

# THE NEW WESTMINSTER HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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October 2007

## **CLUB MEETING CALENDAR:**

**OCTOBER MEETING:** Tonight, Tues, Oct 9 Our **ANNUAL SILENT AUCTION!!** Make sure you wear your name-tag! As you know, this meeting is for members only—sorry no guests or purchase of memberships tonight. Hand your photo and container contest entries to Audrey at the podium. For the photo contest, she will give you an exhibitor number to put on the back of your photos instead of your name. She'll have the stack of envelopes for your container entries. There is no library or free table tonight. If you are returning books, give them to Audrey who will pass them onto Monica. Likewise, if you have collected seeds for the seed exchange, give to Audrey to pass onto Buff. (How can you tell that Audrey plans to just stand in one place tonight?) For tonight only refreshments will be in the kitchen to delve into whenever you feel so inclined. There will be no tea break tonight. Christmas dinner tickets go on sale tonight (\$15 members, \$20 for first guest, \$25 for each additional guest) and registration for BC Council of Garden Clubs meeting at treasurer's table.

### **The evening's agenda:**

**until 7:45:** arrive, set out your donated items, get your exhibitor number. You can bid on an item as soon as it is in place. Bid in multiples of 5¢ please.

**7:45 to 8:00:** Business

**8:00 to 8:35:** Bidding continues

**8:35:** 5 minutes-to-go warning

**8:40:** Auction closes (*absolutely no more bids—there will be scrutinizers!*) all members must leave the auction area immediately. The highlighting crew will quickly work through the tables and highlight the winner's bid number and bid amount for each item.

**8:45 (approx):** Upon Audrey's OK (when highlighting is complete), members are allowed into the auction area to collect their won items and the accompanying slips.

**8:50 (approx):** Get your bids tallied! Before heading to the cashier, get your bids tallied by a member with a clip-board and then proceed to the cashier. Cheque already written?—great!

**9:00 (approx):** When you pay for your items, *hand all bidding slips to the cashier—this is important!* Every year won items are left behind. If we don't have the slip, we won't know who to phone. Also, we do a random survey of the slips to see what different items went for.

**9:15:** If you can, stay awhile and help with the clean-up. Many thanks.

## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER: by Audrey**

Well, it looks like tonight will be a good Silent Auction. Many thanks to all of you who donated items. To me, donating stuff is the plus-side of the auction. I like it because it gets me looking around the house and analyzing things. Do we really want that anymore? If I donate that then I'll have room for... I really didn't want that to start, but now I think it is OK to give it away. Wow! Look at all the space! Also thing by doing the pre-processing at our house: when everything is shipped out, the place looks absolutely huge! It's temporary, but it's a thrill.

Have fun tonight! Find your treasure!

## **CLUB MEETING CALENDAR, cont.:**

**NOVEMBER MEETING:** Tues, Nov 13th, 7:45pm: Speaker: JENNIFER RYAN, of GardenWorks and instructor at several colleges, on "FLOWERING SHRUBS". Preceding Jennifer's presentation we will be holding the club's **AGM** in which we will either elect or acclaim the 2008 executive, vote on motions for the 2008 speaker's budget and the general meeting start time and announce the recipients of nwhs monetary donations for 2007. See article on the last page. Also at the November meeting, the container contest entries will be posted. All in attendance get to vote on the one they like the best. The winner will be announced in December.

**DECEMBER MEETING:** Tues, Dec 11th. This is not a normal meeting. The evening is reserved for our SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS. As in past years, we will have our buffet dinner prepared by A & F Caterers ([www.afcateringltd.com](http://www.afcateringltd.com), 604-594-3384). In our "start of 2007 survey", we asked your opinion regarding the party. It was reassuring that your responses agreed with the executives' opinion—overall the party is good but the raffle is too long, more socializing time is needed, and entertainment would be nice but there is just not room. So, at least for this year, we are generally keeping with our format but reducing the number of raffle prizes to 80 (as opposed to 120 or more of last year)—and raise the standard for the prizes. Our selected charity for this year's raffle proceeds donation is the Purpose Society. The evening will again have the trivial Christmas trivia quiz and the presentation of the photo contest winners. Because the dinner and party mesh, to attend the evening you must purchase a dinner ticket. The price has increased this year for members to \$15, first guest \$20 and additional guests \$25. This enabled us to change the menu (you will be pleasantly surprised) and hold our subsidization for the member dinners to about 50%. Dinner tickets are available tonight from Mary or from Audrey after tonight. It is possible that we will still have some available for the November meeting but, being limited to 120, we may be sold out. If you purchase a ticket and then find you have a date clash, you can return your ticket for re-imburement up to Sat, Dec 1st. Dec 1st is the deadline for ticket sales. We will be compiling a waiting list for those wanting tickets.

## **CLUB OUTINGS:**

### **BC COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS FALL MEETING:**

Sat, Oct 27th. 8:30am to just after 2pm. \$20 admission includes a hot buffet lunch. But the lunch is just a small part of a pleasant day of comradery with members of other garden clubs. Many get there on the dot at 8:30 to get first dibs at the plants for sale. The morning presentation is Sherry Liversidge from Lee Valley Tools with a bunch of the newest gardening items—and even some items that are not in the catalogue. In the afternoon we have photographer Adam Gibbs. You probably recognize his name from the Gardens West Magazine. The day wraps up with the famous “draw”. Always great prizes. We will be sending in our list of attendees tomorrow, so you must register with Mary (i.e. hand over the \$20) tonight. There is a new location: St. Helen’s Catholic Church Gymnasium at 3871 Pandora Street, Burnaby. Mary has maps. If you need or can give a ride make sure Mary puts the appropriate notation by your name on the list.

**CHRISTMAS RAFFLE PRIZE CRAFT SESSIONS:** Unless you are a new member, you probably are aware that we have a 3 week long craft session from Monday Nov 19th to Sunday Dec 9th i.e., the 3 weeks prior to our Christmas Party.

Audrey’s basement once again does its chameleon trick—changing completely to craft central. (At the moment is the Silent Auction warehouse.) During this “crafty time” we will be creating the raffle prizes for the Christmas Party.

The secondary purpose is to offer crafty types (and we know there are a lot of you!) the opportunity to be creative but not have to find space in your own home for what you make—and socialize while you do it. We are aiming for 80 high-quality prizes. If you feel inhibited regarding your capabilities, why not come along a try it out anyway. You may be pleasantly surprized by your own capabilities. Many of the prizes in the past have had a series of people working on them. It is a give and share situation. We have loads of materials—often it takes a few visits to the basement to realize just what there is. You name it, we probably have it: ribbon, baskets, wreath forms, cones, candles, fake greenery (We use fresh materials only the last 4 days so that it is still fresh on party day, Dec 11th.), Christmas bobbles, glue guns, wire, styro forms, oasis and sahara, lights.... When we say the list is endless, it really is! We purchase some of the materials but a lot comes from club members. When you dig out your Christmas decorations and find that you have grown tired of something, instead of tossing it out, drop it off at Audrey’s kitchen door. *The sessions run from 9am to 9pm—no, not straight through. That is the time bracket, everyday, that Audrey is prepared to invite you to the basement IF you tell her that you want to come! Usually people come for 2 to 3 hours at a time—and usually there is no crafting during lunch and dinner. If this looks like something you would like to do, check your calendar now for the dates between Nov 19th & Dec 9th and decide before the Nov meeting when you would like to come ‘n’ craft. At the Nov meeting there will be a calendar (similar to the Plant Sale Yard Work Calendar) for you to put your name, phone number and expected hours. Audrey will confirm by phoning you the night before. You can phone her and sign-up after the Nov meeting. Remember, if there are nobody signed up for certain hours, Audrey might just sneak out and go grocery shopping or some such thing.*

## **QUEENSBOROUGH FALL FAIR:**

The Queensborough Fair is magical. How else can you explain the fact the weather for the Sat set-up and the Sun Fair was fantastic! Probably the only weekend since June that had two good days.

And, once again, the members of NWHS made the club proud. Such creative people to make those displays. It is so nice to have members volunteer to do things and then to watch them enjoy the tasks so much. It seemed there was always a crowd around the club display. We made \$200 profit on the plants we sold—it has been forwarded to the Food Bank.

A special thank you must be extended to Nes, Ellen’s husband, who pulled us out of a tricky situation and lugged all the used plant material to recycling at the end of the fair. Once again we are indebted to you, Nes. Many, many thanks. Next year, we must definitely get trucks or trailers lined up to help remove the materials from the site after all the fun is over.

There are a few photos of the fair on the wall in the foyer. They are Audrey’s meager few. If anybody else took pictures, could they send them electronically to Audrey to enhance the club’s photo record of the event. Thanks.

**Competitions:** Well, we were sure that with all those enticing cow-related categories, we would get huge participation this year—but, no. Entries were down by about 1/4. No doubt the weather was a factor. For example, not one pumpkin was in evidence. They just had not ripened in time. Rather disappointing, but it is worthwhile holding competitions even if it is just for the dozen core exhibitors who really get into the event for the love of a challenge and entering and seeing what others enter.

**NWHS had several winners:**

Collections: 1st, Audrey Barnes  
Rock Painting: 1st, Audrey Barnes  
Needlework: 1st, Diane Escalante; 2nd Erika d’Esterre  
Knitting & Crocheting: 1st & 2nd: Bev Yates  
Drawing on Black Paper: 3rd, Joan Miller  
Cow Photography: 1st, 2nd & 3rd: Audrey Barnes  
Cow Limerick: 3rd, Patti Kemp  
Harvest Pie: 2nd, Ellen Berg  
Butter Cookies: 1st, Debra Halbig  
Milk Chocolate Morsels: 1st & 2nd, Linda Turnbull  
Cow Cake: 1st, Silina Nakatsu  
Cow Pies: 1st, Monica Mowat  
Apple Butter: 1st, Audrey Barnes  
Jelly: 3rd, Ellen Berg  
Jam: 1st, Buff O’Shaughnessy  
Moostard Pickles: 1st, Audrey Barnes; 2nd Buff O’Shaughnessy  
Weirdest Vegetable: 1st, David Tamblin  
Tomatoes: 1st, Debra Halbig; 3rd, Audrey Barnes  
Largest Beefsteak: 2nd, Roy Pegler, 3rd, Audrey Barnes  
Apples: 1st, Ellen Berg  
“Cow Jumped over the Moon”: 1st, Audrey Barnes; 2nd, Debra Halbig; 3rd, Ellen Berg  
“Hungry for Hay”: 1st, Debra Halbig; 2nd, Linda Turnbull & Silina Nakatsu, 3rd, Debra Halbig  
“Milky Way”: 1st, 2nd & 3rd: Debra Halbig  
“Better Hat for Bessie”: 1st, Debra Halbig; 2nd, Audrey

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

October is the start of cleaning up the vege patch. Tomatoes still on the vine will not ripen now, so it will be better to take them off the vines and put them in paper bags to ripen. A good time of the year to save seeds from beans, squash and tomatoes is now. There is a possibility of a light frost this month but it won’t affect parsnips, leeks, squash, carrots, broccoli, Swiss chard, spinach, beets & Brussel sprouts. It will sweeten these crops. Even winter lettuce can handle a light frost.

Hopefully you planted the garlic by now. You get the best results from fall planting at 3 1/2 inches deep.

In our moderate winter areas Fava or, as we know them as, broad beans, can be planted from this month through to late winter because these plants can tolerate temperatures down to just below zero. Most varieties grow 2 to 4 feet tall, making a bushy plant with several stems. The attractive purple-spotted white flowers are the first to attract bees to my garden in spring. Like peas, fava beans grow best when temperatures are 15 to 20°C and soil is moist. In winter I put a cloche over the planted bed until the end of February. Full grown favas have a tendency to flop over, sometimes breaking in windy weather when the stems are heavy with pods. It is advisable to stake the perimeter of the beds with a couple of rows of twine. Favas have very few problems in our temperatures. If you see aphids, simply cut off the tops. I plant seed 1 inch deep and about 6 inches apart. Germination can take up to three weeks. By the way, plant the seed dark eye down. Favas are rich, meaty and succulent with a background taste of bitter-sweet. You should find a spot in your garden for favas because their time for harvest is early—and you might just like them.

**GardenWorks Appreciation Day:** Thurs, Oct 18th.

**UBC APPLE FESTIVAL:** Sat & Sun, Oct 13-14, 11-4, UBC Botanical Garden. Cost \$2 for adults, under 18 free. This is one of the events of fall you won’t want to miss (NWHS is not having an organized group attending). Every year between 25,000 and 30,000 lbs of apples are sold—over 60 varieties of heritage, new and “tried & true” varieties. Also available for sale are many varieties of apples trees grafted onto dwarfing rootstock (go early if you plan to buy trees!). One of the most popular activities at the Festival is apple tasting. For \$3, you can taste up to 60 varieties of apples grown in BC. There will be demonstrations on grafting and cider pressing. Master Gardeners will discuss apple-related diseases and pest management. Enter the Longest Peel contest. For kids there are games & face painting. Refreshments for purchase include apple pie and hot apple cider. Note: All funds generated by the festival support research and educational activities at the Garden. Dogs are not permitted. Parking is not on site: Park at the West Parkade on Lower Mall (\$4 on entry for the day) and take the free trolley to the Garden.

## **ROCKWOOL: A MEDIUM FOR SEED STARTING AND PLANT PROPAGATION:**

by Linda Turnbull (Rockwool is also known as “that stuff Audrey bought from the Sally Ann a few months ago”). She still has a small supply available, \$2/stick.)

### **FACTS TO KNOW ABOUT ROCKWOOL:**

■Rockwool is a mixture of basalt rock and chalk, which is heated and spun into blocks.

■Rockwool has a pH of 7.8 (pH 7 being neutral). If you plan on growing acid loving plants compensate with an appropriate water soluble nutrient.

■When growing with rockwool, water soluble nutrients must always be added to your water.

■Rockwool is suitable for seed starting or cuttings.

### **HOW TO USE ROCKWOOL:**

■Always use gloves when handling rockwool.

■Always pre-soak rockwool in plain water (rain water is best) for 24 hours before use.

■Cut the rockwool block to size for each individual seedling or plant. To cut the wet rockwool use a sharp or serrated knife and cut across the grain. This way you will have a neat cut and no tearing. Do not cut too large but a size just big enough for a small plant to grow and develop a root system.

■Poke a hole in the center of your cut rockwool, just deep and wide enough to receive your seed or cutting.

■Place your smaller blocks of rockwool in a waterproof receptacle, such as a plant saucer.

■Insert seed or cutting into your hole.

■Pre-mix your water-soluble starter fertilizer of choice and fill your saucer an inch or two with this water.

■Allow the water to be absorbed before refilling with more pre-mixed water soluble nutrients. Never allow the blocks to be without water. This is the plant’s only source of food.

■When a strong root system has developed (you will see the roots), either pot-up into a soil based container or transplant outside.

■If you must extend the time your plant is being grown hydroponically, make sure you change your nutrient mix to meet the needs of a growing plant.

### **PERSONAL COMMENTS FROM MY EXPERIENCE:**

■Rockwool is re-usable, but I do not recommend it for the average home grower. The possibility of root damage is not worth it. Some commercial greenhouses do re-use rockwool but not always.

■Rockwool does not breakdown in the soil, but when the plant has finished its life-span, it is easy to shred with the trowel and leave in the ground. For perennial plants, it eventually disperses itself. Rockwool is very good at lightening soil texture thus allowing more oxygen to reach the roots. Shredded rockwool is a great addition to the compost as it helps heat up the pile and is a natural material.

■As for what nutrients/fertilizers to use, I have in the past used RainGrow, Bloom-A-Long (0-12-0), also known as “liquid bone meal”. I have never kept plants hydroponically beyond the re-potting/planting out stage.

## **NWHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Usually this is a pretty short affair. It is handy having the very social Silent Auction the month prior to the AGM—what an ideal time to discuss the upcoming motions—and to seek out potential new executive members.

**ELECTION or ACCLAMATION OF THE 2008 NWHS EXECUTIVE:** Although we have several members of the existing executive interested in staying on, every seat is open for nominations. Interested? Talk with any of the existing executive between now and the Nov meeting to find out just what “being on executive” entails. The continuous influx of new people with new ideas is what makes a club strong. Be aware, too, that you don’t have to belong to the executive to be involved in club activities. We strive to have a club that fosters the participation of all members.

### **The Executive Positions:**

**President** (2 year term): Basically runs the show

**Vice-President** (2 year term): Should work with the president on major club issues; should head up at least one important committee

**Treasurer** (1 year term): Handles all club money and member registration

**Secretary** (1 year term): Keeps the minutes

**Show Chairperson** (1 year term): In charge of all club events in which members exhibit

**Members-at-Large** (1 year term): *up to 5 positions.* A great position if you want to learn how the club works—or if you want to be really involved but do not necessarily want to take over the duties of one of the “named” executive positions.

All executive are expected to head up one committee or area of responsibility. It is hoped that all will be able to attend every general and every executive meeting. It is very easy to lose the continuity of involvement if you let meeting attendance slide.

The first meeting of the new executive will be early January. The club’s fiscal year is Jan 1 to Dec 31.

**SPEAKER BUDGET MOTION:** As we have done for the past several years, at the AGM we will vote on a speaker budget. Our constitution states that any expenditure of over \$250 for one unique expense must be voted on by the general membership. By designating an annual speaker budget, the executive member who arranges the speakers for the general meetings has the ability to book a pricy speaker immediately. It is her/his responsibility to keep within the total budget for the complete year.

**The Motion:** *NWHS allocates \$2000 for the 2008 speaker budget to be used at the discretion of the Speaker Coordinator to pay for the meeting speakers,*

**GENERAL MEETING STARTING TIME MOTION:** We have been discussing the possible change in the starting time of the general meetings for a few months now—should we change the start of our meetings to 7pm? Currently with our meetings starting at 7:45, several members must leave at about 9pm in order to catch transit or to get to bed because of their “get-up-early-for-work” schedules. Currently too, many of our speakers have voiced preference for speaking at 7:30 instead of 8:30. Often they have a long drive home after presenting—and they, too, get up early for work. With the possible switch to 7pm, workers who get home late could very possibly have to miss some of the business section of the meeting. You say, “So what! That’s the boring part anyway”. It is however the section of the meeting in which we hold votes and it is important that every member, who so desires, has the opportunity to vote on a motion. Mind you, the time-line agenda of our meetings is not written in stone. It is possible that we could juggle things about, especially on “vote” evenings. We could have the majority of the business early but hold votes just before the speaker.

**The Motion:** *The start time of the NWHS General Meetings be changed from 7:45pm to 7:00pm.*

**ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FROM THE DONATION BUDGET:** In June, the membership voted on allocating a \$2000 maximum budget for the NWHS Donations Committee to award to worthy projects or initiatives. This year only two projects were nominated by members by the September 30th deadline. They are in the process of being evaluated against the committee’s set criteria. At the executive meeting in two weeks, the Committee’s proposal will be put before the executive for approval. At the AGM we will be announcing the allocations of funds. It is hopeful that the successful nominee(s) will be present in person to accept the club’s donation(s).

## **LOOKING FOR GARDEN HELP:**

■The **Purpose Society** is looking for some volunteer garden help at their facility that offers a residential treatment program for young women of 13 to 18 years who have misused drugs and alcohol. They have an normal city lot to maintain. Since the garden is mature, at this point the work would be mainly pruning and trimming—and perhaps help moving a small maple. They plan to have a small vegetable garden next year and want to set up a composting system. The idea is not to just do the work but to give the girls some guidance and technical advise in gardening. If interested, talk with Audrey. She will be in touch with facility director who is on holiday until near the end of October. The house near Brentwood Mall.

■Do any members have teenage sons (or grandsons) who would like to earn a bit of money helping people with gardening? It seems that every month we get someone asking for such help. If you do, talk with Audrey.