



Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 1

January 2007

2007

Membership Fees

are now due. This will be the last Newsletter for those who are not renewing their membership. Dues can be paid at Jan. Meeting or contact Dorte Froslev at 604-898-3333
Thank you



NEXT MEETING

Monday Jan. 15th
Squamish Library
7:00 p.m.

SPEAKER

Andrew Appleton
Invasive Species

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Letter From The Editor

Down the Garden Path

"Let there be peace on earth/ and let it begin with me..."

As the traditional "twelfth night" brings the holiday season to a close I suppose there is no more apt resolution for the New Year than the sentiment from the song above. In these turbulent times, be it wars or violent weather, gardeners seem especially equipped with skills that can bring tranquility, serenity and a sense of continuity and stability to their surroundings. Family and visitors alike can renew their spirits and energy in the calmness of the garden. One of the greatest compliments we can receive is to have someone comment on the inner stillness and calm they experience as the stroll through the beds. So this year I resolve to try to cultivate even more of the zen-like qualities in my own yard in 2007.

This may prove to be a little difficult. The storms that ripped through the mature stands of trees in Stanley Park also damaged my garden. I imagine many of you experienced similar problems. Every one of the thirteen magnolias had large limbs ripped off. Three of the dogwoods had lower branches stripped and even several Japanese maples were severely wind-pruned. The greatest damage occurred to a huge hazelnut tree. The catkin laden limbs gathered in the heavy snow and it uprooted crashing into many shrubs on its way down. What a tangled mess! Several other trees lost big branches and some still have broken, twisted limbs hanging down that will have to be professionally amputated when the winter weather stabilizes. The photos I promised of ways to make your garden a winter wonderland just won't come from my yard this year. Even when my garden seems so peaceful, underlining the surface there is tension and conflict. An aged chicken, that I promised to care for with my own hen, was attacked and killed by a raccoon. Herons are a continually menace for my fish who lack vegetative cover during winter and the hawks and eagles circle the garden searching for small birds and rodents. Danger and death lurk everywhere. Peace is only a thin veneer, especially in the winter garden. But peace is contagious and even more worth seeking out when the conditions are the most miserable...the glistening drops of rain beading along the cotoneaster bush, the haunting scent of the Winter-sweet, the wild joy of the Valley's resident swans as they follow the path of the Squamish River as the eagles soar above.

Yes, there are also signs of spring already. The stinking hellebores are beginning to don their nodding lime-green caps: the magnolias' pussy-willow like buds are swelling and the witch hazel's strangely twisted flowers are opening. The willow trees, with their glowing yellow stems, are simulating rays of golden sunshine even in the rain. Under the evergreens, the tips of snowdrops reach up to the light. Paper whites, in a clear vase, have replaced my winter table center. How great to see the whole plant from roots to sweetly scented flowers. Of course by forcing them it will probably mean it will take a couple of years in the garden to get them back to blooming strength

Letter From The Editor Cont'd

but they are such a delight now in the dark of winter. My amaryllis will hopefully bloom for Valentine's Day. I had them in the carport before Christmas where it was too cold for proper growth. They like warmer temperatures to set flowers. They didn't freeze but they are somewhat retarded in development. The orchids are also non-flowering this year. I fertilized them as per my usual schedule but I had them outside during most of the autumn so they too may just be late bloomers this season.

I have done very little with the plants that I over-winter in the sunroom. During the first cold weather I let my chicken reside there too. Well you know that chickens love to scratch...I have dirt and poop all over the floor! I haven't managed to clean it all up. Luckily I had spread newspapers on the floor so it will only be a matter of dumping it all in the compost pile. Now is the time when I usually prune back the geraniums and fuchsias and take cuttings. A little fertilizer, about half the recommended strength, is added to the weekly watering of the orchid cacti and the other flowering tropicals now too. I'll spray them all with a mild insecticidal soap when I cut them all back and I'll top up the pots with a little compost or fortified soil from the garden center.

Outside plants should get a lime and sulphur treatment on a sunny, calm day before they leaves and flowers break from dormancy. This year I think it will be impossible to find such conditions. (Besides I find it a smelly chore and I'm sure the birds avoid the garden for days after I spray). Already I see the buds on the peach and nectarine trees are swelling and many of the flowering shrubs already have their sap running. The cold snap before Christmas was their 'winter' and the warmer weather lately has been their signal that spring is here. Plants can't read calendars so sometimes they get caught with their sap up. I have seen years when the orchards literally rained sap from branches. It freezes in the limbs, bursting the bark then drips as the weather warms again. It is very hard on plants. Often you can see the scars on older trees. It actually kills weak plants and smaller branches.

Another early spring chore will be to help replenish the nutrients that our monsoon rains have washed away. Rain forests have some of the shallowest and phosphate depleted soils on earth. Without constantly building it up plants will fail to reach their potential. A good top dressing of well-rotted manure, super phosphate fertilizer, a sprinkling of Epson salts and a dash of lime will remedy most deficiencies. Some plants need a little more of one item or another. The lime helps to neutralize the naturally acid soil we have here but plants such as blueberries, most broad-leaved evergreens and even some bulbs prefer this type of soil so lime cautiously. The salts help to release minerals and food from the dirt but in small quantities are harmless to plant growth itself. Even house plants benefit from its use. Try dusting a little cinnamon on the soil surface of potted plants too. It helps to prevent molds. It has the added bonus of making your house smell nice!

There are many ideas for garden activities for winter on our web site at <http://www.members.shaw.ca/sqgardeners/>. Dave Colwell has set up an archival section that will keep back copies of the newsletter as well as pictures of Club activities and members' gardens. Hints and other items of interest are available too. All members can add to these pages just by contacting Dave.

During these last two months of extreme weather I have had a hummingbird coming to my feeder. Sometimes it would miss a day or two and I would think that he had taken off for warmer climes. However this year he would have had to buck pretty heavy headwinds in order to reach California. With a bear still roaming around the neighbourhood I expected to see him at the feeder instead of the tiny bird. But he returns early most mornings for a quick fuel injection then off he goes. Dot Diotte, however, has one upped me on this one. She has told me of feeding a parrot that appeared in her North Shore garden one winter years ago. She and a neighbour cared for it over the period of two years by stringing fruit to tree branches. It seems it had escaped probably from an unlicensed importer of exotic birds. Ask her for the details.



I have just realized that it has taken me 50 years to reach back to the 1950's era, the hippy generation, and to again embrace "peace". Talk about recycling!



Notes From Dec. Executive Meeting

Present: Eleanor Bowcock, Beth Fitzpatrick, Donna Fourchalk, Judy Crowston, Ellen Grant, Marie Lamontagne, Phyllis Carte, Dorte Froslev, Carol Robson, Nairn Stewart

(I am not sure if this is the accurate list so if anyone can correct it for me I would appreciate it)

Appreciation was expressed for all the work the previous executive did and information and records were given to new executive/

Executive for 2007

President: Carol Robson
 Vice President: Carla Halvorson-Burke
 Secretary: Pauline Lawrence
 Treasurer/Membership: Dorte Froslev
 Door: Glenda Begley
 Newsletter: Ellen Grant
 Marina McMaster
 Phyllis Carter (to learn)
 Programme: Nairn Stewart
 Sandra Kilby
 Colleen Polowich,
 Carla Halvorson-Burke



Refreshment Organization: Judy Crowston

Executive Recommendation for Date for Squamish Garden Tour 2007: Sunday, June 24, 2007

Tour to start at 9 a.m. to accommodate upper Squamish travel

2007 meeting dates: Carol to confirm with Library

January 15, 2007	Squamish Public Library
February 19, 2007	Squamish Public Library
March 19, 2007	Squamish Public Library
April 16, 2007	Plant exchange, Heritage Railway?
May TBA	Major speaker
June 18, 2007	Squamish Public Library
July 16, 2007	Short meeting & social at Brackendale Art Gallery
September 17, 2007	Squamish Public Library
October 15, 2007	Plant exchange, Heritage Railway?
November 19, 2007	Squamish Public Library/election of new executive
early December	Wreath decorating & social at Brackendale Art Gallery

Weeding at the Library: Reminder to the club that the free use of the library is really an exchange. We do weeding before meeting (and in between) in exchange for meeting space.

Questionnaire should be given out at January meeting to determine club desires

Archives and Squamish Gardeners albums: Beth wondered what should be done with the Albums of past events. We need to find someone to continue doing the scrap-booking but Dorte will use a computer program if people will send her pictures to bring them up to date.

Should we have name tags for meeting so people will get to know each other?

Executive recommendation: That we have family memberships for \$25.00 per family per year.

January meeting Speaker: Andrew Appleton/ Invasive Species?

Judy Crowston and Ellie Grant will prepare refreshments for January meeting and Judy will send around a list for people to sign up for future meetings.

November Minutes

Regular Meeting: November 20th, 7pm Squamish Library Board Room

Treasurer's Report:

Balance October 16 th , 2006		\$ 2,337.42
Revenue:	Door	\$ 36.00
	Membership	<u>37.50</u>
		<u>\$ 73.50</u>
		\$ 2410.92
Expenses:	Donation – H.S.P.A.	\$ 50.00
	BC Council of Garden Clubs (Affiliation & Insurance)	69.00
	Postal Box Rental	<u>90.10</u>
		\$ 209.10
Bank Balance November 20th 2006		\$2,201.82

Judy Crowston Treasurer

Minutes

Chairperson: Eleanor informed us that Paul Buikema of Progress Landscaping would provide this month's program. Paul is a certified ISA Arborist and Horticulturist Technician. Paul's talk was about garden tools, their proper use, maintenance and quality.

Those present were reminded that our Christmas Social would be held at the Brakendale Art Gallery on the 4th of December at 7pm. Please bring goodies. Beverages will be available.

Eleanor gave the following list of people willing to be on the executive for the following year:

Web-master:	Dave Colwell
President:	Carol Robinson
Vice-president:	Carla Halverson
Secretary:	Pauline Lawrence
Treasurer:	Dorte Froslev
Door:	Glenda Begley
News Letter:	Ellen Grant
	Marina McMaster
	Phyliss Carter
Program:	Nair Stewart
	Sandra Kilby
	Colleen Polowich
	Carla Halverson-Burke
Refreshment Organizer:	Judy Crowston

Eleanor closed the meeting by saying that Nairn was in contact with a group called "Evergreen" who are prepared to come and give us a talk about invasive species. They are prepared to tailor their talk to our own problems with invasive species. It was suggested that the talk include these particular plant problems.

Dought Weed, Bishop's Weed, Ground Elder and English Ivy.

Reminder: Dues are now payable.

**The best way to garden is to put on a wide-brimmed straw hat
and some old clothes. And with a hoe in one hand and a cold
drink in the other, tell somebody else where to dig.**