



Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 9

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

November 2007

NEXT MEETING

Monday

November 19, 2007

Squamish Library

7:00 p.m

Speaker

Ferdinand Vondruska



CHRISTMAS PARTY

Monday

December 3

Brackendale

Art Gallery

Wreath Making

& Social

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Letter From The Editor

Down the Garden Path

"Along the line of smoky hills, the crimson forest stands," from **Indian Summer** by Wilfred Campbell is the beginning of a poem by the Canadian poet that has always epitomized for me this time of the year. Like one of Tom Thompson's paintings of autumn around Lake Superior, it is full of color, crisp details and sunshine. Now is the time when our gardens expand to take in the splendor of the neighbourhood and beyond to the hills and snow capped peaks. How lucky we are to have such magnificent back drops to our private domains! The prairies may have the wide skies and eastern Canada may have brilliant deciduous trees but here on the wet coast our combination of all the elements, water, forest, rock, foliage and ever-changing heavens makes Indian summer a spectacular climax to the fading year. All the autumn hues are in harmony and the misty rain just makes them more vivid.

My own garden still has many leaves still clinging to the branches. Although we have now had a frost, the roses are still sending forth a few buds and here and there a clematis, a pansy, a group of primroses or a few asters add to the foliage display. Outside the kitchen window the Christmas rose is again in bloom. Great swags of rose hips droop over the carport and the holly tree is laden with fruit to adorn Christmas wreaths and tables.

I am gaining muscle mass as I continue to haul in my 56 pots and baskets. As my collection of tender bulbs and perennials grows I struggle to find warm spots for them to spend the winter. This year I am determined to not let them over-take my living room and I would like to have some space in the sunroom for people during the winter months too. Raking leaves has been my steady employment for the last few weeks and is likely to continue for a while yet. I cart the loads to various low areas on the property. In a couple of years they will have composed down and will form the basis for some new berms. I hope that November will be a mild month so that I can plant my bulbs. I usually wait until I have lifted the dahlias and plant the tulips in their spots. We have a couple of friendly black squirrels around watching the garden from the top of the spruce tree. I know they are just waiting for me to hide away a few expensive bulbs that they can nibble on during the winter. I wait as long as I can then pat the ground down well around the bulbs and cover them with sticks or wire. If you stir up the soil and leave it soft the rodents and birds will "plant" the area up with their own stores for the cold season. If you find wheat, corn, sunflowers, oak trees or even pine trees growing where you didn't expect then it may be that you cultivated your garden for the other critters to sow and reap. There are some benefits to having clay soil. It is hard digging for all creatures.

Our bears seem to have moved on. One knocked over our garbage can last week. We don't put anything in it until we hear the garbage truck coming down the next street but this bear seems to recognize the container and gives it a once over just as a routine check. I have heard that they are now breaking into locked garages and raiding deep freezers. We have many dogs in the area and I hear them barking at night. I think this discourages the wild things. I know that my grandfather always said that even an old dog is worth his food if he can keep the bears and cougars away from the crops and livestock. As hibernation time rolls around the bruins seem to get desperate and try to access things like bird feeders and compost bins. I remember years in my childhood when we had a "bear problem" but it seems that every year brings an increase in numbers of intruders and the length of time they are in our neighbourhoods. I wonder if we can add this to the list of climate change results?

Since I probably won't publish a newsletter in December because we don't really have

Letter From The Editor Cont'd

a meeting that month I should remind members to keep their Christmas trees well watered and remove them as soon as needles start to fall. If you have a living tree acclimatize it by gradually bringing it into the warm, dry environment of your home. Keep it in a cool but not cold place until early March before planting it in your garden. Wreaths, swags, and other greenery need special care too. A spritz of water daily helps as does spraying with some of the products that seals the surface of the boughs and help to conserve the plants natural moisture. I have started to remove the real cedar, pine and fir from my indoor decoration and instead I use these greens and berries in outdoor containers near the doors. I may tuck a few branches into the Christmas table center to add scent to the arrangement but "bringing in the outdoors" for a few brief days is hardly worth all the mess. I guess I'm getting older!! Holiday plants such as amaryllis, poinsettias and roses will last longer if you lower the temperature in the room and keep them away from direct sunlight and drafts. Add a few tablespoons of Canada Dry to cut flowers. The acidic acid helps control the growth of algae in the water and the sugar feeds the blooms. I am not an expert on house plants.

If anyone would like to write an occasional article for the newsletter on specific plants and their care, I, for one, would certainly appreciate it. It would also be great if some of you vegetable growers would share some of your knowledge with the rest of us. The art of growing your own food is among the skills that many of us have sadly let fade. The new products, crops and methods would be an interesting topic for some members to contribute to the newsletter in the new year.

I know that many people would like to contribute to the club but don't feel that they have the time to commit to an executive position. There are many roles that you can perform that require a brief contribution of time and/or knowledge. We are always looking for speakers from within the club to share their expertise. It helps the bank account and yet these people have more understanding of the gardening conditions that face our members than people that we get from out of town. Also we sometimes have difficulty convincing guests that the highways will not swallow them up or winter storms isolate them for a week or so. Maybe you are too shy to step forward but know of friends or acquaintances that would be willing to share their gardening experiences. Maybe you know of a garden worthy of being on our Garden Tour. Perhaps you have read an article or book, viewed a T.V. program, visited an inspiring site, discovered a great source of tools or plants. Please add your knowledge to our club experience. Send Dave, Carol or myself an e-mail.

Has anyone else noticed that the hummingbirds have left the area early this year? Last year I had one little fellow, who stayed all through the wind and the cold and who left only as spring approached. I had lots of the bejeweled friends during the summer as they visited the flowers and feeders but as August came the hummingbirds disappeared. I had put up a new feeder, a beautiful colored glass creation that rivaled the birds in hue. I thought that perhaps I had prompted their departure but they haven't even been back to see if I removed the intruding device.

How many of you have planted a tree or shrub this autumn? Why not try a witch hazel? No, I haven't got a Halloween candy hang over! I am just surprised that more people don't have this small tree in their yards. It has beautiful fall colors and is one of the first trees to bloom in January or early February with funny twisted petals in yellow, orange or blood red. The branches make wonderful additions to winter indoor bouquets with the flowers force like forsythia. In the summer the leaves are the usual hazelnut dull green but if you plant them with rhodos, azaleas or camellias, with their shiny foliage, the dull tone just acts to accentuate the companion plants during the witch hazel's "down time". Besides you can make a tincture from the bark that is great for relieving bruises and scrapes.

Hope to see many of you at the Christmas gathering at the B.A.G. If you can't make it then from our house to yours a *very Merry Christmas!*

Message From The President

Our next meeting is November 19th 7:00 p.m. at the Squamish Public Library. Over come your shyness or reluctance and put your name forward to take on a position on the executive or as executive member at large (mainly a learning how the executive works), program committee or coffee organization.

The last day to order Christmas wreaths is November 8. You can call Carla Halvorson-Burke with your orders. Her phone number is 604 898 9095. The date of the wreath decorating party is confirmed and it is December 3 at the Brackendale Art Gallery. Remember to bring your own wreath embellishments (or alternative seasonal craft) and a few holiday treats to share.

Although I have recovered fairly well from my bout with shingles I still have my good days and unfortunately bad ones too. I hope that a break will help change that. I will be leaving for holiday on November 18 and return on December 3 so I will probably not see many of you until January. So have a great

The Squamish Valley Quilt Guild is pleased to host a Quilt Trunk Show featuring PIPPA MOORE's Vibrant and Energetic quilts, the stories they represent of African women and the AIDS program of Steven Lewis.

Enjoy the work of this talented artist, the stories and photos of the women who inspire her work.

Husbands will also enjoy the event.

African fabric and patterns will be available.

FRIDAY - NOVEMBER 23

**Sea to Sky Hotel 7PM Non Members \$5.00
Space still available for her two workshops on
Nov. 24th and 25th. See under classes**

Contact

Sandra to register at 898-5216

October Minutes

October 15th, 2007

- Following the plant exchange, Carol Robson opened the meeting. It was decided that left-over plants would be left for the Railway Museum. Raffle tickets for the hospital, as well as for the usual garden club raffle were available.
- Moirra Biggin-Pound moved that the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted, seconded by Eleanor Bowcock, passed by the meeting.
- Carol reported that a cheque for \$386 had been sent to the Friends of the Library, representing the proceeds of the raffle at the Garden Club Tour, minus expenses.
- In the past the Club has given donations to the B.C. Council Scholarship Fund (\$100), the Railway Museum (\$300), and Lily's Garden (\$200). In addition we donate subscriptions to the library for Fine Gardening and GardenWise (\$57.70). Dawn Milne asked whether we would have sufficient funding for speakers if we continued these donations. Carol said that with the increased price of the tickets for the Garden tour (from \$10 to \$15) we do have enough. Didee asked whether it would be possible to give money to the high school for a bursary. Carol pointed out that the bursaries from the B.C. Council were available to all – we should ensure that the high school is aware of the opportunity. Moira moved, seconded by Beth Fitzgerald, that we increase the donation to the B.C. Council Scholarship Fund to \$200; motion carried. Nairn Stewart moved that all the other donations be carried through. This was seconded by Karen Chelswick; motion carried.
- The club received an invitation to be represented at the Community Focus groups: (September 24th and 25th). As no-one wished to go, we passed on that.
- Nairn and Moira will represent the club at the B.C. Council of Garden Clubs Fall Meeting, on Saturday October 27th. It was moved by Pauline Lawrence and seconded by Dot Diotte that the club cover entry fees and the required gift; motion carried.
- Carol requested that membership fees be paid by December. Eleanor moved, seconded by Didee, that fees remain at \$15 for an individual and \$25 for a family; motion carried.
- The club has been approached by the Arts Council to see whether it would be possible to combine some aspect of the Council with next year's Garden Club Tour (for example, exhibit pictures of gardens). The Garden Tour committee will discuss this.
- Dave Colwell said that we currently have both Squamish Garden Centres linked to our website. In return for this advertising, they give members a 10% discount. He suggested that the Club approach a number of businesses around town, offering to have their logo (with a link) on our website, and ask for a donation to the Club in return for the advertising. This could be directed towards the Garden Tour, which might making requests for donations easier, or could be year-round. Dave moved, seconded by Ellen Grant, that this be discussed at a meeting of the Executive: motion carried.
- The Club needs nominations for next year's executive. Carol (President), Carla Halvorson Burke (Vice-President) and Pauline (Secretary) have agreed to stand again. Dorte Froslev (Treasurer) will likely also re-offer. Nairn who has been on the Programme Committee for two years would prefer to stand down, as would Colleen Polowich. Sandra Kilby will stand again. Judy Crowston (Social) is not re-offering. The Garden Tour Committee will consist of Karen, Carla and Ellen.
- Christmas wreaths can be ordered up until November 8th. Ten-inch wreaths will cost \$20, and will be available at the December meeting (either the 3rd or 4th of December). Contact Carla to order.
- The Garden Club will be represented at the Seniors' Wellness Fair (November 7th, 9-1) and will share a table with WOW and other outdoor groups.
- Dot announced that she had a bougainvillea and a grapefruit tree available to anyone who wanted them.
- Nairn said that the speaker from Select Roses was not available for the November 19th meeting. In his place, Ferdinand Vandruska, from the Upper Cheakamus, will speak on "Biodynamics", a method of organic gardening and crop cultivation in which certain factors such as planetary and seasonal cycles are considered.
- She then introduced the evening's speaker, Chris Woods, the new director (as of September 2006) of the Van Dusen Botanical Garden. He is originally from England and began his apprenticeship in horticulture at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. He worked at three other gardens in the UK before moving to the US in 1981. There he has worked as Director and Chief Garden Designer of Chanticleer, Vice President for Horticulture and External Operations for the Santa Barbara Botanical Garden, and Executive Director of the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy in Ojai, California. He has been a consultant for a number of other gardens and horticultural projects. He has written numerous articles as well as *The Encyclopaedia of Perennials: A Gardener's Guide* (1992). In 2003 he was awarded the Professional Citation for significant achievements in public horticulture by the American Public Garden Association.

WELCOME
TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Joan Fawcett
Freda Hoff
Tim Marks



A Passion For Plants (October Speaker)

-His illustrated presentation was titled *A Passion for Plants*.

-(Note: it is difficult to describe this presentation satisfactorily, as it was based on wonderful pictures).

-He is of the opinion that it is important to look closely at plants and flowers just to see how marvellous they are. He illustrated this with close-up views of plants such as clover, coleus and ferns. One sees the extraordinary mystery of life looking at close-ups of plants. It is also important to pull back and look at plants from a distance. Spring is always a surprise. Some plants direct insects to their reproductive organs by designs on their flower parts. Plants can be architectural, for example, the seed pods of *Nigella*. He emphasised the exquisite purity of plants.

-Garden design is about seeing, and allowing the eye to be curious. One should look at the aesthetics of plant material (he illustrated this point with a picture of a bunch of leeks taken from below).

-Plants provide medicines (e.g., aspirin from willow). Many synthesised medicines are based on plant materials. Houses can also be built using plant materials.

-The way in which plants are put together is important. He showed illustrations from Chinese 14th-16th century garden representations. The aesthetics were paramount. There was a relationship between what we see in nature and what we use in our homes, a relationship between outside and inside. Often the view from inside looking out is so important. Gardens can be framed by a window, for example.

-Entrances to and exits from gardens are also important – he showed illustrations of moon gates in China. Often there is a religious or spiritual content in gardens.

-Gardens do not necessarily depend on a riot of colour for content, they can be subtle – he showed a moss garden in Kyoto, with shades of green, brown and cinnamon. In Europe the first gardens were walled medicinal gardens, frequently associated with religious organisations. The Italian garden motif has been carried around the world. In the 16th to 18th centuries, there was not a great diversity of plants used in gardens. Many were affected by wars, and were simplified to accommodate a smaller number of staff. The garden at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles is a modern version of a traditional Italian museum. He also showed a picture of a modern Italian garden in Thailand.

-Versailles is an example of a garden as grand architecture on a grand scale.

-In English garden design there is the concept of a formal garden close to the house, which gets wilder with distance from the house, and eventually merges into the landscape. Gardens were seen as the idea of heaven on earth, a celestial sphere. In the post-industrial revolution gardens were idealised and romanticised. The Arts and Craft movement brought in the concept of country living and cottage gardens. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries people looked at gardens in a “painterly” way, utilising form, texture and colour. This led to consciously created colour gardens.

-Arranging plants in a perennial border is extremely difficult, partly because the plants grow. People tend to overdo combinations of plants.

-He showed pictures of the Eden Project, in the UK, that is totally about conservation and sustainable use, an educational garden. However, one can have educational themes and still have a beautiful garden.

-He touched on sustainability – we need ¼ planets to support everyone in the world.

-He concluded by saying that gardening is about sitting back and dreaming about how beautiful you want your garden to be. Gardening is about the joy of living. It's about passion; it's about fertility; it's about changing styles; it's about sharing. Jump for joy

November Speaker

Ferdinand U. Vondruska, started his Bio-Dynamic life at the Zurich Waldorf School in Grade 4 when he was taught seeding wheat all the way to the making of bread. During the ten years at the Waldorf School, he attended gardening and farming classes every Wednesday afternoon for 4 hours. His study at Emerson College, Forest Row England under Prof. Dr. Herbert Koepf, a world renowned Bio-Dynamic capacity, is where he got his Diploma.

For 17 years, Ferdinand was also a Waldorf teacher before he settled with his wife Marcela in Paradise Valley, BC surrounded by the beauty of forests, mountains and the serenity of the wild Cheakamus River. Ferdinand has established himself here since 1985 and has actively been involved with studies and practices of Bio-Dynamic Preparation Making and composting for gardens, fields and forests. To date he still teaches and practices Bio-Dynamic preparation making and composting to heal the soils that surround us. He also teaches BD courses in Mexico, the US, Finland, Canada and many other countries. Through his traveling experiences around the globe and the many countries he has visited and lived in, he has devised a method of Bio-Dynamics that can quickly restore polluted and exhausted soils in almost any geographical area.

MERRY CHRISTMAS