

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

Issue 18

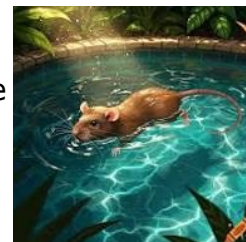
www.vimga.org

June 2025



Editor's Letter

In 1992 Des Kennedy wrote a book entitled "*Living Things We Love To Hate*" (since updated). In his amusing and fact-filled book, Kennedy tackled some of the creatures that most people find easy to hate. It is an interesting read and I do realize that we need, as Kennedy says, "a wholesale change in attitude towards all living things." I have tried my best. I have tried.



For example, I no longer recoil at the snake slithering across my feet (well, maybe a little!) and have since learned that they eat slugs and provide soil aeration. I love to see bats flitting about at night devouring insects in their flight path. I enjoy the deer and rabbits frolicking outside of my FENCED garden. If they do eat any of the plants, there is a determination to blame myself to put such a tempting meal in their path. A rock would have been a wiser choice. I have discovered techniques to deal with fruit flies that involve chasing them around with a vacuum cleaner. This is a never ending source of amusement for my family. Worms I pick up and usher to the side hoping they will make it to the compost heap. Spiders inside the house are shepherded onto paper and taken outside with a zen like determination. And, the non-native squirrels eating bird suet are handily deterred with red-hot suet - who knew?

However, and you knew this was coming, I draw the line at rats. I know there are hundreds of species worldwide—some beneficial like the bomb sniffing rats who have been trained to detect landmines called HeroRATS. However, the rats I am referring to are no heroes to me and dwell right in our gardens. According to Wildlife BC we have two types. The Norway rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) and the roof rat (*Rattus rattus*). Not native to BC, they were introduced via boat traffic in the mid-1800's. Kennedy makes the observation that rats have been called the most successful and adaptable opponent of humans on earth. Successful or no, I do regard them with dread—especially as last week when I lifted my hot tub cover to see a baby rat swimming the length. When I told my friend about this unfortunate encounter, she mused "back stroke or doggie paddle?" EEWWW!

Here's to a wonderful and relaxing summer. Hoping to see you all at the VIMGA picnic on July 29 (more info about this event in the newsletter).
- Jan

In this issue....

President's message.....	2	Prolonging Your Petunia Power.....	8
Silver Spade Award Info.....	3	Grow Your Own Blueberries.....	9
VIMGA Master Gardener Application/Beban Learning Gardens in the Victory Garden event.....	4	Area Updates.....	10-11
Plant Sale Reports.....	5	VIMGA Summer Picnic.....	12
Strategic Plan Update.....	6	Our busy VIMGA members/Volunteers needed.....	13
Dealing with a Heat Wave.....	7		

President's Message

Mike, President

president@vimga.org



Greetings VIMGA Members,

Clinics R Us! We are deep into our "fun" season now.

I have enjoyed a few clinics so far and look forward to more coming up between other summer events, a very busy time of year.

Hopefully you have noticed our website changes and the improvements. Plenty of work being done. Many of the changes are time consuming and sometimes very challenging. Have a look at Resources – Info Sheets and Questions answered. Still working on "where we are" and getting our current events working well. Kudos to the our team leader Cameron for all his hard work to date. Have a look around and send any comments to webmaster@vimga.org even if it is just to say thank you!

We have decided to hold off on a logo change until next year. We have some funding for it and thought we would consider getting a professional artist involved. This is such an important piece of who we are and although we had some wonderful ideas, we want to do better. The logo team lead will be revisiting in 2026. Better not to rush these things.

Districts' clinic supply has been improved and we have sourced a central supplier for any new signs and banners. This is ongoing as your district representatives stay on top of needs and changes. If you see a need in clinic totes supply let your district rep know. As smart phones and devices become more prevalent as tools we will change our needs for supply. You may have noticed our two new Nanaimo Representatives Eric Mohlmann and Felix Surjadaja, both hail from our class of 2024 and have teamed up to represent Nanaimo members. Congratulations Nanaimo members!

Please give some thought about joining your board or committees. Your help is appreciated and we should all do that we can for the betterment of organization. Big or small, all contributions make a difference and every member can play a part they enjoy. Thank you VIMGA members for all you do to keep things moving along and relevant.

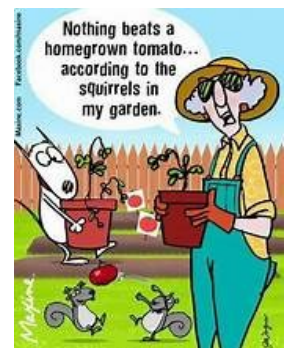
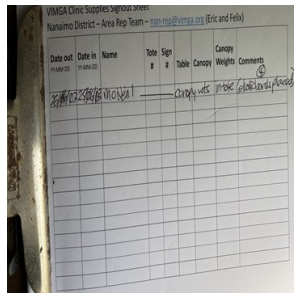
In closing be sure to be thinking about our Silver Spade nominations for 2025 and graduating interns be ready to apply for our Bursary in the fall. Our upcoming VIMGA picnic July 29th at Transfer Beach will be a welcome venue to celebrate us and enjoy some fellowship, looking forward to seeing you all there.

We might be getting some air time on CBC radio this summer so look for an announcement on that. It is still in early planning and I will send out more information when we get it finalized. Read on for many more exciting notes and announcements in this newsletter.

Meanwhile if you have a question or need to know more don't hesitate to drop me a note at president@vimga.org . I enjoy hearing from members and sharing ideas to serve us better. Happy Gardening all and stay cool.

- Mike

Picture of the revamped clinic totes and supplies at "the barn" at Nanaimo! And Mike at his Clinic.



VIMGA SILVER SPADE AWARD

The Silver Spade Award is an honour VIMGA awards for outstanding service.

Past recipients

Dorothee Kieser 2018	Jo Canning 2022
Chris Southwick 2019	Angela Einarson 2023
Karen Bennett 2021	Kay Howard 2024



The Criteria.

- Must be a full member in good standing of the Vancouver Island Master Gardener Association.
- Must be a Certified Master Gardener.

In addition, the nominee must have at least 2 of the following.

- Have led numerous clinics.
- Have undertaken other volunteer activities, such as holding seminars, teaching garden-related courses or publication of written material,
- to educate and interact with the public.
- Held one or more administrative positions with VIMGA or MGABC.

Nomination process:

The chair of the Awards Committee receives the nominations and tallies them.

Qualifying suggestions (likely more than 3 votes) are then checked against the criteria.

- Number of years as VIMGA Member (minimum 7)
- Number of years of holding administration or Ad Hoc committee positions.
- Any other extra service.

The Vancouver Island Master Gardener Award is available to Master Gardeners in Training (Interns) in their second year of the VIMGA Master Gardener Certification Program. The award is administered by Vancouver Island University and the recipients are chosen from the pool of submitted applications by a VIMGA selection committee.

Applicants for the award must demonstrate commitment to obtaining their Master Gardener Certification by completing all the requirements of the program. Applicants will also provide a brief statement (300 words max) documenting their enthusiasm, knowledge, and experience in supporting horticultural programs that benefit the community (ex: community gardens, advice clinics, participation in workshops and other gardening-related activities, etc.)

TWO AWARDS of \$500 each will be offered to Interns from the Vancouver Island University Master Gardener non-credit program, Class of 2023. Applicants must submit the application no later than August 31, 2022 via:

Email: Education Committee, president@VIMGA.org

OR

Canada Post:

Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Award
Attention: Awards Committee
101-5170 Dunster Road, Suite 299
Nanaimo, BC
V9T 2Z2

The selection committee will announce the recipients at the 2025 VIMGA AGM. The award will be disbursed in early 2022 by the Vancouver Island University Foundation.



VIMGA Master Gardener Award Application



Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

I have met the following VIMGA requirements:

Completed Plant IDs

Completed Advice and Education Hours

Signature: _____

Date: _____

List 2 (two) references who are current VIMGA Certified Master Gardeners and who know you and your work in the program.

Reference 1: _____ Reference 2: _____

Please provide a brief statement (300 words max) on a separate page describing your enthusiasm, knowledge, and experience in supporting horticultural programs that benefit the community.

Hi All:

The Beban Learning Garden in Nanaimo (most of you will have been to it for hands-on VIMGA sessions) is having a Victory Garden Fest on July 19.

It will be a fun event with plant sale (winter veggies), worm composting demo, kids activities, Agastache tea tasting and other goodies and... the reason for my writing gardening talks. We are looking for a speaker for at 20 minute session on any topic related to winter gardening with focus on edibles. A soils talk would be lovely. Beth Walrond will speak on covers for your winter crops. I will talk on Victory Gardens and growing winter veggies to beat the exorbitant costs of fresh produce. We would like one more speaker. Any takers??

**And for the rest of you... please mark the date and come to the fun event. Master Gardens will be there to answer pressing gardening questions.
Doors open at 10 am and the event lasts till 1 pm or until the last customers leave.**

Contact me by email or phone (250-390-4136) if you have questions.

Thanks,
Dorothee



THANKS

VIMGA Plant Sale Report

Thanks to everyone who donated plants to this year's plant sales at the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society and the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society's show and sale. We had a record number of plants donated and made over \$1300.00 to put towards next year's Spring Education Day. The plant sales are VIMGA's biggest fundraiser and requires many volunteers from starting seedlings to loading and unloading plants.

Here is a report from the plant sale committee with recommendations for next year. If anyone is interested in being involved in the plant sales, please contact your plant sale district representative. We would love more help.

NI: Marion Woloschuck

PQN: Jean Carr

Nan: Felix Surjadjaja

COW: Mary Shakespeare

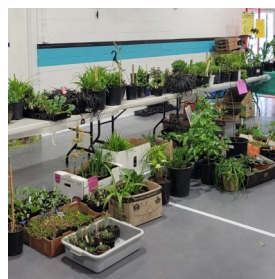
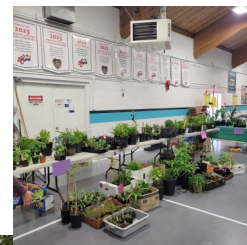
Committee: Having one representative from each district worked very well for communication to members and division of workload. Representatives were responsible to send out information to their district about the plant sale, arrange drop off locations, price the plants and transport them to the sale. We had guidelines for pricing but discretion was also used for unusual or valuable plants.

Recommendations for next year:

- Expand on pricing guidelines including the use of a "pot size" template
- Explore alternative tags for pricing as some of the popsicle sticks deteriorated before the Nanaimo sale.
- Provide plant cultivation information for unusual plants if workload allows
- Continue with signage for organizing placement of plants: fruits and veggies, houseplants, perennials, annuals, shrubs
- Consider reducing the price of plants 2 hours before the end of sale
- Schedule extra help for picking up plants, pricing, loading and unloading plants throughout the sale.

Final Tally:

MARs plant sale net:	\$724.80
NRS plant sale net	\$352.00
Total net:	\$1076.80



Strategic Plan Update on Information Processes

You heard an update on the strategic plan efforts at the SED. There is lots going on. Here is some further information on the VIMGA Public Website Refresh project.

The objective is to create a website that it is an eye catching, relevant, useful and easy to navigate place to find fact based information on gardening and how VIMGA provides it. It walks hand in hand with the efforts on the marketing side as well as other information process projects. Together they support part of our vision statement "new and experienced gardeners think of VIMGA first when looking for trusted gardening advice". A small group of people from different districts and backgrounds are working together to update the website. The work group consists of Deb Gurrad, Ute Holewa, Cathy Lund, Phyllis Pullinger, Cameron Smith and Felix Surjadjaja.

We've taken the approach to do this internally which means educating ourselves on what other Master Gardener organizations and non MG organizations websites are doing for best practices and applying that to our site. Cameron is the website expert in the group so the rest of us are getting some hands on learning along the way.

We have reviewed other websites and now have a good idea on the direction we would like to go. A couple of focus areas are:

- overall look & feel of all pages with colour, photos and arrangement of information
- making the home page a mix of rotating up to date information along with some repeating seasonal tips and key links to our own content
- providing a map that shows users our districts so users can quickly look for upcoming events
- organizing the resources tab where we post our own gardening content

Resources is where you will find:

- InfoSheets: That's new this year and a result of the work of the Client Data Team (Gerry Davis, Norma Kilpatrick, Jean Carr, Ruth Beilman, Deb Gurrad, Jo-Ann Canning, Jim Taylor and Meredith Potter.) You also have them laminated in your clinic totes. They capture the knowledge of all members that you gain and share over the course of your volunteer efforts. On the website they will be reorganized for quick sorting as their numbers increase.
- Questions...Answers: These are drawn from all of the questions submitted through the Gardening Advice Line.
- Newsletters (soon)
- Helpful external links
- Other content as time goes on

It's not a quick fix and we will keep you informed on our progress. Some things we are looking at include a new look, photographs of our work, reorganized content, new content under resources (Fact Sheets are an example of this) and the advice clinics on the calendar of events.

We are creating an editing team to look at content submissions to keep the website relevant and make sure all upcoming events are included. This is starting up this week. If you have interest in the ongoing maintenance of the website let any of the team members know.

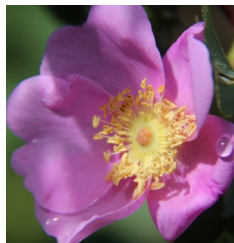
There have also been changes on the members' website with the simplified Advice Clinic, GAP and Presentation reports which Clinic Coordinators will appreciate and increase the number of questions gathered at those events. These changes were driven by the Client Data Team.

Stay tuned for further updates. If you have corrections or suggestions of your own on contents or improvements please pass them on.

Regards,

Cathy

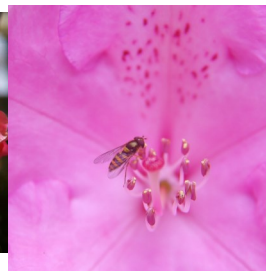
Pics by Jo Canning



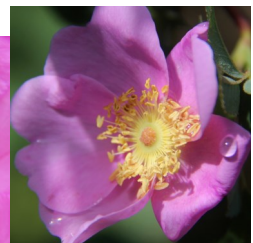
Rugosa Rose



Bi-colour rhodo



Wasp on rhodo bloom



Nootka rose

Dealing With a Heat Wave

By Jo Canning



We are familiar with our early fruit trees losing blossoms or not getting pollinated during cold spring storms, but a similar phenomenon happens with many perennials and crops during heat waves. If you are seeing early blossom drop our recent shot of heat may be the culprit. Temperature over 30C / 85F cause stress in most plants in our area. This year, so far, our heat wave has been short but if we have a couple more, expect to see a larger than normal apple drop later this month, or deformed stone fruit from partial / poor pollination. In a mid-summer heat wave, exposed fruit – especially apples – will actually “cook” in the sun. The cedar trees will also flag, a natural phenomenon in which the ends of many branches turn brown as the tree withdraws water from a percent of the branches to conserve moisture. Although this is normal, a bit of extra water at the end of this month and in July will help them be less stressed.

The pollen of most plants can become inactive when the days climb over 30C /86F, especially before noon. Even if they get adequate water, many perennials, too, will cease blooming. Some will rebloom, others will not. This year our shrub roses finished in half their normal time. We'll still get a few later blooms – they delayed their bloom in the heat this past week – but that will be it for this year. The rebloomers will do okay. Remember to mulch to help keep the soil surface cooler, keeping it about 10 cm away from stems / trunks so the wild pollinators have bare ground to nest in and keep cool in the heat. Water before 0700 in the morning.

Many food crops will drop their blossoms and go back to green growth only, including the nightshade group. Some species, like tomatoes and zucchini, will reset their blossoms. Just expect a later crop. Others, like tomatillos, will not blossom again. Ground cherries seem to act this way as well. The just-opened female blossoms of squash will often curl up immediately even if there are pollinators and nearby male blossoms, so they will not get fertilized. I've seen this when I've gone out in the morning to help the squash get pollinated by picking the males and transferring their offerings to the female blossoms.

Many pollinators will not fly in the heat of the day, and will suffer from dehydration. Water in non-reflective pans in the garden's shady spots will be a welcome gift for our friends. Be sure to put some stones in the pans to make very shallow spots and dry places so they can safely crawl to the water's edge without getting sucked in by capillary action or fly into the water and drown against the steep sides of the pan. Hang the hummingbird feeders in the shade with a pan of water beneath. They will hover and drink. Change your feeders at least every 48 hours so the syrup doesn't ferment and make them ill. 1/4 cup of white sugar to 1 cup of water is the only syrup to use according to the Cornell Ornithology Lab.

Shade cloth will help your susceptible plants and fruit trees. And it doesn't have to be heavy: in our climate, 30% is the maximum weight needed. If your plants are in a greenhouse, the standard greenhouse cloth is usually enough. Just be sure to get good ventilation, even if you have to put in fans. A slow-moving large floor fan works very well. If you cannot find shade cloth, some old “sheer curtains” used as privacy hangings are perfect. A single is about 15-20%; doubled over gives you about 30%. On a greenhouse roof, throw some burlap bags up there. The loose weave makes about the correct shade percentage. And finally, keep your brassica starts in a cool and shady place or they will grow too fast and have weak root systems by August so produce poorly. I've kept the starter gallon pots on wagons and wheelbarrows, bringing them inside the garage or porch by 10:00 AM where is a comfortable 17 – 24C / 65 – 75F, then setting them out in the early evening to get some rays before dark. By November, I am happy I took the extra effort.



And the good thing about heat waves? Fashionable sunhats and mirror sunglasses. Ice tea, lemonade, sangria -- or de-alc beer for those of us taking meds. Oh, how I love a hazy IPA. And a good book. Gotta have the book.

More from Jo Canning:

I am an avid bird watcher as are many VIMGA members who, like me make our gardens bird friendly. Below is a short piece from Cornell Laboratory of Birds on good and bad nesting materials for backyard birds. For those who may be interested, here is the link to Nest-Watch - Cornell Lab of Ornithology- nestwatch@birds.cornell.edu.



New Research Explores Pet Fur Problems

A recent study from the UK documents some concerning findings regarding birds' nests that contained fur in the lining. In a large sample of nests provided by participatory scientists from around the UK, 100% of the fur linings contained insecticides commonly sold as flea and tick treatments for companion animals and livestock. Higher insecticide levels were linked to poorer offspring survival. While more research is needed, we have updated our [blog post on providing nesting materials for birds](#) to reflect this new study. In short, don't offer treated pet fur to birds as a source of nesting material.

Prolonging your Petunia Power by Marion Waters

Reprinted with permission from the Campbell River Mirror.



I am sipping coffee at a patio restaurant. It could be almost anywhere in BC with its brimming baskets of petunias draping from every roof corner. I love the one I am perched beneath today with its mix of purples and hot pinks (pictured). If you set out to design the perfect summer annual you would probably come up with something very like *Petunia x hybrida*.

The domesticated petunia that we all know well is a hybrid of two wild species originating in South America; one with large white flowers (*P. axillaris*) and one with smaller purple flowers (*P. inflata*). Cultivars have been developed in every eye-popping colour-combination and pattern you can imagine including stripes, fringes, and even polka-dots! Some boast double flowers. Some waft heavenly fresh scents that beg a sniff. Pollinators, butterflies, and hummingbirds are all attracted to their flaring funnels. Petunias flower profusely from spring through fall. They are even deer and rabbit resistant. And best of all, they are surprisingly easy to maintain, so even reluctant gardeners embrace them.

There are four distinct groups of petunias. Grandiflora have the largest flowers, reaching 7-10 cm (3-4 inches). Plants grow into mounds of up to 38 cm in height (15 inches) and are typically used in garden borders. Multiflora petunias have smaller blooms but, as the name suggests, produce loads of blossoms. Milliflora present the smallest flowers of all at 2-3cm in size (1-to-1.5 inches) on compact, miniature plants. And we are all familiar with the rapid-spreading wave petunias that cascade from hanging baskets or spill over rock gardens and walls.

The more unusual or new or popular the variety is, the more impossible it seems to be to resist! That's how I felt when I first spotted 'Night Sky' but then was rather disappointed when the dots were virtually invisible from a distance. Take note that any varieties with tiny flowers or details are best viewed close up.

Starting petunia seedlings at home is possible but presents some challenges. For one thing, petunia seeds are tiny and difficult to see and plant out evenly. Also, several packages of seeds may be needed to grow the variety of colours and types you desire. It's possibly more cost-effective to simply buy starters – and definitely easier.

Maintenance is fairly straight-forward. Petunias love sunlight, the more the better, but at least six hours per day; they will not flower or will produce fewer flowers if the light is not adequate. Many petunia varieties can thrive in just about any garden soil and need only moderate watering. Some can withstand intense heat. One thing petunias do not like is soggy soil so adequate drainage is a must. Any planted in pots or baskets will need richer soil and regular watering. Fertilize with a balanced liquid fertilizer formulated for flowers every three weeks (every week for spreading petunias).

An important practice is "deadheading", which is the removal of faded flowers so the plant will put its energy into new blooms rather than setting seed. (I like to use a pair of scissors for this task because petunia stems are covered with sticky hairs.) Try to cut next to a developing bud. Later in the season, remove entire branches that have grown leggy. This will encourage new branching and flowering. Of course, it is not possible to deadhead every flower, but regular attention to this detail will keep your plants healthy and blooming well into the fall.

Petunias are often pest-free. Aphids can be an issue but are easily dislodged with a spray from the hose. Gray mold may develop on leaves but can be avoided by keeping leaves as dry as possible. Water in the morning so leaves have time to dry in the sun. Slugs and snails can be a problem for petunias planted out in garden beds.

Pretty petunias woo us time and again with their promise of lasting summer beauty. And with a little attention, they always deliver. At the first frost, it's time to say our goodbyes.

I wonder what horticulturalists will come up with next year? Checkerboards??

Grow Your Own Blueberries by Brad Willet

Re-printed with permission by Fairfax Master Gardeners



Blueberries have been a delight for thousands of years, and spring is a great time to plant young blueberry plants while soils are moist, and temperatures are mild. Many tribes of indigenous North American people recognized the quality of these edible fruits and shared their knowledge with many of the early European settlers and explorers, such as John Bartram, Meriwether Lewis, and Henry David Thoreau. Records as early as 1615 indicate uses and cultivation of wild blueberries and were likely enjoyed dried at the first Thanksgiving.

Growing from 2 feet to 12 feet (.5 to 4 m), depending on the variety, this native shrub is a great all-season plant. It provides food and great interest in its foliage and flowers. Pink and crimson buds in early spring evolve to dark green foliage as they mature through the growing season. A display of white bell-like flowers brighten up the planting area and attract a variety of bees, which are essential to achieve fruit set. The fruits set into small green juvenile berries that ripen from pink to red to deep blue in the summer. This shrub puts out a spectacular display of foliage in the fall that changes from green to oranges and deep crimson reds. Blueberry bushes work great as foundation plants, focal specimens or even as a natural hedge. These versatile plants are sure to be a joy for years to come.

Members of the Ericaceae family that include plants adapted to acid soil (think azaleas and rhododendrons), there are more than 35 species of blueberries (*Vaccinium*) indigenous to North America. It's a good idea to plant more than one cultivar within each species you select to provide an overlap in the bloom period for adequate cross pollination, allowing for a wider window of ripening fruits and a longer harvest. Many blueberries can be self-fertile, not requiring active pollination, but any time you allow the native pollinators to help out, the better it will be for the fruit set. Many native bees will visit your blueberry flowers, and the flowers need these visitors often to pollinate the flowers to achieve maximum berry growth.

Site selection and preparation will ensure greater success with blueberries. They generally prefer well-draining soils, high in organic matter in full sun, but can tolerate some shade. They also need acidic soils around the pH of 4.3 to 5.3. Soil test results from your planting site will determine what amendments you will require to help your plants succeed. Soil amendments are generally recommended to be added the fall prior to planting. This can be done using soil additives such as sulfur, soil acidifiers or other amendments to bring down the pH to a minimum of 6 inches of soil depth.

Young blueberry bushes should be planted in April or early May. Blueberries have a shallow, fibrous root system and are sensitive to drying out, so planting holes should be dug no less than twice as wide as the blueberry's root ball. A uniform and adequate supply of water is essential during their first season as they become established, about 1 inch (2.5 cm) of water per week. If this amount isn't supplied by natural soil water or rainfall, you must irrigate. Check the soil frequently for adequate moisture and irrigate if necessary. Using a wood chip, pine bark or pine needle mulch will also help with soil moisture retention. Depending on how you want them to look at maturity, spacing each plant about 3 feet apart (1 m) is advisable, unless the variety you are planting will get larger.

And if your location is strapped for space — have no fear! Blueberries can also thrive in containers. They can be easier to protect from birds, less prone to disease, easier to harvest and easier to move if needed. Keep in mind they have the same soil and drainage needs as they would have in the ground. There are cultivars that have been bred especially for containers, which are usually a cross between *V. corymbosum* and *V. angustifolium*. They are sometimes called "patio blueberries," and some cultivars will have pink berries as opposed to blue — but taste just as good.

Some things to consider: Blueberries need about three years to get established. Whether in your landscape or in a container, it is best to allow a blueberry bush to concentrate on acclimating to its new home and growing a great root structure. You'll want to avoid letting it flower the first two years to help the plant grow stronger. Also, it is recommended to let your blueberry bush grow as it will for the first three years, with no need to prune during this time.

Blueberries are generally free from many issues or pests. The main pests will be the wildlife foraging on your berries before you do. Physical deterrents like netting will help to keep your harvest from being stolen until you are ready to pick your berries for yourself.

Blueberries are great plants not only by providing food for you, but they are gorgeous in the landscape. With the proper soil and planting conditions, you can enjoy these wonderful plants for years to come.

...updated 2025



Area Updates

Qualicum/Parksville District Reps - Norma & Jean pqn-rep@vimga.org

—Marion ni-rep@vimga.org



Parksville/Qualicum/Nanose members continue to be hard at work this spring attending a number of clinics at various events including Garden Centres, Seedy Saturday venues, Plant Sales and Garden Tours.

In April a field trip was arranged by Diane for our PQN members to visit Milner Gardens. We had an excellent tour of the grounds led by Kim who provided the history of the property. Kim pointed out many individual plants and discussed them in detail. Richard provided a tour of the propagation areas on the grounds. Our members saw first hand all of the work that goes into supporting and growing that amazing property. It was an interesting and enjoyable learning experience! Thank you to Kim and Richard and Diane! Part way through our tour we held a short meeting in the Den where we ate our lunch and had a catch up with each other.

This year, a group of VIMGA members who volunteer at the Milner's Food Garden applied and received a \$500.00 grant from the Qualicum Beach Seedy Saturday committee to promote food security in the community. The money will be used towards supplies for demonstrating and educating the public on growing food practices.

Our next meeting/social and garden experience is scheduled for June at Peter's home in Parksville.

Two GAPS are complete with two more to be scheduled for later in the summer.

Membership remains the same at 20 total: 12 CMGs, 44 Alumni, 1 Lifetime, 3 Interns.

Submitted by Jean



Marion

NI get together—pictures sent in by Marion Waters. These are from our north island group's social/meeting held at Marion Woloschuk's home in Bowser on April 28th

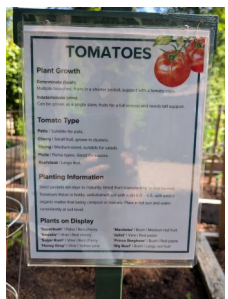


Milner's Food Demonstration Garden



Secret Gardens of Mer-

ville:
Cathy and Kathy at McLoughlin Gardens in Black Creek on May 25



April's field trip to Milner Gardens



North Island District Rep



Mark at one the Gardens on the tour

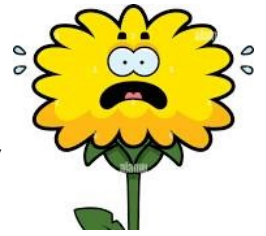




Felix with Bruno

Area Updates cont.

North Island District Reps– Felix & Eric nan-rep@vimga.org



Nanaimo Area held a fun filled and 'educational' get-together. This event was organized by Dorothee, Eric and Felix and hosted by our generous hosts, Mike and Mary. Apart from the social aspect was our **"Free Weeds"** session .

Some of the Weeds brought and left at Mike's (sorry about that Mike!) were:

- Goutweed: *Aegopodium podagraria*
- Common Dandelion - *Taraxacum officinale*
- False Dandelion - *Hypochaeris radicata*
- Common Burdock - *Arctium minus*
- Herb's Robert or Stinky Bob - *Geranium robertianum*
- Creeping Bellflower - *Campanula rapunculoides*
- Common Milkweed - *Asclepias syriaca*



10th ANNUAL ALTRUSA GARDEN TOUR

Sunday, June 22, 2025 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM



\$25 TICKETS AVAILABLE AT:
Cash only at venues other than Gardenworks

GREEN THUMB GARDEN CENTRE	6261 HAMMOND BAY ROAD	250-758-0944
KC'S BOUTIQUE & PETITES	5771 TURNER ROAD	250-751-7799
BIRDIE & BEES	2517 BOWEN ROAD	250-716-2442
GARDENWORKS	6469 METRAL DRIVE	250-390-1151

SELF-GUIDED TOUR OF 6 LOVELY GARDENS
FUNDRAISER TO SUPPORT WOMEN, CHILDREN AND LITERACY IN NANAIMO

ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL OF NANAIMO

Roberta: 250-758-6783 or keberta1@gmail.com
Cheryl: 250-802-4190 or ccurkowskyj@gmail.com



VIMGA Summer Picnic

Tuesday, 29 July, 2025

Transfer Beach
Sportman Shelter
Ladysmith

4-7 PM

Hosted by Cowichan District



Directions

(from Highway #1, both north and south)

1. Turn toward water at 2nd light (Roberts Street).
See VIMGA signs along road.
2. Follow Transfer Beach Road to 'T' intersection. 3. Turn right. Street parking along the road.
4. In a few yards is a parking lot on water side of road. Playground & Sportman Shelter beyond.
See a VIMGA sandwich board in parking lot.
5. Park if there is room, or unload and park along the road. There is an overflow lot at the "T" intersection on main road.

How to find the Sportman Shelter:

The shelter is on the downhill side at the far end of the playground. There are paved walkways with steps on both sides of the playground. Next to the shelter is a cement building with a sign, "Kayak Rentals."

What to Bring

Yourselves and a guest (apologies, no pets)

A dish to share (electricity in pavilion)

Beverage (drinking water provided)

Mug, plate, cutlery

Chair, sunscreen, hat, etc.

NB!!!

Leave room for our big VIMGA cake!



OUR BUSY VIMGA MEMBERS



Your Continuing Education Members are busy planning for our upcoming AGM and Spring Education Day. We know that many of you have expressed an interest in having the small demo sessions continue. We so appreciate your participation and it is wonderful to learn from each other. But we need volunteers. Here are a few of our suggestions for small group teaching (we know you have more). These mini presentations are 20—30 minutes long.

- Decorative container planting
- Refresh and maintain container plantings (including how -to for potting soil)
- Growing Maples and conifers in pots
- Growing vegetables in pots
- Preparing your tools for hibernation and/or sharpening tools for the upcoming season
- Narrow small gardens
- Re-potting your orchids

The above is just a sampling. Please let Ruth or Jan know of your ideas and if you are willing to share your knowledge—remember you don't have to present alone. Bring in another VIMGA friend. Deadline—July 15th email cec@vimga.org