 2023 for the newsletter. Many of our Cowichan MGs participated in this great fundraiser.

Area Updates con't

North Island District Rep—Cathy Lund

ni-rep@vimga.org

2023 has been an exciting season for the North Island. To date we have held 15 advice clinics and 5 Garden Advice Parties. Our venues reach to Campbell River in the north and Baynes Sound to the south. We have 10 more advice clinics planned until the end of the year.

We've grown to 10 members consisting of 6 CMGs, 3 Interns and 1 Alumni member. All of us are on track to complete or exceed our advice hours.

We have 3 Farmers' Markets this year which are really enjoyable to attend. Lots of questions, music, sun, food and veggie starts. I think most of us have spent money there.

GAPs are always good events and the hosts are very appreciative to get advice which varies from what plants to plant, how to prune, identifying plants, including invasive and what order to do things. The most recent GAP was especially hospitable with treats and beverages afterwards. We held a social / planning meeting in February and hope to get together in the late summer / fall for another social. All in all it's been a very good season so far.



Cathy Lund

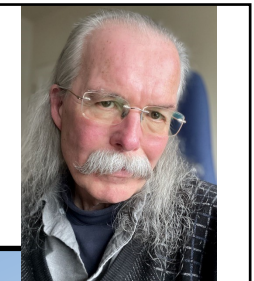


At the Comox Valley Horticultural Society Plant Sale held May 6 and attended by Barb Sanderson, Marion Waters and Robyn Liseth. Photo includes Barb and the left and Robyn on the right

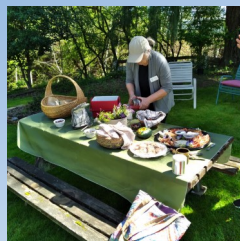
Nanaimo District Rep – Cameron Smith

nan-rep@vimga.org

On April 29th Cam hosted the Nanaimo group to his garden.



Cam Smith



Vancouver Island Virtual Gardening Series

For anyone who wants to check up on something, videos is available to [view here](#).

You can register for [upcoming sessions here](#). Our next session is on Monday, July 17 on the topic of WEEDS.

Thanks for coming and bringing your ample enthusiasm with you,
Your Master Gardeners and Librarians

Monday, July 17, 2023

Time: 6:30—8 pm

Website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/virtual-gardening-series-weeds-tickets-566917454367>

It's a big topic and a big problem. After we figure out what a weed is, we'll examine the terms

noxious, invasive, naturalized and native. We'll look at some of the weedy botanical species in BC and talk about weed control and when you should report a weed sighting. We'll take a deep dive into weed resources for identification, effects on biodiversity, climate change, and the economy, and actions you can take to reduce the weed invasion.



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

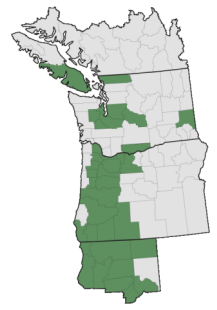
***Please [REGISTER here](#) to receive the link and event material & updates.**

ABOUT THE PRESENTER:

Cameron Smith has been VIMGA member for ten years and is a graduate of VIU's Horticultural Technician program. His gardening efforts focus on food crops, west coast native plants, and ornamentals for pollinators and beauty. He has served as VIMGA's treasurer and webmaster, and designed and implemented VIMGA's website (<https://www.vimga.org>).

Our Secret Garden

By Beth Walrond



Imagine that there is a place of beauty which combines imaginative garden designs, the wild flower meadows of the Swiss Alps and the purity of Japanese forest bathing parks. The air is so pure in this place that lichen grows in fields. You can walk on forest paths through dappled shade, open meadows and be in groves of Douglas Fir, Garry Oak and Arbutus. In the spring there are plains full of wild flowers that you haven't seen before. You exclaim: "OH, that looks like Self Heal but the leaves are different." There are tiny flowers so close to the ground you almost miss them. Every few feet there is something new to see. Unlike many forest areas of the West Coast there is not dense undergrowth near the large trees. Views of the paths ahead are unobstructed. They curve and run up and down with wonderful natural compositions. Rich moss covers rocks and fallen trees. Would you travel far to see it, pay an entrance fee? You don't have to, such a place, such a treasure is here in Nanaimo.

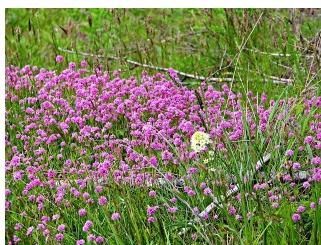
We have our own special secret forest garden that has many of these qualities. Not quite as tame as designed gardens, like Abkhazi but breathtaking all the same. It is a short drive south of Nanaimo and is called Harewood Plains. This place is unique and puzzling.

Unique because there are many rare flowers, such as Lotus Pinnatus, now called *Hosackia pinnata* which is the official flower of the City of Nanaimo. This particular flower grows only in a few places in the whole of Canada and most of those are here the Nanaimo area and 80% are in Harewood Plains. The ecology of this place is produced by the fact that plants are growing in a thin layer of soil over bedrock which is fed by the slow release of spring run off. Vernal seeps exist here which are also rare. The water, the soil, the plants combine to make a unique environment.

What is puzzling is that this special place is not protected. The ownership is complex. A portion, 92 acres is privately owned and the developer plans to build 480 units on it. Permitting is pending. There is a right of way for hydro lines that run through the north part of the plains. The bulk of the area is Private Managed Forest Lands. The city of Nanaimo has made a small park in the north called Lotus Pinnatus Park. It is in two parts and can be reached from Harewood Mines Road.

We have taken for granted that Harewood Plains would always be there to enjoy. Now it is threatened by development, and other things like reckless drivers in ATV's cutting up the fragile soil. Maybe that is not their fault as there are few signs to warn them of the cautions necessary.

What can you do? Support Nanaimo Area Land Trust who are leading the way to protect Harewood Plains in its entirety. See www.nalt.bc.ca for a list of key people to write to. They are also accepting donations to help with a plan to save Harewood Plains.



Pictures from Charles
Thirkell, Nanaimo Area Land

Wanted: Mentors for the students of the 2024 class

Amazing that already two years have passed since we held the Advanced Gardening Course in conjunction with VIU. We will have all (almost) of our keen interns from that class graduate as Certified Master Gardeners at the 2023 AGM. I look forward to welcoming all our new CMGs.

A **big thank you** to all the VIMGA members who volunteered and took on the roles of mentors. For the 2024 class, we will again need mentors in all categories (job descriptions for the different roles are attached). You will notice that all come with a considerable number of volunteer advice hours, but also with continuing responsibility to your students/interns. To clarify: the students who join VIMGA at the end of the Advanced Gardening Course become interns as they fulfill their requirements of completing plant IDs, volunteer advice hours and education hours.

In mid-July, we are planning a meeting of all VIMGA members interested in becoming mentors. Possibly we might even hold meetings in several areas if there is interest. Current I interns are very much encouraged to become mentors-you have the best feeling of what worked well for you and what could be improved.

If you are interested (even if only slightly) send me an email: Dorotheekieser@shaw.ca or lead-mentor@vimga.org so we can see what dates work best and if we want to hold meeting in different areas.

Thanks for considering,

Dorothee

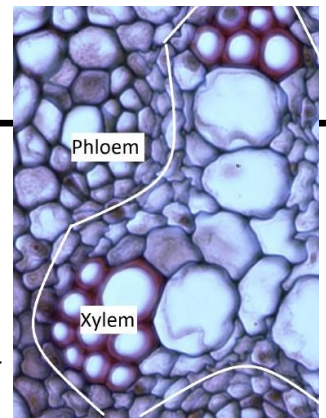
HOW A TREE WORKS

The [Colorado State Forest Service](#) explains how trees work by examining their physiology:

- A tree is a tall plant with woody tissue. Trees gather light for photosynthesis through their leaves; this process creates "food" for the tree.
- Most of a tree trunk is dead tissue and serves only to support the weight of the tree crown. The outside layers of the tree trunk are the only living portion. The cambium produces new wood and new bark.
- The band of tissue outside of the cambium is the *phloem*. Phloem transports new materials (the sugars created from photosynthesis) from the crown to the roots. Dead phloem tissue becomes the bark of a tree.
- The band of tissue just inside of the cambium is the *xylem*, which transports water from the roots to the crown. Dead xylem tissue forms the heartwood, or the wood we use for many different purposes. Every year, trees grow two annual rings. In the spring, usually a wider and thinner-walled layer called *springwood* forms. In the summer, a thicker-walled layer, called *summerwood*, develops. Annual rings are typical in temperate forest trees.

Some examples of common trees found in North America include red maple, loblolly pine, sweetgum, Douglas fir, quaking aspen, sugar maple, balsam fir, flowering dogwood, lodgepole pine, and white oak.

Submitted by Paul Lowry. VIMGA Lifetime Member



Job Descriptions for Mentors

Updated November 1/21 and November 15/21 and November 30/21

Lead Mentor:

- Supports both students and Mentors throughout Advanced Gardening course (AGC) and all the way to graduation.
- Organizes mentor enrolment and training.
- Throughout AGC, emphasizes VIMGA's role in the community, the requirements for becoming a Certified Master Gardener (CMG), the spirit of the organization, the commitment required, the continuing education opportunities, and the personal gratification derived from participation in an active, community service organization.
- Attendance at every AGC class is required.
- Builds camaraderie with students to make asking questions and advice easy.
- Provides a current Reading List, a Study Guide for the Course Manual, and a list of relevant websites to students.
- Leads one break-out room/class. First breakout session is a detailed walk-through on how to complete homework assignments.
- Emphasizes course content and how course manual and presentations in class are related. Informs students that the final exam is based strictly on the course manual and that a study guide will be provided.
- At several classes explains importance of Plant IDs and walk students through examples. Provides opportunities for students to practice creating Plant IDs, possibly to the point of getting several IDs done by the end of the AGC.
- Is available to students between sessions and during internship to answer questions and delineate help options available from other mentors.
- Is available to discuss and problem-solve any issues arising during the course from both students and mentors.
- Before the end of the AGC, arranges for an information session for Continuing Mentors to assist them in guiding their Interns through the Self-evaluation process (see attached Form 1)

Advice Hours earned:

- Year of AGC: 15 hrs
- Year following: 10 hrs
-

Topic of the Week Mentor (CMG with special interest and expertise in class topic)

- Must be very familiar with class topic and prepared to answer questions in detail.
- Attends class on the chosen topic.
- Attends break-out session on topic to answer students' questions.
- Available to discuss topic and homework questions for 2-3 weeks after topic session.
- Builds camaraderie with students to make asking questions and advice easy.
- Presents a hands-on workshop on topic during internship period, if applicable.
- Advice Hours earned:
 - AGC topic/break-out session: 2 hours for class session plus availability for 2-3 weeks after session. Additional hours may be requested if many Q & A sessions with students are needed.

Hands-on workshop: 4-5 hours

Continuing Mentors

(A group of VIMGA CMGs enthusiastic about gardening and the association)

- During the AGC, Continuing Mentors are each encouraged to be the “VIMGA Speaker” for about 10 minutes during one class to explain the functioning of VIMGA from their perspective, encourage students to become CMGs, explain the requirements and generally become familiar to the students and be encouraging about the process.
- Ratio of one Continuing Mentor for each 3-4 Interns.
- Students and Continuing Mentors will be grouped together near end of AGC.
- Support their assigned Interns from completion of the AGC until graduation by: assisting in the development of Plant IDs, reminders of VIMGA activities (workshops, etc.), help with navigating the VIMGA website, assistance with the Intern’s three self-evaluations, and regular check-ins by phone, email, or in-person.
- Build camaraderie with students to make asking questions and advice easy. To begin building a relationship with their Interns, Continuing Mentors are encouraged to meet with them (as a group and/or individually) at the end of the AGC, both to get to know them and to go over the VIMGA Expectations with them (see attached Form 2)
- Guide students through the self-evaluation process (see attached Form 1) a minimum of three times throughout the internship period. To help Continuing Mentors in guiding these conversations with the Interns, VIMGA will provide a workshop for Continuing Mentors at the beginning of the mentoring period.

Advice Hours earned:

5 hours in each of the 2 years during which they mentor their interns.

Plant ID Mentors:

Plant ID Mentors are responsible for guiding Interns through the development of their 25 plant identifications in the following categories:

- 5 - Trees (2 deciduous, 2 evergreens, 1 native)
- 5 - Shrubs (2 deciduous, 2 evergreens, 1 native)
- 5 - Perennials (2 herbaceous, 2 evergreens, 1 native)
- 5 - 2 Annuals, 2 Biennials, 1 native
- 5 - Ferns, bulbs, corms, (1 must be native)



Plant ID projects must be completed at least two months before the Intern’s expected graduation date.

Plant ID Mentors must review each ID in a timely manner and send supportive revisions and suggestions back to the Intern.

Advice Hours earned:

2 Advice hours per Intern once all 25 Plant IDs have been completed.

How to turn your garden into a buffet for pollinators.

Reprinted from Washington Post.

Story by Tovah Martin

Illustrations by Alex Eben Meyer



Most gardeners don't think of themselves as owners of a fast-food diner, but that's exactly what they are. Incidentally or intentionally, they run a fly- or crawl-in restaurant, with clientele apt to have wings — or a whole lot of legs — and antennae. Customers spend their days or nights cruising around and perusing the menu.

As climate change, habitat loss and a lack of food and water sources have threatened many pollinators in recent years, creating gardens to attract them has become not just a hobby, but a necessity. We still have much to learn about insect and bird behavior, and how our gardens can impact their survival, life span and breeding habits. One point, though, is universally agreed upon: We can help. The first step is to think like a pollinator when choosing flowers, shrubs, trees and grasses.

Putting pollinators first might mean steering away from collecting exotic varieties from other parts of the world. "If you fill your garden with plants that are not native, early foraging pollinators might not be benefiting," says Stephanie Frischie, a native plant materials specialist at the [Xerces Society](#), an organization focusing on the conservation of invertebrates.

She suggests opting for spring bloomers such as golden alexander (*Zizia aurea*) and wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*) to provide early season food for native bees. Adding the often-overlooked ephemeral Virginia spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*) can help sustain early foraging specialist miner bees that feed exclusively on its pollen. Frischie also suggests planting early blooming shrubs and trees, such as wild plum (*Prunus americana*) and redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), both of which are critical food sources for hungry insects.

Beware of altered varieties of preferred plants — changes could flummox pollinators, Frischie says, especially when the pollen and nectar sources are difficult to access. Double flowers are particularly problematic if the stamens are reduced in size or they block access to the flower's sexual parts. Sam Hoadley, manager of horticultural research at [Mt. Cuba Center](#) in Delaware, has found in pollinator trials that "stark differences occur when the flower structure is changed ... such as the pompom type echinacea flowers and mophead hydrangea inflorescences. These showy displays are of little value to pollinators."

How a plant holds its flowers also matters. Plant hybridizers frequently strive to create forward or skyward-angled blooms to allow us to better see the goods, but pollinators that service downward-facing, nodding flowers have adapted ways to make that work and may struggle with the changes.

It's unclear whether alterations in flower color affect pollinators. Insects perceive ultraviolet light, so their perception of color varies from what we see. Bees, for example, are most attracted to blue and purple flowers so it is possible that changing the bloom color of anise hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*) diminishes the plant's interest for them. Moths and night-flying insects can be baffled when a luminous white or yellow flower is bred to be a less visible, darker color, such as flowering tobacco hybrids (*Nicotiana glauca*) in deep plum rather than a cream shade.



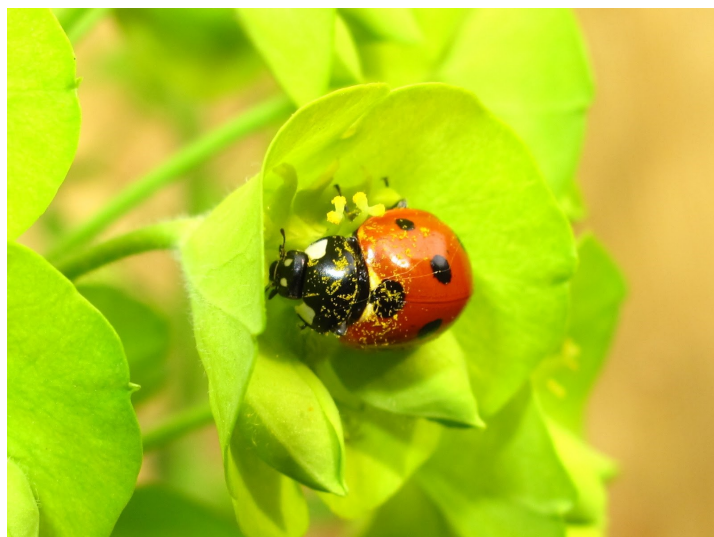
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Insects are more likely to see a pattern than color, says Frischie. The most important thing for their purposes is the nectar guides — lines and a dark center that mark a flower and are specifically adapted to guide pollinators. For example, insects see a halo around the center of many members of the daisy family. Altering that bull's eye with the additional petals of double flowers could befuddle a pollinator. Masking or altering a flower's fragrance can also create problems. So, for example, make sure to choose fragrant cultivars of dianthus or sweet pea.

Andrew Brand, a founding member of the [Connecticut Butterfly Association](#) and the director of horticulture at [Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens](#), emphasizes the need for variety when choosing plants. It's important to provide flowers all season, from the first columbines of spring until the last goldenrods. To fill in any gaps during the growing season, he says, plant supplemental annuals as well as perennials. Going for generous quantities is also a good plan; a big patch of flowers will make an insect's workday more efficient.

Birds also serve as pollinators. It's well-known that hummingbirds love red and bright tubular flowers, but nectar is not their sole food source. According to Glen Somogie, land manager and youth program coordinator at [Bent of the River Audubon Center](#) in Connecticut, hummingbirds also forage on bugs as they hover, waiting to pollinate. They also frequent flowers in other colors. Choose plants such as columbines (*Aquilegia canadensis*) that bloom early in spring when weary hummingbirds return from their winter migration. And include autumn bloomers, such as native honeysuckles (*Lonicera sempervirens*), cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) and great lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) to provide the sugary feast they need to fuel their long flight south for the winter.

Seeing the garden from a hummingbird's or an insect's perspective requires a change in mind-set, but it could make a substantial impact at a critical moment. Pollinators need all the assistance we can offer, and we are just beginning to explore and confirm gardening practices that help. It's a new way of thinking.



Stressful Weather

Below is an answer to a GAL question that Marion Waters and Jo Canning worked on regarding the stressful weather. Jo also added a thumbnail guide for the summer lawn.

The key to healthy, plump veggies:

1. Adequate water at regular intervals
2. Water levels appropriate to each crop
3. Evenly moist but not too wet soil
4. Understanding what "too dry" means. E.G., a leaf crop may wilt in the heat but it doesn't mean it needs more water, just more shade.
5. A single deeper watering is better than several "sprinkles" or light waterings
6. Understanding that each crop takes in the water it needs at its own pace

The amount of water needed depends on several factors such as soil type, weather, and the method of watering. The rule of thumb for all soil types, though is that shallow watering encourages shallow root growth, resulting in plants that are less drought tolerant, and root crops that are small. All soil types in a veggie patch do best with a slow-water method, especially if it is well-drained. You can tell if your watering is adequate by digging down about 15 cm (6 inches) after watering to see if the soil is dampened to that depth. You want the moisture to reach the roots. All root crops as well as others like tomatoes, have deep roots so need deeper watering less often. You need to look at each group of crops by type and water accordingly. E.G., lettuce needs more than squash, and leafy greens dry out faster than tubers and brassicas.

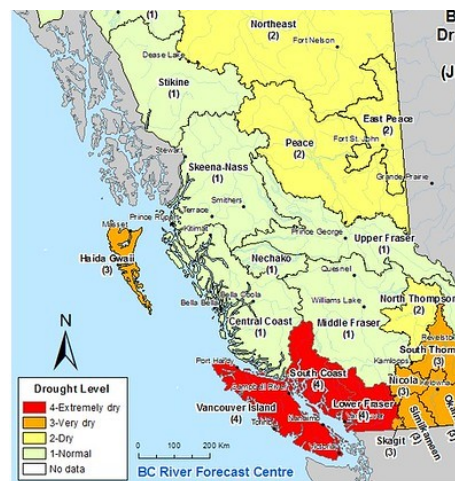
The key to all of this is **mulch**. A mulched bed uses up to 2/3 less water than a bare ground bed.

Here's how to mulch your veggies:

1. Mulch the beds so there is about 15-20 cm (6 to 8 inches) of material. This can be a combo of straw, finely shredded bark, compost, leaf mold ... or just straw if you have nothing else.
2. Soak the mulch. A drip or "shower" head watering along the ground (not overhead) for an hour will equal 2.5 cm (1 inch) of water.
3. Check that the mulch is the consistency of a squeezed-out sponge at soil level.
4. Each morning check the levels of dampness in the soil. When the soil gets dry to within a finger nail, water again, as above. In the heat of the summer, this can be every morning for some crops. Morning is always better (before 0700h) than evening. In evening, water after 2000hr.

You will notice how different crop areas use the water at different speeds. Each crop group has its own pace. Mulching keeps ALL your crops at the correct level of dampness, making them more robust -- which for food crops means a higher level of nutrition and higher pest and disease resistance. It also saves water: a correctly watered veggie garden can use up to 2/3 less water than the "every day no matter what" approach.

The other VERY important element in this watering method is you are allowing the mulched and composted soil to feed the plants rather than relying on fertilizer to do so ... and this includes all types, either organic or chemical. Each crop can take up the combination of nutrients it prefers (dissolved in water that is naturally aerated through the mulch) at the rate it needs to make for the best harvests. There is no starving or flooding/washing away of delicate nutrients. Finally, this method creates a resilient soil full of mycorrhizae to support the dissolving of nutrients and minerals for each food crop, and the soil is not completely depleted every year.



Re lawns:

Do not forget that our lawn grasses are from the cool season group. This means they are healthier when we follow their natural need to go dormant in summer. A lawn can remain healthy if it is only watered every 2-3 weeks from mid-June (or during a heat wave) through the end of August.

When you water, try the “tuna can” method. Place an empty tuna (or cat food can, approximately the same size) in the middle of the watered area. Use a low overhead, gentle, “shower” head. Move water head if needed so all the area gets the same amount of water, always making sure the tuna can is getting filled. When the can is full you have given the lawn approximately 1 inch of water. This usually takes about an hour. This is enough water to last a week. When the lawn shows the beginning of brown patches it is telling you it wants to go dormant. STOP WATERING and go to the summer schedule, mentioned above. The lawn will begin to green up on its own which is your signal to begin the regular watering schedule. Water first, then wait until the lawn is lush again before mowing. First mowing needs to be high ... about 2.5 inches (7 cm), and kept at this height until the lawn slows down in autumn. The longer blades cool the soil beneath and keeps it damp longer.



If your neighbours are upset at the “poor condition” of your lawn ... yeah, like they know more than you do, eh? ... make a little sign for the middle of the yard:

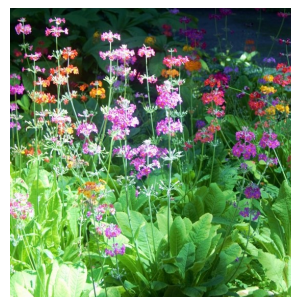
“Shhh ... lawn sleeping until autumn!” or perhaps something with attitude: *“Proud my brown lawn is so eco-friendly”*



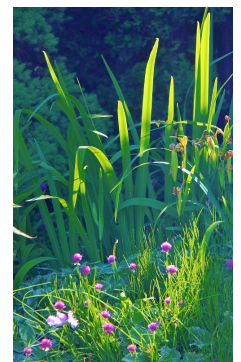
Carol's roses



Wild Daisy mandela



Bee balm—



Rockery

Pictures by Jo Canning



The Horticulture Centre of the Pacific has never looked so wonderful or offered so many programs and community events. Over the past 44 years The Gardens have grown into a spectacular 3.5-hectare oasis for people of all ages to enjoy 12 months of the year. The Gardens are an internationally recognized Botanical Garden and a respected Centre of life-long learning, conservation, and research. It is the only private, not for profit post-secondary institution in British Columbia providing horticulture education.

As a charity, HCP relies on annual philanthropic contributions. Our Annual Fundraising Appeal, **Keep the Flowers Blooming** is now underway as we reach out to our community to help us meet our funding priorities. Thank you if you have already supported us this year. Your ongoing support is vital to our success. Your donation will help us grow our gardens, providing a year round spectacle for visitors to enjoy.

Your donations will provide essential support to some of our **Areas of Greatest Need**:

Irrigation Upgrade: Cost \$25,000

Upgrade our irrigation system to use water efficiently and maintaining a thriving garden for years to come.

Gardening Equipment Upgrade: Cost \$10,000

Upgrade our gas powered garden tools/equipment to eco-friendly alternatives

General Keep the Flowers Blooming Fund

Allow HCP the flexibility to spend funds where most needed.

For more information on our core operational priorities, please visit our website hcp.ca

We want to show our appreciation. By joining our **Perennial Giving Circle**, it gives us the opportunity to showcase our appreciation for your generous annual support. Please visit [Perennial Giving Circle](#) for details.

If you would like information on being a “**Partner in Perpetuity**” through our **Planned Giving** program, please email me at director@hcp.ca. This program allows you to support the HCP through inclusion in your will.

The Horticulture Centre of the Pacific is proud to be a “gardeners’ garden”. We are looking forward to the future, connecting people with plants. This is only through the generous support of our donors. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Deborah

Deborah Donahue

General Manager, Horticulture Centre of the Pacific

P.S. Join us for a wonderful weekend - August 12th and 13th for our **Arts & Music in the Gardens**

Gardening Advice Hours



Any Master Gardeners out there interested in giving advice? Silly question, of course you are! That's why you all became Master Gardeners. How about researching questions about all kinds of gardening topics? I know I love doing that. Well, if you like giving advice and like researching gardening conundrums, I have an offer you can't refuse - sign up to do both by answering the Milner Gardens Advice Line gardening questions from the public. It's simple, it's fun and you will learn a lot, even about things you thought you weren't interested in.

Here's how it works. Questions come in to the Gardening Advice Line at Milner Gardens and get forwarded to teams of two people who have signed up to answer them. Each team has at least one CMG and most teams also have an intern. The teams get assigned questions on a rotating basis and usually have 48-72 hours to consult with each other, formulate an answer and send it back. Sometimes the teams will be assigned a question based on an area of special expertise but usually it's just potluck. You get one Advice Hour for each question answered so it's a great way to top up your hours if you are a bit short.

- Debbie Gurrad

VIU's Milner Gardens & Woodland

PLANT PICK

Latin name: Bear's Breeches

Common Name: Hardy Begonia

Written by: VIMGA/ photos A. Einarsen



Acanthus species are native to the Mediterranean area. A large vigorous plant with stately clumps of leaves and bold flower spikes. It will spread under moist and favourable growing conditions but tolerates drier areas. The large, deeply lobed leaves are dark green and shiny on the upper surface.

A mature clump can bear multiple flower spikes up to 5 feet in height. The long lasting, white flowers with showy purple bracts appear in summer and can be dried. When picking, beware of the sharp spines between the flowers.

This architectural plant is suitable for the back of a mixed border or as a focal specimen. Ignored by deer.

Form: Herbaceous perennial, forming a large leaf clump which dies away in winter.

Foliage type: Long, deeply lobed leaves, up to 60 cm long.

Height/Width: In flower the plant rises to (150cms) in height and has a basal clump of 90 cm

Hardiness Zone: Zone 7-11. The foliage dies away in colder areas and re-sprouts in the spring.

Exposure: part shade to full shade

Flower Colour: Tall flower spikes, white flowers with showy purple bracts.

Leaf Colour: Dark green, glossy on top.

Flower Time: Early summer lasting through to Fall.

Preferred Soil/watering: Any soil, but thrives with more moisture and watering

Other: "Mollis" means velvety or soft in Latin, an apt description for the large glossy leaves; Historically, Acanthus leaves have been the motif on top of Greek Corinthian columns.