

Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Newsletter



**Cultivating Community
Since 1982**

Issue 21

www.vimga.org

April 2026

Dear fellow VIMGA members,

I am lucky to have a large, fenced-in vegetable garden. But to be honest, it has never produced the bounty I dream of. The sandy, rocky soil here in Black Creek doesn't help matters. The other problem is keeping on top of the weeds over such a large area. After using overhead watering for many years, the weeds have become well established. Installing a drip system which kept the water away from the weeds helped somewhat, but I still can't keep up. I simply can't kneel for long periods of time anymore! AND I don't want to spend all my precious gardening time weeding.

So another year - another grand plan - but I think these deep garden boxes will truly make a difference. Setting them up is heavy work. However, once they are completed, I will be able to sit on a stool to tend my plants, so my knees will be much happier. The wide wood-chip pathways will reduce my overall gardening square footage, so that means fewer crops to look after.

I believe this change will improve my yields and (just as importantly), increase my enjoyment of the space. I'll keep you updated.

Good luck with all of your grand plans this season :)

Marion Waters



Your Newsletter Team:
Debora Gurrad
Marion Waters

President's Message

President, Mike O'Neill - Notes from the President

Writing this note in the beautiful sunshine of March 21, and I am thinking, spring has sprung! Planting no veggies before the "old timer" date of May long weekend, though hard to resist, lol. I am a procrastinator, so this approach suits me just fine. Plus, plenty of family events happening this time of year!

Spring Education Day was by all accounts a great success for VIMGA. The CEC has been listening carefully to member and public feedback and the results are applied to our presentations and program. Thanks to this dedicated committee co-chaired by Jan Thorson and Ruth Beilman with very active members. Member and public feedback evaluations are carefully reviewed for VIMGA wide events for ideas and improvements. Always do them to help us improve. Congratulations to our Service Award recipients!

130 VIMGA Clinics in the system and new requests arriving weekly. We will know early April and hopefully a little sooner how many of our 40 VIU students will be continuing with our Intern program. It will be a scramble to get them signed up for clinic vacancies and no doubt adjustments will have to be made as we go. The district planners are magical people getting this sorted. It is very helpful if we could get all our Clinic Coordinators in place, please have a look for an open CC in your district and click on it.

I hope you are all getting the opportunity to view our new web site and all the great improvements and additions. If you log out and access as the public you will see a different look with a lot of great information available. Thanks to the many members and the WEB team for all their hard work. They will appreciate your comments and any ideas to webeditors@vimga.org. Our members' manual is online now and changes are made occasionally, be sure to have a look at critical areas like Annual Volunteer Requirements from time to time. We are very much moving to our web site as the primary source of all things VIMGA! ⁹

Some VIMGA board changes to note, Norma Kilpatrick is moving and stepping down as PQN Co-Rep, Peter MacKillop has joined us as the new co-rep for PQN along with Jean Carr, Carrie Ceasor is soloing as Cowichan Rep while Fern is travelling this year. Felix has stepped down as Nanaimo Rep and I will be unofficially helping fill that role until our AGM with support from other Nanaimo Members. Felix is still very active in other VIMGA projects such as our plant sales. Thanks very much everyone for all you do and will do.

(continued on p. 3)

(President's Notes cont'd)

We have embarked on the development of a new VIMGA Logo and Pam Theriault has volunteered to chair the VIMGA 2026 Logo Committee. We will be looking at first drafts before too long. Thank you, Pam for doing this.

At our 2026 AGM we will be looking to update our VIMGA by-laws again. I am working on a draft for board review with the goal to present at the 2026 AGM for member ratification. The main area of change will be in membership types to comply with the BC Societies act and make them consistent with MGABC and the simplification of by-laws by moving policy and procedure items to the manual and out of by-laws along with simpler language. MGABC is reviewing memberships and their by-laws this year so this will be good timing for us to make those changes.

I have always been interested in updating our history as VIMGA from 2015. I have been speaking to a few members and we might get something done for an AGM 2026 presentation and I am very excited for the possibility! Stay tuned.

Reminding members that if you are interested in being a part of VIMGA administration and service to our members' please let Ruth know, vicepresident@vimga.org , what you might be interested in. This year we will be searching for a President, Vice-President, and Nanaimo Rep as well as possibly other positions we haven't sorted yet. I hope everyone will consider taking on something of interest on the VIMGA Board or Committees to help support our organization and membership. You will be supported and mentored in your choice by the past position holder throughout.

And finally, this is a busy time of year for Volunteer Master Gardeners and make sure you take the time in your busy schedule to enjoy your garden and other real life things! We have plenty of things to unpack so read on and thank you Marion for producing our VIMGA newsletter and all of you for your contributions!

I am always available if you have any questions or ideas or just want to chat let me know at president@vimga.org .

All the best,
Mike



Transplanted Hazelnut Tree that I was given from Dianna Walker many years ago. He is in super sun now!!



*** News from our Neighbours ***

North Island

Wishing our fellow VIMGA members a bloomin' happy Spring. It's great to see all the daffodils and flowering trees brightening our gardens and giving us hope that the wintery weather is now past.

Here in the north we've been busy at various clinics; it's always uplifting to see how enthusiastic people are about getting out in their gardens and growing to their heart's content. Questions we've fielded have ranged from how to grow vegetables, deal with various pests and diseases, and how to improve soil, just to name a few topics we've covered. As well as being at our VIMGA table for the recent Campbell River Seedy Saturday, Kathy Plato was an educator at the event, speaking about "Plant It Right - Giving Your Trees and Shrubs the Best Start".

Our association with the Comox Valley Newcomers' Club gardening group has resulted in our District being able to schedule a good variety of GAPs again this year, as well as 5 people from this group now enrolled in the Advanced Gardening Course as potential future MGs. We are also looking at strengthening our relationship with the Comox Valley Horticultural Society, who have over 400 members.

We're keeping tabs on the ongoing class of students in the Advanced Gardening Course; a number of our members are mentors and appreciate being able to take in the classes as well as providing assistance to the students. It looks like our District could be taking on 8 or 9 interns once they've graduated in early April. Wow, we'll sure be busy but looking forward to increasing our membership.

It's still in the works but Whitney Peek, MG and enthusiastic naturalist, has submitted a proposal regarding the Butterflyway Project that could possibly fit into our mandate, so stay tuned for more info to come on this. Whitney is a certified Pollinator Steward and is currently taking the Restoration of Natural Systems Program through UVic as well as completing an online Landscape Design diploma offered by the University of Guelph. And this industrious gal grows over 2,500 native plants from seed over the winter in her garden. Way to go Whitney!

On another note, we are happy to have Jane Kerr back from a LOA and once again offering her experience and knowledge to fellow members and the general gardening public. She is particularly interested in landscaping and research, and has, in the past, taught several courses through North Island Collage Eldercollege, with plans being made for future courses.

continued . . .

... North Island cont'd

On a personal note, I now seem to be in charge of 2 gardens, one here in Bowser and one down Duncan way. Actually, I guess the gardens are in charge of me - and rather demanding they are indeed. It's always interesting (I could use another less nice phrase here) getting to know a new place. So far, I have tangled with Medusa the Japanese maple and barely made a start on the reams of landscape fabric covering all the flower beds. Oh well, so much for thinking we were downsizing to less work! Just read an article about how gardening is good for our health - I'll have to read it to my knees!

May all your gardens flourish and you have an abundance of fresh veggies and beautiful posies to enjoy.

Marion Woloschuk
North Island District Rep.



Parksville/Qualicum/Nanoose "PQN"

With the new year PQN has had a lot happening, starting with Qualicum Beach Seedy Saturday . We had two tables with six CMGs answering questions from approximately 600 people. We had a meeting of our region at Richard Bernier's home to start signing up for clinics and Richard showed members how this new process is done.

We have an ongoing monthly clinic with the Qualicum Beach Garden club at their monthly meeting, which is proving popular with their over 100 members.



We had our first of the year members get together March 25 at Sylvia Neden's farm, to which we invited our regional students and two were able to attend. We toured her large vegetable garden and soft fruit nursery and also her orchard that includes a 75 year old Newtown Pippin apple tree. Sylvia and her husband run this as a u-pick operation. And then we went to the barn to visit the new born lambs, proving very popular.





PQNCMGs participated in a hands on learning day March 28 at Milner Gardens with our forty students who are taking the Master Gardeners course. Kay Howard and Peter Mackillop taught soft and hard wood cuttings propagation. Aline Burlone taught seed propagation and Richard Bernier demonstrated ground layering. The students were very engaged and asked lots of questions. The students were joined by some of the VIMGA mentors as well as Betty and Chris from VIU. And the weather cooperated!

In April we will be at a clinic in Coombs and we also have several GAPS happening throughout the month. There will be a PQN Master Gardeners gathering Saturday, April 11, from 1-3 at Peter Mackillop's place to welcome our new interns and show them about clinics and GAPS.

News from our Neighbours - continued

Cowichan



Jo Canning Photos



If you are wanting to make your garden more friendly to wildlife, who are the biggest control of garden pests, here's a link to the Cornell University Bird Lab. This program will give you guides and feedback on adding or redesigning your garden.

<https://www.gardenforbirds.org/participate/>

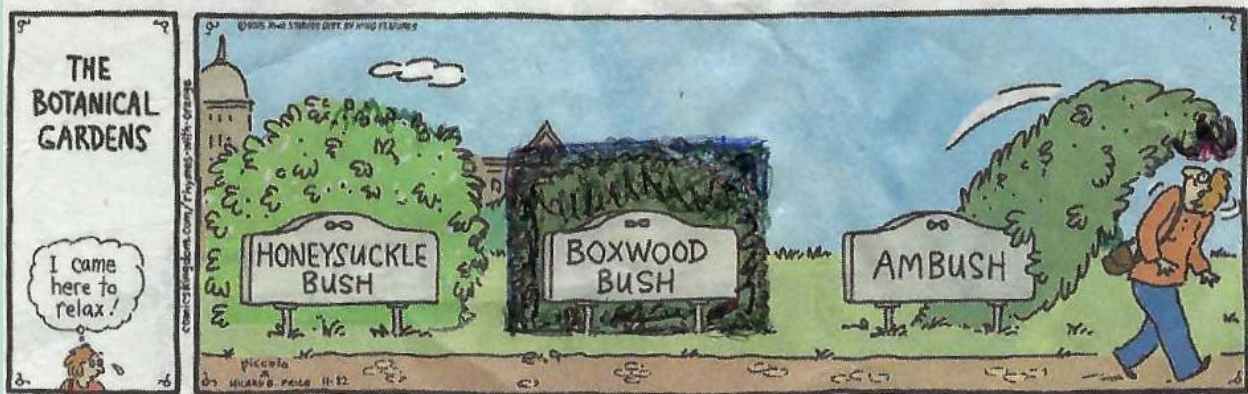
Message from Jo Canning

In February, Cowichan members welcomed a royal guest to our clinic sign up. Carla introduced her "Perfume Princess", a variety of Daphne odora.

As Carla said "It took 70 years to find her ...now she's my favourite plant. I go outside many times a day for her wonderful perfume. She gives me so much joy. ... Always something new to find in gardening"



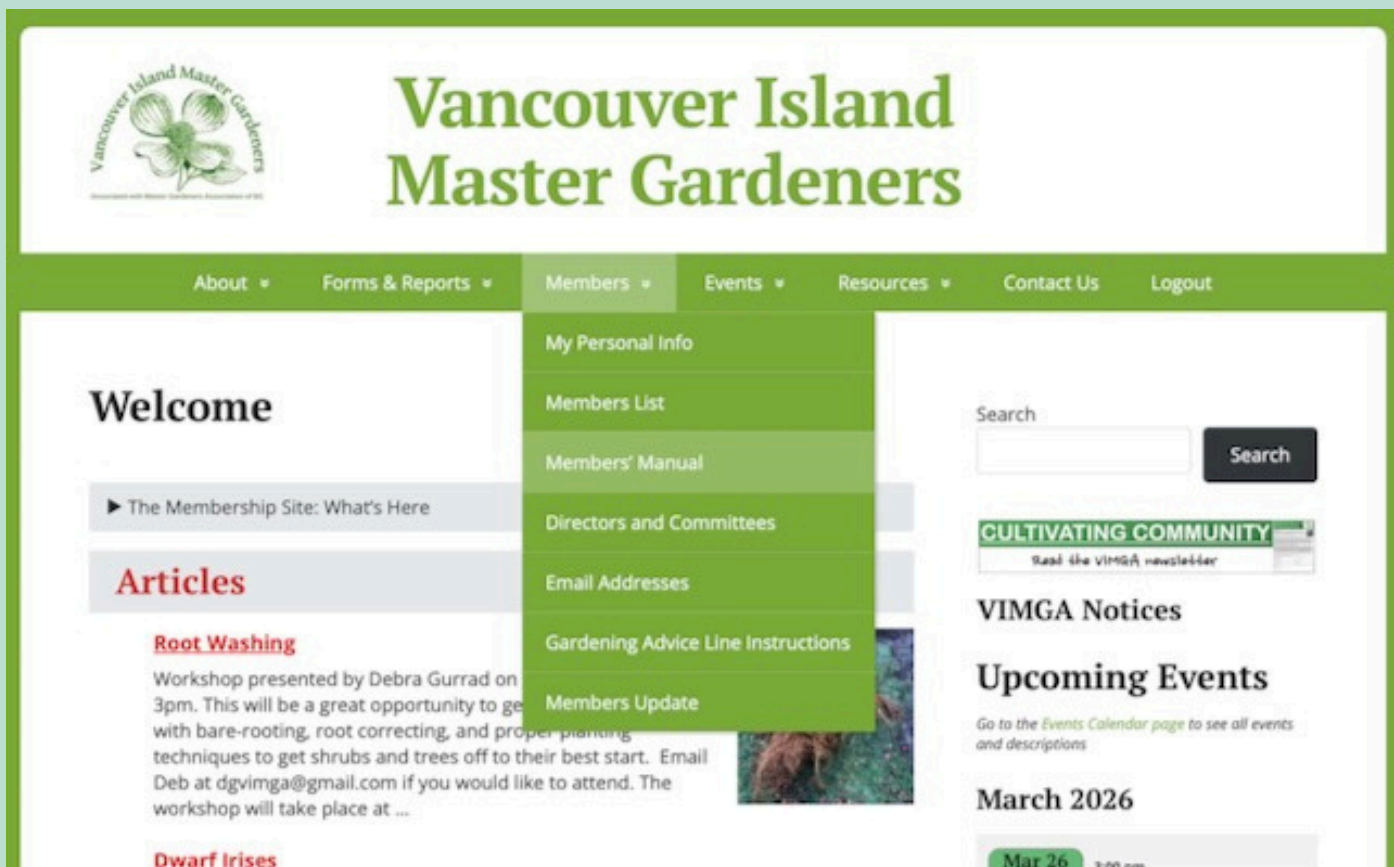
RHYMES WITH ORANGE



Update from the Website Editorial Board (WEB)

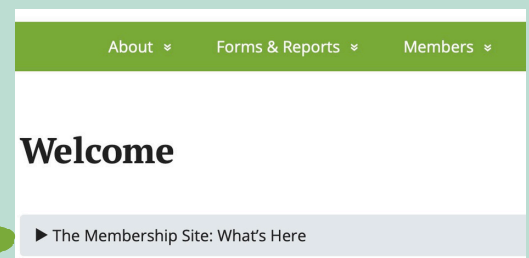
Spring is here? Well it should be as most of us want to get our hands dirty in the garden and we've already held several advice clinics at Seedy Saturdays / Sundays. As the WEB, we keep trucking along making changes and adding new information to the websites. I say websites because we have two - both a public facing one as well as our members only website.

What's the difference? The members only website is secured by login and includes information, under the Members tab on the top tool bar, on our members, our boards and committees, as well as the Members' Manual. Under the Forms and Reports tab you will find the list of advice clinics and GAPS and be able to record your hours in advice clinics, GAPS, presentations, education and administration.



The **Members' Manual** is found by clicking first on the Members tab and then Members' Manual in the drop down menu. The manual is now easier to navigate with links in the table of contents to take you directly to what you are looking for. Check it out.

The first box under the Welcome is a link describing in more detail the forms and information most useful to you as a VIMGA member.



So what's new?

The WEB's focus has been on revamping the public website to entice the gardening public to "Think of VIMGA first when they have a gardening question." Most of those changes are also available on the member side of the website. Note: to view the public website you must be logged out (I know, captain obvious!).

The general look and feel of the website have been refreshed and that work is continuing. At the AGM we showed you three new ways for the public to interact with VIMGA through a second menu bar under the photo banner, as shown here.



A short synopsis of what's included:

Ask a Master Gardener includes info on the Garden Advice Line, Plant Picks, the VIRL Garden Seminars, InfoSheets, Advice Clinics and GAPs.

Book a Master Gardener has information on requesting a GAP, a presentation or a workshop as well as contact info for organizations to request CMGs attendance at their event.

Become a Master Gardener describes the process for becoming a CMG as well as how to transfer to VIMGA for those certified in other jurisdictions. There is also a link to the InternSheets, a marvelous resource describing all aspects of the intern experience created by a team of interns from the Class of 2024.

Click on these new tabs and explore the information there.

We would love to know what you think so please send feedback to webeditors@vimga.org



VIMGA Intern Experience

Communicated to you in the December newsletter, the InternSheets are now included on the public website and accessed from the Become a Master Gardener button in the 2nd menu bar. There is a lot of really good information in there that will be of value to the new group of interns, their mentors, as well as any of the gardening public who are thinking of joining VIMGA. Kudos to the team of Norma, Meredith, Gerry and Allison with special thanks to Norma, Deb and Dorothee as editors.

The **Clinic Data Team** has created 10 new InfoSheets. See the article by Gerry D also in this newsletter.

Lastly, the WEB has been generating new posts on the landing pages of the public and member websites. The intent is to keep this information current and relevant.

What do you want to see on the website - public or member? You can influence what goes onto it by reaching out and letting the WEB know at webeditors@vimga.org.

Learn More About the VIMGA Intern Experience

Joining a new organization can be a bit daunting. Why is that? Well, as you know, organizations are multi-faceted and VIMGA is no different. Also, VIMGA covers much of Vancouver Island which adds another complexity to the organization. Not surprising then, it takes a while to get to know VIMGA.

The 2024 VIMGA interns thought we could smooth your path by providing bite-sized information relevant to the Intern Experience. While you will be supported throughout the internship by various mentors, sometimes it is handy to have information to refer back to. But, don't read all of these at one go. My gosh... you will be exhausted. Read on a need-to-know basis. For example, read about the Plant ID Project just before you start.

The 2024 interns wish you a fun and enjoyable time being an intern!

Wondering about VIMGA...

- » [What is VIMGA?](#)
- » [Wondering if VIMGA is for you?](#)
- » [How is VIMGA organized?](#)
- » [Who is Who in VIMGA?](#)
- » [What does that acronym mean?](#)

Wondering about opportunities to volunteer...

- » [What are the opportunities to volunteer as an intern?](#)
- » [How do I volunteer for a clinic?](#)
- » [What does a clinic look like?](#)
- » [What is involved when I volunteer for the Garden Advice Line \(GAL\)?](#)
- » [What is involved when I volunteer for a Garden Party \(GAP\)?](#)
- » [What is involved when I volunteer for the Plant Pick Article Program \(PPAP\)?](#)
- » [How do district opportunities differ?](#)
- » [How do I record my volunteer hours?](#)

Wondering about the Plant ID Project...

- » [What do I need to know about the Plant ID Project?](#)
- » [What is a good resource?](#)

New InfoSheets available!



2026 InfoSheets Available Soon on the VIMGA Website

In each District's InfoSheet binder, members will find the following new InfoSheets.

The InfoSheet Team extends a warm thank you to each of the writers for their expertise and hard work. (...listed below in the order found in the InfoSheet binders...) A thank you is also extended to the peer reviewers for their time and thoughtful suggestions: Angela E., Linda D., Deb G., and Gerry D.

Topic	Author	Title
Garden Fundamentals	Beth W.	What are some steps I can take to put my garden to bed in the fall?
Perennials	Deb G.	How do I transplant annuals, grasses and other plants with non-woody root systems?
Propagation	Dorothee K.	What do I need to know about the seeds I am planting?
Propagation	Dorothee K.	How do I know if my seeds are still viable?
Pruning	Deb G.	What are the steps for pruning most plants?
Trees & Shrubs	Chris S.	What should I consider when choosing a rhododendron?
Trees & Shrubs	Chris S.	How do I care for my rhododendron?
Trees & Shrubs	Deb G.	What are the steps to transplant bare root trees & shrubs?
Vegetables	Jean C.	What should I consider when choosing a tomato plant?
Vegetables	Jean C.	How do I plant and care for my tomato plants?

The InfoSheet Team works collaboratively on all aspects of the publications including: initial review/suggestions, coordination between all involved, CANVA layout, and final review. The InfoSheet Team includes: Deb G., Jim T., Meredith P. and Gerry D.

If you have a passion topic you would like to share with members and the public, reach out to any of the InfoSheet Team members. The InfoSheet Team supports you throughout the process.

SED



SPRING EDUCATION DAY 2026 REPORT FROM THE CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

This year's SED, with a theme of "Small Gardens - Big Ideas," was very well attended with 89 participants - including 9 students. Many thanks to our presenters:

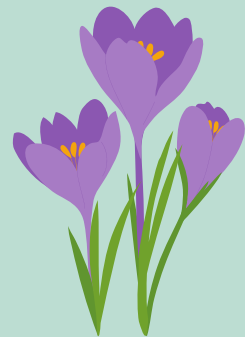
- Jo Canning on Emerging Trends in Landscaping
- Lisa Munro - Replenishing and Reviving Potting Soil
- Chris Dixon - Crevice Gardens

The morning breakout session where members were asked to answer questions posed by the CEC reflected a range of interests, educational needs, and suggestions for future activities.

Following are a compilation of your answers to our questions:

Back to Basics:

- Improving soil in pots and in the ground
- Diagnosing soil problems (and necessary solutions)
- Understanding soil science
- Education regarding rhododendron, alpine plants and native plants
- Landscape design including rain gardens and orchards
- Drought tolerant plants and efficient irrigation practices along with water conservation
- Best practices for greenhouses and cold frames
- Spring cleaning and pest management
- Vegetable seeding techniques
- Seasonal gardening tasks and district specific input



Education and Workshops Ideas:

Overall, you wanted more hands-on, small group workshops and live demonstration similar to GAPs, including planning for vegetable plots and successive planting, weed control, propagation, root washing, pruning practice, effective use of compost and mulching, edible ornamentals and perennials, and tool maintenance.

- Soil testing methods
- Native plant walks
- Balcony gardening tips
- Shade gardening

... continued

Garden Management and Design:

- Greenhouse use and best practices
- Fertilizing and soil enrichment
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) including etymology and diagnosis
- Garden design, including year-round garden interest, how to group plants for aesthetic appeal, native plants in gardens, herbs and their cultivation, hedgerows and hedging
- Gardening practices for different ages
- Sustainable practices and current trends:
 - Sustainable gardening methods (e.g. peat alternatives)
 - Reducing plastic waste
 - Food preservation and security
 - Care and cultivation of trees - especially conifers
 - Houseplants
 - Vegetable growing for seed saving
 - Companion planting strategies



Suggested Presenters:

Linda Gilkeson., Dr. Tom Smiley (Bartlett Tree Experts), Maria Valana ("Mind What You Sow"), Christine Chung (Edible Gardens)

Communication re: Education Opportunities:

- Email, website, newsletter
- Sharing info with other chapters and gardening organizations
- Recommending TV shows, magazine articles, books and YouTube presentations

Evaluations at the End of the Day:

From the 33 evaluations handed in revealed that generally participants were impressed with this year's SED. Comments related how the day was well organized, educational and enjoyable. More specifically, speaker quality, time management and tech support were mentioned as well done.

Following are some of the 'room for improvement' comments from the evaluations returned:

- More in-depth presentations and professional speakers who would provide science-based gardening information in layperson's terms.
- Lay out our expectations of potential speakers
- More emphasis on community focused presentations and explain Master Gardening training and mission to audience
- Include more hands-on demos

...SED continued

The CEC would like to thank all those who participated in our break-out session in the morning and for returning the evaluation forms. The information gathered does help inform how we proceed with the education components at our AGM and SED as well as on-going educational opportunities throughout the year. We appreciate your comments and observations. If you are at all interested in leading a small group demo session (which our members decidedly want more of), please let us know. Remember you need not be a presenter on your own - bring a buddy to help you!

Submitted by the CEC committee

Ruth Beilman, Jan Thorsen, Jen Peterson, Mary Shakespeare, Jo Canning, Pam Theriault and Chris Southwick



Service Years recognition (and new badges) for members reaching milestone number of years as a Master Gardener.

From Dorothee Keiser:

The Quadra Island Garden Club (<https://quadraislandgardenclub.com/>) invited me to speak to them on Propagation. It was a very well attended meeting in the Island Community Hall with 50+ keen gardeners attending. Propagation is a topic of interest to many, especially this time of year. Lots of questions and good cookies.



... Dorothee, continued

On March 14 the Master Gardener class had its hands-on pruning workshop at my place. Ruth had ordered warm sunshine and it arrived on time. Because the class has 40 students there was a morning and an afternoon session so everyone could get their hands "dirty". Thanks to all the mentors who actively participated and guided the students:

Mary Shakespeare on apple tree pruning, Beth Walrond teaching us about rose pruning, Ruth Beilman assisting in so many ways, Jen Peterson and Meredith Potter on tree care. Very special thanks to Deb Gurrad, who was the instructor for the session, Betty Cunnin (the course facilitator), and Christine Quist, Horticulture instructor - a wealth of information was presented.

In contrast to my expectations (a little snip here, a tiny snip there), the students and everyone who participated did a tremendous amount of real work and my garden looks much the better for it. Now there is a big mound of branches to dispose of and I am very happy.





Vancouver
Island
Master
Gardener
On Duty
Gardening
Questions?
←



Articles

Native Plants and Native Cultivars, Part Two

by Whitney Peek

In the December newsletter, I discussed the findings from part one of a recent study of the differences between several Pacific Northwest native species and cultivars of these species. In this article, I will discuss part two of this study, which attempts to figure out what traits make these particular flowers more or less attractive to pollinators, and why.

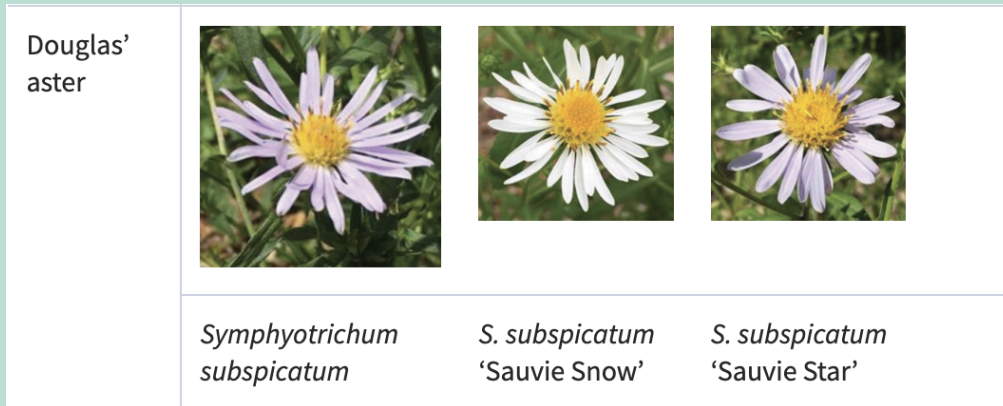
In ornamental plant breeding, changes in floral traits that are meant to enhance the beauty of the plant or its flowers can also unintentionally change other plant and flower traits. Typical changes in plants for ornamental purposes include plant height, flower dimensions (size and depth), and colour. Examples of unintended effects through breeding could include: flowers having little to no nectar or pollen (although some flowers are bred to have this quality, it doesn't apply to these species), pollinators unable to fit into flowers, and different nutritional content of pollen.

This part of the study measured differences between the native species (mentioned in part one) and their associated cultivars in several categories: changes in floral display, changes in floral rewards (nectar and pollen), and differences in communities of bee species that visited them.

The results of the study indicate that the bee communities that visited natives were overall very different to those found on native plants. Among bee species, there are many different functional traits that change how they interact with flowers, such as tongue length (to reach nectar), and style of pollen transport (backs of legs, abdomen, on tiny hairs, etc.) Considering the ornamental changes found in most cultivars, it is easy to see how the cultivars in this study attracted different sets of bees than the native species.

This study also analysed the nutritional content of the pollen among the species and found great variability within the different plant groups, but the researchers weren't completely sure why. They theorized that the gene tied to flower colour could also be tied to pollen nutritional content like proteins and lipids. Interestingly, some social bees (ones that build colonies, like honeybees) show evidence that they can detect which flowers have the most pollen rewards, but whether native bees can do the same is understudied, especially considering 56 species of bees were tracked in this study. Bees that have that ability would be less likely to visit flowers with the lower nutritional content, making them less beneficial for pollinator gardens.

Image from part one of the study: the cultivars of *Symphotrichum subspicatum* originally found on Sauvie Island, Oregon (US). Photo by J. Hayes.



Among the cultivars studied, there was one notable group that measured up to be the most similar to their native species. Cultivars of *Symphotrichum subspicatum* (Douglas' Aster) 'Sauvie Snow' and 'Sauvie Star' are derived from plants found on Sauvie Island in Oregon (US). Seeds were originally collected from the wild and then selected for colour and flowering vigorousness. This process is less of a genetic departure from the original native species than with ornamental breeding practices that create interspecies hybrids. All of the other cultivars in this study were a result of intensive breeding. From this, we can conclude that if we wanted to use a cultivar of a native species, seeking one out that is derived from a naturally occurring variation could be the more beneficial choice for native pollinators.

This study is an important step in understanding the repercussions of nativars in pollinator communities, and in our own backyards. The researchers ultimately hope that their findings help the horticultural industry focus on more traits that are beneficial to pollinators in future breeding efforts, and convince them to take advantage of already existing variations found in the wild. As Master Gardeners, we can use studies such as these as an opportunity to help people make informed plant choices for gardens that are as ecologically beneficial as possible.

There were far too many interesting observations in the study to include in this article. Read the research to learn more: Pacific Northwest native plants and native cultivars part II: plant and pollinator traits
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ee/nvaf105>

- - -

Note: The intent of this set of articles is to summarize current scientific research, not to be an instructional guide. If you are interested in learning about native and invasive species in your area, here are some trustworthy resources I recommend:

Website: E-Flora of BC

<https://ibis.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/eflora/index.html>

Especially nice because of the distribution maps and detailed botanical descriptions.

Book: Plants of Coastal British Columbia (Revised). by Pojar and Mackinnon (2014).

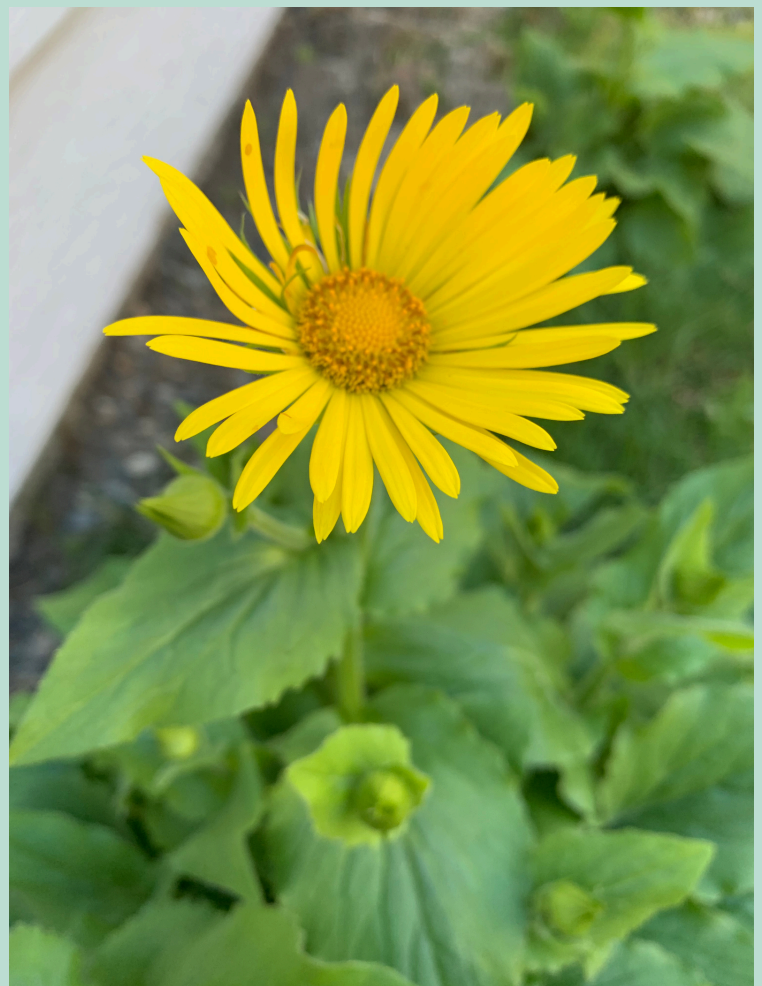
The classic, definitive reference guide for the whole region.

Book: Native Plants of British Columbia's Coastal Dry Belt, A Photographic Guide, by Roemer and Sanseverino (2025).

Groups plants together as they are found in different ecosystems types along eastern Vancouver Island, in a way that is similar to BC's Biogeoclimactic zones system. Excellent photos.

Website: Invasive Species Council of BC

<https://bcinvasives.ca/>



Leopard's Bane (*Doronicum*) - Marion Waters

Dangers of Artificial Turf

By Jo-Ann Canning

As our summers get hotter and dryer, more clients are coming to clinics asking about artificial turf as a solution to dealing with lawn problems and higher water costs. Mostly made from old tires, artificial turf was once praised as a recycled product. However, new - and major -- problems have been discovered.

Recent studies from UBC, published in the journal *Scientific Processes & Impacts* proved that as artificial turf breaks down, it releases the toxic chemical PPD-quinone as well as heavy metals, both of which are deadly to salmonids (salmon & trout) and mildly carcinogenic to humans. The study also showed the rate of release does not diminish over time.

Some later versions of artificial turf have been manufactured from products other than old tires. These have often been marketed as more eco-friendly even though they've remained quite expensive to buy and install in comparison to the standard artificial turf. Although these are safer from a chemical standpoint, the other damaging aspects of artificial turf remain. Here is a list to take to clinics if you are asked about artificial turf.

7 Reasons to Not Use Artificial Turf

1. Artificial turf creates a heat sink which sterilizes the soil beneath. Sterile soil contains no mycelium and bacteria to feed surrounding tree and shrub roots.
2. Because of the intense heat artificial turf creates in the soil column, both our native worm and the compost worm leave the area so surrounding vegetation suffers from lack of worm activity.
3. In natural lawns and lawn alternatives, tree and shrub roots grow beneath the turf roots, absorbing water and nutrients lower in the soil column. Vegetation around artificial turf is often starved of these nutrients because the changes it makes in soil or substrate conditions cause their roots to withdraw from the area.
4. The shiny top of artificial turf reflects light and heat back into the surrounding area at the same time it heats the soil beneath it whereas real grass and lawn alternatives absorb both heat and light, cooling the area and the soil beneath.
5. In summer, the turf's reflected heat can quickly raise temperatures in the surrounding area above 29C / 85F sterilizing pollen in nearby vegetation. Pollinators and plants alike suffer.
6. In summer, artificial turf can get so hot it will scald bare feet.
7. Whereas lawns and lawn alternatives slow water run-off, trees and shrubs surrounding artificial turf are robbed of cool, slow-moving water because artificial turf allows water to race away between turf lining and soil or substrate. Natural run-off from rain is 35%. This is mimicked by slow/drip irrigation systems. Run-off from artificial turf can be up to 75%.



VIMGA MANUAL, POLICY, and BYLAWS UPDATES

1. How do I tell the membership about a great educational opportunity I have found?

In an effort to keep the number of emails to our members manageable, please send information about educational opportunities to cec@vimga.org for distribution through email, the VIMGA website, and the newsletter. Please do NOT send this information to all VIMGA members directly.

Click on the links below for more information on what types of events qualify as educational.

[CMG Continuing Educational Requirements](#)

[Continuing Educational Committee](#)

2. New VIMGA Clinic Venues

Members are encouraged to keep an eye and ear out for new clinic venues in your district. Nanaimo has acquired two new venues this year, Birdie and Bees, and Green Thumb Garden Center! If you have been approached for or have an idea for a new clinic, please be sure to pass it to your District Planner as soon as you are able. Planners have a process they go through to make contact, confirm any insurance requirements, and general setup to make sure the clinic appeals to both the host and VIMGA members' needs.

3. Zoom Changeover - new way to book your meetings

VIMGA Secretary, Phyllis Pullinger, is now administering our Zoom account so she will become your go-to for booking Zoom meetings for members. We have a new email address in the works - Zoom@vimga.org - to make your requests. Meanwhile please request Zoom meetings directly to Phyllis, knowing they will be taken care of while we get the new email up and running.

Thank you, Phyllis!

