

# CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

Issue 19

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

September 2025



## Editor's Letter

Most of us cope with invasive species on our properties. For me, it's Himalayan blackberries and Scottish broom. Some of the plants on the BC invasive species list seem puzzling to us here on the island. Gypsophyla comes to mind. Before I became aware that it was on The List, I tried to grow baby's breath many times without much success. However, when travelling through the Okanagan area, I sometimes see entire fields covered with it. Conversely, Scottish broom is a huge issue here but is not common in other regions.



Marion Waters

Every summer, I travel to our family cabin in the Kootenays. This summer, I was visited there by Dave, a volunteer from a local group that battles invasive species. He had tagged two broom plants on the bank across the road from our cabin. He was informing me they would be treated with herbicides, along with a teasel plant growing nearby. While I was talking to him and sharing our west coast approaches to dealing with broom, I began to wonder how that broom on the bank got started. Was it possible that we had inadvertently transported those seeds from Vancouver Island? Yikes.

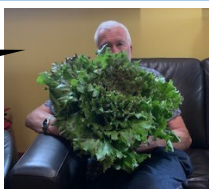
I often travel around the province, as do thousands of other people. Our clothing, vehicles, and pets can carry seeds and deposit them elsewhere. Broom or teasel will likely not take off in the Kootenays because the conditions are so different, but who knows? I realize now that just because an invasive plant doesn't thrive in our area doesn't mean we should ignore it, or worse, feel free to grow it. Those baby breath seeds (for example) could be transported to a place where they really will invade and potentially damage crops and local habitats.

Dave was very kind about it, saying that road mowers also transport seeds and that there were a few other broom plants already growing elsewhere in the area. He was very interested in my advice about combatting them. Let's hope he doesn't have to use it too often. - Marion

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Gail Hudson asked her husband to pick some lettuce .....



# President's Message

Mike, President

[president@vimga.org](mailto:president@vimga.org)



Hello Everyone,

The end of summer 2025 is here once again and we can celebrate a great season of Clinics and events by our Members for 2025! All of our districts were very active with many old and new venues being attended by our Master Gardener Volunteers! With a few great venues still to go we will soon get a chance to celebrate together at our 2025 Annual General Meeting.

This year we will celebrate the graduation of 15 new Master Gardeners having completed their requirements for certification. I am looking forward to joining all of you on November 15 at Nanoose Hall for our AGM and Celebration!

Interest in science-based gardening with attention to native environments, home grown food, best environmental practices, and healthy living is very high. Our members provide an essential and welcomed service to the public and our connection to each other is something to be celebrated. This is quite evident by our list of those interested in signing up for our Master Gardener Training Program in January 2026, we have a record number of almost 100 interested in the program!

The web site teams have been busy planning and implementing many enhancements to our web site and member web-based information system. While having a "bit of rest" over the summer they are back in the saddle planning site improvements for better public and member engagement. This is a good time to remind members to get their entries completed by December 31 to ensure they have their required hours for continued certification. As always if you need help doing that don't hesitate to reach out to myself or any other member - glad to help! ([president@vimga.org](mailto:president@vimga.org))

With our first board meeting after summer break there are plenty of things in the wind that directors and committees are working on. Mentors are signed up for our new Interns, community projects and events are being planned, and Districts are preparing for our new year while still completing our 2025 clinics. 2026 is going to be fun and active for VIMGA members and mark your calendars for our 2026 Spring Education Day on March 7, 2026 at Nanoose Hall.

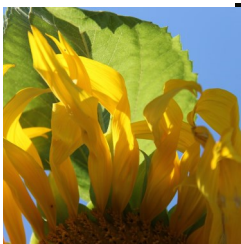
If you are thinking about serving on the VIMGA Board or any one of our committees make sure to express your interest to Ruth ([vicepresident@vimga.org](mailto:vicepresident@vimga.org)) who chairs our nominations committee along with our district representatives. Your service is critical to the success we enjoy in delivering our services to members and the public. I hope you will consider participation in your area of interest! Thank you to those that are part of our Board and Committees for all you do for VIMGA members and our program.

Our VIMGA Newsletter is full of information for members and the public and I want everyone to take the time to thank our tireless editors Jan and Marion and those who contribute to our Gardening community who work hard to bring this to you. Please take a moment and send a thank you to [newsletter@vimga.org](mailto:newsletter@vimga.org) and let them know their hard work is appreciated and maybe let them know about your favorite segment.

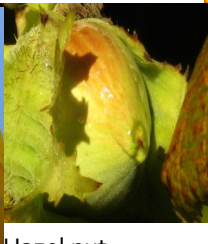
Plenty going on and then there is more so read on to get up to date on many events and happenings with Vancouver Island Master Gardeners!

All the best,

*Mike*



Rising sunflower



Hazel nut



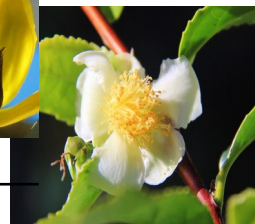
nasturtium



Sunflower



Clematis



Camellia senensis

Pics by Jo  
Canning



**MGABC 2025 Annual General Meeting**  
**Sunday, October 5th 2025, 9:30am – 1pm via Zoom**  
**The Day's Events – 2 Great Speakers!**

Registration Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/o6nJe36yQPyXo2lxZxEH5Q#/registration>

**9:30am Welcome and President's Address – Coleen Rogers**

- Minutes of 2024 AGM
- Financial Report
- Creative Presentations by MGABC Chapters
- Golden Trowel Award
- Nominating Committee Report

**11am Jay Akerley, PMP - Garden Resilience in a Land of Extremes**

Jay will share his experience designing, building and understanding the elements of Southern Interior gardens from valley bottom to chairlifts, and selection of appropriate plants. He will cover soil composition, basic design, propagation and use of native and non-native plants, containers and microclimates. Of particular interest to gardeners intrigued by plants rare to cultivation, water-wise and fire-safe gardens, and pollinator gardens.

Jay is a rock gardening enthusiast with unique experience gardening at sea level in Vancouver, at subalpine elevations in Canada's second largest ski resort, on British Columbia's high and dry Thompson Plateau and in its arid, desert-like interior. His degree in Geography from Simon Fraser University and training at the Pacific Horticulture College in Victoria nurtured an interest in the world's montane, high steppe and desert plants and landscapes.

**12pm Molly Thurston - Altered Weather Patterns and Your Garden**

Molly will discuss impacts of the observed, altered weather patterns occurring throughout the Province. She will explore the impacts of climate change in key commercial horticultural crops and home gardens, climate mitigation strategies being employed in agricultural systems, and those Master Gardeners might consider applying at home.

Molly is an agrologist and grower with extensive experience advising, hiring and managing farm crews in the Okanagan and Creston Valleys. Her crews are comprised of both local and Seasonal Agricultural workers. As the owner and operator of Pearl Agricultural Consulting, Inc. she works with farmers in the Okanagan and Kootenay-Boundary areas, providing support and on-farm extension services. Molly also conducts research and innovation trials on her farms in the Creston Valley and is co-owner and operator of the Creston-based Kokanee Fruit Company, Ltd.

**1:00pm Wrap Up**

## Fond Memories of CyAnne

Most Thursdays during the summer, CyAnne would take the hour-long road trip from Cedar to Qualicum Beach to volunteer at the Milner Food Garden. We would always praise her for driving so far to volunteer at the Food Garden, but she confessed that it was an opportunity to stop at garden centers, plant sales or any other outlets with garden supplies. We all marvelled that she crammed 10 bags of Ben's chicken manure in her little white "Beetle".

On many occasions she shared cuttings of plants, particularly the *Ocimum x citriodorum* "Pesto Perpetuo"- Evergreen Perpetual Basil. Several of us were given cuttings and not one of us could match her special talent for propagating this herb!



- Jean Carr

CyAnne was a lifelong learner. Interested in Herbs, soil fertilizers and vegetable growing.

She signed on to on - line courses and attended education opportunities.

In memory of CyAnne we will be planting one of her favorite plants in the Milner Food Garden.

We will miss seeing her little "white beetle" chugging into the Milner parking lot.

- Angela, Jean, Diane, Allison, Mariah and Sylvia

I was always happy when CyAnne came to the Beban Learning Gardens: To pick up veggie starts for her garden, to talk gardening, or to bring us pots.

And now the gardens will benefit from the wonderful hoard of organic fertilizer, many other amendments, bagged manure, string, and garden tools.

All of us at VIMGA will benefit from many other garden goodies that will be distributed as door prizes, etc. at our fall AGM. As we use these items we will think of CyAnne and our plants will thrive because of her.

CyAnne was very knowledgeable in all things garden-related. When GAL was still located at Milner Gardens and Woodland, we often were together to answer questions and she would be the first to suggest answers, and where to look. I miss her.

- Dorothee

It is not often that you feel a kinship with someone, but for me, CyAnne was the person I felt an immediate connection with. Her welcoming smile and warm presence was something I always enjoyed. She was one of the first people I looked for during our VIMGA get-togethers. We would chat away about our gardens, laugh about our "problem areas" and of course, share our successes.

CyAnne and I were classmates during our Master Gardener training. She was a quiet unassuming participant with an immense store of knowledge. I so enjoyed talking with her during our breaks. I used to tease CyAnne about her 'stellar' final test performance. When the instructor announced the final results, she said that only one person had "aced the exam". We all looked around to see who it was, and of course, it was CyAnne. I will miss you my friend.

- Jan Thorsen



From left to right

CyAnne, Jill, Gail, Dorothee and Beth



# Area Updates

## Qualicum/Parksville District Reps - Norma & Jean



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

Submitted by Jean

PQN Report September's newsletter:

In PQN, we had a busy summer visiting members' gardens and enjoying each other's company. Most of our clinics were completed in the spring

but this year, we added the Qualicum Beach Farmer's market into our summer schedule. It was a big hit as it seemed to meet a need with the public in answering gardening questions during the growing season. We will be looking into adding more clinics at the QB Farmer's market next year. We also had 3 GAPs this summer with one owner making a donation of \$40.00 to VIMGA.

With the dry weather leading to wildfires, we had a couple of our members impacted with either being on alert or having to evacuate. Thankfully, everyone and their homes and gardens were fine and didn't suffer any damage. Fellow members were on standby to help with accommodation offers or help with moving machinery.

We had two interns graduate this spring and our other three are on schedule to graduate this fall. We have enjoyed working with this group and appreciate all of their contributions in the last two years.

CyAnne Bertoia's passing was especially hard on some PQN members. Although CyAnne was from the Nanaimo district, she had strong ties in PQN through her volunteer work with the food garden team at Milner gardens. CyAnne had been with the food garden for over 5 years and welcomed many of us as we joined the team over the years. We will miss her kind and gentle ways and will be planting one of her favorite plants in her memory in the food garden.



June's tour and social in Peter's garden



Celebrating Richard's birthday



August's tour and social in Richard's new garden



July's tour and social in Allison's garden

## VIMGA Cowichan District Rep - Ute Holewa [cow-rep@vimga.org](mailto:cow-rep@vimga.org)



Ute Holewa

COWICHAN DISTRICT REPORT  
Board Meeting September 9, 2025  
Ute Holewa, sitting in for Fern Hietkamp (Distr. Rep)

July

- Advice Clinic - VIRL Duncan
- Hosted VIMGA Summer Picnic (see summary) Theme 'Native Plants'

August

- GAP at Ladysmith Community Garden Focus on summer pruning

Upcoming Events

September

- 5 Advice Clinics at Cowichan Fair

This year is the 159th Cowichan Exhibition, the theme is Winged Wonders

We are contributing to the theme by featuring 'Winged Wonders in the Garden' displayed at our table.

Jo Canning has compiled 7 handouts: Beneficial Insects, Planting for Pollinators, Pollinator Gallery, Bird Nesting Boxes, Hummingbirds, Bats, Dragonflies (recommend these handouts be available on VIMGA's website).

Advice Clinic—VIRL Ladysmith

# VIMGA PICNIC JULY 29, 2025 (4-7pm) AT TRANSFER BEACH, LADYSMITH

Hosted by Cowichan District

Picnic Planning Committee (PPC)

Sandy Kelly, Sandra Lee, Jo Canning, Mary Shakespeare, Jennifer Peterson, Ute Holewa

About 50 attendees

## What worked well

### 1. Planning

Started planning early (February ) so had good lead time

Save-the-Date sent to membership well in advance of the date with emails/posters/newsletter.

Member and their guest asked to RSVP giving us an idea of numbers

Provided detailed map of location on the poster (attached)

PPC met via Zoom meetings plus on-site meetings to get a feel for the space

Divided responsibilities amongst PPC

Planned activities with a Native Plant theme to take advantage of the site and encourage fun and mingling (1hour education time)

### 2. Day of the Picnic

Lots of signage - Cowichan and Nanaimo Districts brought sandwich boards, and a banner went on the shelter

Name badges worn and stickies given to attendees to help identify people and their district

Program MC (Mike), microphone and canopies were much appreciated

Told folks to expect a big cake = few desserts were brought

Involved most Cowichan members as hosts, greeters, photographer on the day

Many attendees pitched in with set-up/take-down

## Needed improvement

Recognition of donors of raffle/giveaways/draw prizes

## Budget was \$300

Item	Cost	Expenses
Sportsman Shelter Rental (4 hours)	\$60.73	
Cake 1/2 slab	\$58.00	
Ice	\$9.80	
		\$128.53

## Recommended by Board (outside of the budget)

Gift Certificates	Cost	Total Spent
4 x \$25 to Garden Works (\$100)		
		\$228.53







# VIMGA 2025 Summer Picnic

Pictures sent in by  
Meredith Potter and  
Jennifer Peterson







At the Nanaimo Gladiolus and Dahlia Society's Show on August 23, D. Gwen Carlson-Redcliffe a member from the Cowichan District entered and won a 1st for the display of a Single Gwen Redcliffe Dahlia. Her Triple Single entry also won a 1st, Section Champion and was awarded placement at the Head Table for Best In Show for a Triple Single.

Gwen and Norman are happy to announce their Gwen Redcliffe Dahlia is now registered with the American Dahlia Society. - submitted by Ute Holewa



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#### Ageless Gardens Season 5 - Episode 4

Chris Southwick was a star on ZOOMER TV. We hope you were able to see this episode which was described as "Building on her grandparent's achievements, an award-winning rhododendron grower in Nanaimo, BC continues to spread plant knowledge to the community".



Unfortunately, it only aired until June 23. Oh well, Chris, fame can be fleeting! But we are all in luck, as we can see Chris' garden on YouTube go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87qyWKZLvJE>

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Dorothee Kieser was interviewed earlier this summer on CBC's North by Northwest by CBC's Margaret Gallagher Listen here at: <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-43-north-by-northwest>



Mariah Wilde, owner of West Coast Plants in Errington near Parksville, was interviewed by the Times Colonist for the article entitled "**Harvest Season keeps Keeping pest-wary gardeners on their toes**". In the article, Mariah was quoted as saying the "first line of defense against pests that travel by land is fencing—fences of all sizes help deer and rabbits steer clear of a garden before they even know it's there.



As for pesky insects, Wilde said the best way to protect a garden is to make sure plants are well taken care of, with adequate water, nutrients and sunlight, since some plants in poor health emit compounds that make them more attractive to insects.

A garden with an abundance of variety also means a healthy, biodiverse ecosystem that will attract good insects to keep bad ones in check, she said.

Focus on creating a garden ecosystem that can take care of itself, and that will be less work for you."

To read the August 6th article, go to: <https://www.timescolonist.com/local-news/harvest-season-keeps-pest-wary-gardeners-on-their-toes> To see Mariah's **West Coast Plants** website go to: <https://westcoastplants.ca/>

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Victory Garden Fest organized by Dorothee, the crew at the Beban Learning Gardens and of course VIMGA members.



Dorothee's talk on 'how to grow winter vegetables successfully.'



Door prize time



This shows Beth Walrond's beautiful artwork -she drew quite the crowd!

**More on Victory Gardens on next page .....**





Victory Garden Fest at Beban Learning Gardens—submitted by Dorothee

VIMGA members have, for many years, been actively involved with the Beban Learning Gardens (BLG) in Nanaimo. We have had pruning workshops, general meetings, bee identification workshops there and some members have gotten many volunteer hours there by answering gardening questions both during special events and during normal working hours.

On July 19 this year we had a special summer event with seminars, plant sales, kids' activities and garden art. Again VIMGA members were actively involved. Felix Surjadaja answered garden questions, Beth Walrond talked on "Fabrics of Change" using available fabrics as tools to deal with climate change and insect infestations. Dorothee Kieser, spoke on "Victory Gardening:\*\* with a short history of Victory Gardens, their relevance to today and how to successfully grow winter veggies in our gardens to become more self sufficient at a time when vegetable prices in the stores are exorbitant and in a time where we want to consume fresh and local produce .

A bit of history on Victory Gardens:

Such gardens had their origin in WWI and came back in WW II. Early in the first war, governments were doubtful about their value but soon, it was realized that not only were there severe food shortages - if not already but soon to come. Men were at the front but women and children suffered at home. Planting a garden for Victory was not only symbolic, but it was morale boosting. In many countries: Canada, USA, Britain, Australia victory gardens were therefore encouraged as wholesome & patriotic.

Most plots were in home gardens where lawns were dug up (only 3% were in community gardens). They taught families new skills, children were encouraged to help. Men who were not busy with the war effort were encouraged by their youngsters and other family members to lend a hand. Even if overall the food production was not enormous it helped in times of scarcity, especially if nothing was available. The governments, while considering it mostly symbolic, supported it as a morale booster. Esp in Britain where food shortages were standard long after the war had ended, Victory Gardens were a major undertaking. *Both Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle had vegetable gardens planted at the instigation of King George VI to assist with food production. One Londoner reminisced many years later, "You couldn't buy artificial fertilisers in those days. But Grandpa kept his plants well-nourished. He swept our chimneys himself and kept the soot for the garden, and he collected lime mortar from bomb sites. Any wood ash was carefully kept, also the lawn mowings, and of course he had the manure and old bedding from the chook and rabbit pens. He made a small wooden cart which he pulled behind his bicycle. He rode round behind the baker, the milkman and the coalman, all of whom made their deliveries by horse and cart, collecting the droppings. Of course the local kids called out after him in the street, and teased me about my 'dirty Grandpa'. But he ignored them, and I learnt to do the same. He collected leaf-mould in the Autumn to add to the compost pile, which regularly received every scrap of organic waste he could garner. Bones were broken up with a hammer, (but not before they had spent hours in Gran's stockpot) and fish bones cut up with old scissors. The vacuum cleaner and the dustpans were always emptied on the heap, as were the teapot and the chamberpots we used at night. All tiny scraps of wool, thread and fabric also went in."*

Reference for History:

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/costofliving/victory-gardens-food-tariffs-1.7546210>

Italicised section taken from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victory\\_garden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victory_garden)

# Sow seeds now for early spring blooms by Marion Waters

Reprinted with permission from the Campbell River Mirror.

Deadheading flowers is an enjoyable pastime at this time of year. Tidying up leggy stems and scruffy flower heads encourages new blooming and extends the beauty of the season. Trimmings can be dropped and left under the foliage to feed the soil as they decompose. But wait, there are treasures in those cuttings! As blooming days peter out, many flowers and herbs produce multitudes of seeds. These fall to the ground and become covered by falling debris. With the fall rains, some of them germinate and new life cycles begin.

Poppies, calendula, snapdragons, alyssum, columbine, nigella, bee balm, cilantro, parsley, dill, even sweet peas – all reseed themselves in my garden every year. And because those seed heads sometimes find their way into the compost, many of those flowers and herbs show up in totally unexpected places. One summer, my asparagus patch turned into a poppy bed. The next year, poppies bloomed throughout my vegetable garden, unplanned and absolutely lovely.

There are many fall-seeding choices to consider. Delphinium and hollyhocks are tall and dramatic staples of the “English Garden”. They create a stately backdrop in any flower bed, particularly against a wall or fence (which also offers support). Tall echinacea, lupins, and poppies can fill out this grouping. Aromatic bergamot (bee balm) is considered a herb but its spiky flowers lend contrast in the flower bed and, of course, draw in bees and hummingbirds. I want to add in some purple ones with the red variety I already have established.

Smaller choices for fall seeding include viola and pincushion plant (Scabiosa), which is a ground-hugging plant that sends up charming flowers on thin stems. Scabiosa has low water needs so is suitable for filling in those drier edges of your beds. Sweet peas can also reseed themselves but will benefit from deeper planting in enriched soil.

Out of hundreds of seeds, often only a few plants emerge in the spring. Much depends on the winter weather. Many seeds require several days of below-freezing temperatures and damp conditions to stratify.

A mild winter may not provide those conditions. Seeds and seedlings also wash away in downpours or dry up in unexpected dry hot spells like we are having now. Seeds are also consumed by wildlife.

Germination rates can be improved with a little intervention. Most fall-scattered seeds just need a well-drained piece of earth to land on. Prepare the soil by removing weeds and large pieces of debris. Seeds can be lightly raked in or simply left on the surface. Water them with a gentle shower so they sink into the soil without washing away. And that’s it, perhaps the easiest gardening you will ever do! The seeds will germinate and put down roots which continue to develop over the winter, much like bulbs. In the spring, your fall-planted seeds will be miles ahead of any spring-planted ones, which means earlier flowers, and earlier harvests of tender dill leaves, cilantro, and parsley. Seeds such as dill and coriander (cilantro) can also be saved to use in your kitchen. Dill seeds are a delicious addition to breads.

Once those plants are established in your garden, the cycle will continue for many years, even without any intervention. Unfortunately, many fall-sown seeds do not respond well to being transplanted. Those roots that have developed over the winter may be thin as a strand of hair and are easily broken. Parsley and columbine are exceptions.

Collecting seeds is a simple task and saves dollars. Save some of your seeds to trade with your gardening buddies. If you collect an excess of seeds, consider donating a few to seed exchanges at libraries and community centres. You may discover some new varieties for yourself. Be sure to leave several stands of flower heads to create winter interest in your garden and to support wildlife. The seeds heads will attract birds throughout the winter. The hollow stems provide winter nesting spaces for many insects.

We are all busy harvesting and cleaning up at this time of year so it’s easy to forget about sowing fall seeds. So this is my reminder and yours too! When spring arrives, we will be rewarded with early blooms and maybe some sweet surprises.



Snapdragons, calendula and sweet peas all produce seeds in fall.





## Plum Crazy by Beth Walrond

It's been a perfect growing season and gardeners are dealing with bumper crops. I certainly have, with an estimated plum crop of 250 lbs from my plum tree. Those beautiful purple plums (*Prunus domestica*) came in a little early, but are a most welcome addition to the winter store of food. I have made 12-250 ml jars of plum/orange jam, 12 pints of stewed plums and have frozen 18 lbs.

I obviously had a lot left over. What to do with the rest? I could have sold them, but given the current economic climate I decided to give them away. I just wanted to do one thing that was an act of generosity. Sixteen families received boxes and bags of plums. Considering what it cost to have my tree professionally pruned, there were moments when I wondered if that was wise, but I have received surprising paybacks.

Gardeners tend to share. One friend returned 3 jars I had loaned her years ago. My jars came back filled with blackberry jam. This was a most welcome gift as I didn't have time to get out and pick the berries myself.

Another friend brought me a bag of carrots from her fabulous vegetable garden. I find growing carrots challenging, so I really appreciated her gift.

The last bag of plums went to another friend with whom I have many shared interests, including music. I was moaning to her that I would need to buy a keyboard since I joined the church choir. I had given away my grand piano a few years ago when my husband and I considered moving. The thing about music is: play what you sing and sing what you play. "Oh", said my friend, "I have a keyboard you can have." I offered to pay her, but no, she was just happy to have someone use the thing that had gathered dust for years. What a great trade, a bag of plums for a keyboard.

One of the interesting gifts, is recipes. I took a box of plums to choir practice and to the Sunday service. Many people told me of favorite recipes for plums. Plum Klueken (cake), plum syrup,

and most surprising, to me, is plum soup. This recipe is from a choir member who grew up in a Mennonite community in Saskatchewan. It seems to be a winter treat as dried fruits are used.

Here is the recipe:

### **Plumi Moos (soup)**

5 qts water  
2 cups plums  
½ cup of apricots  
1 cup of dried apples  
1 ½ cup of raisins  
1 ½ cup of sugar  
½ lemon  
½ tsp. cinnamon  
½ cup cornstarch



Boil water and plums 10 minutes. Add the remainder of the fruits and boil till well done. Then add sugar. Mix cornstarch in a small amount of water and boil for about 5 minutes.

Mrs. D Fast

Choritz, Man.

This is called a soup, but it sounds more like a pudding to me. I imagine this would be a wonderful treat in the winter. The recipe book has many versions of this.

It has been a Plum Crazy time preserving and finding a home for all the plums before they became over ripe, but I have succeeded.



Pictured here is Beth's nephew, Jeremy Conn and his daughter Coco, who picked a large part of the crop

# PHYLLOSTACHYS NIGRA (Black bamboo)

By Sally Shivers

These plants only bloom once, in forty to one hundred years. They then die. Mine was purchased locally from someone who was dividing his plant, so I do not know how old it is. I believe bamboo is classified as a grass and the flowers look very much like grass seed heads. The Bamboo farm on Saltspring Island, tells me that the plant will take a long time to die, (years they say!) it may put out some shoots, but they will not be very robust. I have loved this plant. It is very imposing, provides a beautiful backdrop and privacy. You definitely need space for it. It is a clump forming bamboo, and for many years it did not spread, but in latter years it has been quite difficult to control. It looks as if after flowering, the dying process starts.



Sally's bamboo plant in bloom.



If you look at the left branch you can see the seeds, and can easily see why it is classified as a grass!



## Request from Sally Shivers

I would love to compare notes with anyone who has used the fertilizer. It was either called fierce fish or frozen fish! It was produced by a fellow in Errington using fish waste and a North Korean organic method of ? Composting. He produced a solution which could be diluted to different strengths depending on its use. It was to encourage growth of the micorrhizal fungi in the soil improving the plant's roots' ability to take up the nutrients in the soil. I used it in the vegetable garden, I think two years ago and I have been very impressed with it. Unfortunately, I think he is no longer producing it!! Sally.

## Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Website Update



### Strategic Plan Update on Information Processes

Short update on the VIMGA Public Website Refresh project: it was a good summer and most of us enjoyed working (playing?) in our gardens. We did take a break but got the WEB Editors team going.

Your WEB Editors team includes Ruth Beilman, Gerry Davis, Deb Gurrad, Ute Holewa and Cathy Lund. They have met several times to discuss approaches and get hands on training from Cameron. The training has already generated some new information on the home page. Check it out. The team will be working with the District Reps to bring in district specific information and keep the Events listings up to date. If you have information you think would be relevant to the public or membership then reach out to anyone on the team. It's a very energetic group and they are excited about getting relevant and colourful information onto the VIMGA website. They will be working with the VIMGA Public Website Refresh project team to ensure they are aligned. - submitted by Cathy Lund



## Reminders for our members



Hope you've been having an enjoyable time in the garden. We're excited to announce our second 2025 social gathering — and this time, we're headed to Gail's and Louie's forest retreat!

### Details:

When: Saturday, September 20th, from 2:00PM to 4:30PM

Where: 3550 Galloway Road. Nanaimo, BC.

Join us for a guided tour through the woods with our wonderful hosts, Louie and Gail.

It is a peaceful forest stroll that's mostly easy, with an optional route through the sequoia area for those looking for a bit more adventure.. Not up for walking? No problem — you're welcome to relax, socialize, and enjoy the serene setting. It's a stunning experience you won't want to miss.

Bring along your favorite snack to share and feel free to invite a +1!

Please RSVP so we can plan accordingly. Stay tuned!

*Felix*

Eight of our members have signed up for the root washing workshop at Chris Southwick's garden on October 25 but we have been offered a second garden for another workshop. This one is in Port Alberni at Laurie Tandrup's garden and she has a large selection of different kinds of plants that need to get out of pots and into garden beds. I know this is a longer drive for most of you but I would really love to have a workshop there to support Laurie.

At this point we have not set a date but we have lots of options in October. If enough people are interested in going to Port Alberni we will find a date that works for everyone.

*Deb*

Hello VIMGA Members:

At the VIU-VIMGA meeting today, it was decided to recommend to the 2026 Adv. Gardening Course students to obtain Linda Gilkeson's "Natural Insect, Weed and Disease Control" book, third edition. We plan to put in a bulk order to Linda once we know the student numbers. We also wondered if any of you are interested in purchasing a copy (to be added to the bulk order). In 2024 the price was approx \$30. I see that it is now at Chapters for \$50.-, but likely we will get a bit of a discount on the bulk order.

If you are interested, please let me know and I'll get a copy for you next spring (likely early February).

*Dorothee*

## VIMGA AGM

**When: Saturday, November 15, 2025**

**Where: Nanoose Place**

Your Continuing Education Members are busy planning for our upcoming AGM. 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 fall container planting
- Over-wintering container plants
- Preparing your tools for hibernation and/or sharpening tools for the upcoming season
- 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. email [cec@vimga.org](mailto:cec@vimga.org)

**More Information is coming!**



## Plant Propagation Workshop Series

Learn basics of sexual propagation, vegetative propagation, and micropropagation via Zoom  
<https://blogs.cornell.edu/plantpropagation>

**Presenter:** Dr. Mark Bridgen, *Professor of Horticulture, Cornell University*  
Teacher of plant propagation & micropropagation for over 30 years.

**Dates/Times:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, November 4-December 9, 2025 (no class 11/13 and 11/27)  
2-4pm (EST)  
3 modules, with 3 two-hour sessions within each module  
Participants can attend all modules or register for individual modules.

**Fee:** \$150 per person/per module. All three modules: \$400. **Save \$50!**

Participants must have access to Zoom to participate in real time. Lectures will be recorded and available to participants after live sessions.

### Module #1 – Sexual Plant Propagation: November 4, 6 & 11

**Description:** Introduction to plant propagation, biology of plant propagation, terminology, and the propagation environment including microclimatic conditions (relative humidity, temperature, light, & gases), edaphic factors (propagation media, nutrients, and water), and biotic factors. Also, basics of seed propagation and seed dormancy including exogenous dormancy, physical dormancy, seed scarification, chemical dormancy, endogenous dormancy, physiological dormancy, seed stratification, morphological dormancy, and double dormancy.

### Module #2 – Vegetative/Asexual Plant Propagation: November 18, 20 & 25

**Description:** Introduction to vegetative propagation, terminology, rooting hormones, cutting propagation, management of stock plants, treatment of cuttings, environmental manipulations of cuttings, propagation media, stem cuttings, (hardwood, semi-hardwood, softwood, herbaceous), grafting (types of grafts), propagation by specialized stems & roots (bulbs, corms, tubers, tuberous roots, rhizomes, etc.), layering, division, and separation.

### Module #3 – Plant Micropropagation: December 2, 4 & 9

**Description:** What is plant tissue culture, uses of plant tissue culture, what is plant micropropagation, history of micropropagation, media components and preparation, laboratory supplies, equipment and design, stages of micropropagation: Stage 0 (stock plant selection and preparation), Stage 1 (initiation & establishment *in vitro*), Stage 2 (multiplication), Stage 3 (*in vitro* rooting and conditioning), and Stage 4 (acclimating & hardening off).

Online registration at: <https://plantpropagation.securepayments.cardpointe.com/pay>

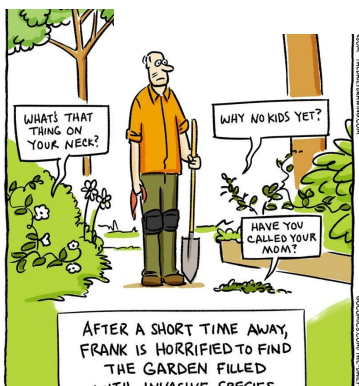
For more information contact Dr. Bridgen at [mpb27@cornell.edu](mailto:mpb27@cornell.edu)  
or Shari Romar at [sr369@cornell.edu](mailto:sr369@cornell.edu)





Pic by Jo Canning

# hello AUTUMN



Normal Person:



Gardener:



American Rhododendron Society  
2026 Spring Convention  
Vancouver Island, British Columbia  
Rhododendrons & Companions  
in a Changing Climate  
April 21 - 25, 2026

## Highlights:

- Garden Tours in Qualicum Beach, Parksville, Nanaimo
- Pre-tours of public and private gardens in Victoria and the Cowichan Valley
- Speakers, Plant Sales, Banquet in Qualicum Beach
- Partnering with the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden: Annual Meeting and Speakers from RSBG

Organized by the ARS Chapters  
on Vancouver Island, British Columbia  
More information coming soon!