



Newsletter

Volume 9, Issue 5

June 2006

NEXT MEETING

Monday June 19, 2006
7:00 p.m.
Squamish Library



**WELCOME
TO OUR NEWEST
MEMBERS**

Dave Colwell
Irena Erdos

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Letter From The Editor

Down the Garden Path

"What is more lovely than a morning in May? Why a garden in June by the light of the moon!"

Yes, May was a beautiful month with its lilacs, and rhododendrons, its tulips and violets. The robins serenade you as you arise and whisper sweet tunes as you draw the drapes at night. The grasses grow and the fruit tree blossoms coat the sidewalks in pink and white. Everything is fresh and green. June, on the other hand, gives us a last fling at spring. The rain shares the spotlight with very warm sunny days and we begin to enjoy time after supper in our gardens. Now is the time to appreciate those flowers that literally shine in the dusk and moonlight. Of course I am talking about a white garden. Many flowers are at their best after the sun goes down...Moon flowers, night blooming stocks, nicotiana, carnations, mock orange are a few of the white blooms that brighten the twilight hours. Since most are pollinated by moths, they are usually also noted for their scent. The simple 'dame's rocket' becomes a magical thing in the evening garden, like a flock of butterflies hovering over a deep green sea. The flowers don't need to be white. Pastels grey and silver foliage, variegated leaves, striated bark and even light colored rocks can glow in the fading light. Since most people still spend much of the summer months working and only get to enjoy their gardens after a hard day at the office, it is fun to plan a portion of the garden to enjoy from the patio after the barbeque. Don't make the mistake I did with my garden long ago. I planted lots of the above and neglected to think about the daylight effect. Blah! Add enough contrast and brightness to make the hot sunny times interesting too. White needs some solid greens to bring out the stark purity of the color. In other words balance your plot. I have spread my evening flowers through out the garden. The Japanese willow anchors the bridge and the 'floating cloud' maple looks just like its common name implies. The white Siberian iris' mark turning spots in the paths and light colored astilbes, goat's beards and columbines float, ghost-like, in the beds. Even the lowly English daisy appear as if like fallen stars in the lawn. If you are lucky you may even attract a hummingbird moth to your garden. This creature is the size of a small bird and it buzzes from flower to flower much like its namesake but the wings are definitely moth wings and it has antennae. Bats too may come to feed on the insects, both beneficial ones and the bad, blood sucking kind...mosquitoes. Watching them swoop about at dusk can be much more exciting than watching T.V. reruns!

Evidently the newest trend in gardening is actually very old. We are told that people are now making garden rooms and moving the indoors outside. Out door



Letter From The Editor Cont'd

furniture, patio tents, natural gas fire-pits, kitchen sinks, indoor lighting, we are literally moving into our gardens for the summer. It is called camping in comfort at home. I guess it beats the cost of gas for the car. With greater use of the outdoor space, the gardener needs to make sure that special plants are displayed on or near the activity area, be it patio or deck. Pots and planters are more popular now than ever before. Make yours movable with casters or the plant stands. You can rearrange them just like your indoor plants and always have the best side out.



Save mass plantings of more common plants for the beds a distance from the living space. Make them background for your living area. Prickly, poisonous, and sappy plants should also be relegated to these areas as well as lilies with their potent pollen that stains clothing. Perhaps my grandmother didn't think it was a fashionable trend when she sent her 10 children to spend the summer sleeping on the screened porch or spread out the supper on tables under the apple trees. It was escape from the heat of the wood stove that prompted Victorian homes to have a 'summer kitchen' and wicker furniture moved onto the front porch so friends and neighbours could share a glass of lemonade and some gossip.

My patio has been used by a mother mallard this May. I have a planter with a large bonsai evergreen. It is located on the pathway to Glenda Begley's home and every day we pass by it several times. Well this mother hatched six offspring and we didn't have an inkling of her presence until two ducklings fell out of the nest before the rest had hatched and they signaled her location. The family has since moved on to the creek nearby and another mother with triplets has taken up residence in the pond. When the young are busy growing, the adult ducks tend to molt. I think it is nature's method of keeping the family together. The adults don't like to fly much when their feathers are changing. The pond is now ringed with feathers, like someone has just burst a feather duvet over the waters. Although these birds are fun to watch they can also be very destructive.

My husband, Don, has just spent three weeks repairing the damage the mallards have done to the banks of the pond. During the wet January weather their little bills were busy digging in and around the rock walls and many slide rocks into the water. Even the cement block portion was damaged and had to be rebuilt. All the time he was working on the project both the ducks and the fish swam around him, searching for grubs and treats that he loosened as he worked. My special handyman has also finished the new rails and gate by the back door and built a clematis cage to control six sprawling vines that completely engulfed a vine maple this spring. Now they are contained in a wood and wire cage 4 feet by four feet by eight feet high. Already they have crawled up the wire to the top but I will be able to trim the vines down each year and still have lots of blooms.

My daughter has also added to my garden this month. She surprised me with the gift of a face to adorn the New Dawn Redwood tree. The gnarled features of the old man of the garden blend nicely with the bark. I have seen similar items in local stores, notably the Country Store, by this one really fits in this location. Like plants, it seems to be finding the right accessories for the right place.

For those people who enjoyed the lecture on orchids at our April meeting, may I suggest that you try some hardy orchids? Available for such nurseries as The Plant Farm and Fraser's Thimble Farms on Salt Spring Island there are many varieties such as the Lady's Slipper that we can add to our plant collections.

New Service

Thanks to the efforts of Dave Colwell the Squamish Gardeners now have their own web site.

<http://www.members.shaw.ca/sqgardeners/>



Members are asked to submit any gardening on line sources, photographs, recipes etc. that they wish to share with other members. This will also be a great place to ask gardening questions. Members, who have had experience with growing conditions in this area, may be able to assist with your specific problems. Again thanks to this new member for establishing the site for us.

Special Events

What do California, Las Vegas, Hawaii, and Georgia on the Black Sea have in common? Well they are all resort destinations and they all have palm trees as symbols of their sunny, warm climates. And what is Rudi Pinkowski's greatest ambition? Well, it is to show that the lower mainland and the gulf islands can have the same lush tropical appearance as the above mentioned famous vacation spots. Our guest speaker and slide presenter on May 15 gave us a humorous evening showing his passion for unusual, exotic plants. He detailed how to adapt them to our climate and challenged us to try to grow some seeds that he brought with him. Has anyone managed to get any sprouted yet? He also stated that his gardening club has more men than women... a very unusual thing. It seems that men like a challenge in gardening. They want to try to grow things outside the box. Perhaps more speaker that focus on the unusual such as Greg Porter's orchids and Rudi's palms will entice more gentlemen to join our club too. For those who don't want so much challenge there are tropical looking plants that will give you a resort like feel to you back yard. These may include yuccas, canna lilies, and oriental lilies. Gunnera, and annuals such as castor beans.



The other club event this last month was the trip to U.B.C. botanical gardens. With David Tarrant as our guide we spent most of the time exploring the Asian section admiring the last of the rhododendrons, giant ferns and an eagle's nest. A quick trip through the vegetable garden, the herb garden, then on to the rockery area that is divided into areas from the five continents completed the tour. A visit to a piece of sculpture that is part of a Vancouver-wide display was on the route out. Most of us spent some time and much money back at the "Shop in the Garden" as we gathered mementos of the trip for our own gardens.

There will be not special speakers for June. The meeting will be needed to finalize plans for the Tour.

You're Invited to our 2006 Show!

Greetings to all fellow gardening enthusiasts.

My name is Chris Jennings and I am the President of the Vancouver Shade Garden Society. I'd like to take this opportunity to invite you and your club members to our Society's 2006 Show. Here's some of the details.

The Show is being held on Sunday, July 23, 2006, in the Floral Hall at VanDusen Botanical Garden, at Oak and 37th in Vancouver. The Show will be open to the public from 1:00pm to 4:00pm, however, we will have various sale and draw tables open from approximately 11:00am. And, there's no admission charge!

We have a judged show, with ribbons and rosettes awarded for plant entries in 10 different shade plant divisions, including Begonias, Coleus, Ferns, Fuchsias, Gesneriads, Hostas, Impatiens, Other Shade Plants, Shade Plant Displays, and Novice Exhibitors. We also award our Pat Dredge People's Choice Trophy to the favourite plant at our Show, as voted by all attendees at the Show.

You will see a fantastic variety of shade-loving plants, and there will also be great plants for sale and available to be won in draws. Please identify yourself as a garden club member when you come to our Show and you will receive a free ticket for one of our draws. You could win a plant or some other gardening related item.

Come and find out just what can be grown in a shade garden! You'll be amazed at the variety and quality of plants in our Show. We hope to see you there. And please visit our website at www.vancouvershadegardensociety.ca to learn more about us.

For more information about our Show, please contact me at 604-602-6644, Pat Dredge at 604-596-7627 or Sue Girling at 604-263-4079.

Yours in gardening,
Chris Jennings
President, Vancouver Shade Garden Society.



April Minutes

The meeting of April 2006 was held at the Railway Museum on Monday April 17th after our spring plant exchange that took place at the eatery.

1. Discussion of the tour to the botanical gardens at U.B.C. scheduled for May 30 was arranged.
2. The Wild Turkey Nursery was to open April 20. Members receive a 10% discount on their excellent perennials and vegetable plants. If you are looking for something different try this home based nursery at Leski's Crossing.
3. Donna reported that the \$300 donated to the Railway Park had been spent to buy a wheelbarrow for the gardeners. This was purchased locally at Home Hardware. Plants were also bought at the Garden Center. Donna also informed the membership that there would be a giant Garage Sale to benefit the Museum on July 3.
4. The membership was also reminded that we are responsible for weeding at the Library in exchange for the use of the B.C. Hydro meeting room. Please try to put in a half hour before the next meeting in June.
5. An idea exchange followed where these items were discussed.
 - a. do not put manure on potatoes to avoid scale
 - b. lime lawns now
 - c. dry your geranium cutting before you start them in potting soil
 - d. mason bee boxes need to be cleaned out
 - e. mushroom manure should be 3 years old to avoid sowing seeds with your fertilizer
6. Greg Porter, the co-owner of Garibaldi Nursery in the Industrial Park, was our guest speaker. He has had thirty years experience growing orchids. His mother was president of the B.C. Orchid Society. Greg literally learned at his mother's knee. Some of the points that he emphasized were:
 - a. Don't over-feed your plants; they should look a little stressed.
 - b. Orchids need light and only a little water every week or 10 days. Color of leaves should be light green. Dark green means they need more light.
 - c. Put outside from May to October in full sunlight.
 - d. Don't plant in plastic pots, they need air to their roots
 - e. Don't let plant set in water. They'll rot.
 - f. Don't mist orchids, especially in the afternoon. Better to have a dish of water near by evaporating.
 - g. Soil should be mixture of bark, soil, expanded clay perlite.
 - h. Repot just after blooming but keep them slightly root bound and only repot into next sized pot.
 - i. Prune off all broken and soft roots.
 - j. Fertilize in spring with fish fertilizer and 0-10-10 in late summer.
 - k. Use silicon dioxide to clean off bugs
 - l. Use only fresh water soaked orchid bark that does not sink when you wet it down.
 - m. Never use vermiculite in soil mixture. Charcoal helps keep soil "sweet".
 - n. Drop the night temperature to promote flowering.

Greg also gave us some general advice on plant care such as watering a plant well before applying any fertilizer, Don't let water set on the crown of most flowers, water in the morning if possible, Epsom salts is good for most plants in this area and sulphur helps to promote strong growth. After his demonstrating of how to prune and repot three orchid specimens, our speaker donated these plants as door prizes. And he also donated his honorarium back to the club as gift certificates. He certainly proved to be such a knowledgeable plants man. Next time my orchids need repotting I think I'll give the task to him!

6. Members were advised that there would be no meeting in May as our keynote speaker would be Rudi Pinkowski who would be speaking at the Eagle Eye theatre on May 15 at 7pm.

Calendar

June 19 - June Garden Club Meeting

June 25 - Squamish Garden Tour

July 2 - Water in the Garden Garden Tour
Sunshine Coast

Noon to 4 p.m.

Tickets available at Advent
Gardener, Marine Dr., West Van
\$15.00

July 11 - Rose Show and Craft Sale
Van Dusen Garden

Noon to 4:30

\$3.00