



# Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 3

March 2007

## NEXT MEETING

Monday March 19, 2007

Squamish Library

6:30 Weeding

7:00 Meeting

### Speaker

Barry Belec

Native Plants

In home gardens



## WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Mary Mitchell

Doug Morrison

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## Letter From The Editor

### Down the Garden Path

*"In the city field*

*Contemplating*

*Cherry-trees...*

*Strangers are like friends."* Issa

Or, as in the words of Pippa and Browning, "winter is over and all's right with the world. , at least mostly so. We are still cleaning up after the winter storms. The ice has gone from the pond so we have been able to pull out the branches that had been caught fast. I am still finding branches broken by the wind but still dangling high up in the trees. It will take several years to get the trees and shrubs to look like they aren't transplants from the Dr. Seuss book "The Lorax". Compared to Stanley Park and Pacific Rim Park we really have been very lucky. I was also reading in the last issue of "Fine Gardening" about a gardener from New Orleans who had to leave during the hurricane and flooding a couple of years ago. The family returned to a garden devastated by the wrath of nature. Trees were toppled, shrubs uprooted or buried under debris, lawns covered in greasy, oily guck! But their home was repairable so they started the cleanup. Most of the plants bore only a few flowers that first year but to their surprise a couple of plants not only survived but rewarded the family with the best display of blooms they had ever experienced. Another gift to the returning residents happened because of the many bird feeders in the southern city. The flood waters scattered the seeds far and wide. That first summer sunflowers popped up in every garden, park, field, and ditch in New Orleans. There truly is a little ray of sunshine behind the deepest clouds. Gardeners are trained to see tomorrow's flowers in the seeds of today. They are the optimists with dirt under their nails. If you want to read the story of their recovery, the club purchases the magazine for the library. It is on the last page.

When we started our journey towards spring back in October, I promised that I would record the things in my yard that brighten and highlight winter in the garden. I've posted photos on our website and added a few to the newsletters. Little did I realize then that the task would be more difficult than is usual. Nothing has unfolded as it should but even with the quirks of weather flowers have bloomed, trees have shown their stately demeanor, and we have seen beauty in unexpected places even if we really had to search for the items we discussed five months ago. I hope that you can appreciate this special season more and strive to include plants in your scheme to enjoy during the shortest days of the year.

To that end I have just purchased some more hellebores from Phoenix Perennials. There are now so many beautiful shades, speckles, doubles, singles and now even one with mottled foliage. Their greatest attribute is that they bloom in the cool rainy season without becoming bedraggled and messy. Surrounded by crocus, snowdrops and other seasonal bulbs they are becoming a staple of my garden. I have also sent out another order to Verseys for more lilies. Next to roses I find these flowers to be the most reliable plants for a long blooming period in the summer. By planting

## **Letter From The Editor Cont'd**

some of all the various kinds you can have a show from June to the first part of September. They multiply well in our area and so far I have not had any problem with the squirrels devouring them. I also have a new bamboo water feature to replace an old one that cracked from the frost a few years ago. I'll just have to dig up the wiring now and make a new base for it. With all the new stores in town, I'll have to be more selective or I'll be bankrupt with new gadgets and horticultural widgets.

Speaking of purchases, I have ordered my bags of soil amendment from the grads as usual but does anyone know of a good source of soil for vegetable gardens? So much of the dirt that is available in bulk comes from sludge and industrial waste. The high levels of heavy metals in it make these soils unsuitable for vegetable plots. Often soil sold by the yard does not come with a ph level or content analysis. The rich dark look may be achieved by adding petroleum products to the mix. Several members have expressed an interest in find a source of good organic medium to grow nutritious, tasty, healthy plants. If you can help, please pass the information along.

### **Have you checked the web site for chores to do in March? [squamishgardeners.com](http://squamishgardeners.com)**

Just a bit of a note on the invasive plant issue that our last two guest speaker have enlightened the membership about. First there is some problem with the interpretation of "What is an invasive plant?" On public lands the answer seems to be any plant, not native to the region, that by its spread and tenaciousness, threatens the habitat and thus the existence of indigenous species. It may cause considerable work and expense to remove this threat so awareness and quick response by all citizens is important. We discussed ways that public education could be achieved and some of the plants to watch out for in this region. In our own gardens the threat of invasive plants may have a different connotation. Any plant that is a bully, that grows beyond its boundaries or that comes, uninvited into our realm may be considered invasive. Essentially it means that home owners must recognize the growing conditions in their own yard and research the growing habits of the plants that are introduced. Care must be taken to ensure that your plants stay in your yard. Dead heading spent flowers and root pruning along fence lines are important chores designed to keep good neighbours. But birds, the wind and even flood waters can deposit seeds and roots where they are unwelcome. Remember that the conditions that keep plants under control in your yard may be lacking in another. If you are plagued by invasive plants you can help keep them at bay by putting down mulch in the form of newspapers, bark, gravel or even leaves. Anything that blocks the sunlight from the seeds will limit germination. Hoeing or weed-whacking off the leaves of invasive plants deprives them of there food producing parts and again may stunt growth. Ditching along boundary fences and around plants like bamboo or creeping plants may stop their spread. Sometimes planting heavily so that there is no open ground discourages new growth or sprouting plants from surviving. Attack plants in cracks or in pathways with boiling vinegar on a sunny day. It may require a couple of applications several days apart. As a last resort, consult your garden dealers for a herbicide. But be very careful, you may kill more that you planned to do. If you have invasive plants in your yard,(and who doesn't) try growing them in planters or containers. They make good, fast growing fillers and many have fabulous, foliage and fragrant flowers. Just remember to dispose of them by putting them in a black plastic bag in the sunshine for a couple of weeks. Then put them in the garbage can. I have all too often just tossed them into the compost only to find these pests have spread to the far corners of the garden in a couple of years. Never just throw these plants over the fence onto public property or give to a friend without due warnings. I'll admit to being guilty of all the irresponsible acts mentioned. If a plant is too good to be true it is probably going to give you and your neighbours grief. I have learned that good gardening comes with great patience, careful planning and hard work. I'm not very adept at any of the three but I do have fun!



We have a complete change of topic for our next meeting. Barry Belec will be addressing the group this month on Native Plants in home gardens. This will be at the library on March 19th. Remember to bring your gloves and equipment to spend a half hour in the Library gardens before the meeting. The April 16th meeting will be our plant exchange followed by Gwen Odermatt discussing Butterfly Gardens. Our feature speaker of the season will be Steve Kovacs with his special presentation on Ponds in May. I can hardly wait. After a winter like this one I'm really anxious to find that green thumb again and I think these speakers will be just the inspiration I need to get me on my way.

## 2007 Meeting Dates

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.

## Refreshments List

March	Judy Gordon Lise Hamilton
April	Carol Raffaele Carla Halvorson Burke
May	Not required
June	Glenda Begley Nairn Stewart
July	Not required
Sept.	Astrid Andersen Patsy Riecker
Oct.	Colleen Winterburn Diddi Price
Nov	Colleen Polowich Beth Fitzpatrick
Dec.	Wreaths - not required

## Native Plants Speaker's Focus

Barry Belec has gardened since age three when he took responsibility for raising vegetables and his family's endless need for sweet peas, roses, and lily of the valley. He received many awards for gardening through his teens and early twenties. He has practiced extensively in plant propagation and sat executive for garden societies such as the B.C. Rock and Alpine Garden Club. While teaching in Britain and France, Barry pursued credentials in plant propagation, garden development, and landscape architecture and has received numerous citations locally and internationally. He has managed local nurseries and currently works weekends at Arts Nursery as a horticultural consultant. He will be lecturing on *The Use of Native Plant Materials for Garden Development*.



# February 19th Minutes

- In the absence of Carol Robson, Carla Halvorson Burke chaired the meeting. She welcomed all those present, and two new members, Loleeta Turner and Mary Mitchell.
- Dave Colwell was unable to be at the meeting, but Carla reported that he had been able to get a **domain name for the Squamish Gardeners** (squamishgardeners.com) for \$5.00 per year.
- The club has received *The Bulletin* from the **BC Council of Garden Clubs**. The 2007 Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 27th .
- Dorte Froslev gave the **Treasurer's Report**: she received \$390.00 from memberships and \$32.11 from the raffle. She has written two cheques.
- Dot Diotte and Audrey Peterson have started canvassing for **raffle prizes for the Garden Tour** Carla said that at the last meeting, Dorte had agreed to maintain the **photograph albums** Thor Froslev moved that Dorte keep the albums and bring them to meetings. This was seconded by Judy. This motion was passed by all, although there was some further discussion
- Ellen Grant said that there had been some problems with the distribution of the **Newsletter** in the absence of Marina MacMaster. Ellen only had last year's list with old postal codes. She apologized to those who hadn't received their copies. Copies were available at the meeting. Dorte asked people to make changes to their postal codes on the 2006 mailing list at the front.
- Carla will ask Dave to put the Club's **mailing address** on the website.
- Carla asked for **gardening-related questions**. Carol Adley asked when the Spring Plant Exchange was to be held, as she was growing seedlings, and would these be suitable for the exchange. She was told that they would be most acceptable. She asked if left-over seeds would also be useful. Marie mentioned that seeds can be kept in the fridge for years. Thor asked how many people have bees, as there is a meeting coming up on the 23rd.
- Nairn Stewart reported on behalf of the **Programme Committee**. Last month's meeting on Invasive Species generated so much interest that the committee decided to follow up with the local situation. Meg Fellows would be giving the presentation.
- She then went on to introduce **the Speaker, Meg Fellows**. She has been a member of the Squamish Environmental Conservation Society since 1992, and is currently its Director. She reviewed the local situation, and gave examples of brochures and websites that deal with invasive species. She mentioned that Kiewit has plans to minimize the spread of invasive species along Highway 99; they do not use herbicides. Problems could easily arise when the amount of earth that is being moved around is considered. Currently the Municipality and the Region have no plans to deal with invasive species.
- The meeting was then broken up into groups to discuss:
  - List of problem plants
  - How should they be dealt with?
  - What can we do as a group?
  - The groups' lists were summarized at the end of the meeting.

