

February 2024
Volume 13 No. 2

NEXT MEETING:

February 15th
in the Eagles Hall

Things to Remember

1. Your mug for the herbal tea or coffee.
2. A plant (or two, three, or more), or a garden item for the Sale table.
3. Those Library books that you borrowed.
4. Your membership renewal form and monies, if you have not renewed yet for 2024.



From Our President . . .

I continue to be in awe at the breadth and depth of knowledge within our club membership. The willingness to share and assist where possible lends strength to any undertaking. The sharing of questions, possible solutions and experiences could help us navigate the uncertainties that face us with unprecedented weather patterns.

As gardeners, we are aware that what we plant, where we plant it and how well we meet the various requirements of our chosen specimens makes the difference between failure and success. Questions become more difficult to answer if global systems are becoming somewhat chaotic. Along with these challenges are the requirements to be good stewards of the natural world.



I am slowly acquiring a wardrobe for my plantings! Netting, plastic, Remay, old sheets, mesh curtains, burlap, cloches and a few manufactured pop-up domes. Trouble is, I am not usually ahead of the game so both heat scald and frostbite have occurred. This is on a small, easily managed lot.

We will all be watching for snow pack levels, water supply and temperature fluctuations as the year unfolds. Let's hope the bees and worms do well, and the joys of gardening prevail.

Carol H.

Our Executive:

<i>President – Carol Henderson</i>	<i>Vice-president – April Johnston</i>
<i>Treasurer – Starla Parkin</i>	<i>Secretary – Trixie Neufeld</i>
<i>Membership – Bennye Miller</i>	<i>Speakers – Gail Wiseman-Reed</i>

Dear Ladysmith Saltair Garden Club Members

The Rotary Club of Ladysmith will be holding its annual garden tour on the last Sunday in May (May 26th). This is one of our larger fund-raisers of the year, with all proceeds going back into the community and funding international humanitarian projects.

Are there any members who would be interested in entering their garden this year, or could possibly recommend a garden to be featured? We like to include a variety of gardens from Saltair to Yellow Point, and showcase eight gardens each year. We are always looking for unique features and ideas.

The Garden Tour is a day enjoyed by couples and groups of friends. We like to carry on the tradition. We generally have a Master Gardener on site at a few of the gardens and, of course, at least one of our members is at each garden to act as chaperone and assist with parking, etc.

We often include a local artist at the garden to showcase their works. It is a pleasant addition enjoyed by many.

Please let me know if you, or someone you know, would be interested in entering their garden.

Joan Phillips
Rotary Club of Ladysmith
(250) 245-8104
(250) 327-6220
joph@telus.net

Floating Lanterns to celebrate the New Year – a better option than floating lanterns.

Have you come across an unusual garden or a very elegant but elder tree during your travels?

Could you share a picture, and the story of that special place?
Email clfletcher@protonmail.com



MEMBERSHIPS

IT'S TIME TO RENEW

Our Annual membership fees are valid from September to August.

Membership Fees:

Individuals - \$25.00

Family - \$40.00 includes 2 adults, children under the age of 19,
or students living in the same household

Payment Options:

1. Pay with Cash in person at a meeting.
Please fill out a printable membership form to bring with you.
2. Pay by cheque to Ladysmith Saltair Garden Club .
Please fill out a printable membership form, and bring it with your cheque.
3. Pay online via E-transfer: LSGCmembership@gmail.com.
Please submit an online membership form. (see *Clixk Here*)

We're looking forward to seeing you again !

Our February Speaker:

Colen Henson Owner of Dancing Frog Farm

I have a passion to grow food and help people get a good start with their gardens.

I specialize in growing organically grown vegetable transplants that I sell through my Facebook page, Dancing Frog Farm – Nanaimo.

At this time in my farm life, I mostly sell tomatoes and peppers, plus a few bee-attracting flowers.

I have been working in the industry for more than 35 years.

I will be speaking about how I grow tomatoes: Starting from seed, transplanting to the first pot and into the garden or pots, and fertilizing.
Add additional fertilizer mid-season.



(Alert to Members- our speaker will be bringing items to sell)

CLUB NEWS

Volunteers Needed

for Set Up & Clean Up
for our meetings.

- * February 15th meeting:
- * Doors open at 6:00 to set up, and for tea
- * Meeting starts at 7:00



THANK YOU

to the members who have volunteered
to bring Snacks to our February Meeting:

Lynne Fletcher
Sandra Lee

THANK YOU

to our members who have volunteered
for the Sale Table
at our February Meeting:

April Johnson
Bryan Henderson

THANK YOU

to our members who have volunteered
to be Greeters and provide Orientation
for New Members
at our January Meeting:

Linda Stephensen

Vancouver Island Master Gardeners

Spring Education Day: **How to Build**

Healthy Soil – Presenter Tamara Dinter

Saturday, March 2 from 11:00 am to 2:30 pm

Nanoose Place Community Centre

2925 Northwest Bay Road, Nanoose Bay

Cost: By donation

To Register: email vicepresident@vimga.org

NOTICE BOARD

Nanaimo Seedy Sunday

Sunday, March 3 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm
Nanaimo District Secondary School
355 Wakesiah Avenue, Nanaimo
60 confirmed vendors with an array of seeds,
plants, locally produced and information
galore! We hope to see you there.
You can learn even more gardening tips and
tricks!

Info: jennie.wharton@nanaimofoodshare.ca

Seedy Saturday Comox Valley

Saturday March 2 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm
Florence Filberg Centre, 411 Anderton Ave.
Courtenay, BC

Seedy Saturday Comox Valley turns 25 this
year. Join the Comox Valley Growers and
Seed Savers Society and 40 vendors for seeds,
supplies and information. Food and snacks are
available on site. The seed exchange will also
be selling and swapping a variety of locally
collected seeds.

Contact: cvseedsavers@gmail.com

More information: cvgss.org

Duncan Seedy Sunday

Sunday March 24 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
Si'em' Lelum Gymnasium, 5574 River Rd.
Duncan

Join us for our annual spring seed market
featuring seeds and plants from local farmers,
kid's activities, food trucks, workshops, and
community fun!

Contact: hannahsophia@cowichangreencommunity.org

Info: www.cowichangreencommunity.org

Good name for dandelions:
'Golden Misfits'

--northstoke.blogspot.com

NOTICES

Ladysmith Saltair Garden Club

Upcoming Program & Events 2024

March 20, 2024

Care of Rhodos.
Chris Southwick.

April 18, 2024

Hanging Baskets.
Alex Limberis.

May 16, 2024

My Favourite Vegetables & How to
Grow Them.
Dorothee Kieser.

A Reminder . . .

February is the second most perfect month to take time out to sort and tidy your seed stash/box/bag, and to get ready for the coming planting season.

If you have extras of any type of seed, could you package it up and bring it along to our February meeting to donate to the LSGC Seed Basket ?



My Garden Bible:

www.westcoastseeds.com/pages/request-catalogue



O! thoughtless Dandelion, to be misled
By a few warm days to leave thy natural bed,
Was folly growth and blooming over soon.
And yet, thou blasted yellow-coated gem,
Full many a heart has but a common boon
With thee, now freezing on thy slender stem.

—George Marion McClellan (1860–1934)

HAVE YOU EVER . . .

Have You Ever Spied This ?

Sansevieria trifasciata

In similar vein to aspidistra, snake plants are tolerant of a certain degree of neglect. They do not require a great deal of water and also survive well in low light. They are known to be effective in purifying the air, removing toxins and pollutants from the atmosphere.

It has been noted that snake plants have several health benefits, such as relieving headaches and alleviating eye irritation and respiratory problems. In addition, these plants are said to improve concentration and increase productivity. As they remove carbon dioxide from the air and give out oxygen, they are good plants to have in a bedroom.

Advocates of feng-shui claim that snake plants bring good luck and positive energy or chi, and place them in corners of rooms or at their entrances.

I discovered *Sansevieria Velvet Touchz* quite by chance and was intrigued by the brightly coloured tips. I failed to delve into the reasons and found later that the colours are entirely artificial, the leaves having been dipped into paint that resembles velvet when dry. Basically, they are painted ladies!

Other names for *Sansevieria* include mother-in-law's tongue, good luck plant and golden bird's nest. They are toxic to pets – and people - if consumed in large quantities but our animals have got past the chewing plants stage!

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Bees Can Make Plants Flower

Did you know – bumblebees can force plants to flower by biting their leaves. Scientists studying the common European bumblebees and their larvae found that when the bees and the larvae emerge in the spring they only eat pollen. If plants are not flowering at that time, the bees will bite them, and somehow those incisions speed up the emergence of pollen laden flowers.

When the scientists tried to copy this behavior and mark the leaves, and the plants did bloom earlier, but not as early as they had done for the bees!



... October 2020 *National Geographic*

ALL ABOUT SEEDS

Garden Planning Before You Start Your Seeds

*Ideas From the Charles Dowding website:
“10 ways to succeed more easily”*

1. Choose a soil method to increase your success - no dig can work well.
2. Plan for weed control - stay ahead of upcoming weed growth, with a little and often weeding.
3. Know and prepare for likely pests, such as root flies, leaf miners, caterpillars, slugs, rabbits.
4. Know your climate and adapt to weather as it happens especially an excess or shortage of rain.
5. Make a list of what you hope to eat, then work out timings for planting, including summer sowing!
6. Buy seeds, read the variety descriptions carefully, and buy seed potatoes, they're easiest to grow!
7. Discover the best timings for each vegetable, and beware of random “advice” that may not work in your climate zone.
8. Learn about propagation, it's an economical way to expand the garden.
9. Buy fleece for warmth in spring (25-30 gsm), and mesh to protect from pests.
10. Learn and document harvest timings and methods for different vegetables.



Apricot Twist, Empress of India
and Strawberries & Cream
nasturtiums
(clockwise from top left)

Nasturtiums

A quick and easy annual to grow, nasturtiums not only look good, they taste good, too. They can also be tough little survivors in the autumn months, hanging in there until the big frosts come along. The two most common species are *Tropaeolum majus*, the trailing type or *T. minus*, the bush type. Trailing Nasturtiums have bigger flowers and leaves but don't produce as many flowers as the bush varieties do. Great in hanging baskets, or cascading over the edge of a raised bed, they can also be trained to climb a fence or pole. Bush-type plants work well in window boxes, pots or for edging a path. The large seeds usually germinate within a week, and flower a month later, so these are great plants for children to grow. They can be started indoors, but their taproots may be difficult to transplant. They prefer cool, damp locations, but flower best in full sun. Nasturtium leaves tend to attract aphids, these can be knock off with a brisk spray, or if needed, insecticidal soap. Some favourites:
'Apricot Twist' 3-4 ft. double flowers.
Jewel of Africa mix 4-6 ft. includes yellow, red, cream, & pink.
'Empress of India' 1-2 ft. bright scarlett, large flowers.
Tip Top Alaska mix 10", mixed colours with variegated leaves.
'Strawberries & Cream' 12" pale yellow.

HUMMINGBIRDS

Planning For the Hummers

For hummingbirds, red is a welcome sight, an appetizing come-on to a delicious meal of nectar. While hummingbirds will feed from flowers of all colors, they are especially tempted by the red and the tubular. A combination of annuals, perennials, and vines help to create a well-rounded hummingbird garden.

Beardtongues (*Penstemon* species and hybrids, zone 4/5) come in many colors (pink, red, yellow, blue) and all attract hummingbirds. They grow best in full sun and are drought tolerant once established. Heights range from 1-3 feet tall. Well-drained soil is a must.

Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*, zone 3) is another perennial, perfect for a sunny to part sunny spot with moist soil. This stately plant (grows to 4 feet tall) has deeply saturated red flowers and new hybrids come in many shades of pink and burgundy.

Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*, zone 4) is a native perennial that grows best in part to full sun. Delicate red and yellow flowers perch above deeply lobed, gray green foliage. Hybrid columbines in many other colors (yellow, blue, purple) will also attract hummingbirds.

Fuchsias (*Fuchsia* hybrids) are frost-tender perennials that prefer cool weather and grow best in part shade with good air circulation. They come in many shades of orange, red, and pink, and grow well in containers, hanging baskets, or in the ground.

Giant hyssop (*Agastache* species and hybrids, hardiness varies from zones 4-6) comes in many colors (orange, pink, purple). These fragrant perennials appeal to hummingbirds, and giant hyssop is sometimes called hummingbird mint. These plants require excellent drainage; flowers will be most abundant in full sun.

Red beebalm (*Monarda didyma*, zone 4) might as well be called red hummingbird balm. Hummingbirds can't get enough of this plant and will visit each slender red tube in succession. Grow bee balm in full sun to part shade.

Trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*, zone 4) is a fast growing, drought tolerant vine for full sun. The orange-red flowered varieties are generally more floriferous than yellow and are more appealing to hummingbirds. A vigorous grower that can reach 40 feet, needs a very sturdy trellis or arbor to support its growth. Be sure to place this vine where it will not quickly grow out of bounds.

These are just a small sampling to whet your appetite and the appetites of your local hummingbird population. Consider the salvias, red hot poker, Indian paintbrush. Think tubular, think reddish, and you're well on your way to creating a little piece of hummingbird heaven.



SPRING PLANTING TIPS

For gardeners, spring can't come soon enough and many of us have been guilty of jumping the gun and starting our seeds way too early inside. A terrific method for starting seeds that can be done earlier is milk jug winter sowing, which is basically sowing seeds in a milk jug that becomes a mini greenhouse. You can recycle plastic milk jugs, but a better use for them is to repurpose them for milk jug winter sowing. This is a low maintenance way to start seeds earlier than you thought possible. The sealed jug acts as a greenhouse that allows the seeds to germinate several weeks ahead of direct sowing. The plants are sown in their mini greenhouse outside, eliminating the need to harden seedlings off. The seeds also go through a period of stratification which is necessary for some types of seeds to germinate.

Milk jugs are usually the preferred vehicle for this type of sowing, but you may also use any semi-transparent plastic container (apparently the semi-opaque milk containers work as well) that has room for at least 2 inches (5 cm.) of soil and at least 4 inches (10 cm.) for growth. Some other ideas are juice jugs, strawberry containers, and even rotisserie chicken containers. Rinse out the milk jug and punch four drainage holes into the bottom. Cut the milk jug horizontally at the bottom of the handle working your way around the circumference; leave an inch (2.5 cm.) or so to act as a hinge at the handle.

Use either a soilless seed starting mix or any potting mix that has been sifted to remove any large chunks of bark, twigs or rocks and has been amended with perlite, vermiculite or, ideally, sphagnum moss. If using a potting mix, make sure it has no fertilizer which can burn the seedlings. The most ideal seed starting medium for milk jug winter sowing is 4 parts screened aged compost to 2 parts

perlite or vermiculite, and 2 parts peat moss. Fill the bottom of the jug with 2 inches (5 cm.) of slightly damp medium.

Plant the seeds according to the package instructions. Replace the top of the milk jug and seal it as best you can with tape; packing tape works best. Place the containers in a sunny area outdoors. Keep an eye on the containers, so if temperatures dip, you can cover the jugs with a blanket at night. Water the seedlings lightly if they dry out. When temperatures hit 50-60 F. (10-16 C.), especially if it is sunny, remove the tops of the jugs so the seedlings won't fry. Cover again in the evening.

When the seedlings have produced at least two sets of true leaves, it is time to transplant them into individual containers to allow the roots to grow and then transplant them into the garden. Seeds that require cold stratification, hardy perennials and hardy annuals and many native plants can be started in milk jug seed pots in early to mid-winter. Cold crops like brassicas, native plants and wildflowers that require short periods of stratification, heirloom tomatoes and many herbs can be started using this method in late winter through early spring. Tender annuals and summer vegetable crops that require warmer temps to germinate and don't reach maturity until late summer (tomatoes, peppers, basil) can also be started in milk jugs during this time or later.

Information on seed packets will also help you to figure out which seeds should be planted when. 'Direct sow after all danger of frost has passed' becomes code for plant in late winter/early spring, and 'start indoors 3-4 weeks before average last frost' means sow in milk jugs in mid to later winter, while "sow 4-6 weeks before average last frost" indicates planting time in early to mid-winter. Lastly, remember to clearly label those jugs !

Tips from Brian Minter for February Gardens

1. *Sprouting Seeds:*

A question about seeds not sprouting well or at all led to a comment that seeds sold in Canada are tested for germination rates by the government, and the rates should be noted on the packages.

- Timing for starting is most important, and late is often better than too early.
- February is a good month to start cool weather vegetables, such as the giant onions (Valeda), early lettuces and broccoli, as well as pansies or violas.
- Use clean, disinfected containers, and a professional seed starter. Keep the seed tray warm, and water them with warm water. Cover the pots with newspaper, and plastic to keep them moist, just until the seeds sprout. Then remove the coverings and move them to a bright spot.
- As the small sprouts grow, slowly reduce the temperature around them. When they're big and strong enough to go outside, be sure to harden them off or keep them in a cold frame setting till warm weather arrives.

2. *Pruning Fruit Trees*

- Older trees (such as cherries) need a spring pruning to keep them shaped into an open vase shape, that lets sunshine and air into the middle of the tree.
- With younger trees, newer branches that are heading straight upward can be redirected by weighing the tip down to a more horizontal direction, using a small sand bag or other weight.
- Early Spring is the best time to apply a fine spray of sulfur and dormant oil, after 8 hours of dry weather.

3. *Pruning Flowering Shrubs*

Prune these ones after they have finished blooming, and shape them for their space.

4. *Dead cedar hedging shrubs*

If your hedge has one or more dead shrubs, spring is the time to remove those, and plant replacements that have been grown in pots.

It is possible to take a living one from the end of the hedge to replace the one removed, but can be tricky to dig out a good root ball without disturbing roots of the shrubs beside that one. Be sure to replace the soil with new compost, and feed and water the shrub(s) carefully during their first year.



“Like a suspension in time,
the protected space of a
garden allows our inner
world and the outer world
to co-exist free
from the pressures of
from the pressures of
everyday life . . .
there can be no garden
without a gardener,
a garden is always the
expression of someone’s
mind and the outcome
of someone’s care.

-from

“The Well Gardened Mind”
Sue Stuart-Smith

