

THE NEW WESTMINSTER HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Club address: Suite 392, 104—1015 Columbia St., New Westminister, V3M 6V3

www.newwesthortsociety.org

Editor: Audrey Barnes, 604-526-8284 before 8pm

May 2005

CLUB CALENDAR:

MAY MEETING: Tonight, Tues, May 10th, 7:45. Tonight we celebrate the success of our plant sale and sit back to be entertained by gardening enthusiast and humorist DES KENNEDY. He will be doing a two barreled presentation: A slide show "The Gardens of Ireland" and then "The Seven Deadly Sins of Gardening". Hopefully you have brought some cash with you because no doubt you will want to purchase a book (or books!) from him.

PARLOUR SHOW: for tonight only, the showbench will be set up in the kitchen. It may be tight but having it in the main hall would be even more of a crunch.

JUNE MEETING: Tues, June 14th, 7:45. HENK SUYS from Lee Valley Tools (Vancouver) on SHARPENING GARDEN TOOLS. He will discuss general gardening tool care and how you can keep your garden tools sharp—and why you should! He will demonstrate sharpening techniques on the duller tools in town (Audrey's). Henk is also willing to sharpen tools for members. In order for him to have some indication of the demand for his skills, please sign-up at the head table if you plan on bringing tools in to be sharpened. Our **MINI PLANT SALE**, by popular demand, will be held during this meeting. Originally this sale was to offer, to our members, plants such as squash which need warmer temperatures than those the first week of May. However, last year, we found that several members had grown seedlings prime for planting out in June. If you anticipate bringing plants in for the sale, please talk to Audrey tonight or phone her later (604-526-8284 before 8pm) so we can organize it better. Last year we found many desirable plants were not purchased because members just did not see them. If you want to help with the organizing, that would be most appreciated. Two sign-up sheets at the head table—one for plant donations, one for organization helpers. The proceeds of the sale go to the club's coffers. There will be no raffle at this meeting.

CLUB OUTINGS:

Shopping trip: Sat, June 4th. Trice Farms Pond & Garden Centre (Maple Ridge) and Amsterdam Greenhouses & Garden Centre (Pitt Meadows). Map & itinerary at head table next to the sign-up sheet. Just two stops so we should get home in plenty of time to plant our new treasures. These two establishments are owned and operated by plant lovers but are much more extensive than "cottage nurseries". Both have loads of interesting "stuff". Both offer club discounts of 10% off regular prices—at Trice, this leaps to 20% if you pay by cash or debit card! The deadline to sign-up for this outing is 5pm, Tuesday May 31st—the Tuesday before the trip.

Club outings continue on next page

PRESIDENT'S CORNER: by Audrey

Quite the sale! We managed a classy act once again. It was an effort of which every club member can be proud! We rank right up there as one of the most outstanding plant sales of the lower mainland. Outstanding from the point of the buyer—what a great assortment of very healthy, well labeled, desirable plants! Outstanding, also, regarding the level of participation by club members. Many thanks to each and every one of you who helped. It definitely was a great group endeavor. Sure we made loads of money (Mary will tell us exactly how much tonight) but I think it is more important that the sale is something with which each of you can identify. It is important for the cohesiveness of the club, that we put on these group efforts. Our club is more than just monthly meetings.

The weather this year did not cooperate!!! Thank goodness it cleared for the last few weeks. That miserable cold, windy March kept everyone inside and as a result many of the plants did not come to the yard until the last week before deadline. The result: the last-minute crunch was much worse than anticipated. My apologies to everyone. I was curt and abrupt with on sale weekend but I was extremely tired. In 2004, we produced roughly the same number of excellent plants but the weather was great all spring—no crunch. Several of us have been mulling over how the sale preparation tasks can be delegated to spread the load a bit in case this weather is repeated. We hope to have a brainstorming session before the executive meeting in two weeks. If you are interested, talk to Audrey about the best time. Can't make a session, tell her your suggestions. Things will be further discussed at the executive meeting.

Time to thank our "corporate sponsors". Top of the list is **ROYAL SQUARE MALL**. We are uniquely blessed having the mall management behind our sale. It is a great mall—not a huge mall—but friendly and neighbourly and, surprisingly, quite complete in its range of tenants. Visit it soon. Now our raffle prize donators: **HONG'S NURSERY** (on Scott Road just over the Patullo Bridge) once again donated a gorgeous 18" hanging basket—gleefully won by Peter Berger. **LEONG'S NURSERY** (on Meadow in Burnaby) gave a lovely patio container which is now gracing my patio (Yep, I won it!). **GARDENWORKS** (on Lougheed and at Mandevilles) supplied two sets of garden tools, won by Allison Mousey and Ken Kemp. (I kid you not, club members Ken & Patti Kemp have now won 3 sets of those tools!). **THE FRAME SHOP** (on Belmont in New Westminister, owned by nwhs members Bonnie & Peter Berger—yup, the basket winner) generously gave a beautiful floral lamp (all sorts of this kind of thing at their store) won by Diane Escalante (another member) and a \$200 picture framing certificate, already cashed in by Cathy Barber. Many thanks for your donations. What a great group!!

CLUB OUTINGS CONT'D:

Vancouver Garden Show at VanDusen: Thurs June 9 to Sun June 12th. We do not attend the show as a group but it almost seems like we do—you will probably run into many other members when you attend. The club will not be doing a group advance ticket purchase this year as you can individually purchase your advance discount tickets at GardenWorks. Nor will we be entering a container as we have not received word of a contest this year.

Pond mini-tour/workshop: tentatively scheduled for Sat, June 25th as this works for Audrey & Steve Barnes (who have some serious questions about creating a pond) and for Lorna Cloutier (the first pond owner to come forward, willing to talk about her pond). We have talked about this workshop for a couple of years. It is intended to be an instructional tour—members who have garden ponds will let us view their ponds and give advice such as the placement of the pond, how it was created (problems encountered), maintenance of the pond, what they would do differently. We hope to visit 4 or 5 ponds, spending 20-30 minutes at each. We will end at Northwest Landscape and Stone Supply, provider of pond materials, so that we will have a realistic idea of costs. There are sign-up sheets for people who would like to show and talk about their ponds and for those interested in installing a pond in their garden. Please note: this is not a garden tour—the focus will be on receiving instruction for creating a pond. Please do not sign up if you just want to look at gardens. Your chance to tour gardens will come in July.

Annual Garden Tour & Pot-luck Picnic: Sat, July 23rd. Many thanks to Ellen & Nes Berg who have come forward offering their Durham Street garden as our picnic site. Perfect location! All we need now is some gardens to tour leading up to the picnic. We would like 5 or 6 gardens. Oh, you say, my garden is not good enough! No gardener ever thinks back and thinks his/her gardener is good enough!! In fact, for our tour, gardens in a state of progress are often the most interesting. Just finished a major project?—or half way through it?—consider showing us what you are doing! Being on the tour is a great incentive to getting that yard job done! We are looking for gardens near New Westminster to eliminate excessive driving during the day. If you are not familiar with our tour, the gardens are not all open all afternoon. Instead we have a set map and itinerary. We visit the gardens in sequence. This enables those members who are showing their gardens to join in touring the remainder. For the sake of the gardens, we ask that small children do not come on the tour. Want to offer your garden? Talk to Audrey or any of the executive. The sign-up sheets for the tour and the pot-luck picnic will be available at the June meeting.

CLUB DISCOUNTS UPDATE: Add these to the list of establishments offering you, a club member, a discount on presentation of your membership card.

Trice Farms Pond & Garden Centre

24565 Dewdney Trunk Road, Maple Ridge

Off reg prices: 20% if paying with cash or debit card,
10% if paying with credit card

Triple Tree Nurseryland

20503 Lougheed Highway, Maple Ridge

10% off reg prices on Tuesday & Thursday

IN YOUR VEGE PATCH: by the Urban

Gardener also known as Roy Pegler. Roy welcomes your vegetable gardening questions.

How time flies and now we are into sowing and planting ninety percent of the vegetables. Hopefully we can remember not to put everything in at once, but sow or plant at two or three weekly intervals. For tomatoes, corn, cucumbers, beans, squash and chiles, it would be advisable to leave sowing until the end of May—and if the nights resist being warm, hang off until early June.

Acclimating your chiles to the garden: If you put chilies into the garden too early, they will not do well. Along with warm nighttime temperatures, you also need garden soil that feels warm up to your wrist when you dig your hand into the ground. Hardening off, or getting your chilies ready to plant in the garden, involves gradually decreasing their soil temperature and allowing their soil to dry a bit more between each watering. If garden conditions are what you would hope for (warm soil and nights above 12°C) you can transplant the chiles at about eight weeks from seeding. If nights become cooler than 12°C, put protection over them. A sunny garden enriched with compost is ideal for chiles. Till in a balanced fertilizer that has a nitrogen value that is equal or less than its phosphorus and potassium values. The worked up soil should be fluffy and warm. To plant your chiles, use your hand to scoop out a hole that is just a little deeper than the pots. Then set the transplants in these holes, burying the rootballs up to the first leaves. Fill in the hole and firm down the soil. Continue to use the balanced fertilizer as above and water. Chiles thrive in full sun. In fact they need full sun so the pods can ripen. The problem is, and this seems a little strange for a vegetable known for its heat, chiles can suffer from sunburn. Aside from making the chile pod unattractive, sunburn makes it taste sour where the heat has actually cooked the flesh. If you cut out the sunburnt parts of the pod, the rest is still usable. Lots of leaves on a healthy plant can help to shade the pods. It's advisable to stake the plants deeply when you put your plants into the ground. Tie them up as they grow around the stake. The more you pick the chiles when ripe, the more they will produce. Harvesting chiles as they mature encourages the plant to continue flowering. Your overall production will be greater if you keep picking the green mature chiles.

GardenWorks Appreciation Day Thursday, May 19.

SEED EXCHANGE: Now is the time of year to keep your eye on your plants as to whether you think they will produce seed which other members may be interested in. Think now about collecting later. Got any purchased seed which has been "hanging around"? Ease your conscience—donate them to the seed exchange. It is amazing how relaxed one can be not gardening when the subject of guilt is removed from one's eyesight. A word about the seeds from the exchange: On the whole, we have no idea of the viability of the seeds we offer—we only think that others may be interested in the plants. Or how to germinate them—it is up to you to check literature as to the best way to start them.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: a review of last

month's presentation: The combination of meeting presentation and yard walk around by DARREN SILCOX and GLENN MURRAY, definitely raised our plant care IQ a few notches. Darren Silcox, of Bartlett Tree Experts (the company which has taken over Arbour Care, his old employer) is the person to call for pruning or spraying of your trees. With this company, your tree(s) will get the tops in treatment. Call Darren at 604-841-0732 for a free estimate of the job. Glenn Murray has, since our May meeting, renamed his tree consulting firm as "Froggers Creek Tree Consultants Ltd". His number is 604-721-6002. He is an ace at diagnosing the problems with your trees & shrubs and suggesting remedial work. He doesn't do the actual remedial work—he leaves that to Darren and his company. For \$75, he will do a verbal 45 minute walk around of your garden evaluating plant health and recommending action to be taken. You will want to have notepad or tape-recorder in hand. There is an additional fee schedule for more detailed, more documented work.

During the May meeting presentation, much was said about adding a layer of composted bark mulch around the base of trees and rhodos to act as a buffer enhancing the soil's acidity. Lynn Masuhara searched out the info for us. She found that Fraser Richmond Biocycle (the recommended source) is now under the name of Fraser Richmond Soil and Fibre Ltd. They supply hemlock bark mulch, fir bark mulch and 3/8 composted bark mulch(a mixture of fir and hemlock). For delivery, you need to order lots. For a small amount, you can pick up the fir-hemlock blend at GardenWorks. It is what they call "Bark Mulch" in their bulk soil area (one bag, \$3.75; five or more, \$3.50). Check out www.fraserrichmond.ca

PARLOUR SHOW NEWS: by Ellen Berg

Seven exhibitors participated in April's Parlour Show, our first showbench of the year. Our total exhibits of 64 fell short of last year's 90, partially due to the absence of one of our keen exhibitors. Molly, we're all wishing you a speedy recovery and hope to see you (in the kitchen) tonight.

The first showbench of 2005 Top Scorer was Colleen Graham with 53 1/2 points. Congratulations! Although there were some pretty impressive entries no "Perfect 5's" were awarded only three 4 3/4's. I'm sure weather was a factor—those daffs really got pelted with rain just before show day. No excuses tonight though, let's hope setting up goes smoothly and exhibits make it to the countertop show area unscathed. Also as space will be very limited, we're asking you not to enter the kitchen area at tea time. For you new membes, please pick up a copy of the Parlour Show rules and join in the fun. Other "contests" to keep in mind is our "Container" and our "Photo" contests. Julia and I will be available at tea time for any questions. Exhibiting members please feel free to call me at home (604-525-7827) with any question regarding your showbench entry.

Good luck, exhibitors, with your entries tonight.

B.C. COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUB'S SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUND:

As you are probably aware, the proceeds of our plant sale raffle go to this scholarship fund. Our donation does not go directly to scholarships awarded. It goes to the capital trust fund. It is the interest earned on this capital that is distributed as scholarships to horticultural students. Every post-secondary institution in B.C. which has a horticultural program receives one or more scholarships (\$500 or \$750 each). It is left up to each institution to determine who the worthy winner(s) will be. Although the scholarships are of immediate benefit to the recipients, it is us, the avid gardeners, who in the end reap the awards of highly trained horticulturalists.

Last year the membership voted that we increase our donation amount to \$2000, supplementing the raffle proceeds from our sale profits. We hope tonight, you will move and vote that we contribute a similar amount this year. With our extremely successful plant sale, we can definitely afford to be generous.

THIS 'N' THAT:

■This is the time of year when we revamp our roster. Of the 197 members we had at the end of last year, 49 have not renewed and thus their name tags have been removed from the foyer boxes. With the 8 new members, our roster now stands at 157. We welcome our newest members, Gillian Wright, Susan Lee-Gregson and Kathy Donaldson to our number. Participate!—the club is for you! The revised roster will be issued at the June meeting. Please advise Mary of any changes to be made. Thanks.

■Montana King (604-895-9742) has a friend who has been overwhelmed by the germination rate of her Swiss Chard seeds and is now looking for good homes for many, many seedlings. Give her a call.

■That yard work getting away from you? Montana (again, 604-895-9742) has a willing body and spirit and is interested in paying yard clean-up jobs.

■Found at the sale (did you lose it?): one black jacket and one pair of gloves. They seem to have been left behind after set-up. See Audrey (604-526-8284)

■Set aside the evening of Monday, July 18th aside for a rare treat. At 7:30, Piet Oudolf, world famous Dutch garden designer and plantsman will be presenting at UBC in the IRC Woodward Biomedical building auditorium, Health Sciences Mall. Purchase your ticket (\$15 admission) in advance at Free Spirit Nursery, the Shop at UBC Botanical Gardens or Southlands Nursery or send SAS plus the \$15 to Free Spirit Nursery. It will be the chance of a lifetime.

■Looking for drought tolerant plants, try some native plants. There are many native trees, shrubs and perennials that if planted correctly will need very little watering once established. <http://www.evergreen.ca/nativeplants/> is a good resource.

■The Evergreen project “Urban Oasis in New Westminster” continues in Queensborough on Sat, May 14, noon to 3pm, on the Queensborough Foreshore, corner of South Dyke Rd and Spagnol St for a day of blackberry removal and planting of native species. The last of the art mosaics celebrating Nature in Queensborough will be part of Queensborough Day on May 29th. For more information, contact Denise Philippe 604-689-0766 ext 27.

■The club has received notices of some of the many upcoming garden tours:

Sun. June 5th, 10am-4pm, Communities in Bloom Tour, City of Langley, 1st Annual Self-Guided Tour. 6 Gardens. \$10 per person. Info & tickets at 604-514-2865 or www.city.langley.bc.ca/reconnect.

Sat. June 18th, 10-5, 9th Annual Delta Hospice & Evergreen Garden Club self-guided Ladner & Tsawwassen Garden Tour. \$10 available June 1 at Delta Hospice Care Centre, Flowers Beautiful, Harris Nursery (2 locations), Sunnyside Nursery or 604-948-0660.

Sun. June 19th, 9:30-4:30, Tri-City Garden Tour 2005, \$10. Info Susan Beye 604-941-9955.

More THIS 'N' THAT:

■The B.C. Council of Garden clubs is having a booth at the Cloverdale Rodeo and Exhibition this coming long May weekend. They are looking for volunteers to help man it on these days.

May 21, Sat, 4-8pm

May 22, Sun, 10-6pm

May 23, Mon, 10-1pm

If you can help out with any of these hours (3 or 4 hr shifts suggested), give Elaine Senft a call at 604-929-2928. Parking and admission to the show is free for volunteers. Ideally, 1 or 2 people volunteering per shift would be great.

■Where did the last of the sale plants go? They were brought back to the carport where people contributing to the sale were informally invited to take what they wanted. Non-contributors were asked to pay 50% of the final tag price—the final price at the sale. Some were pulled, destined for the June or next year's sale. Then, last Sunday a truck load headed out destined to be part of the sale at the Strathcona and Cottonwood Community Gardens Open House (close to the corner of Hawkes & Prior in Vancouver) on Sun, July 10th (10am-3pm) For those of you addicted to garden club sales, this is reputed to be the last plant sale of the season. This year marks the 20th anniversary of Strathcona Community Gardens and the event promises to more fun than ever.

■Queensborough Urban Farmer's Fall Fair is on Sunday, September 25th.... and the club will be there once again. This year the theme is “bees”. One idea for our display is “planting to attract bees”—what plants will entice those valuable little bodies into your garden and why you want them there. Supposedly “the wasps” are still in existence. As with last year, they are soliciting our talented members to help with the general displays around the fair site. Mark your calendar.

■As you may know, Lesley Wood sends out the club meeting announcements via e-mail every month. These e-mails are so good that many members think they are receiving the newsletter! The system works great—as long as Lesley has your correct e-mail address. If you change your address (or want to be added to the list), *please* drop Lesley an e-mail (link is on the website)

■We are in dire need of Venitian Blinds (vinyl, 1”, leave whole) and pots of all sizes for next year's plant sale. Please drop off any offerings to the carpot. Thanks

NEWSLETTER NOW ON WEBSITE:

www.newwesthortsociety.org is getting better all the time. Last month we asked the membership about adding the club newsletter to the site. No qualms voiced. In fact, many thought it would be a great idea. If you lose your hard copy, you can easily refer to the site for outing details and such. If we mention your name in the newsletter and you prefer it not to be on the site, please tell Audrey or Lori. We post photos of many of our outings. If you would prefer your image not to be on the site, just say so.