

# GARDEN CLIPPINGS

*“Spring is the time of the year, when it is summer in the sun and winter in the shade.” — CHARLES DICKENS*



## MONTHLY MEETINGS

### St. Mark's Anglican Church

12953 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue

7:00 pm, 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month, except December and August

## NEWSLETTER

The *Garden Clippings* newsletter is published six times during the year:

|            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| January 15 | July 15      |
| March 15   | September 15 |
| May 15     | November 15  |

Submissions from the membership are welcome and subject to editing. Submissions must be non-commercial in nature and must be word-processed. A style guide is available upon request. The deadline is the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, 2 weeks prior to publication. Send inquiries to: [owg@shaw.ca](mailto:owg@shaw.ca).

## WORDS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

### PRESENTATION IS ALMOST EVERYTHING

At the time of this writing, I am preparing plants for the annual Plant Sale. As I have so often mentioned, the appeal of the plants on the day of the sale lies in their presentation. I do the best I can with the growth and health of the plant but in order for it to be an attractive sale it needs to be well-presented.

This leads me to what I've learned about presentation during many years of communication and theatrical work; and is highlighted when I begin thinking about our upcoming Flower and Garden Show.

I was fortunate enough to be the assistant to Mas Tanizawa, a renowned judge at a number of our Flower and Garden Shows. He was one of B.C.'s most treasured Master Gardeners and Flower Show Judges, and sadly passed away last year.

As I worked around our displays with Mas, he would express joy in each flower display or regret that another bloom had just had not quite "made it." He was such a delight to work with as he practically caressed each class of plant he saw.

However, he would mumble frustration at the beer bottles and weird containers in which some of the entries had been placed. "Why not put something so beautiful in something that enhances it?" he would ask. Or "Too bad about the jar."

That's when I caught on and started to change my approach to preparing my entries. I began to expand my occasional hunts to thrift shops, garage sales, and moving sales. I had often searched for vases for Floral Arts, but now I scanned for smaller, slimmer vases that would hold one bloom. I looked for neutral colours or cleverly complementary shades of whatever I was presenting.

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## SSGC EXECUTIVE 2017-18

Lee Bolton Robinson

**President**

Karen Ewing

**Vice President**

Melodie Brandon

**Past President**

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**Membership**

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**Newsletter Liaison**

Linda Stanley Wilson

**Newsletter Editor**

Anna Ludwinowski

**Plant Sale Chair**

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After conditioning my entries overnight, I had the added fun of choosing the perfect container to show off my "beauties." They held well in the fridge until it was time for their "cue" and their turn in the lineup.

## NEWS BITS

### 2018/2019 SSGC BUDGET

The proposed 2018/2019 budget will be presented at the May 2018 SSGC general meeting for review and questions. A copy of the proposed 2018/2019 budget will be distributed with the meeting notification email that is sent out about one week in advance of every general meeting (meeting notification emails are sent to all current SSGC members who have an active email address, and who have agreed to accept emails from the club).

### FROM ANNA BURIAN

At our March meeting, Anna shared these tips for the successful growing of African violets:

- Watering from the top is fine; it will not hurt the leaves;
- Water only before noon;
- Water only with lukewarm water.

### NEW FACEBOOK PAGE

The SSGC has a new Facebook page. You'll find reminders about meetings, events of interest, and lots of beautiful photos. Give it a like!

[www.facebook.com/southsurreygardenclub](http://www.facebook.com/southsurreygardenclub)

## SHOW WHAT YOU GROW

### By Cindy Tataryn and Gillian Roberts

These are only suggestions; if you have something you have grown that you would like to share, please bring it to the meeting. Please remember to label your treasures if you know the name.

### MAY

1. Iris, peony, rhododendron, or azalea
2. Any other flowering exhibit
3. Rhubarb, herbs, or vegetables

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Kathy Starke

**Open Gardens Coordinator**

Carole Wood

**Door Prize**

Claude Hewitt

**Monthly Plant Sale**

(Table Reservations)

Christine Deagle

**Master Gardeners' Desk**

Carol Wong

**Sunshine Gardeners &  
Darts Hill Weeders**

Claude Hewitt

**Lost & Found**

Karen Ewing

**Phoning Committee  
Sunshine Greetings**

*Note: If you know someone in need of a little sunshine, please contact Karen.*

Melodie Brandon

**Awards**

Dick Logie, Ernie Gray, &  
Bryan Williams

**Set-up**

Parents, Peace Arch Cubs

**Clean-up**

Melodie Brandon

**Nominating Committee**

Ruth Sebastian

**Goodies Coordinator**

**MARCH Newsletter Team:**

Linda Stanley Wilson,

Marilyn Bryson, Pam

Robertson, Joan Galloway,

Lucina Perkin

## FLORAL DESIGN DIVISION

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Throughout this edition of the newsletter, you will find information about our Flower and Garden Show, scheduled for June 27. Here are the specifics for the Floral Design Division. It is very important to register ahead of time so that table space can be saved for your creation. Reserve your space (24" W x 36" H) by phoning 604-585-6786 before Sunday, June 24.

### THEME: SUMMER DELIGHT

#### A. NOVICE

N101. A Cut Above—A design of your choice

N102. Lasting Beauty—A design of your choice

N103. Flowers in Paradise—A design of your choice

N104. Beyond Imagination—A design of your choice

#### B. AMATEUR

105. Smooth Sailing—A design featuring water

106. Perfection—A design of your choice

107. Idyllic Dawn—A design of your choice

108. Silhouette—A multiple container design

#### C. MEN ONLY

109. State of Bliss—A design of your choice

## PHOTO WORKSHOP

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Sixteen photographers signed up for a photo workshop on April 21 at the Ocean Park Community Orchard. Participants were treated to a brief presentation by volunteers from the Honeybee Centre, who opened the hives for the first time since the fall. The sleepy bees then became the centre of attention as cameras snapped away. Afterwards, a brief presentation was given by Bryce Wilson on how to use a camera phone to capture garden treasures, followed by one-on-one assistance.

At the end of the newsletter, you'll find photos by the participants. Due to the success of this free workshop, additional hands-on camera phone workshops will be added on event days in the orchard. Later this year, a photo editing workshop will be offered.

## MAY SPEAKER

### MAKING A GARDEN: GROWING A NEW LIFE

LESLIE COX-THE DUCHESS OF DIRT

JOHN COX-THE DUKE OF COMPOST

We are the owners of Growing Concern Cottage Garden and this is our story.

Once upon a time, the garden was mostly grass with a few beds of ornamentals, a number of raised beds for growing vegetables, and an herb garden. And then we both lost our jobs.

After much researching and soul-searching, we embarked on a new career path . . . growing vegetables to sell at the local farmers' market. (We also needed to feed four teenagers.)

Thus, the garden in Black Creek began a transformation. Joining the Comox Valley Horticultural Society somewhere along the way led us into the exciting world of ornamental plants. A slight shift in our business plan and the garden grew even more.

Nowadays, the garden supports an intensely planted display of ornamental plants, a vegetable garden, and numerous seating areas from which to watch nature unfold.



Leslie and John Cox

## MARCH TIPS

### By Joan Galloway

**Editor's Note:** *In each issue, we share Joan's tips as she presented them at our meeting.*

Margaret Atwood said, "In spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt."

For my first tip, I confessed that I am terrible at starting plants from seeds. I water them too much and they rot or I forget or go away and they shrivel up and die. But now I'm a seed-starting queen—ever since I discovered Lee Valley's self-watering seed starter. It is a self-watering system that only has to be filled every 5-7 days and which keeps the seed-starting mix at just the right moisture level. The soil cells sit on a capillary mat that soaks up water from a reservoir and keeps the soil moist from below. An indicator tells you when to add more water to the reservoir. Once the plants are well up, half-strength liquid fertilizer can be added to the water. A clear plastic lid keeps the growing chamber humid and can be removed once the seedlings are well started. It can be used on a window sill or under grow lights. Once the plants are large enough to pot on or transplant into the garden, flip the platform over and the cones on the other side push the plants out neatly without injuring the delicate roots. This system can also be used to start cuttings.

My second tip concerned how to improve your success rate with cuttings without using commercial rooting hormones. Willows root really easily because their young branches contain a large amount of indolebutyric acid, a hormone that induces root formation. They also contain a lot of salicylic acid, which is part of the plant's defense system for fighting off bacterial and fungal infections—like damping off—which kill a

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lot of young cuttings. To make willow water, collect some young first-year branches no thicker than a pencil from any willow, domestic or wild. Remove the leaves and break or cut them into 1-inch lengths. Soak the cut-up branches in water for anywhere from 1-4 weeks or pour boiling water over them and leave them to soak for 24-48 hours, then pour off the liquid. Place the stems of the cuttings in the water and leave them overnight so they take up the hormones, then prepare them as you would any other cutting. Alternatively, you can use the solution to water your cuttings.

My third tip was about planting for pollinators. Some of our favourite showy flowers don't actually provide much pollen or nectar for the bees. Showy double flowers like some roses, camellias or peonies are produced by breeders when they induce the plant to mutate its stamens (the pollen-bearing part at the centre of the flower) into petals. If there are no stamens left, there is no pollen for the bees to collect. Or if there are a few stamens left in the centre, the flower may be so dense that the bees can't get to the pollen. So consider growing lots of single flowers or composite flowers like daisies, echinacea, asters, etc. to feed your bees.

My closing spring quotation was from Robin Williams, who said, "Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's Party!'"

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## APRIL TIPS

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### By Joan Galloway

Gardening magazines and many popular gardening books tout the wonders of mycorrhizal fungi and you will see products for sale in garden centres that promise to inoculate your soil with the beneficial fungi when you plant new plants, especially woody plants like shrubs and trees, and

produce better survival and growth rates. There are even services that will come and spray your soil with mycorrhizal fungi. In some areas back east, garden centres register you when you buy the product along with new trees and shrubs and promise that, if you use the product as directed when you plant them, they will replace the plant free of charge if it dies in the first year. Sounds fantastic, right?

Mycorrhizal fungi are very important components of healthy soil. These fungi actually penetrate and invade the roots of plants. But unlike disease-causing fungi, they don't harm the plant. Instead they set up a mutually beneficial relationship with the plant. The fungi have no chlorophyll so they can't photosynthesize to produce carbohydrates to use as food. So they take carbohydrates stored in the roots of the plants they invade. The fungi form an extensive network of hyphae in the soil that extends far beyond the reach of the plant's roots. These fungal hyphae absorb water and essential nutrients from the soil and pass them on to the plant in exchange for the carbohydrates they take. In particular, the fungi can break down phosphates in the soil, which are often present in forms that the plant itself has difficulty absorbing. Therefore, if the plant has a good network of mycorrhizal fungi in place it becomes more drought tolerant and grows better because it gets more nutrients and water from the soil and doesn't have to expend as much energy growing a huge root system. Therefore, adding packaged mycorrhizae should be a no-brainer for growing better plants, right?

Wrong! The practice of artificially adding mycorrhizae to soil got its start in the commercial growing industry. In large-scale growing operations, plants are started in sterilized soil to prevent the spread of disease. Sterilization kills the native mycorrhizae. Adding supplements to the sterilized soil has been shown to have some

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## FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW - VOLUNTEERS

This year, the Flower and Garden Show is scheduled for June 27. The success of our show is due in large part to the many volunteers who bring the show to life. Please read through the descriptions below and see where you might be able to lend a hand. Volunteers can sign up at the May meeting or by contacting one of the organizers: Cindy Tataryn and Gillian Roberts.

### **Hall and Staging Area Set-up: 7 people**

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Set up the tables and table coverings, place the plant category cards, place schedules and paper plates for fruits and vegetables. Set up 1–2 tables outside the kitchen door, set up the canopy covers, fill watering cans for exhibitors.

### **Kitchen: 4 people**

3:30 pm – 6:00 pm

Help with the volunteer potluck dinner, make tea and coffee, put out water and juice, set up the buffet tables for the potluck dinner. Clean the kitchen.

### **Registration: 1 person**

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

### **Exhibitor Helper: 2 people**

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

### **Volunteer Potluck Dinner**

5:00 pm – 5:30 pm

Our traditional potluck dinner is a time to celebrate the work put into getting the show ready. Volunteers and judges are invited to attend.

### **Outside Clean-up: 4 people**

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Take down the canopies, take down the tables, collect and empty the watering cans.

### **Recording Secretary: 3 people**

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Record and tally the exhibitors' scores.

### **Ribbon Clerk & Judges Clerk: 8 people**

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Assist the judges, take the winning entry information to the recording secretaries, place the ribbons with the appropriate entries.

### **Inside Clean-up: 8 people**

9:30 pm – 10:30 pm

Collect the class cards, collect the wood blocks, remove the table coverings, fold the tables. Put the church tables away, stack the rental tables by the back door. Sweep all the floors, wash all the floors. Make sure the kitchen and bathrooms are clean. Collect lost and found items.

## QUICK CLASS LIST

| CLASS | CLASS NAME (Please check the club website for the show schedule, rules, and exact specifications as to number of blooms, spikes, pieces of fruit, etc.) | # (blooms, etc.) |
|-------|---|------------------|
| 201   | Peony-any peony   | 1                |
| 203   | Poppy   | 1                |
| 204   | Iris-aAny iris  | 1                |
| 208   | Dahlia over 4" diameter   | 1                |
| 209   | Dahlia under 4" diameter  | 2                |
| 210   | Gladiola  | 1                |
| 211   | Vase of garden flowers and foliage-Small  | 1                |
| 212   | Vase of garden flowers and foliage-Medium   | 1                |
| 213   | Vase of garden flowers and foliage-Large  | 1                |
| 301   | Hybrid Tea-any colour, including blends-Specimen  | 1                |
| 302   | Floribunda-any colour, including blends-Spray   | 1                |
| 304   | Shrub rose-any colour (not David Austin)  | 1                |
| 305   | Old garden rose (prior to 1867)-any colour  | 1                |
| 307   | Climbing rose-rambler or otherwise-any colour   | 1                |
| 308   | Rose-Aany other rose  | 1                |
| 309   | Bowl of roses-all one variety or a mix  | 5 +              |
| 310   | Rose-to be judged for fragrance only  | 1                |
| 402   | <i>Pelargonium</i> (geranium)   | 2                |
| 403   | Sweet peas-any one colour or mixed  | 3                |
| 404   | Any other annual not listed-any colour  | 1-3              |
| 405   | Most unusual (uncommon) variety of annual-any colour  | 1                |
| 501   | <i>Hemerocallis</i> (daylily)-any colour  | 1                |
| 502   | <i>Lilium</i> (lily)-any one cultivar   | 1                |

|     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| 503 | Phlox-any colour                                     | 1   |
| 504 | Salvia   | 1   |
| 505 | Hosta (leaf only)-any one variety-Giant              | 1   |
| 506 | Hosta (leaf only)-any one variety-Large              | 1   |
| 507 | Hosta (leaf only)-any one variety-Medium             | 1   |
| 508 | Hosta (leaf only)-any one variety-Small              | 1   |
| 509 | Hosta (leaf only)-any one variety-Mini               | 1   |
| 510 | Astilbe-any one colour                               | 1   |
| 511 | Fern-any one variety                                 | 1   |
| 512 | Woodland plants                                      | 1   |
| 513 | Native plant-must be native to the Pacific Northwest | 1   |
| 514 | Perennial from bulb or corm-e.g. calla lily          | 1-3 |
| 515 | Ornamental grasses                                   | 10  |
| 516 | Rare and unusual                                     | 1   |
| 518 | Delphinium   | 1   |
| 519 | Any other named composite                            | 1-3 |
| 520 | Any other perennial or biennial                      | 1-3 |
| 601 | Any flowering tree, shrub, or vine                   | 1   |
| 602 | Clematis-any one variety                             | 1   |
| 603 | Hydrangea-any colour other than pink or blue         | 1   |
| 604 | Hydrangea-"Lacecap"-smaller varieties                | 1   |
| 605 | Most colourful foliage (annual or perennial)         | 1   |
| 606 | Hydrangea-Pink                                       | 1   |
| 607 | Hydrangea-Blue                                       | 1   |
| 701 | Cactus or succulent                                  | 1   |
| 703 | Succulent collection                                 | 3 + |
| 802 | Any flowering house plant                            | 1   |
| 803 | Any foliage house plant                              | 1   |

|      |   |         |
|------|---|---------|
| 901  | Outdoor container grown plant-1 plant   | 1       |
| 902  | Outdoor planter-must contain at least three (3) different varieties of plants | 3 +     |
| 903  | Hanging Basket-display on top of an overturned container                      |         |
| 1001 | Apples-stem on  | 3       |
| 1003 | Blueberries-bloom on, no stems  | 6       |
| 1006 | Currants-stalk on   | 1       |
| 1008 | Gooseberries-stem on  | 6       |
| 1013 | Plums-stem on   | 3       |
| 1014 | Raspberries-stems and cores removed   | 6       |
| 1015 | Strawberries-stems left on  | 6       |
| 1016 | Any other fruit not listed, should be named                                   | 3-6     |
| 1101 | Beans-any variety, stem on  | 5       |
| 1102 | Beets-tops trimmed to 2"-3"   | 3       |
| 1103 | Broccoli-any variety  | 1       |
| 1104 | Cabbage-red or green; round, flat, pointed, or savoy                          | 1 plant |
| 1105 | Carrots-any size, ¼" stem left on   | 3       |
| 1107 | Chard-any variety   | 1 plant |
| 1108 | Cucumber-any variety  | 3       |
| 1109 | Garlic-any variety, 2" stem left on   | 3 bulbs |
| 1111 | Kale  | 1 plant |
| 1114 | Lettuce-head, leaf, or romaine  | 1 plant |
| 1115 | Onions-any onions   | 3       |
| 1118 | Peas-shelling type, stems left on   | 5       |
| 1119 | Peas-edible pod, stems left on  | 5       |
| 1121 | Potatoes-any variety  | 3       |
| 1122 | Radish-stem on, do not scrub  | 5       |
| 1123 | Rhubarb   | 3       |
| 1125 | Squash-short stem left on   | 1       |

|      |  |                |
|------|--|----------------|
| 1126 | Tomatoes-any variety-stem on   | 3              |
| 1128 | Any root vegetable not listed above  | 1              |
| 1129 | Any other vegetable not listed   | 1-3            |
| 1130 | Vegetable oddity-"deformed"  | 1              |
| 1131 | Collection of garden herbs-named   | 5              |
|      | YOUTH CATEGORIES   |                |
| 1201 | Most colourful foliage   | 1              |
| 1202 | Vase of garden flowers and foliage-medium, no more than 12" wide, 24" high |                |
| 1203 | Poppy-any colour   | 1              |
| 1204 | Iris-any Iris  | 1              |
| 1205 | Dahlia over 4" diameter  | 1              |
| 1206 | Dahlia under 4" diameter   | 1              |
| 1207 | Gladiolas  | 1              |
| 1208 | Rose-any other rose-bloom spray or stem                                    | 1              |
| 1209 | Bowl of roses-all one variety or a mix                                     | 5 blooms       |
| 1210 | Any other annual   | 3              |
| 1211 | <i>Hemerocallis</i> (daylily)-any colour                                   | 1              |
| 1212 | <i>Lilium</i> (lily)-any one cultivar                                      | 1              |
| 1213 | Hosta leaf-any one variety   | 1              |
| 1214 | Any other perennial or biennial  | 3 (or 1 stem)  |
| 1215 | Any flowering tree, shrub, or vine   | 1              |
| 1216 | Cactus or succulent  | 1 plant        |
| 1217 | Any flowering house plant  | 1 in bloom     |
| 1218 | Any foliage house plant  | 1 not in bloom |
| 1219 | Outdoor container grown plant-1 plant                                      | 1              |
| 1220 | Any fruit  | suitable #     |
| 1221 | Any root vegetable   | 1              |

|      |  |  |   |
|------|--|--|---|
| 1222 | Any other vegetable  |  | 1 |
| 1223 | Vegetable oddity-“deformed”  |  | 1 |
| 1224 | Vegetable character-use plant material to make a character of your choice. |  |   |
|      | E.g. dinosaur, penguin, etc. May use other components.                     |  |   |
|      | E.g. glue, toothpicks, etc. to complete the character.                     |  |   |

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benefit in these situations—not a huge benefit and not for all plants, but some benefit. However, that doesn’t carry over to use in regular gardens. Why?

1. Normal garden soil, even if it isn’t great soil, already contains its own mycorrhizae. Millions of them, and there are many different ones.
2. There is good evidence that each plant species develops its own specific population of mycorrhizae that works for it and may be quite different from the ones that work for the next plant. The commercial product may not contain the right strains of fungi for your particular plants.
3. There is no good evidence that the fungi are still alive when you use the dehydrated product, or if they are still alive, that they will persist in your soil. The inter-relationship and balance between all the different organisms in soil is very complex. If they don’t fit in, they die.

So save your money and encourage native mycorrhizae to flourish in your garden. How do you do this?

1. Avoid rototilling and deep digging of your soil. It disrupts normal soil structure and kills many of the beneficial organisms, not just the mycorrhizae, that live in balance in your soil. Top dress with your soil amendments rather than digging them in and let the worms do the work instead of you.
2. Avoid using fungicides on your soil.
3. Avoid overwatering. If water is too abundant the

plant doesn’t need to establish those fungal networks to help it absorb water. Then if drought strikes, the plant is not prepared for it.

4. Avoid use of high phosphate fertilizers—you’ve heard me say this before. Normal garden soil already has abundant phosphorus in it so you don’t need to add more. Apart from polluting ground water, the use of high phosphate fertilizer means the plant has an excess of absorbable phosphate available and it doesn’t need help from the fungi, so a good network doesn’t get established. High phosphate levels also kill many other beneficial soil organisms and upset the soil’s natural balance.
5. Incorporate moderate levels of organic material into your soil: compost, shredded leaves, manure, Sea Soil, etc. Mycorrhizal fungi love that stuff—you’ve probably seen the thin, thread-like fungi that form in a layer of dead leaves left on the ground. The fungi are also helping to break the organic material down into a form that can be readily absorbed by your plants. But it’s not a case of “if some is good, more is better.” The ideal amount to make a rich garden soil capable of growing beautiful flowers and abundant vegetables is 10%. Only 10%! Think of that before you pile on the manure.

Like in life, everything in moderation, and natural is usually better.



## PHOTO WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS



Photo by Kathy Starke



Photo by Kathy Hodson



Photo by Arlene Morris



Photo by Kathy Starke



Photo by Freddie Whiting



Photo by Bryce Michael Wilson

## PHOTO WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS



Photos by Claude Hewitt



## A FEW PLANT SALE HIGHLIGHTS



Photos by Linda Stanley Wilson