

THE NEW WESTMINSTER HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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March, 2007

CLUB MEETING CALENDAR:

MARCH MEETING: Tonight, Tues, Mar 13th, 7:45, BRIAN MINTER presenting "NEW TRENDS IN GARDENING". We hope you brought along some extra cash since Brian is bringing some "gotta have that" plants. Sit back and be inspired to get out into your garden tomorrow. As the national co-chair for Plant a Row, Grow a Row, Brian has been asked to say a few words about that great community oriented program. If you haven't paid your membership dues, you have the opportunity to do so tonight. T-shirt orders also taken at the treasurer's table.

APRIL MEETING: Tues, April 10th, 7:45, FRED WEIN Sr., of Clearview Horticultural Products, on "GROWING VERTICAL WITH CLIMBING PLANTS". Clearview has long been known as the premier Clematis propagators in North America. Fred will not be just focusing on clematis, but will discuss other vines as well—and some ways you can incorporate them into your landscape. The spring "Bring to Share" (details elsewhere in this newsletter) happens at this meeting. Also, if you have not renewed your membership by the April meeting, be prepared to have your name removed from the roster and your email/phoning meeting notification terminated.

MAY MEETING: Tues, May 8th, 7:45, MARGARET NAKAHARA, president of the BC Council of Garden Clubs and qualified show judge, on "HOW TO SHOW". You'll enjoy Margaret's enthusiasm. If you did not plan to enter our June show, prepared to be inspired to do so after Margaret's presentation. Also at the meeting, "How much we made at our plant sale"!

JUNE MEETING, Tues, June 12th, 7:45. Our JUNE IN-CLUB SHOW! Plus a GARDENING QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION WITH A PANEL OF NWSHS EXPERTS. A great opportunity to share knowledge—want to be on the panel? Speak with Audrey.

CLUB OUTINGS:

Plant Sale Preparation on-going in Audrey's yard

United Flower Growers Cooperative Association Auction Tour: Thur, Mar 15th, 6:30am (Yep, early—that is not a typo!), United Flower Growers. The tour takes about 2 hours but if you have to leave early, no problem. This is a repeat of one of those "we must do that again" events. If you went on the tour in Aug 2004, you know what we mean. You get to see what happens behind the scenes at the auction. The place hops! It must process 4000 individual purchases, with hundreds of individual buyers, each hour. See how the Dutch Auction works. *Tonight is the deadline* to sign-up as we have to phone them first thing tomorrow morning. There is no cost to attend. If you need or can give a ride, come to the head table. Maps available tonight. Check out their website: www.ufgca.com for a taste of what you will see Thurs morning. It also has a great page on flower & plant care tips.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER: by Audrey

Lets talk plant sale! Well, I think next year we will brace ourselves for only 2 months for plant sale preparation right from the start. If conditions allow for us to start earlier, then we will consider it a bonus. First I got the evil bug, then there was the cold weather... Oh well, we now have a fair number of *very well watered* plants in the yard but...we are running out of the plants from my yard. Hopefully the early Day-Light Savings will enable you to get out into your yards. Yep, I know a lot of things aren't up yet—but a lot of things are! Make more than one trip to the yard with your donations! We need your plants as soon as possible—and your assistance in the yard! Working in the yard in that warm spell was really quite fun. Some of the things we potted have doubled in size. *Please* supply as many details as you can with your plants. With the compressed plant preparation time, searching for details which you probably know off the top of your head is an extremely non-productive use of my time. Thank you for helping me.

Sale Publicity: It's never too late to start! Everyone of you has a unique set of friends and acquaintances—most of which would probably be interested in the sale. We have a huge stack of small posters available tonight. Attending a meeting? Take some along and hand one to each person there. How about at a party? I handed out 70 or so at Steve's retirement party! Gave out stacks of 10 to good friends to give to their neighbours. Loads of large posters for posting in public places are at the head table. If you are posting in a window, Scotch tape 2 posters back-to-back to double duty the location. It is probably best to hold off posting outdoors until a few weeks before the sale.

OUTINGS CONT.

BC Council of Garden Clubs 2006 Annual General Meeting: Sat. Mar 24th, 8:30 to 2:30., PNE Boardroom. Doors actually open at 8:00—so if you want first dibs at the plants for sale, you might want to plan early. Tonight is the deadline for early registration. Sign up at the head table with Audrey with your \$20 in hand. The day includes socializing with your fellow club members (and members from other clubs!), the most fantastic draw (all sorts of great prizes!), a hot buffet lunch, and talks on "Pelargoniums" and "Organic Soil from the Sea". Oh, yes, the AGM part of the meeting is allotted 1½ hours on the agenda. If you would like to car-pool, please speak with Audrey.

Plant a Row, Grow a Row Gardener's Party, Mar 29th. Not an organized outing but great fun. See article for details.

MEMBER'S SURVEY RESULTS:

Many thanks to you, the members, who took a few minutes to fill out and submit the survey at the February meeting. It was a delight to receive 67—not bad out of an attendance of about 90. Much, much more response than in previous years when the survey was mailed to you. It is assumed that the remainder of you are pleased with what is happening in the club and are willing to go along with whatever the executive offers. If you still want to fill out the survey, there are copies at the head table. Just quickly fill it out and hand to Audrey. *THERE IS NO TIME LIMIT ON FEEDBACK—anytime is a good time.* A summary of the responses are posted on the bulletin board.

Age: Oops a serious series of typos. Sorry. Quite amazing that the ages of those in attendance was so high—just goes to show how gardening keeps you looking youthful!

Years in Club: pretty well what was expected. Most are under 10 years. This data is handy when considering re-inviting a speaker or re-doing a topic done several years ago.

Proficiency: We know there are more “experienced” gardeners than 6! Good to know to aim for information for those with “fair” to “good” expertise.

Your garden profile: Looks like most are into flowers. High percentage for balcony & deck, trees & shrubs, lawn and more sun than shade. Glad to hear only 10 considered that their gardens were “a mass of weeds”.

Your hopeful future garden profile: lots of hardscaping; drought tolerant, fragrance, easier care...lots of suggestions here.

Parlour Show: Again, sorry about the poor wording of the questions: General response was to continue with the evolving of the old show replacement.

Silent Auction: Yes, keep it! A fair number commented on the low quality of items in recent years. Remember the items are donated by you.

Christmas Party: Sounds like we should keep the format but have fewer raffle prizes.

Website: pictures and up-to-date info are important.

T-shirts: you can order yours up to the April meeting.

Presentation topics: high scores for climbing plants (April Speaker), composting (visit to City Farmer in May), flowering shrubs, design for front yards & small spaces. Other suggestions: xeriscaping *We are searching for good speakers on these topics—do you know of someone? Please talk with Carole Forsythe or Audrey*

Workshops & Mini Tours: High scores for all the suggestionsd.

Outings: Looks a shopping trip will be definitely scheduled (maybe more than one!)

“BRING TO SHARE”: What's it all about?

In April we will be having our Spring “Bring to Share”. There will be another one at the September meeting. This event is one section of the four part replacement of the club's old season long Parlour Show.

A Brief History: For new members who do not know what the Parlour Show was, here is a brief description. At every meeting from April to September there was a showbench —members collected flowers or vegetables from their gardens, or created floral art displays to be judged. There was a very detailed schedule describing what exhibits classes there would be each month. Although learning how to exhibit and learning from the exhibits was emphasized, in reality only a small number of members exhibited with not that many more inspecting the exhibits. Unintentionally, it became a season long competition which stressed the need to participate every month. It took up much of the meeting room and time. Last year was the inaugural year of replacing this season long show with a spring and fall “bring to share” evenings, a June In-Club Show and the open show at the Queensborough Fair.

What is a “Bring to Share” It is an opportunity for members to bring in something they would like to share with other members. Members bring in exhibits for the rest to look at and offer feedback. Members offer interesting things (could be a question), other members respond. There is no judging of the exhibits, however prizes are given. *Each member who brings in one or more exhibits (no limit on the number you can bring) will get his/her name entered in the participation draw. There will be three draws for cash: \$10, \$15, \$25.*

Easy steps to participate:

1. **Think!** What do I have that I would like to tell others about? Or what do I have a question about? Photos or diagrams are great. (We will have protective sleeves for them).
 - are looking for a plant or tree for a specific spot
 - how do you prune something
 - an absolutely gorgeous plant you bought
 - have a insect you want info on
 - came across a sneaky idea in a book, magazine
 - know of a fantastic gardening Web-site
 - great hint for container planting
 - a photo of your yard when it looks fantastic—or when it is a doesn't look so good (ask for advice)
 - need a plant identified (bring in plant or leaf)
2. **Fill out a slip for each exhibit:** your name at the top and then why you bought the item in—why you think it would be interesting. Put your exhibit(s) on the tables. Slips are available tonight if you want to get a jump on this.
3. **Register for the Draw:** Check in with Sharon to make sure she gets your name down for the draw. Each exhibitor can enter only once regardless of the number of exhibits brought in.
4. **Leave feedback for the exhibits:** Before the meeting and during tea, check out what is on display. Sharing is a 2-way street. Show that you appreciate the efforts others made to bring in things for you to look at. Write it down on the slip. If you want to talk with an exhibitor but don't know the person—ask Audrey. What a great way to make a new gardening friend.
5. **Keep your fingers crossed**—you might be a winner for the participation prizes.

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

Hopefully this month we will be able to start planting and sowing in the garden. The soil needs to be a little warmer and dryer to avoid rotting of the seeds. Given that, it will be time to sow the green peas, broad beans, lettuce, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Swiss chard, onions & spinach.

The latest garlic should be in the ground is this month. You can buy garlic for fall or spring planting. Do either (or both) but bear in mind that you will invariably get a heavier crop with fall planted cloves, even in heavy soil. It is advisable to grow fall garlic on raised beds. It is possible to grow garlic from supermarket bulbs, but I wouldn't recommend it as there is a greater risk of virus infection. If you buy from proper planting stock, you know what variety you have and also whether or not it's suitable for growing in our climate.

Snap and shelling peas can be sown as soon as the soil can be worked, even before the last frost—if the soil isn't too soggy! It is essential to plant peas early because the vines stop flowering when daytime temperatures stay above 80°F. Pea seeds germinate when the soil is between 10 and 20°C (50-70°F). Peas aren't all that particular about soil. I add compost or sea soil, shovelling about 1 inch on the top and working it in. You can give them a boost and increase yields by inoculating them with rhizobia at planting time. Dampen the seeds, roll them in the powder and plant as usual. By mid-June, the pods are about 3” long and ready to pick. The more you pick, the more you get.

GardenWorks Appreciation Day: Thurs, Mar 15th

LIBRARY NEWS:

Monica has updated the list of books we have available for loan (assuming that they have been returned in a timely manner). *She is in the process of developing a hold procedure for the books.* Check the list. If there is something you would like to borrow but it is currently signed out, talk with Monica. She will put you down to be first in line to sign it out next. As always, Monica is looking for feedback on new books to purchase. If you have come across a “must have”, pass the suggestion onto her. A reminder, books signed out one meeting are due the next meeting. If you will not be able to attend a meeting, books can be dropped off at Audrey's—or at least contact Monica (604-521-3906) or Audrey (604-526-8284 before 8pm) to alert them that the book(s) will be late.

OUR SEED EXCHANGE:

Check it out on the free table! According to Buff O'shaughnessy who organizes the seeds, it is the “best ever selection”. She thanks all members who collected and donated seeds last year. Although it is not seed collecting time, it is “checking through your stash of seeds” time. If you come across something which you bought but now realize you will never plant, bring the packet into the seed exchange. A great guilt-reduction technique!

PLANT A ROW, GROW A ROW:

It's March, it must be time for the annual kick off for this great community program! You couldn't be more right.

For the uninformed, Plant a Row, Grow a Row is a national program which matches excess produce grown by local gardeners with the need for fresh produce by the Food Bank and such groups as Monarch House. Did you know 30% of the Food Bank users are kids? The local chapter started about 5 years ago under the coordination of Margaret Steward & Claude LeDoux. It has grown to be one of the most successful nation-wide. Last year 70,000 pounds of produce were collected and distributed.

“Get kids growing & sharing” pilot project: This year, besides encouraging all growers to donate produce, a pilot project with a local Cub Scout troop and a grade 1&2 class at Richard McBride Elementary is underway. From the news release: “Each little farmer received two peat pots (that can be planted in the garden just as they are), soil, seeds (kale & broccoli) and instructions. The Cubs came home with their potted seeds ready to be watered, and zipped into plastic bags for the seeds to germinate. Once the seedlings are up, they come out of their bags and the pots go in a bright window to grow big enough to plant outdoors, either in the garden or in a pot on a balcony. Gardeners with neither are invited to plant their plants in St. Aidan Church's community garden. Kale will grow with no extra care to harvestable size by mid June. The broccoli should be close behind it, with the help of a little fertilizer. A McBride teacher is excited about the many facets of the project: “It comes back to the curriculum a lot of different ways, growing seeds, with math through measuring and predicting, also talking about toxins and pollutants. But beyond that, it ties in so well with our goal of teaching social responsibility. The term ‘social responsibility’ has such an adult focus, but in this way a six-year-old can have some involvement in the world beyond their school”.

Plant a Row, Grow a Row Gardener's Party: Thurs., Mar 29th, 6 to 9pm, St Aidan's Church Hall, 1320 7th Ave. All keen gardeners are invited whether or not they intend to participate in PAR GAR. In addition to enjoying the refreshments and prizes, you will be treated to seminars by a variety of garden experts: Brian Minter, Judy Newton, Mary Ballon, Dr. Alan Reid, Conway Lum and Sheree Liversidge. There is no charge for admission but a donation of money or canned goods to the Food Bank is strongly encouraged. There is no need to pre-register, just turn up prepared to have a good time.

Dropping off produce: Once again, the drop-off location for excess produce is at St. Aidan's Church Hall. Volunteers will be there to receive your donations from June to October on Sundays, 9:30 to 10:30 am. For more information call 604-526-4914—just leave a message to be called back.

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!). Anna_Camporese@telus.net is how to reach her. Please preface your email subject with “nwhs”.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: A brief description of last month's presentation. Rudi Pinowski was well worth the wait. Stressing the Lower Mainland's minimum and maximum temperatures are much more temperate than many places which are mentally considered as palm climates, Rudi recommended that we widen our minds and try palms. And to compliment the palms, to try other tropical looking plants. Some great before and after pictures showing how a lush tropical (or tropical looking) garden can be created. A great talk from a great guy. Thanks Rudi.

WE HAVE FOR SALE...

T-SHIRTS, POLO'S & SWEATSHIRTS: We will be taking orders for shirts tonight and at the April meeting. *Our standard printing is the small logo on the front over the heart and the large logo on back. You can specify that you would like this standard printing or just the front logo or just the back logo.* Shirt dimensions and fabric contents are at the treasurer's table. This is the data from our 2003 order and will be confirmed before the April meeting. If there are any changes and you have ordered a shirt, you will be notified before the order is placed.

Short sleeve T's are available in either Serene Green (our pale shirt) or Forrest Green (our dark shirt). S to XL is \$15, XXL is \$17.

Long sleeve T's only available in Forrest Green. S to XL is \$20, XXL is \$22

Short sleeve polo (golf shirt) only available in Forrest Green. S to XL is \$22, XXL is \$24.

Sweatshirt only available in Forrest Green: S to XL is \$33, XXL is \$35

BLACK PLASTIC PLANT SAUCERS: We have a huge stock of these saucers which we will be selling off at our plant sale. Samples are at the head table. Stock is at Audrey's. 12, 14 and 18" available for a mere \$1 each. These would retail from \$4 to \$9 each depending on size. Buy our samples or go through Audrey to get a whole bunch.

DOWN-TO-EARTH SHOVELS: We have sold dozens of these great transplanting shovels to our members. Not a big earth mover but excellent for getting into tight places to dig up that plant for the sale. If you missed out on that deal, you can get one if you tell Audrey tonight (money in hand would be nice since Audrey must send off the cheque to the supplier asap) Your shovel will cost \$28. The shovels will be delivered to Audrey at the BC Council Meeting Mar 24th.

—carbon steel blade: shaped narrow to cut into the ground in tight places.

—foot pedals: for added push-strength

—unbreakable fibreglass shaft—no rotting or rusting

—Bright red—hard to lose in the garden.

Check out Audrey's shovel at the head table. Yes, of course it is dirty. It is a shovel for use! (Audrey has had no trouble with the handle but the supplier has reported that some have broken under heavy use. She says to just contact her for a replacement.)

THIS 'N' THAT:

■While many of us were busy renewing our memberships last month, we had 6 new members who handed over their hard cash for the first time: **Victor Allen, Margaret Dragvik, George Nakatsu, Ian Robertson, Elaine Sharpe and Anne Smith.** We hope you enjoy the club. May I suggest that a fantastic way to get to know other members is to volunteer to help with the plant sale—more specifically plant sale preparation.

■**Conway Lum** from GardenWorks @ Mandeville recently added one more trophy to his crowded mantle. The BC Landscape & Nursery Association selected him as "Garden Communicator of the Year". He was also nominated in the "Educator of the Year" category. You may remember that last year he was awarded the City of Burnaby's "Environmental Star" award. Well done, Conway! You deserve it!

■**Queensborough Fair** is on Sun, Sept 23rd—it's closer than you think. This year the theme is "COWS". Please, if you have any ideas of how the club can centre its display on that theme or competition categories can be related to cows, please talk with Audrey.

■**Buff O'Shaughnessy**, our dedicated seed sorter, didn't plan to be absent tonight but with one broken arm and stitches just taken out of the other and innumerable bruises, she thought she would rest at home. The moral of the story is: make sure your ladder is really secure or let someone else paint those high walls in the stairwell.

■We have been working on the June Show schedule and have it almost finalized *but* we need ideas for the **Best in Show Awards.** Last year we had one super award which was very nicely donated by GardenWorks Design Services—an hour & half design consultation worth \$150. We would like to come up with 2 prizes this year (one will be for Floral Art entries, the other for entries not in the Floral Art classes): Do you have any suggestion for fantastic prizes which the club could possibly get for zero dollars? Please speak to Sharon or Audrey.

■Does anyone know the date of, or a contact person for the **New West Senior Secondary's Manure Sale?**

■We have only a few posters of the 2007 Great Plant Picks available tonight. Please take one if you have a good place to post it. If you need another, give Audrey your name and she will work with Claude leDoux to make sure you are not disappointed.

■Congratulations Connie! It is with delight that we announce that Connie McClinton is now **Connie Wicklund.** She got married on January 6th. We hope that you will enjoy many happy years of marital bliss.

■If you plan to attend one of the **New West Parks Hanging Basket Classes**, don't wait! If you have made baskets before, the only class left is the big class in the Arena on April 14th—and 75 of the 200 spaces available have been filled. The morning of the "re-do" registration saw a bee-hive of activity at the arena office. From 8:30 to 10:15, all the smaller classes were filled—the crew of 4 were scrambling to process all the phone, fax and in-person registrations. Lots of room still available for "new" registrants. See bulletin board for class dates and times.