



LSGC Snippets

March 2024
Volume 13 No. 3

NEXT MEETING:

March 21st
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 . . .

Mid March blessed our local area with beautiful sunshine and temperatures that encouraged bumblebees to visit heathers and Pieris, and beckoned gardeners outside to reassess what needs to be done before the active growing season really sets in.

Local Seedy Saturdays and Sundays, which began nearby in February, continue to provide us with opportunities to visit vendors and experts and to learn from others. A gardener's need for one more plant is seemingly never satisfied.

Winter damage combined with the long dry periods last summer has left some established plants in a sad state. Seeing a green stem, bloom or leaf bud leads us to hope the plant will survive. Sourcing replacements will likely lead to seeking out more resilient varieties.

For many, shopping for plants is more pleasure than pain.

When in the company of Garden Club members we could well have answers to our questions and quandaries within the group or from a Speaker. Share your experience and expertise.

May this Spring be a time of learning, renewal, hope and growth.

"Spring is sooner recognized by plants than by men."
Chinese proverb.

Carol H.



Our Executive:

*President – Carol Henderson
Treasurer – Starla Parkin
Membership – Bennye Miller*

*Vice-president – April Johnston
Secretary – Trixie Neufeld
Speakers – Gail Wiseman-Reed*

FEBRUARY MEETING

Minutes of the February 15, 2024 Ladysmith Saltair Garden Club.

By alternate secretary Pam Fraser
68 in attendance

President Carol Henderson opens meeting at 6:53.

- new members identified.
- Lynne Fletcher - prepares our newsletter - Saltair Snippets
- Marianne Hsieh - does our website
- Jim Tredwell, with Mary Ann, manages our website
- Linda Stephenson - is our greeter tonight

Volunteers requested for a club table at Seedy Saturday in Saltair, 10 - 2, March 9, 2024.

Volunteer	Hours
Carmen Dolinsek	10 - 2
Ione Brown	12 - 2
Linda Whitten	12 - 2

Speaker - Colen Henson - from **Dancing Frog Farm** - get in touch by e-mail -
dfrogfarm@gmail.com

Topic - growing TOMATOES

Visit club's facebook page for pictures of products mentioned during talk -
[Ladysmith/SaltairGardeningClub](#)

Visit Dancing Frog Farm facebook page [Dancing Frog Farm-Nanaimo](#) for:

- list of what vegetable starts available
- follow the facebook page for sale dates at the farm stand at Dancing Frog Farm, 2280 Gomerich Rd.
- Pre- ordered veggie starts ready for May

Tomato Seed sprouting -

- start seeds in plug trays (Colen later gave lots away)
- fill plug trays with soil, use a seedling mix, NOT regular garden soil. Colen uses Pro Mix Seedling mix and adds some perlite.
- sweep off top of plug tray with brush
- one seed per plug hole
- add more soil on top
- put on a heating mat at 70 degrees
- check twice daily - plug trays dry out quickly - water when needed.
- have a fan to keep air circulating
- water both under and over head, when overhead watering use a fine spray

FEBRUARY MEETING

Tomato Transplanting -

- first to 2.5" to 3" pot
- once seeds have sprouted in plug trays, put tray in water. Pull out sprout from bottom of stem. Use small tools like lobster/crab picks/ hors d'oeuvre fork to help dig out sprouts.
- plant sprouts in potting soil in 2.5" to 3" pots
- second transplanting to much larger pot where plant will be for rest of growing season. (note: go from plug tray, to 3" pot to large pot to foster good root growth.)
- make a hole in the planting soil, sprinkle in some of the following fertilizer mix:
 - 3 cups lime
 - 2 cups 4-13-0 granulator fertilizer or granular bone meal
 - 2 cups 4-3-7 or 4-3-9 granular fertilizer.
- plant one plant per large pot
- "bury them to their armpits" , take off bottom leaves and bury much of the stem of the plant well down. Why? Roots will form from the buried stem and make a stronger plant.
- sprinkle about ¼ cup of the fertilizer mix on top of the soil at plant base

Growing Tomatoes -

- give tomatoes as much sun as possible
- good to grow in a greenhouse but ensure good air circulation, use fans.
- water at bottom of plant, keep water off leaves
- water regularly. To ensure good water penetration, use large screwdriver to poke holes in soil, then water
- cover soil surface with raw sheep or alpaca wool to retain moisture
- if blossom rot appears - add granular lime to soil or 2 tbsp. epsom salt in 1 gallon of water or egg shells, baked and then pulverized.
- plant marigolds and borage as companion plants for tomatoes

Fertilizing

- fertilize plants every month through growing season - June, July, August
- liquid fertilizer every 3 - 4 waterings
- alpaca poop a great fertilizer, doesn't burn even if fresh. Add about 1 cup to the bottom of the pot or hole, or sprinkled around plant base, cover with more soil . Can also use rabbit poop.
- Colen gets fish compost from Parksville. Sea Soil also good but expensive.

Pruning

- take off suckers
- prune hard in September. Cut off small fruit that won't ripen in time.
- any diseased leaves - cut off and destroy - DO NOT compost
- if damp and rainy - cut off and destroy any blighted leaves

FEBRUARY MEETING

Questions for Colen

Colen's favourite tomatoes

- Big Beef, big tomato
- Berry's Crazy Cherry - small tomato
- Early Girl - get bush variety
- Pink Fang - paste tomato
- Wippersnapper - cherry tomato

Best plants for bees - alliums, borage, poppies, alliums, catnip, calendula, veronica. Bees love blue flowers.

To avoid sun scorch - provide shade with light cloth (lace or sheers good) or umbrellas – Must have good air circulation

Planting time for seedlings - usually the middle of May.

Break for tea, goodies, shopping and chat.

Carol Henderson reconvened the meeting - announcements -

- Rotary Club looking for gardens for Rotary Garden Tour - May 26, contact Joan Phillips.
- Cowichan Garden Club - bus tour coming our way, looking for local gardens to tour
- Island Rock and Garden Show, April 21 in Sydney.
- Duncan Seedy Sunday - March 24
- Nanaimo Seedy Saturday - March 3 - Nanaimo Secondary School
- OUR PLANT SALE - Sat. May 11, doors open at 9am. Think about planting up extra stuff for the sale.

Treasurer Starla Parken told us that once expenses are deducted we will have approximately \$7,000 in the club account.

Door prize a beautiful tulip and daffodil bouquet from Starla won by Jillian K.

Meeting adjourned - 8:15.

Speaker for March:

Chris Southwick

The Care of Rhododendrons

Chris Southwick had the good fortune to be born into a family that loves the outdoors, gardening and . . . rhododendrons. Her grandparents were Ted and Mary Greig who were pioneers in the propagation of many rhododendron species on Vancouver Island.

Chris has been gardening all her adult life and her first garden was a vegetable patch in an old horse corral off the Alaska highway at Milepost 428. Chris was principle in Fort Nelson before returning to Nanaimo in 1992. She worked for School District 68 and retired in 2013 when she was Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Nanaimo.

Chris joined the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society in 1994 and held many positions in that chapter. She was honoured with the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Bronze Medal in 2008 and the Silver Medal in 2022. Chris currently serves on a committee at Milner Gardens towards the creation of a Greig Rhododendron Species Garden.

Volunteers Needed
for Set Up & Clean Up
for our meetings.



- * March 21st 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 March Meeting:

Marianne
Haydi

THANK YOU

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

Linda S
Donna G

THANK YOU

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

Joanne A

THANK YOU

to the members who have volunteered
to prepare Tea at our March Meeting:

Barb B
Mi N

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

Dinter Nurseries

Landscaping for Shade Gardens

Sunday, March 31 from 1:00 to 2:00 pm
Nat, our resident Red Seal Landscape
Horticulturalist, explores plants that thrive
in shady conditions.

Cost: \$10, Register *in Advance* by phone

Annual Perennial Exchange

Friday, April 5 at 9:30 am SHARP to 10:00
Bring your divisions or cuttings of perennial
plants to trade with other gardeners. Free!

Preparing Your Pond for Spring

Sunday, April 7 from 1:00 to 2:00 pm
Join Scott from Van Isle Water for an
in-depth seminar on how to prepare your
pond for spring.

Cost: \$10, Register *in Advance* by phone

Special Bonsai Workshop for Kids

Sunday, April 14 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Tailored for young folks over 8 years old,
learn how to plant, wire and care for a bonsai
plant that is theirs to take home.
Ages 8 to 12 must bring an adult, 12 years and
older may attend on their own.

Cost: \$35, includes plant & supplies.
Register *in Advance*, space is limited.

NOTICES

Ladysmith Saltair Garden Club

Upcoming Program & Events 2024

April 18, 2024

Hanging Baskets.
Alex Limberis.

May 16, 2024

My Favourite Vegetables & How to
Grow Them
Dorothee Kieser

September 19, 2024

Preserving, Using & Sharing our
Local Harvest (member interactive)

October 17, 2024

Annual Member Plant Auction

November 21, 2024

Gladden Your Porch !
Seasonal Wreaths, Pots, & Swags.
Pat Spezowka

December 19, 2024

Christmas Party

Upcoming Program & Events 2025

January 16, 2025

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
Barrie Agar

May 17, 2025

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

June 2025

Annual Year End Potluck

Food First Chemainus

Mason Bee Info Session

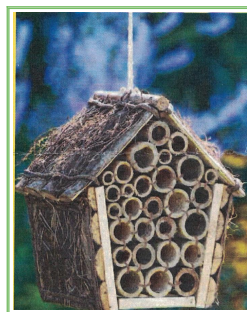
Monday, March 25 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm

Cowichan Neighbourhood House

9806 Willow St., Chemainus

Presenter Brian Guzda has been promoting the importance of Mason Bees in pollinating fruits and vegetables. He has set out over 150 Mason Bee nests around the Island. Learn about these fascinating creatures and how to establish them in your garden.

Free workshop – register by clicking
“Attending” on the Facebook Event page, or
email food.first.chemainus@gmail.com



NOTES FROM OUR SPEAKER

Dancing Frog Farm 2024 Tomato List	
Tomatoes are in 4-inch pots \$5.25 each.	
Please order early for best selection.	
I plan to start seeding them by Mar. 15th.	
Email orders to dfrogfarm@gmail.com	
Barry's Crazy Cherry yellow, small oval shape	Nepal red, beefsteak
Big Beef red, beefsteak	Pink Fang red, paste
Black Cherry small cherry	Pink Tiger small oval
Blush Tiger cherry, elongated	Red Pear small pear shape
Box Car Willie red, beefsteak	Roma red, paste
Brad's Atomic Grape cherry, elongated	San Marzano red, paste
Bush Early Girl red, medium size, good in pots	Stupice 4 oz., early
Caroline Gold yellow, med. to large	Sub Artic 2-4 oz., early
Choco. Pear small pear shape	Sugary cherry
Czech Bush red, small to medium	Sunny Boy yellow, 10-12 oz.
Early Girl red, medium size	Sweet 100 red, cherry
Gardener's Sweetheart mini red, heart shape	Tumbler cherry, good in baskets
Health Kick red, medium oval shape	Whippersnapper cherry, good in pots
Heinz red, med. to large, good for canning	Yellow Pear small pear shape
Lucky Tiger small oval	
Manitoba red, medium size	

Our February Speaker, Colon Henson from Dancing Frog Farm shares these print-outs for her recommendations for tomato food, and for a list of some of her favourite tomatoes.

ORGUNIQUE



2 CUPS 4-13-0

2 CUPS 4-3-7

3 CUPS LIME

mix together

Add ½ cup to tomato plants when they are at least one foot about the ground.



Thanks to Rick Adams, our member who took photos of these printouts, and send them along.



Thinking of devilled eggs for an Easter table ?

SOILS

SEDIMENTATION TESTS FOR SOILS

Interested in checking the texture of the soil in your garden? A sedimentation test will show you the proportions of sand, silt and clay in the sample, and is quick to do.

You will need:

1. A tall glass jar (mason jars work well)
2. Enough soil* to fill your jar 1/3 full
3. Cold water to fill the jar ¾ full
4. Liquid dishwashing detergent - 5 tablespoons
5. A ruler, pencil, paper and watch or clock.
6. The Soil Texture Triangle chart (see below).

* Your soil sample should be taken from below the leaf litter layer, remove any small stones

Preparing the Test:

1. Add soil, water and detergent to your jar. (the detergent is important as it dissolves the sticky organics that hold soil aggregates together)
2. Close the lid of the jar tightly, and shake vigorously for 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Set the jar down quickly so the soil settles in horizontal layers. The organics will float to the top.

Reading the Test:

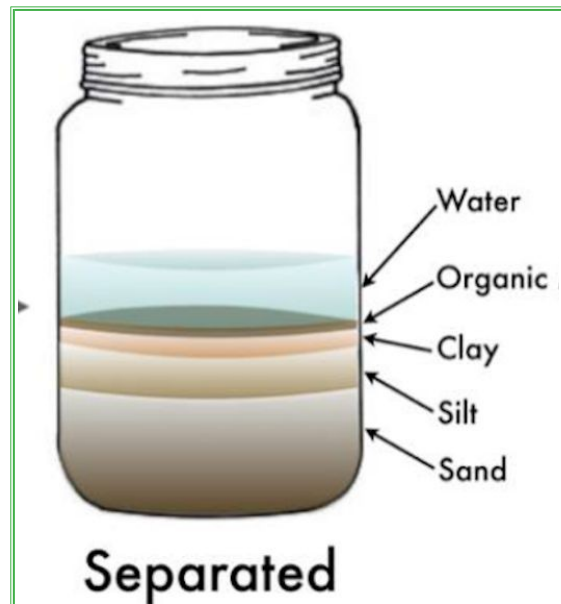
1. After 60 seconds, the sand will settle out.
After 30 minutes, the silt will settle out.
After 24 hours, most of the clay will have settled.
2. You can measure the sand and silt right away, or wait for a day or two to measure all three components. The layers will be distinct, but the water may take much longer to completely clear.
3. Carefully measure the total depth of the soil, and the depth of each layer.

An example:

Total soil depth	=	10 cm.
Sand layer	=	6 cm.
Silt layer	=	3.5 cm.
Clay layer	=	0.5 cm.

4. Math time: calculate the percentages of each layer by dividing its thickness by the total soil depth. (layer/total soil x 100)

Total soil depth :	10 cm.	= 100% volume
Sand layer :	6 cm.	= 60% volume
Silt layer :	3.5 cm.	= 35% volume
Clay layer :	0.5 cm.	= 5% volume



SOILS

5. Use the Soil Texture Triangle chart to analyze your soil texture.

First – find the % numbers for each layer on the triangle.

Note - the clay % runs from 0 at bottom left corner to 100 at top point
 - the silt % runs from 0 at the top to 100 at bottom right corner
 - the sand % runs along the bottom

Second - Follow the line that runs from the % number along the line. The clay lines run horizontally, the silt lines run downward and the sand lines run upward.

Third – The point where the three lines meet is the soil texture. Anywhere in the middle is good result !



Children's* Easter Bunny Hunt at The Butchart Gardens

March 29 - April 1, 2024

*For participants 17 and under
Admission to The Gardens
is required



‘my green thumb came only as
a result of the mistakes I made
While learning to see things
from a plants point of view’
...itsallaboutpurple-debbie.blogspot

The Rotary Club of Ladysmith will be holding its annual garden tour on the last Sunday in May (May 26th).

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.

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 joph@telus.net

SPRING IS FOR RENEWING

Renovating a Flowering Shrub

Old shrubs, such as spiraea, forsythia, lilac, and honeysuckle, often become overgrown and full of crowded stems and dead wood.

If you notice that new growth is weak, and flower production has decreased, then it is time to prune and rejuvenate them.

The best time to prune depends on when the shrubs bloom, so prune the spring bloomers in early summer, right after they finish flowering. Wait until early next spring to prune summer bloomers, as they flower on shoots grown in the current year..

Start by removing dead, damaged, and diseased wood. Prune into healthy wood or cut the shoots back to the ground. Also remove limbs that rub against one another. Next, remove the oldest shoots, about a third of them, back to the ground. As you repeat this process each year, that shrub will soon be blooming on new wood.

Prune severely. Some shrubs can tolerate having all of their shoots cut back at once to within 3 to 6 inches of the ground. In order to allow the shrub to recover, do this in late autumn to early spring. Shrubs best suited for this treatment include redbud (*Cornus stolonifera*), smokebush (*Cotinus coggygria*), peegee hydrangea (*H. paniculata* 'Grandiflora'), ninebark (*Physocarpus*), basket willow (*Salix purpurea*), and Spiraea bumalda. Allow two to three years between severe prunings.

Each year, as the shrub regrows, choose the strongest shoots and remove crowded, spindly, and weak ones. Prune off spent flowers, and cut the shoot tips back to a desirable branch or bud to encourage bushiness, but take care not to remove developing flower buds.



Spiraea bumalda



Smokebush

With slow-growing shrubs and those with few shoots, prune lightly instead of renovating them. Remove the oldest and weakest growth at the appropriate time of year, but never take more than a fourth of the plant at one time.

Tips for the gardener:

Safety glasses prevent sharp branches and sawdust from accidentally scratching or poking your eyes. Leather gloves to protect from pinches, splinters, and cuts. We need to take care of our gardeners, too.