

January 2025
Volume 15 No. 1

President's Message January 2025

NEXT MEETING:

January 16th
7:00 pm

Things to Remember for the Meeting:

1. Bring one or more **plants** potted up for our Plant Table, if you so choose. Small tools are welcome, too.
2. Bring your cup or mug for our break time treat tasting!
3. If you have not renewed your **membership**, bring your cheque book.



With the sudden influx of mail after the strike, I was delighted to receive a seed catalogue which then prompted me to get out my seed collection and my Gardeners Journal. All these items were spread out on the dining room table and remained there for about 3 days. I did list a few seed types for renewal and intend to follow up by placing an order. Mostly, I got “lost” in looking at the dated journal entries for the last 17 years.

My entries aren't precise and quite rare in the January section. On Jan.15th, 2010, I commented on the “almost Spring like weather with sunny skies and a 10 degree day. Heavy rains the previous week and buds popping out.” Being a little younger then, I note that I started cleaning up the clematis, raspberries and a climbing rose. Where has the (misplaced) energy gone? By 2015, I had waited until February 1st to tackle the raspberries.



I just reread a glued in, undated column by Helen Chesnut. It starts with “Uncertainty is the name of the gardening game in February. Will it be a month of continuing winter or a glimpse of early spring?” As with many of us, Helen stated hopes of getting her garden cleaned up post-winter and ready for pre-season preparations. Can I just wish all the mess away? I then read that all the jobs I was planning for back in January 2010, were on Helen's list for early February. I no longer jump ahead but wait to see which weather system is prevailing. My February 3rd, 2017 entry “ridiculous amount of snow”, Feb 4th and 5th “snow continues” while in 2015, notes of “snowdrops and cyclamen and returning primroses in bloom.”

While the fluctuations require minor adaptations, we have had few extreme weather events so far compared with many areas suffering very challenging conditions. We are indeed fortunate. Recognizing that the climate is favourable for a wide range plant growth brings the topic of invasive plants into focus as these invaders can take over so readily.

DECEMBER MEETING

President's Message January 2025 *continued . . .*

Our January speaker, Hunter Jarratt, will address ways in which we can be good custodians.

As always, the garden provides us with so much food for thought and calls to action.

"The deeper a man digs for knowledge in his garden, the more he realizes that he has only scratched the surface." Unknown

Carol



**Pictures from the
Christmas Pot Luck Social,
Thursday December 19th . . .**

DECEMBER MEETING



DECEMBER MEETING



Lots of good food, Christmas fun and gifts!
Pictures from Marianne Hsieh

CLUB NEWS

Volunteers Needed
for Set Up & Clean Up
for Jan. 16th meeting.



- * Set up starts at 6:15 for the tables & chairs
- * Doors open at 6:30 for members, to bring their Plant Table items, Library books and to visit.
- * Meeting starts at 7:00 sharp !

IT'S A NEW YEAR

Our **Garden Club** year begins in September, and runs to June 2025, so this is the perfect time to renew you membership!
Our Membership Table will be set up, ready and waiting for you along the back wall.

THANK YOU

Thanks to Barb and Mi for preparing the Coffee and Tea for our breaks. Please remember to bring your mug (or cup) for the break.

*Thanks to our members
Carmen and Haydi
for bringing treats for our
January meeting!*



NOTICE BOARD

Central Vancouver Island Orchid Society

January General Meeting:

Sunday, January 19 from 11:00am to 2:00pm
Royal Canadian Legion Mount Benson
Branch: 1630 E Wellington Road, Nanaimo
Doors open at 11:00pm with a brief business meeting starting at 12:00pm. Following is a display of plants brought in by members, a coffee break.

Guest speaker: Sasha Kubicek - Native Orchids of Vancouver Island Through the Seasons.

Comox Valley Horticultural Society

Monthly Meeting:

Guest Speaker Brian Minter

Sunday, January 20th at 7:00pm via ZOOM
Brian's topic: *What's new, interesting and exciting for our gardens in 2025*

Advanced registration for Zoom is required for both members and non-members.

Non-members (\$5.50)– visit our website at www.comoxvalleyhortsociety.ca by 5:00pm on Friday, January 17th, requires two days to process.

21st Annual Qualicum Beach Seedy Saturday

Saturday. February 1st from 10:00 am to 3:30pm

Qualicum Beach Civic Centre,
747 Jones St. Qualicum Beach
Picture a large hall full of seed vendors, plant vendors, advice from Master Gardeners, educational displays, demos, children's activity and the Seedy Cafe.

Admission: by donation.

For more information, please check out our website: www.qbseedysaturday.ca

NOTICES

Ladysmith Saltair Garden Club **Upcoming Program & Events 2025**

January 16, 2025

Invasive Plants
Jarratt Hunter

February 20, 2025

Protecting Our Trees in Changing Times
Bartlett Tree Service

March 20, 2025

Xeriscaping & Drought Tolerant Plants
Zac Kregosky

April 17, 2025

Gardening For Your Site & the Seasons
& for Ease of Maintenance
Barrie Agar

May 10, 2025

Annual Plant Sale
Aggie Hall

May 15, 2025

Feeding the Soil: Composting,
Vermiculture, & Liquid Fertilizer
Malcolm Ho You

June 2025

Annual Year End Potluck

* At some point this month you will notice primroses appearing in garden centres. They will flower for the longest possible time if displayed in a sheltered place outdoors, next to glass doors on a patio, balcony or deck, where they can stay cool and be enjoyed from inside the home. Create a colourful display with a few of the plants together on a plant tray or in a basket.



A Tip from Helen Chesnut . . .

Helen's column in the Victoria paper reminded all gardeners that January should be a 'rest time', a chance to rest one's mind and body before making plans for the upcoming months.

After a suitable amount of time enjoying the new seed catalogues, and perhaps a trip to a local seed rack to pick up something new or just to refill the regular items, then it time to start your planning for this year's garden.

Helen listed some very specific jobs to get this season started:

- * Take a slow tour around the garden, note pad and pen in hand. Look for changes you'd like to make.
- * On useable outdoor days, take care of tidying projects.
- * If you have grape or kiwi vines, prune them this month, before the sap begins rising in them at the first hints of warmth. Once the sap is flowing, pruning cuts bleed profusely. Wisteria can also be pruned in January. Shorten new growth on side shoots to two buds.
- * Make a list of vegetables and flowers the family most want to grow. Make a list of seeds to purchase. Seeds from previous year stored in dry, dark, cool conditions should still be viable. Exceptions are onion, leek, corn, parsley, larkspur, tender geranium (Pelargonium), salvia and verbena. Keep these for this year and only one more year.
- * Make a list of supplies needed for the upcoming year.

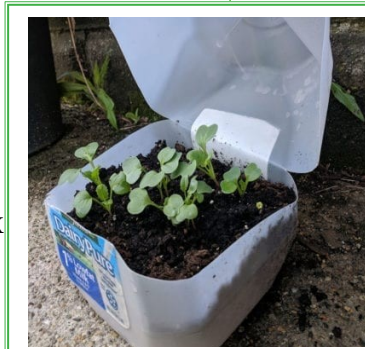
SPRING PLANTING TIP

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. In January, 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 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. . . .Cont'd. on page 8

MEMBERSHIP

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

We encourage you to use our e-transfer option as to avoid lineups.

Payment Options

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

Please go to our website <https://www.ladysmithsaltairgc.com/membership.html>
for more information

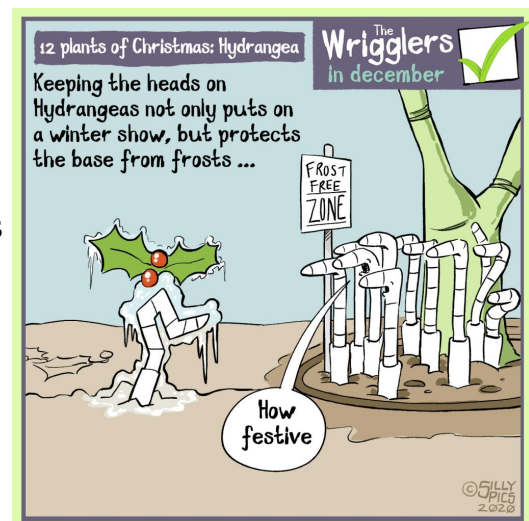
We're looking forward to seeing you again !

Spring Planting Tip *cont'd* . . .

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. '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, but most importantly, remember to clearly label your seeds !

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/propagation/seeds/milk-jug-winter->



RECIPES

Double-Deep-Chocolate Hanukkah Layer Cake

Cake:

¾ cup vegetable oil (olive oil)
¾ cup unsweetened cocoa powder (not Dutch process) & more for dusting pans
1 cup water
¾ cup unsweetened coconut milk
3 large eggs (warmed in water 5 min.)
1 ½ tsp. Vanilla extract
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 ¾ cups sugar
2 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
¾ tsp. Salt

1. Heat oven to 350° with rack in the middle. Oil pans & line bottoms with rounds of parchment paper. Dust side with cocoa powder.
2. Whisk together water, coconut milk, oil, eggs & vanilla in a bowl til smooth.
3. Sift together flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking soda & powder, & salt in a large bowl. Add wet ingredients to flour mixture & whisk until smooth.
4. Divide batter between pans, & bake til tester comes out clean & layers just begin to pull away from the side of pans, 25 to 30 min.
5. cool layers in pans on a rack 30 min., the run a thin knife around the edges & invert cakes onto rack. Remove parchment paper. Cool completely.



Ganache Frosting:

2 ¼ cups unsweetened coconut milk
4 cups (24 oz.) semisweet chocolate chips (Costco chips are dairy free)
2 tsp. Instant coffee powder
2 ½ tsp. Vanilla extract

1. Combine coconut milk, chocolate chips, & coffee powder in a heat-proof bowl. Set bowl over a pan of simmering water. Heat, whisking occasionally til chocolate is melted and smooth. (Alternately: microwave for 2 ½ min., then whisk.)

Remove bowl from pan, whisk in vanilla.

2. Chill frosting, stirring occasionally, til slightly thickened & spreadable, about 2 hr. (Quick-chill: put bowl into the freezer & stir occasionally til thickened, 20 to 30 min.)

3. To assemble cake, spread frosting generously between layers & over top & sides.

Cook's Notes:

* If frosting becomes too thick to work with, warm over a pan of simmering water, then chill again.

* Cake layers improve in flavour if made ahead. Chill between layers of parchment, wrapped in plastic. 1 day or freeze 1 week. Frost while layers are still cold.

... With Thanks to Gail Wiseman



WINTER RECIPES**NOTICES****White Bean & Kale Soup**

(a slow cooker recipe)

- 1 lb. Green Kale
- 1 medium Yellow Onions
- 6 Green Onions
- 15 oz. cannellini beans, canned, drained
- 42 oz. vegetable stock
- 15 oz. tomato purée
- 1/2 cup converted rice
- 2 tsp. Basil
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 ½ tsp. kosher salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Freshly grated Parmesan cheese, for garnish
- Olive oil, for serving

Combine ingredients in your slow cooker (keep cheese and olive oil for serving).

Cook time: 5 - 7 hours

Creamy Ham and Cheddar Soup

- 4 cups water
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 1/2 cups ham, cooked and cubed
- 1 1/2 cups celery, diced
- 1 1/2 cups carrots, diced
- 1/2 cup onion, finely diced
- 2 teaspoons lemon dill
- 2 teaspoons dried parsley
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 2 cups milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded

1. In a large pot, simmer water, broth, ham, vegetables, dill & parsley for 30 min., til done.
2. In small pot, melt butter, whisk in flour til smooth, add milk & stir until thickened. Stir in salt, pepper & cheese, then add to soup.

VIMG**Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop: Winter Session**

This is the 2nd of the 2 fruit tree workshops for interns. Please register ASAP as it is on a first-come-first-served basis, and hands-on participants will be limited to 15. Interns get priority for the hands-on practice, but ALL ARE WELCOME to observe and learn. Barrie Agar will do a presentation, and will offer supervised practice on a couple of trees. Please note the possible dates: winter being what it is, and bud break being what it is, the date won't be known until about the 2nd week in January. Registration is not a commitment, but to indicate interest given that the dates are variable.

**Vancouver Island Regional Library
Virtual Gardening Seminars****Dorothee Kieser: Unusual Vegetables**

Monday, February 3 from 6:30pm to 8:00pm

Please register by e-mail to Jo Canning suncoastpearl@gmail.com. The session will be recorded and both sessions will be offered on the VIRL Virtual Gardening Series. Handouts will be offered to registrants, and Jo will send them electronically.

Looking forward to seeing you!

Place: Dorothee Kieser's farm (address will be sent to registrants)

Winter does her own pruning.
And I think that, as the new year begins
I might well do some pruning in my own
life, keeping the essentials, the real values
and letting go the part that is no longer
contributing to the growing time of
my spirit.

Gladys Taber