



Newsletter

Volume 9, Issue 7

September 2006

NEXT MEETING
Monday September 18
Squamish Library
7:00 pm
Water Wise
Gardening



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Letter From The Editor

Down the Garden Path

"When it comes to the end of a perfect day..."

Or maybe when it comes to the end of an almost perfect summer we can celebrate our successes and contemplate that even such a beautiful season has some problems. I, for one, am tired of watering my baskets. The timed released fertilizer that I used in May has run out and I seem to be just running the liquid stuff right through the baskets. Yes, I do water, and then fertilize but my petunias have given all they want to give! My attention is now turning to picking the bumper apple crop before the bears discover they are there. I usually feel the culls to some horses in the neighbourhood. This year they have gone to other pastures so I must deliver the bags to other destinations. Friends, that usually take several bags to freeze for pies have finally come home from holidays so I will be able to give some to them now. The Gravenstien apples are great for apple sauce, pies and just eating but they don't keep long. The King apples on the second tree, however, are winter apples designed to last, at least until Christmas, in a cool place. These are giant sized fruit but they should not be picked until the first frost has set the sugars. I love them stuffed with brown sugar, butter and raisins I don't know if I can keep the furry folk from the tree for that long. They have been spotted in the blackberry bushes at the end of the road so it is just a matter of time before they add apples to their diet.

This year we have had another adventure with animals. We have had turtles in the pond for years. They came from formers students who out grew their pets and they needed an adoptive home. We knew that they sometimes roamed into neighbour's yards but this summer, while having coffee with Glenda, we watched as a mother turtle dug a hole in her garden and laid her eggs. According to the internet they should hatch sometime in October. It isn't just plants that grow in our gardens!

But plants are the 'raison d'etre' of our pastime. This year seemed to be especially productive. The plants all out did themselves with blooms. The lilies, of all varieties, were especially beautiful. There was never so much rain that the pollen discolored the petals as is a common fault. However I did find that each species of flower lasted such a short time. If any fault could be found with the summer is would be that it didn't last long enough to relish each star in its bouquet. I remember enjoying a view from my bedroom window one day. Looking through the shade of the magnolia the sun highlighted hydrangea in pinks, mauves, and blues. The colors were repeated in astilbes, roses, hostas, clematis, Rose of Sharon, butterfly shrub and several fuchsias. They had all chosen to bloom at once. Never had I noticed such a display in this small space. But soon it was gone. Although I have a new camera, there were many scenes that I did not record thinking that I would have time 'tomorrow'. They are all stored up in my memory however and I'll be able to enjoy them in the wet winter but I can't share them with you.

Now that the air has that slight edge of fall in it and the sun's arc is sinking

Letter From The Editor Cont'd

lower in the sky, I notice that certain planters and baskets are actually reviving and having another round of blossoms. The baskets under the south facing eaves are now basking in the sun and the geraniums are coming into their own in that location. Similarly the begonias and fuchsias seem to like the cooler temperatures at night. They always seem to save their best blooms for the fall. Of course most of the ornamental grasses suddenly have their autumn spurt just before frost and now the asters and mums are beginning to add their hues to the rainbow days of September.



A strange thing happened this summer. I have a Sumac tree in the front yard. I love its shape, the club-like burgundy heads of blooms and, best of all, the autumn burst of leaf color. I am aware that this tree suckers badly but I had planted it between the driveway and the boulevard. What suckers didn't get mowed down were easily pulled out. This July we had some unusually windy days for our part of Brackendale and two of the trees branches became entwined. We decided to cut these limbs right back and thin out a couple of other long branches. That's when trouble started. The tree felt threatened and began sending out roots and shoots in all directions. It went under the pavement, it spread along the gas pipeline and it popped up in all the front plantings. It was persistent. But so was I! I've been pulling and cutting daily. It just goes to show that the purpose of all the growth we have in our gardens is not for our enjoyment or pleasure but for the survival of the species. We dead head annuals to force plants to grow more in order to set seeds. We prune so that shrubs and trees have to produce more fruit to ensure the propagation of a new generation of plants.

We root prune to force wisteria and other plants to bloom for the same reason. We use the plant's natural survival skills to our advantage as gardeners but sometimes we forget that the wrong cut at the wrong time can give us more growth than we bargained for (and more work too.)

After the long days of summer we are faced with the busy fall season with shorter days in which to do even more in our yards. Already I am starting to gather the fallen leaves. The dry weather has caused such trees as the cherries to start to drop their foliage. It is a welcome addition to the compost bin. They help to cover the corn cobs and tomato peels and the huge flow of garden waste. The dry component of compost is very important. It adds carbon and helps to aerate the mixture. It also keeps the odors down so the critters stay away from the pile. The amount increases save some and dig the leaves into the beds where you take out the annuals. By spring the leaves will have been recycled into humus to enrich your soil. Big leaves should be ground up with your lawn mower to help in the decomposing process.

Another chore I am waiting to do is fertilizing my lawn. I usually wait until the first good rains. This year the watering has leached the soil of nutrients so the fall feeding will help to strengthen the roots for winter and give the grass a head start for next spring. Remember too, to water and fertilize your broad leafed evergreen shrubs. These plants usually have shallow roots that can be damaged by drought. I have noticed that plants that get missed in the weekly watering may look O.K. but they fail to set flower buds for next year. This is one case where survival consists of conserving vitality for the mother plant instead of putting strength into flower production.

While you are out enjoying your gardens watch for perennials that need dividing. If they are over three years old they probably could benefit from being dug up, split into several pieces and the newest, strongest piece replanted in some enrich soil (compost, fertilizer bone meal etc.). Share the remainder with friends, neighbours or bring them

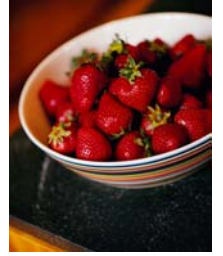


to our October meeting at the Railway museum for our plant exchange. This also is a great way to enlarge your beds or produce a mass planting. Repeating a planting in various parts of the garden adds continuity to the landscape. A plant that does well in your yard is worth repeating in another spot as the soil and sun conditions will be similar and you have a chance of repeating your success.

I hope that you have enjoyed your summer in the garden and that you are ready to come back to our meetings with ideas and experiences to share with others. If you have suggestions remember to pass them on to a member of the executive committee or voice your ideas or concerns at our monthly meetings.

Corner-post Pudding et al

I remember as a child the wonderful desserts that my aunt Gwen made from whatever mixture of berries and fruits were in season. She called them corner-post puddings because she said they contained what ever was ripe in the garden when she went to gather ingredients there. Strawberries, rhubarb, cherries, gooseberries, apples raspberries, blackberries, currants, plums were just some of the items that found their way into the bottom of the pudding bowl. The mixture was always different. When the dish was about filled 2/3rds. with the fruit mixture it was covered with a sprinkling of sugar and flour and topped with a short cake batter or sweet biscuit dough. After baking until the fruit bubbled and the crust was light brown it was served with cream, ice cream or soft custard. On special occasions the cake was a white one-egg recipe and the dish was turned upside down to serve from a fancy platter, similar to a pineapple up-side down cake. My sister-in-law makes a German dessert called a Kuchen that has the cake mixture on the bottom but she arranges apple, peach, pear or plum slices on top and places a strudel mixture of brown sugar, butter and spices over it all before baking. Another delicious fruit dessert is made with the fruit being placed in a deep pan or pot with a tight lid. The sugar, butter spices or lemon juice or citrus zest and some juice or water, about ½ a cup, are added and brought to a boil. In the meantime a dumpling dough (or thin biscuit batter) with a touch of sugar is mixed up. Drop from a tablespoon or ice-cream scoop into the gently boiling fruit mixture and cover tightly. Turn heat down to simmer Cook without peeking for 30-40 min. Serve immediately with a sauce of ice-cream. As you can see these recipes for the seasons' bounty can be adjusted to suit your tastes and what you have in your cupboard, freezer or garden. (Canned fruits, dried fruit and/or frozen items work just as well as winter nears). The added spices and toppings can be as inventive as you wish and all celebrate the abundance from the garden and hedgerow this harvest season.



Members' Help Needed

I really need the help of garden members. The Howe Sound High School Reunion (years up to 1962) are gathering September 15 to 17th. I am in charge of the table centers. The school colors are blue and gold. I had planned to use hydrangeas and various yellow daisy type flowers. But the blue hydrangeas in my garden have faded or turned to green and the deep blue monk's hood is not yet in bloom. If you have any blue or yellow flowers to spare could you please let me know at 898-3471 or drop them off at 41601 Grant Rd. on Friday Sept. 15 or Saturday morning at Totem Hall. If I could bum just a few blooms from many gardeners I should be able to concoct the 35 arrangements that are necessary.

BULBS

The Library has acquired several hundred spring bulbs used by the parks dept. last year. When the weather turns wetter and cooler, members may be called on to do a planting blitz to get these in the ground.



Meeting on September 18

Nairn Stewart will be the Squamish Gardeners next speaker on September 18, 7pm at the Squamish Library. Her topic will be: **Water Wise Gardening**. Drought tolerant gardening, or xeriscaping, has an ever-broadening appeal, and we can all benefit from this innovative form of gardening. Fellow member, Nairn Stewart, will give a well-informed slide presentation and she will bring books, as well as suggested readings, on the subject. Please come early and help tidy up the library gardens.

A \$5 admission for non-members gives you a chance to win the door prize.



THANK YOU!

A big thank you to all those people who helped with the Squamish Gardeners booth at the Brackendale Fall Fair held on September 9th.



COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION

Members should be on the look-out for businesses in the Valley who have especially attractive premises. Every year we give out certificates to two or three places that have added to the beauty of their surroundings and shared it with their customers and other residents and visitors. We will ask for suggestions at the September meeting.

Books and Bulbs

- ▶ **Recreating Eden** premieres Tuesday, September 12 at 7:30 pm. From Australia to France and from Toronto to Vancouver Island, these gardeners grow their own versions of paradise.
- ▶ On Tuesdays at 7:30 pm, beginning September 12, discover the distinctive ways that gardens can change people's lives. Each floral paradise in this sumptuous series tells a story about the gardener's life, family, ancestors and culture.
- ▶ The first episode of *Recreating Eden* transports you to Somerset, England, where a neglected, two-hectare garden stole one couple's hearts and convinced them to leave Vancouver Island to aid in its revival.
- ▶ Other episodes highlight a Belgian garden filled with rich family history, the healing garden of BC poets Patrick Lane and Lorna Crozier, and an environment-saving garden in a street-side ditch in Etobicoke, Ontario.
- ▶ With gardens plain or glamorous, sprawling or neatly kept, this series shows that a garden is whatever you make of it.
- ▶ These stories prove that even a single plant has the power to hold memories, provide healing, and transform lives.
- ▶ Help us spread the word about this engaging series! Your garden club is an important resource for gardeners in your community, and this series may be inspiring to you and your green thumb! We have also included a poster for you to pass along to club members or anyone else who might be interested in this vibrant series.
- ▶ On behalf of Knowledge Network, thank you for informing others about *Recreating Eden*, premiering Tuesday, September 12 at 7:30 pm!
- ▶ As British Columbia's public educational broadcaster, Knowledge Network delivers high quality, relevant, and compelling programming to all British Columbians on TV and the Internet. Find us on cable 5 in the Lower Mainland, cable 4 in Victoria, or check your local listings for other B.C. regions. Find us on the web at <http://www.knowledgenetwork.ca>.