

Newsletter



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February 2010

BC Council of Garden Clubs General Meeting

The BC Council's spring meeting will be on Saturday, March 20, 2010. The speakers will be Daniel Mosquin on *The Potential Effects of Global Warming and Climate Change on Gardening and Horticulture* and Sharon Hanna on *Vegetable Gardening, with Emphasis on Asian Vegetables*. A hot lunch and refreshments are included. The NWHS will provide a \$5 subsidy toward the ticket of any member who attends the meeting. Advanced payment for the balance of the ticket (\$15) is required to reserve your ticket. See Anna Camporese during the break to sign-up. Deadline for payment is February 28. Only exact change or cheque accepted.

Start Planning Your Container Now for the October Container Contest

While this is not a photo contest, your container is judged by how the photo portrays it. Enter the best photographs possible of your container. If you do not have a good camera, ask a friend who does to take some pictures. For this contest, the member entering the contest does not need to be the photographer!

The Rules:

1. The contest is open to all paid up NWHS members as of the October 2010 general meeting.
2. Each member can enter up to three containers or hanging baskets. Each entry must be a distinct entity e.g. not a raised bed.
3. Each container must have been created by the member.
4. Photos of containers accompanied by a list of all the plants used in each container are submitted at the October 2010 general meeting. Up to three photos of each container may be submitted (for example, include both a summer and a winter view). While the container can be started before Oct 1, 2009 (it can be several years old!) the photos must be shot between the October 1, 2009 to the October 12, 2010 meeting time-frame.
5. Photo dimensions allowed: if in normal format, up to 5" x 7"; if panoramic, either width or length must be 5" or less (i.e. it can be 5" x 10" but not 6" x 12").
6. Judging will occur by membership ballot at the November meeting.
7. The winners will be announced at the club's annual award ceremonies in December. The award for most votes will be first place, \$15; second place, \$10; and third place, \$5.

Tonight's Meeting

Tuesday, February 9, 7:30 p.m.

Membership Renewals

Speakers:

Jennifer Lukianchuk on New Westminster pesticide-use bylaw effective March 2010

Conway Lum on *What To Do In Your Garden Now*: an overview on what to do now to get your garden in shape.

Mark Your Calendar

Tuesday, March 9, 7:30 p.m.

General Meeting

Speaker: to be announced.

Saturday, March 20, 8:30 – 2:30

BC Council of Garden Clubs General Meeting

555 Slocan St., Vancouver

Sunday, April 25th, 9:00 – 1:00

Burnaby Rhododendron & Gardens Society Plant Sale

Burnaby Museum parking lot

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PLANT PREPARATION UNDERWAY by Audrey Barnes, Yard-master

Thanks to the “Olympic Curse”, we have actually started with the potting! Unbelievably, many plants are now further in their spring sprouting than they were at the middle of last March. Taking advantage of balmy January days we’ve started potting-up. With the unseasonably warm weather sure to stay at least until the closing ceremonies, now is the perfect time for you to dig up those plants missed last year because they were still hidden. Remember that the earlier your plants are donated, the earlier they can be potted and the healthier they will be at sale time.

Whoa! A bit of an overview for our many new members who have not experienced the thrill of putting on our super plant sale. You are probably aware that our plant sale is the club’s financial life-line. It is important in other ways as well. Working together to pull off such a great sale unifies the club. The sale is not just put on by a small group. All of us are needed to work together to pull it off! Whilst doing this, friendships grow among us. We learn a lot about plants by working with them.

For our sale, to simplify organization and maintain quality control, all plant material must be processed through the yard. For February the primary tasks will be getting as much plant material to the yard as possible, potting those plants and creating their tags.

Donating Plants for the Sale

Preparing for our plant sale starts when you look at your garden and decide what you no longer

want or want to divide and would like to give to the sale. Dig up the clump or seedlings. Write out a description: Botanical name (if you know it), colour, size, sun or shade, what made the plant special to you when you first got it. Remember the details you supply will sell your plant to someone else. Please add your name and phone number in case we have a question about an overlooked detail. This information also allows us to brag to others on your behalf about the great stuff you donated! Our sale is a super way to get rid of unwanted plant material without guilt. If you create huge divots, we can refill them with some of our purchased screened compost. Drop off your well-identified clump to Audrey’s carport. If delivering several clumps at once, please make sure each has its own identification. Several plants dropped off at once can be confusing if all the details are listed on one page with no way to tell them apart.

Volunteering to Pot-up

Now the socializing and learning about plants begins. Crews of volunteers (you!) work in the carport, around the potting table, converting the clumps into the plants we offer at the sales. A group of four around the table works well. It’s an on-going learning experience for each of us. It is best to wear layers since the wind can sometimes be cold. A shift is two hours, Most shifts are usually 10:00 a.m. to noon or 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. There is flexibility in scheduling depending upon when you’re

available. Just put your name, phone number and shift hour on the “want to help pot” calendar at tonight’s meeting. To confirm your attendance, Audrey will call around supper time the night prior to your shift.

Making plant tags

Once the potting is done, Audrey makes a master tag for each type of plant. If printing is your forte, creating plant tags is the job for you. The master tag is copied for the number needed for that plant. That is a lot of tags! It is an on-going job right up to the last minute.

Growing from Seed

If you would like to grow plants from seed for the sale, please talk with Audrey so that there is minimal duplication. If you have a greenhouse and would like to nurture tender plants, that would be fantastic. Greenhouse space always becomes premium real estate in the last months before the sale.

Speaking of growing from seed.... we would like advice on what you think we should grow.

Grew some tomatoes last year you loved? Tell us. Some that you definitely did not love? We want to know that too. What other vegetables would you like? We grow annuals that are normally not available at garden centres. Is there something you have been searching for? The potting calendar has a space for your suggestions. You can also email or phone Audrey. Of course, please contact Audrey ASAP as we may have to search for the seed.

The SKETCH GROUP

-AKA the Garden Gals (pictured, some of the Garden Gals after an inspiring 2-day workshop with Angie Au Hemphill last year)



The sketch group is made up of NWHS members who not only love gardening, but also love to draw and want to combine these two interests with a group of like-minded individuals in a supportive environment.

How to get involved...

Join in any or all of the sketch group activities by either e-mailing your contact information to Merrill Hall (merrillhall@shaw.ca) to get group updates by e-mail or talk to one of our garden gals at the monthly NWHS meetings.

Sketch Group Activities

Saturday Morning Sketching in Queens Park

Starting April 10th (ending in July), we meet every Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Our meeting place is the patio in front of the Arts Council office, Centennial Lodge. Bring what

you need to sketch in the park; a folding chair is a good idea.

Still Life Sketching in the Evening

Evening studio time for still life sketching is a new addition to our group's activities this year. Just bring your pencils, sketch pad and enthusiasm. The Arts Council of New Westminster studio space has been booked for one Wednesday per month, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The dates are as follows:

Feb. 17th

Mar. 24th

Apr. 21st

May 19th... and to continue on.

Work Shops

We are very excited to have confirmed work shops with Angie Au Hemphill and Teresa L Bernard. Both artists are local and have been accredited with the SFCA designation, which means they are signature members of the

Federation of Canadian Artists. They are also wonderful teachers! You can visit their e-galleries at: <http://www.angelaauhempill.ca/> <http://www.teressalbernard.ca/>

Angie Au Hemphill

Acrylic painting

July 5 and 6,

9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Please bring a bag lunch for the half hour lunch break each day.

Teresa L Bernard

Water Colour painting

October 20 and 27

6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

The cost of each class will be determined by participants cost sharing. Payment is due one month prior to class time, payable to NWHS.

Both classes will have a supply list that will be your responsibility to purchase.

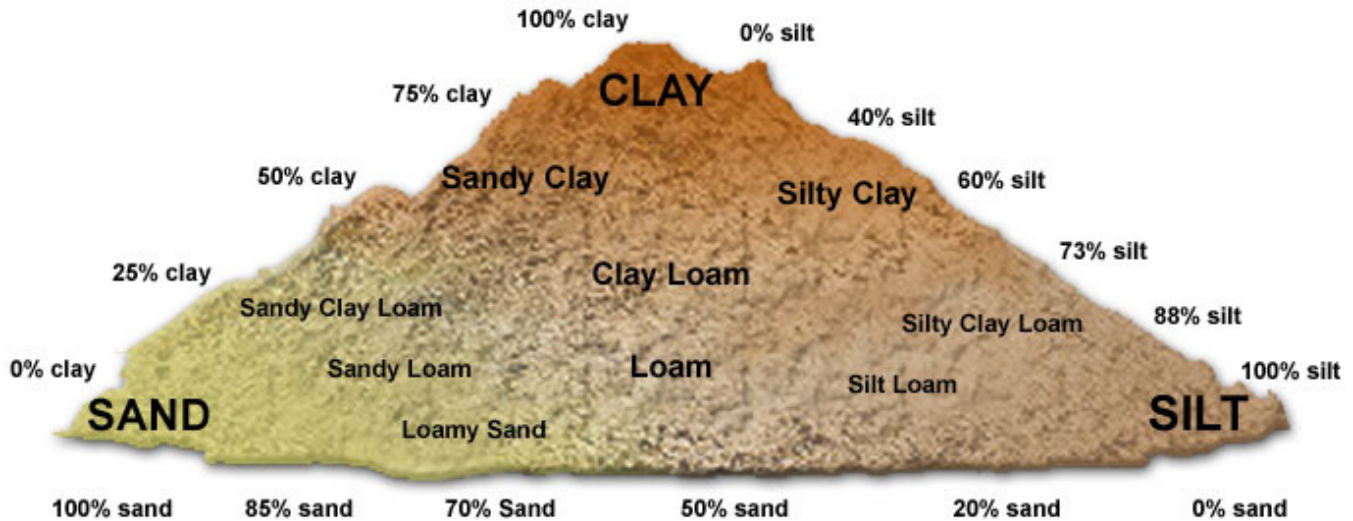
From the Treasurer:

At the time of writing the position of treasurer is still vacant.

A huge thank you to Carla Sharp for her excellent work as treasurer in 2009.

In Your Vege Patch — *Analyzing Your Soil*

By Roy Pegler



Happy New Year to you all and I hope it will be a successful season. So far this winter has not been so bad. It would still be a good idea to apply a dressing of lime. If the soil is workable, sow the green peas and broad beans and seed the Spanish onions. Starting lettuce, broccoli, chard and spinach inside will give you a good start and they will be ready to transplant in March when the weather will be a bit warmer.

The first message I would like to give is quite simple: feed your soil the right ingredients and it will feed you. By taking the time to analyze your soil, you will know how best to cultivate it and what to add to improve it. Take a handful of soil, add a little water and roll it into a ball. You should feel certain characteristics. These will indicate the size of particles that make up your soil. Most problems occur with the extremes

in soil particle size.

Sandy soil contains big particles which are gritty and do not stain the fingers. Silt, which is made of finer particles than sand, feels silky smooth and cracks when rolled into thin sausage. The finest particles of all are found in clay soil, which is sticky when moist and stains your fingers. Loam soil contains sand, silt and clay in roughly equal quantities.

While the large particles in light sandy soil warm quickly making them good for early crops, water nutrients soon drain away and the soil dries out in the summer. Sandy soil is best dug in the spring, so nutrients aren't washed away by winter rain. At the other extreme, clay has tiny particles packed closely together which causes slow drainage and limits the air in the soil. Heavy soils are best dug from autumn to December. Don't break up the lumps – let the weather do the

work. Frost thawing and freezing helps to break up the soil. This process makes it easier to create a seedbed when sowing and planting in spring.

The ideal soil for vegetables has a neutral PH around 6.5 to 7. You can make acid soil more alkaline by adding lime in the fall, but not at the same time as fresh manure.

Whatever your soil type, don't walk on it when you are digging beds. Choose a day to dig when the soil is moist, not dry or waterlogged. If conditions aren't perfect, lay a board (an old 1" x 6" piece of lumber) on the ground beside the bed you're working. Standing on the board while working spreads your weight and reduces the risk of soil compaction.

Next month we will discuss how to dig your soil and what to add to your soil.