



Newsletter

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October 2007



NEXT MEETING

Monday, October 15
6:30 pm
Railway Museum
Plant Exchange
SPEAKER
Chris Woods
"Passion for Plants"



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Letter From The Editor

Down the Garden Path

"Happiness is to hold flowers in both hands." Japanese Proverb

October, the month of falling leaves, has arrived in all its bold colors and fickle weather. Like clockwork the various trees step to center stage to take their final bows before winter drops the curtain on another year. From my kitchen window the brilliant yellow of the huge tree in a yard two house down the street glows in the dreary rain. Today I noticed that the Norway maple next door is taking on the rosy hues of autumn beneath its deep burgundy mantle. The deciduous azaleas are beginning their second season of color in shades of oranges and purples. It started slowly with just a leaf here and there standing out from the rest in rich contrast but now with cooler nights the grand parade has started in earnest. The rain just adds to the jewel tones of the season. When a few beams from the setting sun light up the leaves of my heucheras in a barrel on the patio it looks like a pirate's treasure lode. The flowers too seem to have a more vibrant glow in October. The blues of the asters and monkshood are electric against the yellow maples and the red dahlias and yellow grass complement each other. And the berries and rose hips string their necklaces through the borders. Have you noticed the number of burning bushes that now dot the gardens of the area? Ever since the Canadian Tire Mall used this plant near their entrance many home landscapes have joined in with their own display of this plant. Just as I love to tour the town in the spring to admire the displays of bulbs and flowering tree, so too is a trip through the valley a rewarding journey in the fall.

But all is not beautiful in the garden. We have four bears that are romping through the yard at all hours of the night and day. There are a mother and young cub, a wounded mid-sized bear and a very large male. They don't seem to care how many people are around. In fact one even tried to urinate on my husband as he tried to scare it out of the trees. Yesterday one stood up and peered through the window of our sunroom while my son's dogs barked frantically from the inside. Today we had had the big fellow at our front door in the mid afternoon while the mother and her cub joined us at suppertime on the back patio. Last year these critters feasted on blackberries and honey in the neighborhood but this year the berries have been cut down and the owners of the hives have electric fences around them. So the bruins are stripping my apple trees before the fruit is ripe and are even eating holly berries. I pick up any fallen apples and have picked the fruit that I can reach. Actually the bears do shake the tree. If I can get out there and scare them away, I get to keep the apples that have fallen. These are the ones on the top of the tree and they usually are the ripest and biggest. My uninvited guests also trample down the plants under the trees and along their pathways but since most of the flowers are near the end of their blooming period it isn't such a loss. I guess it is a matter of live and let live. I just worry that we are going to cross our paths at the wrong time and someone will get hurt. Even if they would only come at night I would be happier. When they want to stand by the family room window and watch us eat supper it is a bit unnerving.

Their presence reminds me that gardeners are actually the cornerstones of our culture and the guardians of our flora. It wasn't until our ancestors began growing crops and settling in co-operative groups that government and the arts were possible. In every culture plants seem to play not only a role in mankind's nourishment of body but also of mind and soul. The lotus plant, for example, is used in both Egyptian and far eastern countries as a symbol of the stages of life. In Grecian civilization the stylized Bears Breeches is used as ornamentation in columns.

Letter From The Editor Cont'd

in temples and many gods and goddesses share names with flowers we grow today. Jewelry, in the form of daisy chains and pottery adored with iris-like forms are found in ancient burial sites

I sometimes wonder what was in the first bouquet picked from the fields and woods and brought into a dwelling to brighten the abode. Plants have fascinated us since before we left our caves and the love affair goes on. Perfumes, spices, teas, balms, lotions, salads, fruit, grains, woods, grasses, mushrooms plants feed all our senses. How lucky we are to be gardeners!

Yes, and it even provides us with exercise. Now is the time to feed your lawn with fall fertilizer. It shouldn't have too high an amount of nitrogen (first number). The idea is to strengthen the roots for winter. October is the month to rake and compost your leaves, to bring in your tropical plants (before any frost) and lift tender bulbs, dry and store them after the first light frost and to tidy the garden of plant material that may make a gooey mess if left over winter. It is also the time to plant a fall cover crop and to mulch some of the more tender perennials. The suggestion to water your plants well before winter seems a silly joke with our recent weather but plants under eaves or large evergreen trees may need a good soaking. I know that Dave has just sent around quite a good list of thing to do with your beds at this time of year. It is also on our web site squamishgardeners.com but we have many members that do not have inter-net and must rely on the newsletter for their information. Remember that free inter-net access is available at the Library. When you are picking out a book, magazine or video why not check our web site if you don't have a computer at home. Dave has a great collection of gardening advice and all the back copies of our newsletters. By the way, where are all the pictures of members' gardens that you folks were going to send Dave to post on our web-site?

The executive have had a bit of a problem locating someone to provide the wreaths for our Christmas social at the Brackendale Art Gallery in early December. If you know of a source for these items could you please phone Carol. The speaker for the October meeting will be Chris Woods who's topic will be "Passion for Plants". Check your September newsletter for more details. The meeting will be preceded by our annual fall plant exchange at the Railway Museum. This begins at 6:30pm. Please try to label your plant material or be prepared to answer questions about your items. This is an excellent time to divide perennials or renew beds. You just might find an old plant that is no longer available in the garden centers. The regular meeting will begin inside in the meeting room at 7pm followed by the speaker.

Message From The President

The thorough notes taken by Pauline Lawrence are always a great way to see what your executive has been up to. Her notes of our monthly meetings and the speakers sure save me a lot of note taking. If you ever have any questions, please feel free to call (604 898 4264) or email (clrobson@telus.net) me. Our executive meetings are open to anyone who has an elected position or is on a committee. We have anywhere from 6 to 12 people attended to help make the decisions and give direction between meetings. Garden club members are active in a number of community organizations and bring a broad range of interests and abilities to the executive. We have been especially fortunate this year because the past president, Eleanor Bowcock, has guided the new executive and made our job much easier.

Greetings From Gary

Have you ever visited The Little Schoolhouse in Peachland? It's a delightful place with a nice garden. On Sunday's they serve a delicious afternoon tea and seasonal shortcake on their shaded, outside porch. And the price is very reasonable. Local artists display their work inside the schoolhouse for browsing and enjoyment.

Friends and I visited the Schoolhouse one Sunday afternoon in July. Imagine my surprise when a man's voice called my name! It was Gary Williamson and his wife Angela, former Garden club members, who moved to the Okanagan 3 years ago. (Gary was our President for several years.)

The Williamsons "love the Okanagan". Gary has re-done his garden since moving there and welcomes visitors. Just send them an e-mail (wags@telus.net) if you are traveling that way and would like to tour their garden. I'm sure you would be welcome. Below are photos of Gary & Angelas yard. Before & after.

Beth Fitzpatrick



Executive Meeting Minutes

Executive Meeting, September 20th, 2007

Present: Carol Robson, Nairn Stewart, Karen Chelswick, Carla Halvorson Burke, Pauline Lawrence

- Carol will work on a binder to formalize procedures for future executives. A binder will be made for the Garden Tour.
- **Speakers' Budget:** We have 9 speakers a year. A budget ranging from \$1,100 to \$1,500 was proposed. An approximate budget will be set aside – the Executive could be approached if additional funding is necessary. Speakers cost between \$100-300, plus travel expenses.
A policy is needed if members speak. Last year Ellen Grant gave a talk. Proposed by Carol and seconded but Carla that she be given a \$15 gift certificate.
- **Garden Tour proceeds:** Nothing has yet been given to the Friends of the Library. The raffle generated \$528. Gaming License - \$25, Printing Costs - \$57.81, Balloons - \$29.37, Carol's expenses - \$30, leaving a balance of \$386. Moved by Carol and seconded by Carla that this amount be given to the Friends. Passed.
- **Marina's gift:** a gift certificate from The Burrow has been suggested. It was decided to wait to consult with Eleanor re. past practices. Carol, Carla and Eleanor will make the decision.
- **Election of Officers:** This happens in November, with a call for nominations in October. Carol (President), Carla (Vice President), Karen (Co-chair of Garden Tour Committee) and Pauline (Secretary) are prepared to re-offer. Nairn (Programme) would prefer to step aside as she has been in charge of programmes for two years. However, she will stand again at a pinch. Carol will approach those not here (Dorte – Treasurer; Sandra and Colleen - Programme Committee; Judy Crowston – Social).
- **Garden Tour Date:** The Executive will propose June 22nd to the general meeting.
- **Other Business:**
 - Business cards. It was decided to ask Marina to print some, following Carol's design. These would be for distribution at events and other publicity.
 - Community Focus groups: the club has received an invitation to be represented (September 24th and 25th). Ellen Grant will be informed.
 - Christmas wreaths: These were supplied by Jennifer Parker last year. Judy Crowston may know how to contact her. We should start taking orders.
 - Meeting on October 15th at the Railway Park: We no longer have the contact there – Donna Forchuk. Sherry Elchuck has suggested that the maintenance man might stay late. Carla will contact Sherry to point out that Garden Club members have worked in the garden at the Museum in exchange for the venue. We also give donations to the Museum, and leave extra plants.
 - B.C. Council of Garden Clubs Fall Meeting, on Saturday October 27th: Chris Woods (speaking at our club in October) will be the keynote speaker. The membership will be asked who would like to attend. Carol will send out an e-mail.
 - Donations: we need to decide who receives donations. In the past we have given the B.C. Council Scholarship Fund \$100, the Railway Museum \$300, Lily's Garden \$200. In addition we donate subscriptions to the library for Fine Gardening and GardenWise (\$57.70). Karen will check on this.
- Meeting adjourned.



September Meeting Minutes

- Carla Halvorson Burke chaired the meeting, and opened by thanking members for weeding the library gardens. She welcomed new members Joan and Tim (?), and returning member Freda Hoff.
- Moira Biggin-Pound moved that the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted, seconded by Colleen Winterburn, passed by the meeting.
- As Dorte Frolev was away there was no Treasurer's Report, except that in the newsletter. Ellen Grant was also away, so there was no newsletter report. Dave Colwell reported that the minutes and newsletter were available on our website; he asked for pictures from the Fall Fair.
- The plant swap will precede the October meeting, which will hopefully be held at the Railway Park. Carol Robson will inform the membership if there is to be a change in the venue.
- Lois Sutherland, who ordered the Christmas wreaths last year is away.
- There will be a meeting of the Executive on Thursday, September 20th.
- Nairn Stewart reported on behalf of the Program Committee. The date for the Social in December will have to be confirmed when Dorte returns.
- On October 15 the speaker will be Chris Woods, the new director (as of September 2006) of the Van Dusen Botanical Garden. His topic will be A Passion for Plants. Mr. Woods 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 Encyclopedia 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.
- On November 19, Brad Jalbert of Select Roses in Langley will speak on the topic of roses. Select Roses was established in 1990, on the farm where Mr. Jalbert grew up. It is a farm-style nursery and greenhouse which specializes in hybridizing and growing beautiful garden roses. Mr. Jalbert has introduced at least 25 new rose cultivars, and is Western Canada's leading hybridizer of miniature roses. He is the author of the book, *Roses for British Columbia*, and co-author of *Roses for Washington and Oregon*. We hope that he will bring some roses that we can purchase at the meeting.
- Nairn then turned the meeting over to the Speaker, Gerry Gibbens. Mr. Gibbens worked for the Vancouver Parks Board, and then moved to Windsor Great Park in the UK, specialising in rhododendrons. In 1980 he started working at the Van Dusen Gardens particularly in the Himalayan Garden. He is president of the Alpine Gardens Club of B.C. His topic was Pruning.
- He began by referencing two books that are extremely useful: *Pruning and Training*, by Joyce and Brickell, a reference work that covers basic principles, and works through a wide variety of plants by genus and species; and *The Pruning of Trees, Shrubs and Conifers*, by George Brown.
- One of the most important aspects of pruning is using the proper tools, which should be sharp. Anvil pruners are not recommended, as they tend to crush the branch; by-pass cutters are preferable. They should be clean, otherwise infestations can be transferred. Lysol and bleach can be used to clean tools. Folding blades are good, safe and portable.
- Wounds should be cleaned after damage so that they can heal better.
- Pruning the wrong way can weaken a tree, and can introduce disease. Things to be studied include the manner in which a branch is attached, or the weight of leaves, etc. Pruning should not be haphazard.
- Suckers, out-of-place branches, damaged wood and criss-crossing branches should be pruned.
- The first principle is that dead, dying and diseased branches should be removed (including water sprouts – branches shooting straight up, that appear after damage or if the plant has been pruned at the wrong time. Note that maples should be pruned in late summer). Suckers appear at the base of the tree if it has been grafted, and grow from the root stock. Once these have been removed, the structure of the tree can be seen. Problems such as rubbing and crossing branches can then be identified. After pruning one ends up with a more open plant that is less resistant to wind. Branches should be well separated and at a good angle. Start when the tree is young to create a healthy structure.
- Never close a wound – let it heal naturally. A callus gradually works its way in and closes the wound.
- When pruning a shade tree, maintain the lower branches in order to allow the strength of the trunk to increase. The basics are: 1/3 tree cut, 1/3 tree pruned and 1/3 tree left as is. Prune close to the trunk where a callus can more quickly cover the wound. A good angle of attachment is important: a branch should be able to support itself. It is best to prune close to the collar at the base of the branch. The suggested angle is approximately 16° so that water will run off during callusing. If pruning with secateurs, always cut with the blade close to the trunk.
- When cutting large, heavy branches, first cut further out than the intended cut: undercut, then top cut down. This means that there is less chance of damage and tearing with the final cut as there is less weight.
- Be careful not to damage bark ridges.
- Prune to maintain a dominant leader – do not top trees! This is a death sentence for a tree as the centre will rot.
- Root pruning is usually done around the water line of the tree. Prune on a 3-foot gap basis. Two years later, cut areas that weren't cut the first time. Root pruning triggers root growth close to the trunk and increases stability.
- Up to 30% of live wood can be cut. Timing of tree pruning – late summer. Shrubs differ with different flowering times.
- Nairn thanked Mr. Gibbens at the conclusion of his talk.

