



# Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 5

May 2007

## GARDEN SPEAKER

*Steve Kovac*

*May 7, 2007*

*Eagle Eye Theatre*

*7:00 p.m.*

*This is in place of  
the regular garden  
meeting in May.*

*Please remember  
that we still need to  
weed the library  
gardens and your  
help would be  
greatly appreciated*

**WELCOME**

**TO OUR**

**NEWEST MEMBER**

***Diana Robertson***

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## Letter From The Editor

### Down the Garden Path

*"I have here only made a nosegay of culled flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the thread that ties them together."* Michel de Montaigne

The first of the merry month of May, as children, we used to make May baskets of wild flowers to present to my grandmother. It was a tradition that I suppose originated in England during the 19th century. It is a lovely way to appreciate the delicate blooms that grow in the early spring under the trees that have only a lacy covering of leaves or in damp meadows where frogs are serenading their soul mates. Violets, bleeding hearts, shooting stars and spring beauties used to be some of my offerings to the matriarch of the Judd clan. In my garden, these same flowers mingle with the tulips, narcissi and blue bells under the crabapple trees in a shower of pink and white petals. May, is indeed, the start of three months of flowers that seem to be the apex of nature's annual glory. To be sure, August and the autumn season have their own style but these next days will herald an explosion of colour and growth. This year they will be most welcome after a long wet, cool beginning to spring. Hopefully the weather in April will have helped give the rivers in the valley a slow steady run-off period and thus avoid a flood. The year that I graduated from Howe Sound Secondary there was "high water" at the end of May that saw fish swimming on the roads and real water gardens for a week or so. I'd hate to spend the month planting up a garden only to have it washed away by rushing water.

May is usually the month to plant the seeds and bedding plants that will bring us a wealth of vegetables and flowers for the summer month. Mother's Day is usually basket planting time at our house. Although I have seen killing frosts right up until the end of May, you can usually hang the baskets in the shelter of a garage or cover them with newspaper if the temperature threatens to dip too low. Vegetables can be similarly protected with row covers. There are lots of ingenious methods to provide protection for tender plants and seedlings. Older gardeners will perhaps remember the glass bell-shaped jars or maybe you have fashioned hood out of milk cartons. I wonder how many of you have cold frames to start seeds, harden off seedling or extend the growing season. With global warming these things may be 'things of the past' soon and we will be coping with drought instead of floods.

April was a busy month in the Grant garden even in the rain. I finally had professional fallers in to take out the big pine tree near the patio. It had lost

## Letter From The Editor Cont'd

one huge limb to the winter storms and another dangled, twisted and gnarled on top of a magnolia beneath it. The tree was a Japanese white pine that I had had for 35 years. The top had been damaged when it was about ten years old and it grew with several leader branches. It did shade the house during those hot mid afternoon summer days. In the winter its cones provided material for Christmas projects and its branches enhanced the décor. But the needles were really messing up the special eave trough screens we had installed when we re-roof a few years ago. The holes were just the right size to grab the needles and it took a powerful shop vac to dislodge them. So down came a bit of family history. Of course the flower bed beneath got ground up as well and the path way leading to the mulching machine turned into a quagmire of mud. It will take sometime before I discover what plants will grow in the new sun-lit spot. I am sure that the magnolia and other shrubs will enjoy their new view. I had the cutters leave a tall stump so I can tie the lanky limbs of these understory plants to it until they have filled in the area with their own growth. The other big project has been to erect some fencing along our north and west sides. The acre has always had a short chain link boundary fence that we erected many years ago. We have also constructed blocks of higher wooden screens within the yard for privacy and other areas have hedging to help with noise control. Recently the wild animals, bear, raccoons, coyote, and the neighbourhood dogs have managed to make the chain link look like a drunken trail of metal staggering down the property line. We were particularly concerned about the six young children in the abutting yards joining their pets in climbing into the yard. So Don has been adding more of the tall privacy fence and replacing some that has weathered too much over the years. So another large area has been disrupted. Plants have been moved or removed, fence ornaments taken down, and again a new assessment of growing conditions will have to be made. I am sure that you are all familiar with the routine. If you have a mess you might as well have a big one and get it over with all at once.

Considering the damage down by the winter storms I am amazed that the trees have still had a grand display this spring. The magnolias have been especially pretty as they don't mind the rain but quickly turn to mush if they experience even a hint of frost. The fruit trees seem full of blossoms too. However both of the beekeepers in this area tell me that their hives were hard hit by the winter. I hope that the mason bees will take up the slack and pollenate the fruit. We have had a couple of wonderful years for apples, pears and berries. There is also a glorious peach tree on the south facing wall of a house on our street. The fruit is heavenly and it all came from a pit planted years ago.

Speaking of pollinators, I hope you found our last speaker as interesting as I did. Butterflies are more than garden jewelry; they perform that task of spreading pollen among flowers. So attracting them to your garden is another way of making nature work for you. It seems that our program committee this year has managed to heighten our awareness of the role of home gardeners in the ecology of the area.

Steve Kovacs, our speaker on May 7 at the Eagle Eye theatre, may change the theme as he shows us how to put "controlled" water into our landscapes. I am sure that all members and their spouses will find the topic interesting and informative. My husband took a course in constructing waterfalls and fake rocks but he has never got around to using his knowledge on our own property. I think I'll try to talk him into join me on Monday. Maybe he'll be inspired



## **Butterfly Speaker Notes**

Speaker Gwen Odermatt, from the Petals and Butterfly Nursery in Langley. This garden has been in existence for over ten years, and specialised in plants that attract butterflies and humming birds.

- Gwen brought flyers on butterflies put out by the Wild Birds Trust (for sale for \$2.50) She and her husband presented a slide show on butterflies.
- Development of housing, etc., affects the distribution and prevalence of butterflies, and whatever we can do in our own gardens to provide suitable habitat should be done. Plants should be chosen carefully, and include species such as dianthus, coreopsis and lavender, for example.
- B.C has about 190 species of butterflies. Locally, in the Georgia Basin, we have 19-20 species.
- Gardens suitable for butterflies should have sun all day, from early to late seasons. Butterflies feed on nectar, and prefer yellow, white and purple, preferably composite, flowers. Flowers should be planted in drifts, and lots of spring flowers should be available. Gwen pointed out that the butterfly bush is invasive, and needs dead-heading. - - - Suggested plants include lavender, lilac, heather, Echinacea, verbena, phlox, and dianthus, and in the fall, aster and rudbeckia. Native plants include joe-pye weed, stokesia and jupiter's beard.
- Butterflies also need specific host plants for laying eggs: for example, three species utilise stinging nettles, and swallow tails need willows. Ornamental plants are not host plants.
- The cabbage white is the only pest species in our area.
- Do not use pesticides or herbicides in your garden.
- In summary, what is needed to support butterflies is: a sunny site, nectar plants, host plants, and an organic garden. - Gardens are valuable in replacing built-up habitat.
- Gwen brought a number of plants for sale, including: potentilla, dianthus, rainbow loveliness, statice, oregano (dingle fairy, Kent beauty), monkshood, scabiosa, seruma, corydalis "blue heron", aster, blue poppy, perennial money plant, lewisia and perennial sweet pea.

## **Garden Books**

**Garden Books** reviewed by Carla Halvorson Burke



**There is a Season** by Patrick Lane

The story of the author's own healing from alcohol addiction through the horticultural therapy of his Victoria garden is the theme of this book. A 12 month tour of the creative process in the garden interspersed with stories from his difficult past and the healing that he experiences through nature are chronicled here.

**The Passionate Gardener** –Adventures of an ardent Green Thumb- by Des Kennedy is a fun and inspiring garden read especially the chapter on the small garden tour that he led to New Zealand. Here is an up-date on the travels and trials of an old friend of our club. He has entertained us as a speaker and as an author. Try this volume or more of his great gardening ideas and humour.

## **Garden Photo Op**



Dave Colwell, our web master, has offered to make slide shows of members' gardens to post on our club's web site. Knowing that many people have gorgeous garden but either they have already been on the Tour or are not ready to have a hundred people share their private retreat, we felt that giving people a chance to share in this manner would be great. Just wander your yard in the next couple of months snapping shots of your favorite plants, fountains, patio, statues, foliage and friends. Use close ups or wide angle, landscape or portrait, digital or hard copy. Pick the ten images that you like the best and send them to Dave. He will post them as a slide show. I have done this for a year and it is great to be able to edit the view. I send those shots that I like but not the pictures of the mess! But you have visited my garden via photos for a long time. Now I'd like to see yours. I'll continue to include a photo or two in the newsletter from my garden but the web site will be left up to you.

# April Minutes

The plant exchange was held from 6:30 – 7 p.m.

**Minutes:** These were adopted as presented in the Newsletter: moved by Carol Adley, seconded by Lolita Turner.

**Treasurer's Report:** Dorte Froslev reported that the club has approximately \$2,500.

**Correspondence:** A letter was received from the Lynn Valley Garden Club, informing us of the Annual Spring Plant Sale on Saturday, May 12th from 10-1 at St. Clement's Anglican Church on Institute Road in North Vancouver.

**Programme:** Nairn Stewart said that on May 7th the speaker will be Steve Kovacs, who will talk on "Creating a Paradise with Water Features". The June presentation will be a composting evening, with bear aware and composting worm components.

A field trip is proposed for the Langley Butterfly Garden. Members were split between **Garden Tour:** Carla Halvorson Burke said that a contact person for the beginning of May, when many committee members would be away, is needed. Nairn volunteered. mid-week and weekend events, so perhaps Nairn will organise one for each group.

**Newsletter:** Material for the newsletter should be in by the beginning of the month. Please contact Ellen Grant with any questions.

**Webpage:** Please keep Dave Colwell up-to-date with any information. The B.C. Council of Gardens material has been updated. There is a new power-point presentation on Gardens of Holland on the site.

Carol thanked Carol Raffaele and Carla for bringing the evening's refreshments

Weeding needs to be done at the library; Carol will arrange a time and members will be contacted.

**Garden Clubs B.C. Council:** Carol reported on the recent meeting, which she had attended with Marcie Phillips.

- membership covers our insurance for the Garden Tour, supports club interaction and resource exchange and distributed over \$9,500 in scholarship funds last year.
- there is an updated speakers list - Ray Beckhurst is one of the possible speakers – subject: hellebores.
- Chris Woods from Van Dusen Gardens, is an excellent speaker and available.
- Are we linked to BC Council of Garden Clubs? (Yes, a registration form has been submitted).
- Send information re events well in advance to be included in B.C. Council of Garden Clubs Bulletins.
- Individual subscriptions to bulletin can be had for \$10.00/year (should we subscribe for Dave?).
- We can and should send a profile of our club to be included in the bulletin.
- Vancouver Sun Garden Show at Van Dusen Gardens needs volunteers.

Carol brought along a garden shovel from the meeting. This particular shovel will be raffled off to raise money for speakers, as costs have risen. Shovels can be ordered for approximately \$24: a list was circulated for those interested.

**Executive meeting:** Carol presented recommendations for approval by the membership:

- \$5 fee for non-members at meetings does not include raffle ticket – Moved by Ellen Grant and seconded by Colleen Polowich. Motion passed.
- Tickets for May meeting with key note speaker will be \$10.00 for members and \$12.00 for non members – Moved by Dawn Milne and seconded by Eleanor Bowcock. Motion passed.

Garden Tour ticket price to rise to \$15.00 – Moved by Meg Fellows and seconded by Judy Crowston. Motion Passed

**Any other business:** Dorte asked whether the printer gets a gift in recognition of services. It was reported that last year she received a certificate for a massage. She also bills us a small amount for supplies.

The Garden Tour Raffle: there will be 200 single tickets at \$2 each, and 150 at 3 for \$5. The friends of the Library will be asked to sell these in advance, as people at the tables on the tour are too busy on the day. A motion was moved by Eleanor and seconded by Colleen Winterburn. Passed.

**Programme:** The meeting was then turned over to Nairn, who introduced the speaker, Gwen Odermatt, from the Petals and Butterfly Nursery in Langley.