

Newsletter



NWHS 2011 Shows

The club is all about sharing gardening knowledge and experiences. Consider participating and maybe even winning prizes in following shows and contests this year:

Bring-to-Share: This event takes place during the April and September club meetings. See page 2 for details.

June Show: Members enter their flowers, produce and floral arrangements in this horticultural competition. A qualified horticultural judge evaluates the entries. Rules, guidelines and Show Schedule listing the entry categories will be available as a handout at the April and May meetings.

Club Contests: Photo, Container and Garden Design Photography. All entries are submitted at the October meeting. See NWHS Contest 2011 handout (available at the April and May meetings) for rules and categories. It is never too early to start snapping pictures of your garden or planning the winning container. This year's colour theme is white.

Plant a Row Grow a Row – March 17th

Plant a Row Grow a Row will be holding its annual spring event on Thursday, March 17th from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at St Thomas More Collegiate, 7450 12th Ave in Burnaby. As usual, there will be well-known speakers, door prizes, give-aways, and refreshments. Claude LeDoux, everyone's favourite honorary NWHS member and the coordinator of our local PAR GAR group, will introduce an impressive line-up of speakers including Brian Minter, Conway Lum, Ingrid Hoff from UBC and Diane Cairns from Fraserside Community Services. In addition, plant pathologist Andrea Buonassisi will speak on plant diseases and June Hewko from Lee Valley will talk about new products for gardeners. You can pick up seeds from West Coast seeds as well as copies of *GardenWise* magazine.

In case you aren't familiar with Plant a Row Grow a Row, it is part of a national organization that encourages gardeners to plant an extra row or two of vegetables or harvest some surplus fruit. Locally, produce is collected at St Thomas More Collegiate on Sunday mornings and delivered to the local Food Bank so that families in need in our area can benefit from fresh fruit and vegetables. It's a simple and entirely non-political concept. With your help it can work.

Remember to wear green to the event - after all, it's being held on St Patrick's Day! While there is no admission fee, please bring a donation of non-perishable food for the Food Bank. See you there.

—Joan Miller

Tonight's Meeting

Tuesday, March 8, 7:30 p.m.

Membership Renewals

Speaker: Ewan McKenzie on
Grasses

Mark Your Calendar

Sunday March 13, 9:00 – 3:30

Master Gardener Update,
non-MGs welcome

M.J. Fox Theatre, Burnaby

Fee : \$50.00, \$60.00 at door

[www.bcmastergardeners.org/
events.html](http://www.bcmastergardeners.org/events.html)

Saturday, March 26, 8:30 – 2:30

BC Council of Garden Clubs

AGM

555 Slocan St., Vancouver

Tuesday, April 12, 7:30 p.m.

General Meeting

Bring-to-Share

Speaker: Gary Lewis on **Summer
Doldrums**

Contacts

Audrey Barnes

audrey@newwesthortsociety.org

Anna Camporese

anna@newwesthortsociety.org

Sharon Seki

sharon@newwesthortsociety.org

Bring-to-Share in April

What is Bring-to-Share?

It is a chance for all of us to share our gardens and ourselves with fellow NWHS members. Members can bring in exhibits for others to look at or they can arrange to give a short (5 minute) demonstration of some gardening tips. (Please contact Silina Nakatsu in advance if you decide to share in this latter category.) Non-exhibiting members can also share by writing down their comments/answers on the exhibitor's entry slip. There is no judging of the exhibits. However, there will be a participation draw at the end of the evening and three prizes of \$10 each will be awarded.

What to Share

Members can bring in samples of garden glories, garden pests, information and questions on garden issues. The exhibits can be presented in physical form or by photos and diagrams. The categories are:
garden glory: beautiful or unusual plants, blooms or foliage.
insects: info or questions about a certain insect
great tips: your own or from books or magazines
garden related photos
plant identification
weeds and disease: info or questions
garden design: info or questions
demonstrations.

How to Share

Fill out an exhibitor slip for each exhibit. Enter your name at the top of the slip and state the reason for the exhibit, e.g. why you think it is interesting or the information you are soliciting. Exhibiting slips will be available at the March meeting if you want to fill these out ahead of time at home.

Put your exhibit(s) with filled-in exhibitor slip(s) on the tables under the appropriate category.

Register for the draw with either the show chairperson or one of her volunteers. Each exhibitor is entered in the draw only once regardless of the number of exhibits entered.

Leave feedback for the exhibitors before the meeting and during tea break. Sharing is mutual. Let the exhibitors know you appreciate their efforts by leaving a comment or share your knowledge by answering questions posed on the exhibiting slip that is accompanying the exhibit. If you want to speak with the exhibitor but don't know the person, ask one of the executives and they will get you both in touch.

Speaker Etiquette

Why do we all come to the club meeting? To hear the speaker. So everyone can enjoy the speaker please adhere to the following:

- No talking to your neighbour while the speaker is talking
- Exit through the kitchen, if you must leave during the speaker's presentation.
- Be mindful that the treasurer's table and refreshment area are closed during the presentation

Thank you for following these simple guidelines.

Reminder
NWHS Plant Sale
Sunday, May 15th
Tell your friends

BC Council of Garden Clubs General Meeting **Tonight's the Deadline to Sign-up**

The BC Council's spring meeting is on Saturday, March 26, 2011. The morning speaker will be Ted Cathcart on The YWCA Community Garden. The afternoon speaker will be Heather Johnstone on The Edible Garden Project. The meeting also includes plant sales, a great draw and a hot, buffet lunch.

The NWHS will provide a subsidy toward the ticket of any member who attends the meeting. Advanced payment for the balance of the ticket (\$19) is required to reserve your ticket. Only exact change or cheque accepted. See the treasurer during the break to sign-up and pay.

Tour and Picnic—July 16th

It's only six months away, but we're thinking about the club tour and picnic. Ellen Berg has kindly agreed to host the picnic again, BUT would be very happy to have another member host the picnic. We're also looking for members' gardens to tour. Think about sharing your garden with all of us this July.



Cannas go Viral

In the fall three or four years ago, other New Westminster city greenhouse staff and gardeners and myself noticed that some of the cannas being brought back to the city's greenhouse were streaked and distorted. Concerned that the cannas had some type of virus, we discarded the plants. Since then, we have thrown out at least 80% of our cannas. Even plants that looked normal last fall are showing symptoms on their emerging leaves this spring.

Then last year I noticed a canna plant a club member had brought to the June meeting. The plant was a classic example of a canna infected with a virus—twisted and with pale streaks parallel to the veins. I assumed it had been brought as a demonstration of an infected canna, but I was told that the plant was a gift from one club member to another. I decided to find out more about canna viruses.

I learned that canna growers believe that most, if not all, canna stocks around the world have been infected with viruses. This includes varieties purchased at nurseries, plant sales and garden centres or traded between friends. Some heritage varieties have

probably been lost forever.

There are actually several viruses that can infect cannas; some are unique to cannas, and some are carried by other common plants. The viruses include bean yellow virus (carried by beans, peas, freesia, gladiolus, nicotiana and petunia), canna yellow streak virus, cucumber mosaic virus, and canna yellow mottle badna virus.

The viruses are probably spread by aphids and by gardening tools such as knives and secateurs. They do not seem to be carried in the soil, but they will spread to plants growing close together in a field. Some growers have lost entire fields of cannas.

A canna infected with one or more of these viruses can look normal at first. The initial sign of an infection is often green speckling on the leaves. Later, the plant develops pale streaks running parallel to the veins. Then the leaves start to twist and distort, and the tissue in the streaked areas begins to die. The symptoms are more easily noticed in non-variegated plants; the streaks appearing on variegated plants can be mistaken for unusual patterns of variegation.

Infected cannas should be thrown in the garbage, not

placed in the compost pile. If you suspect your cannas are infected, be sure to clean your tools with rubbing alcohol. Purchase only plants grown from tissue culture. Assume that any plants you buy as tubers are infected. At the greenhouse, we have ordered cannas from tissue culture. In the future we will probably be treating them as annuals and discarding them at the end of the growing season.

Tissue culture, also called micropropagation, is a technique of multiplying plants. To get clean canna tissues, the plants are subjected to high temperatures which encourage very rapid growth and stretching of the growing point. In essence, the micropropagator is trying to get the tissue to grow so fast that it “outruns” the virus. The stretched shoot is then cultured and tested (virus indexed) for the virus. If the tissue is clean, it can be used to grow new plants. Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania is one among many groups developing cannas from tissue culture. In the future, we may not be able to purchase or grow cannas the way we used to. However, there is reason to hope that they will not all be lost to canna viruses.

—Joan Miller

Plant Sale Update: *Plants and People Needed*

In retrospect, March 1st was an optimistic starting date for yard work. The weather hasn't been very helpful. At the time of writing we have 13 plants potted—that is plants, not flats. Often at this time of year, we have over 30 flats. It is now full-speed ahead with the potting. Keep those fingers crossed that the weather now becomes the club's best friend.

NWHS plant sale novices may wonder why the emphasis on working on the plants in the yard. Over the years as our sale grew in size, a sequence of steps evolved to facilitate a successful sale day. The primary step is that all plant material must go through the yard for processing before going to the sale site. Plants are potted, nurtured, groomed and priced in the yard. Plants being grown in members' greenhouses also are detoured through the yard. To maintain our high standard of sale plants, inferior plants are culled or held over for a year. Everything is shipped out the evening prior to the sale.

Please sign-up to help in the yard. It is amazing how much can be potted in a two hour shift when there are three to four people helping. Write your full name, phone number and your desired shift hours on your selected date(s) on the calendar. Potting is only done during daylight hours. Audrey will phone you at dinner time the evening prior to your shift to confirm. Don't know your schedule? Feel free to call or email Audrey to add your name to the calendar.

Making up plant tags is a task that can be done either at the yard or at home. It is a great



way to assist if you can't help in the yard. Using a master tag, you hand-copy the plant information onto blank tags. Audrey provides you with the master tags (which should be available soon), the correct number of blanks for each plant and a Sharpie pen. If you

would like to help with plant tags, please tell Audrey.

Although the deadline for dropping off plant material is April 25th, Easter Monday, please drop off your well identified offerings as soon as possible. Thanks.