

THE NEW WESTMINSTER HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

www.newwesthortsociety.org

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CLUB MEETING CALENDAR:

APRIL MEETING: Tonight, Tues, April 11; 7:45; JOHN COWIE, of Valleybrook Farms (Heritage Perennials) on "EXCITING NEW PERENNIALS". John Schroeder had a booking clash so he arranged for John Cowie (who John S says is the better speaker!) to step into his shoes for us. Check out his most desirous plants for sale—on the table that is normally the free table. The free table has been relocated to the foyer. John has donated a copy of the nursery's "Perennial Gardening Guide" to the raffle. A great book! Also tonight, is the club's inaugural "SHOW & SHARE". We hope that everyone of you bought in something to for the display. Check in at the head table to get your display slips and register for the participation draw. It should be a most interesting evening of learning from your fellow members. The participation draws will take place just at the end of the business section of the meeting—so you can use some of the loot to buy raffle tickets and win that Heritage Perennials book! *If you haven't yet renewed your membership, tonight is the deadline—do it now or be removed from the roster. It is only \$10. What a steal!*

MAY MEETING: Tues, May 9, 7:45: Neglect the shady areas of your garden no more! CHRIS JENNINGS, President of the Vancouver Shade Garden Society, will inspire you to tackle it. He will present "AN INTRODUCTION TO SOME SHADY CHARACTERS FOR YOUR GARDEN". There is a chance that some plants from the Shade Society's upcoming sale (Sunday July 23 at the VanDusen Floral Hall) might be available for our pre-sale purchase. Speaking of sales, of course we will announce the tally for our sale!

CLUB OUTINGS:

A visit to Dart's Hill Garden Park: Saturday, April 22, 10am to noon. "Logged in the 1800's, tilled for the first time in the 1940s by Edwin and Francisca Dart, their prize winning orchard slowly, but surely, turned into a park once Mrs. Dart caught the gardening bug. Donated by the Darts to the City of Surrey, the 7.5 acre site contains a variety of rare and unusual plants, shrubs and trees, including an outstanding collection of magnolias and rhododendrons, Mrs. Dart's favourites". To attend, your place and that of your guests must be reserved tonight. The \$5 admission charge is waived for club members. Members' guests can give Carole Forsythe the \$5 at the gate. Sign-up at the head table and pick up a map as well.

16th Denman Island Annual Country Home and Garden Tour: Saturday & Sunday, June 17-18. "Tour ten of the top private gardens on Denman Island, including Des Kennedy's". This one's an overnighter. We'll stay in a newly renovated motel in Nanaimo, visit a garden in Nanaimo on Saturday and head off to Denman Island early Sunday morning returning to New Westminister after dinner on Sunday. Since we will probably be renting a small bus, space is limited and is held by your non-refundable, but transferable, deposit due at our May meeting. Add your name and that of your guests to the established list. Pick up a draft of the itinerary and costs tonight. www.denmanisland.com/denman/home-and-garden-tour.htm has more information on the tour.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER: by Audrey

I just had a phone call from a club member going over to another member's home to gather some plants for the sale. She just got a phone call saying that a neighbour of second member told her of a fellow two blocks away who has dug up everything from his front yard and is planning to cart everything to recycling. I am awaiting the call back to see what there is. This is just one example of the great community support there is for our sale. I have several neighbours who yearly donate plants. People are interested in it. Don't feel that when you hand out plant sale notices, that you are forcing something on people. Most want to know when the sale is on. Our sale is one of the major ways we contribute to the gardening community of New Westminister and the surrounding area. Oh, the plants.... They were junipers. We declined the offer. We do have our standards!

Obviously with the sale now less than a month away, the publicity blitz is in full swing. Work with your little kit of sale posters and if you want more after tonight, get in touch with Audrey. Think of areas where pamphlets are displayed for people to select from—add a stack of the small posters to the selection.

A month ago, I was in shock at how little had been potted up—now I am in shock that we are actually up to the normal number of plants for the time schedule. Many thanks to those members who have spent hours at the table—and to those who got out into their gardens and dug up clumps. Less than one week to go until the plant drop-off deadline of Easter Monday! That means probably a week and half until the potting table is dismantled and the emphasis of the plant sale preparation switches to getting all those tags completed and grooming and pricing commences. This means a switch into high gear! Do you get the hint? *Many, many bodies are needed in the yard!* Thanks.

Plant tags: Sharon Seki has a huge number of master tags to distribute tonight to willing tag printers. If you sign out tags, we need them back as soon as possible. Within one week, they should be returned to the yard (ie. Audrey). We cannot commence pricing until we have the tags. Please return the pen too as we have a limited number. After tonight, plant tags can be signed out from Audrey. Many thanks.

See back page for more sale news.

HOW TO “SHOW & SHARE”:

Really very simple. By now, you will have either bought something from your garden to put on display, or you haven't. At tea, go look at each item. If it's "owner" is nearby, ask them about it. How big does it get? How do those flowers stand up? Do they need staking? If the display is soliciting information—and you know the answer, tell the owner. If the owner is not nearby, write down your questions or suggestions on the display slip. This is your chance to show something you think is special or unique or just a great idea or an great opportunity to solicit some information about something confusing. Enjoy!

JUNE IS FLOWER SHOW MONTH:

Actually we will have competitions for more than just flowers—fruits & vegetables & decorative will be included. We are in the process of making a “simple to follow” show schedule that hopefully will take care of any weird variations in weather that can possibly be thrown at us. Heat-wave or downpour, we will have a schedule that will include the plants and vegetables that will be prime in your garden at the time of our June meeting. It will be available at the May meeting, along with suggestions on “how to show” for the different categories. We want to make participating in the show fun for all. If you find, you just cannot pull together an entry, make sure you come to the meeting to see what other members have grown. Gosh, perhaps you will see just the flower that you were looking for. It is amazing how inspecting a showbench can give you great gardening ideas. Don't forget, although the judges will be evaluating the exhibits for the winner in each category, each member will have a vote for the “Members Vote Award” for “Best in the Show”.

JULY IS GARDEN TOUR & PICNIC

MONTH: Amazingly, the tour and picnic is only a few months away (Sat, July 15th). This year we are starting off at the gardens of some of our Coquitlam contingent. Bev Gatto, Linda Turnbull and Diana Flostrand all live quite close together and all have fantastic gardens. We have Dawn Dutrizac-Larose and Paul Larose's brand new garden to visit. And we know we are finishing at the great back yard of Ellen & Nes Berg for the picnic, *but will we be visiting your garden sometime during the day?* Think about it! As you know, perfection is not a pre-requisite. The “perfect garden” just does not exist! Members are keen on seeing how you are meeting a challenge—or how you plant on conquering it! Talk to Audrey if you would like your garden included.

EMAIL NOTIFICATION OF MEETINGS:

Just the reminder that if you want to get on this list or if you change your address, send Lesley an email: Lesley sends out a great email every month. Help her out by keeping her email address list up-to-date. Thanks.

OTHER GREAT OUTING IDEAS:

THE TULIP FIELDS OF LaCONNOR: The tulips are fantastic this year. Trish, the organizer of our past trips south, is putting together a bus tour for a mere \$30/Can per person. Carole will have details of the trip tonight. Sign-up tonight at the head table.

24TH ANNUAL GARDEN TOUR FOR THE VICTORIA

CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: Saturday and Sunday, May 13 & 14, 10am to 5pm. A self-guided tour of some of Victoria's most beautiful private gardens. Plant sales and live music in selected gardens. Two-day pass with tour map \$25. Ticket information 250-386-5311 or 1-888-386-5311 or www.vcm.bc.ca. We won't be organizing an outing to this but it does sound very enticing!

VANCOUVER RHODODENDRON SOCIETY SHOW AND

SALE: Saturday, May 13, 10am to 4pm. At Park and Tilford Gardens in North Vancouver. This is a great garden covering three acres and offering eight theme gardens including Rose, White, Native and Oriental Gardens. Admission and parking are free. We are not organizing an outing to this either but the Park and Tilford Gardens is always a pleasure to visit (great Christmas light display!) and the show & sale would just add some cream to the visit.

SOME OUTING IDEAS DISCUSSED OVER THE PLANT SALE POTTING TABLE:

“WHAT TO DO WITH A CHAFER-INFESTED LAWN”

MINI TOUR: As we were potting up jewels for the plant sale, the topic of what people are doing instead of a lawn came up. Actually, it came up when a potential member dropped off some pots and said they had been laying around since last year when their front yard became a project for Urban Ecology Students of Douglas College. Instead of lawn, it has been planted in native plants. She confessed that she has now inserted some non-natives into the midst. Then we talked about Carole Forsythe's use of West Coast Seeds “Easy Care Groundcover”. As it states in the catalogue: “A low-care lawnscape. A mix of slow-growing grasses and drought tolerant flowers that gives you a multi-textured lawn that needs only monthly mowing, and hardly any watering. Use as a lawn or in paths between beds. Plant from mid-May to mid-June, or mid-Aug to mid-Sept. Plant and establish as you would a lawn; mow at 2”. Will take less care in the second year. Contains fescues, ryegrass, clover, English daisies, white yarrow, baby blue eyes and white alyssum”. At the moment, Carole's front yard is a beautiful field of English daisies. And then there is the front lawn on Seventh Avenue where the people have installed artificial turf. We are not sure but our memories put the “lawn” appearing about the time the high school got its new turf Hmmm. We wondered if dandelions would take root in it. Then we talked about how we should get sales notices to all the homes where people were digging up their “no longer in existence” lawns. Good idea for a mini tour?

GO AS A GROUP TO SEE “SLITHER”: This seems like a natural for a garden club outing—to take in a viewing of the currently showing comedy horror flick about slugs. Anybody for a slurpy to have with the show?

IN YOUR VEGETABLE PATCH: by the Urban Gardener, also known as Roy Pegler who would love talk “grow’n veges” with you.

As March this year has not been particularly good for early spring gardening, hopefully April will be catch-up time for sowing & planting all the cool weather crops. Possibly the warm weather could come suddenly so good advice would be “get going now!” The following should be sown or planted: carrots, lettuce, brassics, peas, potatoes, chard, spinach, leeks, onions and early tomatoes (and others I have forgotten).

I have a suggestion that it would be a good idea to think about crop rotation. Moving plants around from year to year is one of the best organic techniques to minimize disease and bug problems and to maximize soil fertility. Various rotation plans are popular. The simplest is “don’t plant the same thing in the same place two years in a row”. This strategy is designed to ward off pests. If the cabbage looper pupa nestles down in the cabbage debris in October & reawakens the following spring to more cabbage, that’s instant sustenance. But if you’ve moved the cabbage, the looper may die trying to find its food. I use a system that’s easy to implement and easy to remember without a notebook. I separate my crops based on their nutritional requirements. It so happens that the plants fall pretty neatly into leafy crops, fruiting crops and root crops. A fourth division is for legumes (peas & beans) which technically are fruits but get their own plot because they actually add more nutrients to the soil than they take. By default this system separates families and so helps diminish pest problems. I will continue this discussion next month.

GardenWorks Appreciation Day: April 20th. Get 15% off everything in the store including items already on sale.

THE SECRETS OF SLUGS: This is reprinted from the Spring 2006 edition of “British Columbia Magazine”. They sourced it from “The Western Society of Malacologists Field Guide to the Slug” by David George Gordon (Sasquatch Books, 1994). No wonder they became the stars in a movie!

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: A review of last month’s presentation: **BRAD JALBERT, of Select Roses, demonstrated just how easy it is to take care of roses.** Brad held us entranced. In the end, we all agreed that although Roses are the Queen of Garden Plants, their care is really quite simple. No longer do we need to feel like their personal slaves. Select Roses is located at 22771—38th Ave, Langley. 604-530-5786. They have an excellent website: www.selectroses.ca It is *the* place to buy roses in the Lower Mainland. From reports of the outing there last month, our group enjoyed the selection!

FRAGRANCE AT THE MEETINGS: Please be conscientious regarding the fragrance in your personal products. Please leave the fragrance at home, or better, in the garden. Some members, including Audrey, have an adverse reaction to fragrance. Many thanks.

THIS 'N' THAT:

■It was great to see some “old friends” among the new members last month. We welcome **Pauline Baldoumis, Mike Masuhara, Silina Nakatsu, Ester Newcombe, Gloria Rouveroy & Peter Spencer**. The club stresses offering opportunities for members to participate and it is great to see that half of these new members have already stepped in and helped with the sale.

■That **Roy Pegler** (co-host of the treasurer’s table & “the Urban Gardener”) is one resilient fella. Roy underwent a hip replacement on Mar 29th and was home 3 1/2 days later (instead of the normal 7 days). He credits the good nursing from fellow NWHS member, **Lisa Escalante**, and the draw of Dot’s superb cooking.

■Do you want to know anything about carpenter ants? **Aldina Isbister** has become an unwilling expert on the pests and how to get rid of them. Talk with her tonight or call her at 604-434-9818.

■Our website, www.newwesthortsociety.org is getting better all the time. It is updated regularly. If you bookmark our website for easy reference, please hit your “refresh” button to get the updated version. If you don’t the version that comes up on your screen will be that which you looked at last.

■It is too early to donate to the **Plant a Row, Grow a Row** coffers, but it is not too late to plan to plant that extra row of veges so that you have plenty to share later. The Gardener’s Party last month was a great success. A very festive atmosphere of anticipation for another good year for the program. **Jan Potter** had many claiming to be her “best friend” when her name was drawn for a double season’s pass to Minter Gardens.

■The theme for the **Queensborough Fair** is “chickens”. Start thinking now how we can incorporate the theme into the club’s display. Lori Jenvey & Audrey Barnes are on the fairs organizing committee this year. Lori is involved in Children’s Entertainment and Audrey is in charge of Adult Competitions. Both would love to hear from members with suggestions. Hint: if you are involved in a specific craft, do you want a competition category for it?

■At the spring meeting of the **BC Council of Garden Clubs**, volunteers were asked to take over the stuffing & mailing of the bulletins for one year. We put our hand up. If you think you would be interested in joining fellow members for an evening of envelope stuffing, please talk with Audrey. At the moment, we have no idea of when the first evening will be. There are 6 bulletins a year.

■The **New Westminster Secondary School Mushroom Manure Sale** is looming. Many of you know of this annual event which is a fundraiser for New West Sec School Athletics. The sale dates are Fri, Apr 21 and Sat. Apr 22. If you want to have the manure delivered there is no charge but your order with a cheque (payable to NWSS) must be at the School Office by 3:30pm of April 17th. For more information call 604-517-6300 extension 9637. Leave a message on the answering machine and you will be phoned back. Cost: \$3 for small bag, \$5 for large bag. For questions tonight, you can ask Debbie Crowley—even though she maintains she is “just a parent”.

LIBRARY NEWS: by **Monica Mowat**

Hi everyone, in order to maximize the availability of the books to all our members and to remind members to return the books they have borrowed, I have added a step to the process of borrowing. A blue card with the months of the year has been added to the library table. This is a “month your book is due card”. You complete the index card for a book as usual. Then please circle next month (in this case May) on the blue card. The blue card is inserted in the envelope in the book. We are hoping that this will help as a reminder for everyone. Also, if a book has not been returned after two months, a card will be placed in your name tag slot to remind you that your book is overdue. Thank you for your cooperation with this. I am still looking for book ideas for the library. Please email me with your suggestions on subjects you think the club members would enjoy. That’s all for now. Happy reading!

PLANT SALE NEWS:

The Dahlia Crew: We have a huge number of dahlia tubers that will need to be divided for the sale. We sell them as unplanted tubers. Are you experienced with dahllias? Would you like to help out? The tuber dividing will be done in the yard as a group.

Cardboard Boxes: The gathering has commenced. We need cardboard trays for the plants to go home from the sale. We keep our greedy mitts on our collection of black plastic trays which seem to have become a non-renewable resource. Please start collecting cardboard trays (Costco and Liquor Stores are great sources) but do NOT bring them to the yard. There is just no room for them in the carport or in the house. Instead, please collect them at home and take them directly to the mall on Sat evening or Sun morning of the sale weekend.

Duties at the Sale: On sale day, since no heavy lifting will be required, there is a job for everyone who is keen. When you sign up for the shift you are interested in, please list your areas of expertise or interest: Annuals, Vegetables, Perennials? Cashier? Raffle table? Tallying the slips? Master Gardener? General slave (oops! That position has been filled by Audrey!) When you arrive for your shift, check in with Carole who will give you a name tag and then review the sale procedure. If you have questions, ask Carole. Just a word—don’t forget tear down. We need some young keen bodies to help at day’s end with dismantling of the sale and the transport of “sale remains” back to the yard.

PLANTS WE STILL NEED: This year we are short of (or missing) several desirables. Here are some: Astilbe, tall campanula, bleeding heart, leopard’s bane, sea holly, echinacea, geum, helenium, heuchera, hosta (esp named!), iris (including blue Siberian!), lavender, bee balm, malva, meadow rue, variegated periwinkle, verbena bonariensis. With the vegetables we have very little raspberry and rhubarb. Drop off what you have—this list is not exclusive! Surprise us with your offerings. Thanks.