



# Newsletter

Volume 11, Issue 1

Website Address: <http://www.squamishgardeners.com>

January 2008

## **NEXT MEETING**

Monday January 21st

7:00 pm

Squamish Library

**SPEAKER**

*Ray Zoporozan*

*Bonsai*



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## **Letter From The Editor**

### **Down the Garden Path**

*"I will honour Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year."* so said Scrooge in Charles Dickens' Christmas Carol.

Happy New Year fellow gardeners! The above quote will be my resolution this year. With all the quirky weather we now experience I hate to make resolutions concerning the garden since one really can't mess with Mother Nature. We can only do our best and go with the flow in our horticultural endeavours. It actually has been a treat to have a white landscape over the holidays. There was enough snow to create a Christmas card atmosphere but not so severe as to disrupt people anxious to visit family and friends. We were luckier than those who live where the south winds lash the coasts.

My brother and family live on the White Rock cliffs. His daughter, from New Zealand, has brought her family here to enjoy a "real Christmas". What adventures they have had! They have skied, skated and snowboarded the local hills and still haven't managed to drive up to Whistler. I think that trip is scheduled to be the final destination. For them it has been a perfect holiday season.

We can expect this month to be unpredictable. That is why we have all those seed catalogues to peruse. They are great for when the weather outside is frightful. All the major companies also have their inventory listed on their websites and many of the magazines publish a list of available catalogues. I have noticed that local stores are now displaying some of the more commonly selected seeds for those of you who want to get a head start on their gardening. These are usually selected for conditions in our area. Most of us want to try at least one or two new items so you may have to search a little further a field to find the newer additions or the heritage seeds. A new website data base for provincially grown seeds is [www.bcseeds.org](http://www.bcseeds.org). Organic seeds can be found at [www.sunshinefarm.net](http://www.sunshinefarm.net) and one of my favourite sites for plants is [www.theplantfarm.ca](http://www.theplantfarm.ca) Try these or just google the Vancouver Sun or any of your favourite major nurseries.

I actually didn't receive any gardening items from Santa and his helpers this year, not even a book or a magazine subscription! I did, however, give such gifts. This year I potted up hyacinths in little pots I found at the Garden Center. The rocks that I placed on the bottom allowed enough water so that I was able to stick in a couple of witch hazel twigs. I covered the base of the bulbs with soil and added some bright green moss from the garden and topped the whole thing off with a little ribbon. I made several of these for friends who don't have gardens or live in areas where winter lasts far longer than it does here. Everyone seemed delighted with the twigs that bloomed almost immediately. They will also help to hold up the hyacinths that will flower later this month. Giving gifts of flowers has been part of Christmas since my childhood. I remember an aunt who filled many pots with bulbs every fall and these wonderful hints of spring surrounded her tree until they were dispatched to brighten the homes of family and friends.

## Letter From The Editor Cont'd

In the same vein, my granddaughters helped me yesterday replace a picture that hangs on the wall in our kitchen-family room. Every six weeks or so we collaborate on an art craft to fill the space with some seasonal display. We have done irises, sunflowers, falling leaves and stark branches, poinsettias and now we have some huge white tulips adorning the wall. It gives me a chance to talk about plants, their parts and care, while we share an hour of cutting, pasting and creating. And I get a seasonal décor that is unique and meaningful. It gives us a gardening fix regardless of the weather. When white tulips appear in the stores I know that spring is actually not just a dream. Soon the primroses will brighten their entrances and fill shopping carts.



Another way to fill that craving for spring is to pull out some floral scented soap, spray, or fill your house with real flowers from the florists. I love Casa Blanca lilies. I bought some for the holiday season and the last ones are now beginning to fade. I remember how my grandmother used to wear a perfume made from Devon violets every year in January and February before the real items appeared in the bed under her bedroom window. It was the only time of the year she did this. In my memory it still lingers. I know that many people are allergic to heavy perfumes so it is wise to avoid too strong a scent but if you want to dream of summer try a few drops on a hanky in bedroom drawers as they used to do in "grandma time". It will help relieve those mid winter blues.

Having a sunroom is another way of getting your springtime "fix". It can be an actual garden room or a sunny window or even a room in your house that captures the warmth of the sun's rays during these days when it seems that the earth's orb has lost its way and has forgotten to bring longer days back again. I have noticed that some of the plants that I have stored in my room have started to put on new growth and I will soon start to fertilize some of the tropical species. I give them a couple of months of rest where I don't feed them and I barely give them water. By the end of January though, I start to prompt more growth and fertilize to set flower buds for 3 or 4 months later. I may also repot or renew the top quarter of the soil. I will also take some cutting as I reshape some of my potted items. Judy Crowston has a lovely sunroom facing east. It seems to be ideal for growing jade plants. I have included a picture of her plant flowering in the room. It is huge! I have had little success with these plants but I think I have always over-watered them. I am going to try again now that my sunroom has a more permanent structure where I can better regulate the temperature.

All of the above seems to focus on surviving winter indoors, but please remember to keep your drainage ditches and down pipes unplugged. Here in the valley bottom we are always aware of rain and melting snow causing drainage problems and we often envy those of you on the hillsides that don't have the same problems. This holiday season my niece, who lives on Glacier Way in the Highlands, had a drainage disaster! They have lived in the area for many years and had a well established hedge on the uphill side of their property. Three adjoining lots were filled and new homes constructed recently. The rains of this fall rushed down through these new yards, wiping out channels in the loose soil and taking out their mature hedge. It left them with a mud slide through their yard and the task of having to replace a big chunk of real-estate. So we all must be aware of the drainage not only on our own property but also on our neighbours' yards and public spaces. Good gardening starts with bare bones control of the environment.

More plants are lost by incorrect water supply than almost anything else. Too much water in winter can be as bad as too little in the summer.



How many of you noticed that Chris Wood, the head gardener of Vandusen Gardens who spoke was a speaker at our club last fall, has left our province to take up a position in the U.S. in California. He did seem very negative about his experiences here in B.C. especially as concerned the civic strike last summer in Vancouver that interfered with his vision of the gardens. That on top of the disastrous wind storms last winter seems to have done him in! Perhaps he would have been frustrated with this winter too. Patience did not seem to be his long suite. I hope they are able to hire a person with a commitment to this area. That garden has had quite a turnover of head gardeners. It needs a more consistent planner. Just as my own garden needs more thought and planning this year. I guess that might be a resolution to consider too.

## From The President

It's snowy rain outside and I have caught the garden dreaming more than usual this year. I am intrigued by the sincerity of my friend Jen Lam's work on the Hundred Mile Diet in Nanaimo. While I know I will not be able to "green" my diet the way she has, I can start putting a lot more effort into buying local and growing more vegetables in my own garden. Both my husband and son want to become involved, so it will be interesting to see how desire becomes knowledge and then actually takes "root" in reality in my garden.



An email from Chris Wells about BC grown seeds and Farm Folk, City Folk based in Vancouver adds yet another dimension to the possibilities. Carla Halvorson -Burke and I also enjoyed dreaming about the idea of finding a way to match up people with garden space and people who want to garden. So many ideas, we will have begin to prioritize and zero in on the most doable.

Enjoy your garden planning and email me your ideas and thoughts. I can take them and share them with other members on our website or a club mailing. Dreaming of possibilities is a wonderful way to deal with winter doldrums.

## Reminder

Memberships are now due. We like to publish our new membership list in February so please renew your card now. The membership card entitles you to reductions at both local nurseries and also our annual garden tour. It also includes guest speakers and great special events such as outings to gardens and socials such as the Christmas wreath decorating, the season wrap up in July and two plant exchanges.

## MEMBERSHIP DUES

FOR THOSE MEMBERS WHO HAVE NOT RE-NEWED THEIR 2008 MEMBERSHIPS THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER. IF YOU PLAN TO RE-NEW PLEASE DO SO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

If you aren't attending January's meeting please send dues to

Squamish Gardeners  
PO Box 2655  
Squamish BC  
V0N 3G0

## Another Great Web-site

The U.B.C. Botanical garden that many members visited two years ago has a very informative web site at: [ubcbotanicalgarden.org](http://ubcbotanicalgarden.org) just in case you didn't think to google it!



## January Speaker

As mentioned at the November meeting our speaker will be Ray Zoporozan. His passion, hobby and commercial adventure, in that order, is bonsai. The molding of nature into miniature tableaus is an art perfected by the Japanese and embraced by many western gardeners. Ray will bring samples of his skill and may have some for sale.



Picture from Judy Crowston

# November Minutes

Meeting came to order at 7pm with Carla Halvorson Burke in the chair, Ellen Grant took the minutes. Judy Crowston moved that the minutes of the last meeting be approved seconded by Colleen Polowich In the mail was an advertisement for Roy Johnson's book, "Garden Sets" for \$19.95. Moire Biggin Pound has read the book and offered to take orders. We may order the book for the library.

The treasurer's report submitted by Dorte Froslev showed a balance of \$3,391.38 as of 11/14/07. A short discussion followed concerning donations to the Railway museum and Lily's Garden but decisions were forward to the new executive. Ellen asked for people to provide articles or informational items for the newsletter to make it more of a club endeavor. Marina McMasters is resigning from the publishing aspect of the Newsletter and volunteers with computer experience were asked to submit their names. Phyllis Carter will be asked and Dave Colwell volunteered ask did Beth Fitzpatrick. It looks like some form of the newsletter will continue.

Nairn will contact Sylvia Carrot's brother about speaking to us in January. He is an expert on bonsai and may also bring samples to buy to our next meeting.

Moira and Nairn reported on their trip to attend the Council of B.C. Garden Clubs event. There are 154 group memberships. They supply a newsletter, speaker's list, insurance for members on club business or events, provide training for judges of flora art and put on some great forums and speakers at their events. Our members are allowed to send to representatives to events. Others may attend but must pay their own way. This Council also sponsors the scholarship fund that aids students in the horticultural industry.

At this point Beth Fitzpatrick conducted our annual election of officers. Most members of the executive indicated that they were willing to stand for another term which is almost unheard of in any organization these days. However Beth did call for nominations from the floor and assured everyone that all executive meetings are open to any paid-up members that wish to attend and that any and all input from all members is very welcome.

## **The executive for 2008 is as follows:**

### Elected positions

President; Carol Robson

Past President; Eleanor Bowcock

Vice-President: Carla Halvorson Burke

Secretary: Pauline Lawrence

Treasurer/ Membership: Dorte Froslev

### Volunteer Positions

Door (raffle tickets): Glenda Begley

Newsletter: Ellen Grant and Dave Colwell, Beth Fitzpatrick, Phyllis Carter?

Program Committee: Sandra Kilby and Nairn Stewart , Colleen steps down (we need one or two new people in this committee)

Refreshment Committee: Judy steps down ( two volunteers needed to organize the baking and look after the tea and coffee for meetings)

Garden Tour Committee: Eleanor Bowcock, Karen Chelswick, Naire Stewart, Carla Burke, Carol Robson



Moire thanked everyone for their efforts especially Judy and Colleen who have donated their time to making the club so successful this year.

Colleen introduced our speaker for the evening Ferdinand Vondruska who spoke on Biodynamic. We were all anxious to learn of his experiments with enriching the soil with naturally composted materials to support optimum sustainable growth in our own yards. He even offered to give members a tour of his farm in Paradise Valley next year. Although he gave us suggestions as to what to use in our own compost piles, our speaker has been experimenting on a much larger scale to make it possible to commercially produce a soil amending compound that could be mass produced, and did not give us his secret formula. Mr. Vondruska thinks individual gardeners can show the way to a more enlightened way of managing our soil resources and getting our lands off the diet of hormones, heavy metals and pollutants that are leaching all the good elements out of the soil.