

THE NEW WESTMINSTER HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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www.newwesthortsociety.org

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July 2007

CLUB MEETING CALENDAR:

JULY MEETING: Tonight, Tues, July 10th, 7:45: Eric Meagher, Supervisor of Maintenance, Stanley Park on "STANLEY PARK: THE DESTRUCTION & RECONSTRUCTION". (Jim Lowden, our original speaker is on holidays). He will be covering the history of the park, its damage as a result of the storm and its ongoing restoration. Also tonight: sign-up for the picnic at the head table.

AUGUST MEETING: Tues, Aug 14th, 7:45: Teri Cantin, of Sharp & Diamond Landscape Architecture and Planning, on "GREEN ROOFS & LIVING WALLS"

SEPTEMBER MEETING: Patricia Fleming, of Delta Recycling Earthwise Garden, on "XERISCAPING"

CLUB OUTINGS: *Carole Forsythe (604-515-1927; carole.forsythe@shaw.ca) is the person in charge of outings. However, for this month, Audrey (604-526-8284) is handling the picnic. Debra Halibig is normally in charge of the sketching group but since she is in her last days (last hours, she hopes) of pregnancy, Audrey is stepping in for that as well for this month.*

NWHS ANNUAL IN-CLUB GARDEN TOUR & POTLUCK PICNIC: Sat July 14th. Tour starts at 1:30; picnic 4:00-4:30. No sign-up for tour. Sign-up at head table for picnic.

The Tour: At last, after several revisions, we have the tour finalized! Pick up a copy of the map and itinerary at the head table. Contact Audrey if you need one after tonight. The tour is for adults only. There is no sign-up sheet. You just turn up at the gardens at the times designated on the itinerary. Each garden is not open all afternoon. Each is open for the half-hour stated on the sheet. This enables the hosts to join the tour in visiting the other gardens. It will be hot!!!! And sunny!!!! Put on that sunscreen! Grab that wide-brimmed hat! Water will be available on the tour in the rear of Audrey's white Volvo wagon. Normally, we get 3 cases but plans have been revised to get 5 due to the pending heat-wave. Sorry, it will be warm. The tour starts in Burnaby at Jean List's garden and then progresses roughly west to east through New Westminister visiting the gardens of Tania Worker, Joan Miller & Carl Whitney, Dawn Dutrizac-Larose & Paul Larose, Silvana McNulty, Marya McLellan and finally Ellen & Nes Berg (the picnic site). To our garden hosts, many thanks for letting us view your gardens. On the tour, you will be seeing a wide variety of gardens. No details here—just enjoy the delightful surprises in store for you on Saturday. Some are quite established. Two are very young (*cont. next column*)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER: by Audrey

Excellent! No room! Enjoy the sun that we have so long awaited!

CLUB OUTINGS CONT.

The Tour (cont.): ...gardens that will stimulate your imagination. We hope to re-visit them in a few years to see how they have developed. For three gardens, this is our second viewing. Some excellent examples of landscaping in response to the Chafer. It may seem like a long tour, but the last two gardens are adjoining and can be treated as one. In fact, although Nes & Ellen are the official picnic hosts, we are invited to partake the shade offered by Marya's garden.

The Pot-Luck Picnic: Ah, to relax in the shade after a hot afternoon of garden viewing. If you have a garden umbrella or awning we can use, please talk to Ellen Berg (604-525-7827) or Audrey. We have a fair number, but just in case.... Unlike the tour, there is a sign-up sheet for the picnic. We would like to know the number in your party (for obvious reasons) and what you plan on donating. At the moment we have a growing list of attendees but not many have designated their dish. After tonight, you can sign-up by phoning or emailing Audrey. In the past, when people have called, they usually ask "what do you need?". Very handy to know what we do not need because you wrote in those details! The size of your dish should be about the amount to feed 8 people. It is advised that you drop off your dish before the tour so that it can be kept in a cooler or fridge until picnic time. Cars will be getting hot on Sat. The club will be supplying hot and cold beverages. It is also standard that the club also purchase some cold-cuts to lessen the need for meat dishes. If you have food allergies, please tell Audrey so we can inquire of troublesome dishes before we dig in. The club supplies drinking glasses, disposable plates, plastic cutlery and napkins. We do have a fair number of chairs but if you have one that is easily transported, bring it along. *Make sure you put your name on everything you bring: serving bowl, serving utensils, chair, umbrella, cooler—it makes sorting the left-behinds so much easier.*

Try your hand at the "Garden Stumps" quiz—perhaps you will be the one to get your name "engraved" on the lovely trophy for 2007—and get to take possession of it for the year! Look for numbered orange tags throughout Ellen's garden. Match each number to appropriate plant listed. And then match the plants to the "word association" clues on the second column and insert the appropriate number next to the appropriate clue. Heads up right now, it would be an understatement to say some of the clues are pretty obscure! Good luck!

IN YOUR VEGE PATCH: by the Urban Gardener, also known as Roy Pegler (604-520-6467), He would love talk “grow’n veges” with you.

July has arrived and the weather is definitely warmer & dryer than June. It is time to get the fall planting started, e.g. broccoli, Brussels sprouts, turnips, carrots, Swiss chard and spinach.

As our growing season is at least three weeks late be prepared for a flush of harvesting of summer crops if the weather turns hot.

Mulch helps conserve water in your soil by shielding the ground from the hot rays that burn off moisture. It’s a good idea to soak the soil before you lay on the first layer of mulch. Just as the mulch hinders evaporation, it also slows penetration of moisture to the roots. It’s more efficient to get the water down first, then mulch. It also may initially save your plants from waiting for water to percolate through when they are accustomed to getting it right away. The mulch, of course, will also suppress those thirsty weeds trying to elbow their way to the fountain. Don’t let leaves fool you. If they’re drooping in the hot midday sun, you need not necessarily be alarmed. The plants may just be protecting themselves by exposing less surface to the sun and conserving water. If the same plants are drooping in the morning or at night, then you can rev up the water wagon but don’t cause a flood. Saturated soil drives out the air that roots need and plants will drown. There’s no reason to water the leaves. That can encourage a variety of fungi that develop in moist conditions such as mildew and blight. For some crops, like tomatoes, yields may improve but some flavor may be lost with too much watering as fruit ripens. With carrots and cabbages, for example watering should be reduced as the crop reaches maturity to keep the vegetables from splitting. Once plants are established, more harm than good is done by giving them a daily sprinkling. If only the soil surface gets wet, roots will look up, not down, for their drinks. Deep, less frequent watering works better. Try to grow thirsty plants together. If you have the space, group plants according to their water needs. For example you wouldn’t want your herbs next to your lettuce. Herbs thrive in drier areas, whereas lettuce needs more water. Early morning, late afternoon and evening are usually best times for watering because the cooler temperatures mean less water will evaporate. Under bright sunshine, water droplets intensify the rays and can singe the leaves. According to a common rule of green thumb, a garden needs about one inch of water per week. Divining how much the garden is actually getting can be a little tricky. About 60 gals will provide about 1 inch of water over 100 sq. ft. In especially dry climates or if using raised beds, more water maybe needed. Finally, you have to balance your commitment with the needs of the plants and the results you want.

GardenWorks Appreciation Day: Thurs, July 19th.

GVRD SPRINKLING REGULATIONS:

At the moment, the sprinkling regulations *apply to lawns only*. The hours for lawn sprinkling are 4am to 9am and 7pm to 10pm. Odd numbered houses on Thur & Sun; even numbered houses Wed & Sat.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

A busy evening last month: In-club show, Q & A session. Not to mention the two money votes in which the membership unanimously agreed to donate \$2000 to the BC Council of Garden Clubs Scholarship Trust Fund and \$2000 as the maximum budget for the NWHS Donations Committee to designate to worthy projects.

JUNE SHOW REPORT: by Sharon Seki

Although the weather didn’t cooperate with the timing of our June Show, we still had some beautiful exhibits of flowers, vegges and herbs. Many thanks to the 16 exhibitors who brought a total of 60 exhibits to the show. Sixteen of those exhibits were awarded a 1st prize ribbon, 13 exhibits a 2nd prize ribbon, and 8 exhibits a 3rd prize ribbon. The Best of Show in Floral Art went to Susan Pozniak for her delightful “Let’s Cook” pie, and Best of Show in Cut Materials went to Sharon Seki for her Asiatic Lily. (*Check the bulletin board for the breakdown of show results.*)

Thank you also, to everyone who took the time to complete the June Show Evaluation. Your comments told us that many of you did not exhibit due to a lack of time, or a lack of flowers in your garden due to the poor weather. The general sense of your responses is that people enjoyed the show. We hope that you will join the fun of exhibiting at the Queensborough Fair in Sept. (*The stars of the show were the amazing floral art creations—WOW! We have some many talented members! In contrast there were many gaps in entries for the “Cut Materials” categories. But that was not unexpected. When designing the schedule, because we never know what the weather between May and June will be, categories for things that would be ready for show in the months of May, June & July are included. Also, the climatic zones of the members’ gardens widely differ. In other words, it was expected that there would be only about one-third of the categories with entries. Next year remember that the garden of every other member in the club has gone through the same weather conditions as yours—we are all in the same boat when the weather does not cooperate. Your exhibit is competing against other exhibits—not just against a standard of perfection.*)

QUEENSBOROUGH URBAN FARMER’S

FALL FAIR: Sun, Sept 23rd. For the initiated, this is a great day of family fun. This year the theme is “Cows”. NWHS participates in many ways. Three of our members are on the organizing committee. For fair day, a talented group of members create displays of harvest themes at key sites. NWHS, as an entity, has a large display (usually about 4 tables). It has been suggested, in line with the fair’s theme, we base our display on “Buttercups and their cultivated cousins”. What do you think? Do you have another idea? The competition schedule has been drawn up and is available on our website. Check the bulletin board. The official pamphlet is pending. Just a reminder, as the fair competition is considered a club activity, NWHS pays the entries fee for all NWHS members.

BUGS & SUCH:

HEMEROCALLIS GALL MIDGE: Last month for our Q&A, Diane Escalante brought in a sample of daylily buds infested with this pesky tiny fly. Some people think the problem is worse this year due to the late cool weather. Others say it seems to be in decline. Whatever is happening elsewhere, keep a vigilant eye on your daylilies. Remove all misshapen buds, put them in a zip-lock and deposit them in your garbage. Do *not* put them in the compost!! The only way keep it under control is to break its life cycle.

EUROPEAN CHAFER: Yep, the time is upon us to think about controlling the varmints. They have almost completed their annual mating dance in the trees and tall structures. If you don't have nematodes yet, get to GardenWorks and get them asap. You will be given directions for application. The watering is crucial. The nematodes live in the film of water but too much water can wash them away from the area you are treating. Normally, in New Westminster, a permit to water lawns outside the GVRD sprinkling times would cost you \$50. If applying nematodes, this fee is waived. However, *you must go to the engineering department in person to get the permit.* It would be best to take your nematode receipt with you. This no-charge permit is valid only for the two weeks in which the nematodes are effective.

Just an aside here: last year they were studying the effectiveness of different nematode strains and a surprising factor came to the fore. In the study, the same number of chafers were added to each study sample. In some control samples (i.e. no nematodes applied), it was found the number of chafers were drastically reduced. Natural bacteria in the soil were killing the chafers. This suggests that top-dressing your lawn with a thin layer of organic material will not only give your lawn a healthy boost, but may also give those chafers a kick where they deserve it.

WEST NILE VIRUS: Our fingers are crossed again that this does not invade our area. As everyone knows, it is spread by mosquitoes. Getting bit by a mosquito is no great thrill anytime but being bit by one possibly loaded with the virus!! The late wet June was perfect for the mosquito population. Water, water everywhere. Keep your eye on your garden that you are not extending the breeding season. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in stagnant water. Empty pots of standing water once weekly. Make sure stored pots are not full of water. Make sure your gutters empty effectively. Look around for small vessels of standing water and remove them. If you have a pond, add a fish (favorite food: mosquito larve), add a fountain or waterfall (moving water deters mosquitoes), periodically add a larvicide available at pond supply stores (kills them dead but harms nothing else). To avoid mosquito bites, avoid going outside at dawn or dusk. Wear dark, long sleeve shirts & pants. Avoid perfumes and body lotions. When all else fails, apply mosquito repellent with DEET.

ANTS, APHIDS & ROOT WEEVILS:

by Linda Turnbull.

(Linda's garden was recently on the Tri-City Garden Tour sponsored by the POCO Garden Club. She was on our tour last year. She was asked the same questions over and over again and has written the following article about some gardening tips she practices. Thank you Linda.)

ANTS: Ants can be beneficial in the garden and for the most part should be left alone to do their thing. It is only when your lawns or beds are 'supporting' a huge nest that I would take action. I believe that we are experiencing large nests due to the very long drought periods we have had in the last 3-4 years. It is normal to have a three week to a month drought period (late July to August) in the Lower Mainland, but these past years we have seen this time frame extend well into the Autumn. Prime breeding weather for ants is hot and dry. I have not found the chemical solutions available in most nurseries and stores to be that effective. Short term, yes, they do work but not in the long term. I also find them to be expensive and never seem to have them at hand when I needed them. My non-chemical solution (pun intended) is a mix of Borax (washing powder) and icing sugar. Mix at a ratio of 1/3 Borax to 2/3 icing sugar. Sprinkle over the nest and just beyond. (Sprinkle as in sprinkling salt. Do not cover the area thickly as it will kill a grass or plant.) The problem is that it has to be reapplied after a rain but the same can be said of the chemical solution. My solution: I wash out an empty deli container (yogurt containers work well too) and pierce several holes half way down, fill with the Bora/sugar mix and replace the top of the container. I tuck this container under a plant so that it is not visually intrusive. The ants will go to the container to feed entering through the holes and I have some premixed powder available for sprinkling, ready when I need it. The container top keeps the mixture dry. The plus side of my non-chemical mixture is that it does not harm plants, birds or bugs other than the ants. This mixtures does not kill the adult ants. But when the ants go for the sugar, they are feeding on an empty non-nourishing food which in fact starves them and they unknowingly carry the Borax back to the nest and their babies. The Borax kills off most of the next generation. The aim is not to destroy all the ants, just to control their population. Ants in the garden are not harmful in small numbers. In fact they do help, but in large numbers their tunneling can damage root systems and cause plant or grass failure.

APHIDS: To control aphids in the garden I normally have one sacrificial plant in each bed. For example: with my Papaver somniferum (annual poppies), I leave one plant not sprayed with Insecticidal soap. All the aphids go to that plant and leave the rest of my plants alone. Most years I plant one or two nasturtium plants (which is like caviar to aphids) close to my aphid susceptible plants. Problem taken care of at very little monetary costs and no chemicals.

RHODODENDRON ROOT WEEVILS: I have one "ratty" rhododendron (which is planted and hidden away behind the rest) that is more susceptible (tasty to the blighters anyway!). I keep this plant alive as much as possible and I re-named it the "Weevil Snack Bar". They have munched on this poor plant every year for the last 25 years and have pretty well left the others alone. Again, problem solved and no chemicals used. For those that are curious about "Weevil Snack Bar", it is usually my first rhodo to bloom every year. The blooms are gorgeous but the leaves, notched & chewed, are definitely "ratty".

SKETCHING GROUP:

The inaugural 2007 meeting of the group was a great success even considering the cold, wet weather. Fourteen keeners huddled in Audrey's carport getting an excellent drawing class from Peri-laine Nilan. She's a very talented artist and a fantastic speaker. Check your ticket for the New Westminster Preservationist Society Heritage Home Tour—you'll see her name at the corner of the drawings.

Since then however, due to the foul weather, a holiday weekend and other mishaps, the scheduled meetings of the group have not materialized. A schedule has been drawn up for the locations for the Saturday 1 to 3pm sketching meetings. It is up to you to turn up and make this group work. On holiday weekends, we will have no scheduled meeting.

July 14: our tour & picnic: no meeting

July 21: Dawn Dutrizac-Larose, 56 Eddie Drive

July 28: Debra Halbig, 8282 15th Ave, Burnaby

Aug 4: holiday weekend: no meeting

Aug 11: Ann Paisley, 712 4th St

Aug 18: Silina Nakatsu, 5356 Sperling, Burnaby

Aug 25: Wrap-up at Debra Halbig's.

To the hosts: If this schedule creates a clash with your personal schedule, please tell Audrey.

There is also the possibility of hiring Peri for a more private lesson in cross-hatching or water-colors. It would be a small group, probably about 2 hours long. Cost would be \$30 per person (you pay). If you are interested, speak with Audrey. She will be in communication with Peri in the near future regarding the confirmation of these details and possible dates. (Audrey is temporarily in charge of the sketching group, due to Debra being "beyond due" in her pregnancy.)

THIS 'N' THAT:

■Finally we have revised copies of our **Publicity Pamphlet** (in green) and **Member's Manual** (in blue). These publications have not been available for awhile because considerable revisions were needed to get them up to date. If you are a new member, make sure you pick up a member's manual. It will really enhance your enjoyment of the club.

■The **seed exchange** tonight features some freshly harvested hellebore seeds, compliments of Claude leDoux. If you like hellebores, definitely take some. They are identified by the parent plant. There is no guarantee that they will have the parent's characteristics as hellebores are extremely promiscuous. They should be "planted" right away as the germination rate is sharply reduced with time stored. Just sprinkle them over the ground. Remember to collect seeds from your garden for the exchange. Once the seeds are ripe, just collect them in a paper bag or envelope so they dry. Write down plant name, color, height, etc while you can. Then add your name & phone number.

■Audrey made a run to the Salvation Army and picked up the growing medium, "**Par Gro Stonewool substrate for Horticulture**". Remember when we had a sample at the meeting last month. It is for sale at \$2 per unit. If it doesn't make it to the meeting tonight, it would be appreciated if you would connect with Audrey about your order.

"THAT 'N' THIS":

■Well, when you google "**Italian Killer Ladybugs**" you get *all sorts* of links but seemingly none linked to the ladybugs that were discussed during the Q&A session last month. If you recall, there was a rumor that ladybugs imported from Italy are killing off our home grown variety.

■The **Plant a Row, Grow a Row** season is in full swing. This is that fantastic program that matches excess produce grown by home gardeners to those in need at the New West Food Bank and Monarch Place. Drop off produce at St. Aidan's Church, 14th St and 7th Ave, New West between 9:30 and 10:30 Sunday mornings. If you can't drop off the produce, phone 604-526-4914 before 11am Sundays for afternoon pick-up service.

■**Photo Contest** and **Container Contest** rules are on the back of your roster—or if you have lost it, on our website. Bring your camera along on the garden tour this weekend. One Photo Contest category is "Overall or Partial View of Non-Commercial (i.e. home) Garden". Does that sound like a match or what?

■**Lost and Found:** Audrey is still looking for the owner of an earring found at the plant sale. Did anyone end up with a navy-blue sun visor after the sale? Audrey has looked through most of the stuff that came back to the house—but it seems to have disappeared during the event.

■Have you checked out our **website** lately? Do so. It is looking pretty spiffy. **Bob Santarossa** has been spending a some hours on the revamp. A message board system is being tested behind the scenes. He is waiting for Audrey to give feedback as to what photos to eliminate in the photo gallery. At the moment, some are not that great and would be better non-viewed. Would you like to help Audrey with the task? www.newwesthortsociety.org Well done, Bob.

■Wish that we had the old season-long parlour show back? Well, from the response of the survey last month, that doesn't look like it will happen. But...the next best thing is the **South Burnaby Garden Club**. It meets the first Tuesday of each month at Bonsor Community Centre and still has that type of show season. One cannot belong to too many garden clubs.

■**Ellen Berg** and **Marya McLellan** were walking home from the Canada Day celebrations and they pass one of those electrical boxes covered with a picture of a garden. Marya says "Does that look familiar?". Ellen, while staring at the box, "Sorta". Marya: "It's your garden." Check the picture on the wall. This is a spring shot of the garden which will host our club picnic. Pretty impressive!

■Want a **club T-shirt**? We have a limited supply of Med & Large (both colours) available at the treasurer's table. \$15.

■Amazingly, we still have some **black plastic plant saucers** available—12, 14 & 18". Back to the normal club member price of \$1 each—see Audrey if you would like to buy some.

E-MAIL NOTIFICATION OF MEETINGS:

Anna Camporese would just love to hear of any updates you have to your email address (or if you want to be added to the list!). Reach her at Anna_Camporese@telus.net. Please preface your email subject with "nwhts". Thanks