

GARDEN CLIPPINGS

"I found myself aching to order up sacks of bulbs, to lift my trowel, to slice into the earth, and tuck away what amounts to hope, faith, and promise." — BARBARA MAHANY



MONTHLY MEETINGS

St. Mark's Anglican Church

12953 20th Avenue

7:00 pm, 4th 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 1st of the month, 2 weeks prior to publication. Send inquiries to: owg@shaw.ca.

WORDS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

By Karen Ewing

Hello everyone! We have a big change coming up at the end of November—a new website AND a new way to access membership information. I thought I would use this portion of the newsletter to explain the new website in a bit more detail, as well as provide some brief instructions on how to access member information on the new website.

NEW WEBSITE INFO

The new website will be available to all members on December 1, 2018. You don't need to type in a new URL to access it. The new site will simply replace the existing site on December 1, 2018. The main reasons for changing to this new website are:

1. Almost 75% less expensive than the current site. The 2018/2019 budget was created with these savings included. We don't expect any further savings for this fiscal year.
2. Better user experience, especially when viewing on a tablet or a cell phone.
3. Easier to maintain in terms of adding or changing information.

DIFFERENCES IN ACCESSING MEMBER INFORMATION: CURRENT SITE VERSUS NEW SITE

The current website provides an option for members to access member information via the password-protected area of the SSGC website. With the new website, member information is still accessible, but via a password-protected list. This list is searchable by first or last name, address, committee, postal code, and about 20 other searchable fields!

If you have any questions or concerns about how to access the new membership list, or how to look up information, please contact either myself, our membership chair Marilyn Bryson, or website chair Susan Lockhart. Please see complete instructions on page 4.

SSGC EXECUTIVE 2018-19

Karen Ewing
President

Linda Stanley Wilson
Vice President

Lee Bolton Robinson
Past President

Pam Robertson
Secretary

Dorothy Brown
Treasurer

Kathy Starke
Program Coordinator

Susan Lockhart
**Communications &
Webmaster**

Lorna Fraser
Darts Hill Representative

Cindy Tataryn
Flower & Garden Show

Sharon Lawson
Library

Claude Hewitt
Logistics

Marilyn Bryson
Membership

Linda Stanley Wilson
Newsletter Editor

Carol Wong
Plant Sale Chair

NOVEMBER MEETING AND SOCIAL

JOIN US FOR A SOCIAL EVENING!

For November, we will have a presentation by SSGC member Gwen Odermatt followed by a social evening. There will be no business presentation at the meeting so that we all may have ample time to enjoy each other's company and sample special goodies. To facilitate this special format, a few regular features of our meeting will be slightly adjusted.

- ✦ Our meeting will begin promptly at 7 pm as usual. You may wish to arrive about 6:15-6:30 pm to allow ample time to visit the library or update your membership before the meeting.
- ✦ There will be no *Show What You Grow* table, Master Gardeners info table, or raffle at this meeting.
- ✦ After the speaker, we will have just a quick break so that the social may be set up. We will go to the foyer and enjoy the church choir.
- ✦ If you are interested in bringing goodies for the social, please contact Heather Parker at biggles.hap@gmail.com.
- ✦ Coffee and tea will be provided, please **Lug A Mug!**

FEATURED SPEAKER: GWEN ODERMATT ON THE TRAIL OF GREAT PLANT PICKS



Gwen Odermatt

Gwen will provide us with an inside look at the *Great Plant Picks (GPP)* program and then describe the selection process. The program provides sound guidance about choosing and caring for plants in our Pacific Northwest gardens. Gwen will highlight a selection of *Great Plant Picks* plants and explore the art of finding the best plants through the advice of experienced hands-on gardeners, nurseries, and growers along the coast.

For more information about plants that have been previously selected as *GPP*, and more insight, see www.greatplantpicks.org. You'll find a wealth of information including links to additional resources and nurseries.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Dick Logie, Ernie Gray, &
Bryan Williams

Set-up

Ruth Sebastian
Goodies Coordinator

Carole Wood
Door Prize

Freddie Whiting
Audio Visual

Claude Hewitt
Lost & Found
Monthly Plant Sale
(Table Reservations)

Christine Deagle
Master Gardeners' Desk

Carol Wong
Sunshine Gardeners
Darts Hill Weeders
Plant Sale Committee

Kathy Starke
Open Gardens Coordinator

Linda Stanley Wilson
Phoning Committee
Sunshine Greetings
Note: If you know someone in need of a little sunshine, please contact Linda.

Lee Bolton Robinson
Awards
Nominating Committee
Greeters

Parents, Peace Arch Cubs
Clean-up

November Newsletter:

Linda Stanley Wilson, Pam Robertson, Joan Galloway, Sharon Lawson, Claude Hewitt, Lucina Perkin

NEWS BITS

FEEL FREE TO BRING GUESTS TO THE SSGC MEETINGS

We are always interested in growing our membership and encourage you to bring guests to our meetings. The cost for each guest is \$5.00, which may be applied to their membership should they decide to join. Be sure to introduce your guests to our team of Greeters!

HOW TO EMAIL AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER OR COMMITTEE CHAIR

To contact a member whose name is listed as the point person for one of our activities (noted in the green column on the left-hand side of the newsletter), email southsurreygardenclub@gmail.com and your request will be promptly forwarded to the appropriate member.

FRASER SOUTH RHODODENDRON SOCIETY MEETING

The Fraser South Rhododendron Society, featuring Barbara Mathias at their November 21 meeting, is inviting any South Surrey Garden Club members who are interested to attend. There is no charge. Barbara will be speaking on *Botany and Cycling through Iran*. Come help identify the mysterious plants seen while cycling along the ancient desert roads of Persia.

The meeting is Wednesday, November 21, at 7:30 pm at the Langley Mennonite Church (20997 40th Avenue, Langley—use the west entrance at the back). For more information, see www.frasersouthrhodos.ca.

CHILLIWACK FLORAL ART CLUB CHRISTMAS GALA

The Chilliwack Floral Art Club invites SSGC members to their Christmas Floral Art Gala on November 22. There will be sales of containers, books and magazines, floral art supplies, greens, wreaths, small centrepieces, and baked goods. Tickets are \$20 and available by calling Lynne White at 604-858-6660. No tickets will be available at the door. The doors open at 12:30 and there will be a demonstration at 1:30 by Susanne Law.

ROSE GARDEN AT ST. MARKS

Don't you just love the gardens around the church as you walk into our monthly meetings? SSGC member Roger Phillips recently commented on how fortunate we have been to enjoy the lovely and fragrant roses in the courtyard. If you feel inclined to send a note of appreciation to the church, please send it to Church Garden Committee, 12953 20 Avenue, Surrey, BC V4A 1Z1.

THE NEW SSGC WEBSITE

By Karen Ewing

HOW TO ACCESS THE MEMBERSHIP LIST

Click on the word "MORE"



Once you click on the word **MORE** you will see another set of menu options. When you see the new menu options, click on the words **MEMBERS LIST**.



Click on "MEMBERS LIST"

Once you click on the words **MEMBERS LIST**, a spreadsheet will download to your computer or tablet (you will need a spreadsheet software program such as Microsoft Excel or Numbers by Apple to open the spreadsheet). You may also view the list by downloading a viewer-only program, which will allow you to view the spreadsheets but may have limited functionality to search or manipulate data. The membership list will be password-protected, in order to ensure that only paid members—who have agreed to have their information shared with other paid members—is available for viewing. If you have advised the membership chairperson that you do not wish to have your contact information made public, it will not be visible to anyone except the membership chairperson. An email will be sent to all paid members on November 30, advising them of the password for the membership list.

As always, if you have any feedback on this topic or any other, please don't hesitate to reach out to any of the executive team.

FORCING BULBS

By Joan Galloway

November is upon us—one of the grayest and dreariest of months. Gardening is slowing down—we are raking leaves mostly. There are lots of things to do in the garden but it is often too cold and wet to be enthusiastic about getting out there. Everything is brown or gray and wet; spring seems an impossibly long way away. So what can we do to bring colour back to our lives and to instill hope that spring will really and truly come again? Maybe you have some bulbs sitting out in the garage waiting to be planted but you've lost your enthusiasm or your joints are aching at the very thought of getting down and digging in the soggy cold soil. So instead of doing that, consider forcing bulbs for late winter and early spring colour indoors.

Forcing bulbs is really quite easy but you have to follow the rules or it won't work. In the garden, bulbs have a period of dormancy during which they shed their leaves. Most of the bulbs used for forcing are spring flowering plants, which need this period of winter dormancy. But even when they are dormant, the bulbs' internal biological processes are still working so you can't cheat them out of the time they need. The length of dormancy varies with the plant, but most commonly used bulbs need a minimum rest period of 10 weeks at a temperature of 2-9°C. If the period of dormancy is too short or too warm, the bulb will not flower, so the biggest challenge for successfully forcing bulbs is to find the right place to chill them, especially in our mild climate. The dormant period should be long rather than short. Hyacinths need 13 weeks, 14 weeks for irises, 15 for muscari and crocuses, 16 for daffodils, and 15-17 for tulips. The ideal place for cold dormancy is a refrigerator. If you don't have an extra fridge, alternatives include plunging soaked pots into soil or peat in a coldframe if you

can prevent them from freezing, burying them in a 12-15" trench in soil, compost, or peat and mulching to prevent freezing, or placing them in a cool cellar, garage, porch, or greenhouse.

When you buy bulbs for forcing, choose ones that are tightly closed, undamaged, and free from mould. Forcing demands more from a bulb than planting in the garden so look for the biggest and best ones you can find. Small bulbs like snowdrops, scillas, muscari, chionodoxa, crocus, or Dutch iris force well. Larger bulbs like tulips and daffodils also force well but are a little more particular as to care. Amaryllis and paperwhite narcissi are tropicals and require no cold preparation before flowering.

Daffodils are easy to force. The best varieties are usually the smaller and earlier ones; many bulb catalogues will identify the varieties that force well. Place the bulbs side by side with the nose protruding a little from the surface of the potting soil. The pot should be at least 6" high to give the roots the room they need to expand. Then place the pot in an environment where the temperature varies between 2-9°C for at least 14 weeks and keep them moist but not wet. If you are putting the bulbs in a cold room, make sure there is no fruit in the vicinity because the ethylene released by the ripening fruit will abort blooming. Once the leaves have reached a height of 4-6", you can put them in full sun in a cool room (16°C is ideal). Good sun but cool temperatures encourages blooming and discourages stretching and flopping. They will take 3-4 weeks to flower. Once the flowers begin to open, take them out of direct sun. Keeping them cool, at least at night, helps to prolong the bloom time, which can be as short as a week in a warm home. After forcing, the bulbs can be deadheaded, fertilized, and then transplanted into the garden in spring. They may skip blooming for a year but then should bloom again in the garden. Paperwhite narcissi are sold for forcing but are not perennial in our climate, so they must be discarded after flowering.

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LIBRARY NEWS

By Sharon Lawson

For this edition of the *Clippings* I decided to highlight the category of British Columbia and Northwest (BC and NW). These books are specific to our area. This category is located on the right side of the book cabinet about halfway down from the top. It is highlighted by a tangerine orange square at the bottom of the spine of the book.

There are a few books on private and public gardens that you can visit throughout BC, Oregon, and Washington. We also have books written by local garden personalities that relate what the best plants are to grow in our area. Need to identify a weed? We have a field guide to noxious weeds of BC. If you are interested in growing native plants, we have a few books on which ones are best for you to incorporate into your garden. If you enjoy hiking and/or camping you can take along *Plants of Coastal British Columbia* to help you identify the plants you will likely see. It also provides background on how the First Nations' peoples historically utilized the native plants and which ones are edible.

We also have some eye candy books such as Thomas Hobbs' *Shocking Beauty* and *The Jewel Box Garden*, as well as *A Garden Gallery* featuring the garden of Little and Lewis in Washington State. Both of the main gardens featured in these books are no longer owned by these people so the only way of "touring" them are through these books. A jewel of a garden in our area that is open to the public is Hatley Park outside of Victoria. Be sure to visit if you are making a road trip over to the island.

If you are interested in history, you may enjoy the book about the explorations of David Douglas or the making of Cougar Annie's garden on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

Books taken out in November are not due until the meeting in January. This gives you time to spend curled up with a book in two of the darkest months of the year.

FORCING BULBS

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They can be grown just sitting on pebbles above water but remember my tip from last year to keep them from stretching up and flopping: once they are up 4-6" high change the water in the pebbles to a solution of 1 part gin or vodka to 10 parts water.

Tulips are also easy to force. Plant them with the nose of the bulb just below the surface of the soil. Tulips need 15-16 weeks of cold (2-10°C) in a dark or semi-dark environment like a refrigerator. When the stems are 2-4" high take them out and follow the same procedure as daffodils. If the room is cool enough, flowering will last about a week. If you want to plant them out in the garden afterwards, remove the flower heads when faded, fertilize and keep watered until the foliage dies down, and then either plant in the garden or store them till fall.

Hyacinths can be forced in the same way or you can buy hyacinth bulbs specially prepared for forcing. These bulbs have already had a dormant period and are ready to go. They can be grown in special hyacinth vases that allow the bulb to sit just above water. The bulb will produce roots that extend into the water and the bulb will flower without any other treatment. However, these bulbs will be totally exhausted after flowering as they have not absorbed any nutrients from the water, so they must be discarded after they are done.

Planting multiple pots with bulbs at intervals of very few weeks starting as early as September will ensure that you have colour and joy through the winter before your garden comes to life again in spring.

WILDLIFE IN THE GARDEN

By Joan Galloway

Many gardeners, including me, wax poetical about wildlife in the garden. Seeing wild creatures in my garden makes me feel "at one with nature," etc. I plant to attract bees, butterflies, and birds and carefully attend to my Anna hummingbirds all winter. I am an Animal Lover.

There are rabbits in my neighbourhood. Rabbits are part of nature and all of us Animal Lovers try to live in harmony with nature, right? So I, almost cheerfully, removed the tulips and hostas from my front garden and carefully bunny-proofed my back garden where I grow all my rare and unusuals and my hosta collection and so on. I love bunnies! They're so cute!

Then this spring the gate to the back garden got left open and suddenly there she was: the cutest little baby bunny you've ever seen. "Ooooh, so sweet!" cooed my offspring. Soon it was "My, hasn't she grown!" Yes, she has—on a diet of MY plants! I discovered that this baby bunny had a voracious appetite and very sophisticated tastes. She ignored all my ordinary plants but mowed down all my rare and unusuals. It is amazing how rapidly this Animal Lover descended into a state of homicidal rage!

We tried chasing her toward the open gate with rakes and brooms—dream on. The dog snored. The cat was interested but she's fifteen and doesn't move as fast as she used to. The bunny laughed at my Have-a-Heart humane trap. Pest control companies righteously informed me that rabbits are part of nature, not pests, and I needed to learn how to live with them. Shooting off guns isn't legal in my neighbourhood (I'd have the IHIT team breaking down my door) and the offspring said, "I'll never speak to you again if you kill that bunny." The bunny was now a teenager, and I had visions of debauched bunny orgies happening in

my garden, resulting in new generations of bunnies.

Then one night we were enjoying dinner and a glass of wine with friends on the patio. The bold-as-brass bunny joined the party by hopping across the patio to nibble on my hosta collection near the gate. Suddenly she hopped across the patio and went under the gate (likely going out to invite her friends to the orgy). Gone! We instantly ran around blocking off every space with bricks, boards, wire, anything we could find. Now peace reigns once more in my garden and a few of my rare and unusuals are struggling back to life.

So . . . how to deal with marauding wildlife. Around here that is mostly rabbits and deer—plus bulb-eating squirrels. There are so many different methods out there that you know none of them will work 100% of the time.

First there are repellants. You can install motion-activated sprinklers. They are expensive but are supposed to be quite effective. I'm sure I would forget to turn them off and would get blasted myself. Home remedies include hanging bars of soap or pantyhose filled with human hair around the garden (not very aesthetic), sprinkling predator urine all around (smelly), spreading blood meal (which also fertilizes) or cayenne pepper around, or using commercial sprays like Bobbex or Plantskydd (smelly and expensive). The problem with all these is that they wash off and have to be reapplied, and they have to be rotated because the animals get used to them. One nursery owner in the Interior advises soaking wooden dowels in Plantskydd (the most disgusting smelling of all), letting them dry, and then sticking them in like stakes at intervals in the garden beds. The repellant soaks into the wood and lasts longer, he claims.

Then there are fences. For rabbits they need to be metal (they chew through plastic), 2-3 feet high and they should be buried 3-6 inches below the surface. (Remember Peter Cottontail digging

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under Mr. McGregor's fence to raid his garden?) For deer, black plastic mesh deer fencing can be less expensive and less visually intrusive, but it needs to be 8 feet high so it still means a lot of work and expense.

Probably the best approach is to make your garden deer resistant. First look for tracks and paths so you know where they're entering and head them off with tall, unpalatable plants or shrubs that block their view of your garden, or put up a tall trellis and cover it with a deer resistant vine. Deer will happily go up and down slopes but they don't like having to climb up rock walls or steep berms so terracing slopes can be a physical deterrent. Grow your plants lean; high nitrogen fertilizers produce lush, soft growth—very appetizing. Use feeding mulches or slow-release fertilizers instead. Water wisely and in the morning. Deer browse at night and are attracted to the moisture left from evening watering. Keep lawn grass short to deter grazing and also cut down on deer ticks.

Plant selection is crucial. Although there are no truly deer-proof plants there are some plants that are definitely deer candy, such as hostas, daylilies, roses, lilies, and tulips. There are many lists of deer-resistant plants to be found in books and online. They are often contradictory—which tells you that deer in different parts of the country have different tastes and that a really hungry deer will eat almost anything. I try to look for lists published by authors in the Pacific Northwest. So, choose the majority of your plants from those lists and, if you do plant some deer candy, surround those plants with others that usually repel deer.

Deer tend to avoid:

1. Fuzzy-leaved plants like lamb's ears, lady's mantle, artemisia, etc.
2. Toxic plants like hellebores or euphorbia with its irritating milky sap. Some plants are actually poisonous, like daffodils, castor bean plants, foxgloves or monkshood.

3. Highly aromatic plants like most of the herbs, lavender, salvias, alliums, etc. Planting these at entry points to the garden can be a deterrent.
4. Plants with tough leathery leaves like ferns and many ornamental grasses.
5. Spiny or bristly plants like yuccas, barberry, globe thistle, or hawthorns. A notable exception is roses. The deer will delicately pluck the flower buds off the prickly stems.

SHOW AND TELL

My Show and Tell plant for this talk is an annual called *Coleus canina* 'Hop Off,' also known as the Scaredy Cat plant. It was originally grown to keep rabbits and cats away from garden beds but is reputed to repel deer as well (my local source tells me her rabbits are not deterred but her deer avoid it). This plant is not a *Coleus* at all, though it looks a bit like one. It is actually a *Plectranthus*, a member of the mint family, and is native to eastern Africa



Coleus canina

and southern Asia. It can be grown in the garden or in pots that can be moved around to protect vulnerable areas. It has a very pungent odor that many animals find offensive. The odor is said to resemble tom cat urine and for this reason it is sometimes also called the *Piss-Off* plant. Humans only smell it up close or if the foliage is crushed or rubbed. SSGC experts inform me that the smell is very similar to marijuana but I wouldn't know anything about that.

PLANT SALE UPDATE

The SSGC Plant Sale team requests that members save their used tools (no hoses or mechanized items), unwanted gardening books, and garden ornaments for our May Plant Sale. If storage is needed please contact Debbie Mellenger at mellengers@shaw.ca.

DISCOUNT INFORMATION FOR SSGC MEMBERS

Store Name	Website	Location	Discount
Art Knapp's on King George Boulevard	artknappsurrey.com	4391 King George Blvd. Surrey, BC	15%
Clearview Garden Shop	www.homeofclematis.com	26350 56 Avenue Langley, BC	10%
Erikson's Daylily Gardens	www.eriksonsdailylilygardens.com	24642 51 Avenue Langley, BC	10%
Port Kells Nurseries	portkellsnurseries.com	8730 88 Avenue Surrey, BC	10%
Hunters Garden Centre and Flower Shop	huntersflowershop.com	15175 72 Avenue Surrey, BC	10%
Gardenworks at Mandeville	gardenworks.ca	4746 Marine Dr. Burnaby, BC	10%
99 Nursery and Florist	99nurseryflorist.com	9376 King George Blvd. Surrey, BC	10%
Potters	potters.ca	19158 48 Avenue Surrey, BC	10%
Potters	potters.ca	12530 72 Avenue Surrey, BC	10%

Your SSGC membership card entitles you to discounts at a number of local nurseries. Please be sure to present your card before the cashier rings up your items. Most need to enter a special code first, before entering your purchases. If you are aware of other garden centres or programs that might honour a discount, please let Sharon Lawson (in the library) know so that she can add them to our list.

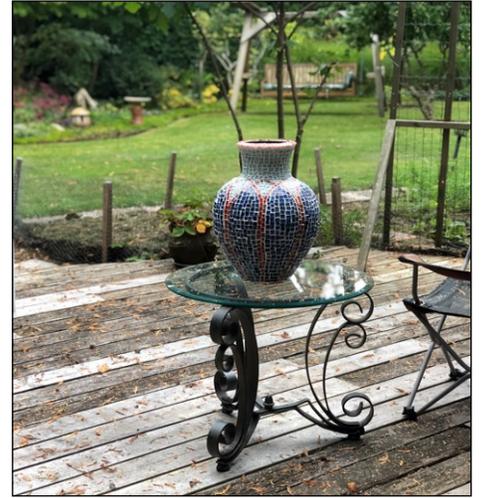
FLORAL DESIGN CLASSES

SSGC member Cindy Tataryn has offered to provide floral design classes to our club in the Spring. She just needs an idea of how many people might be interested so that she can book the correct-sized venue. She will have instructors for both beginners and intermediates. All members are welcome! The lessons will likely be on Saturdays, 2½ hours for about six weeks. The cost will be determined when the total number of students is confirmed. Email Cindy at ctataryn@telus.net if you are interested or have questions.

NOVEMBER TREASURES



Photos by Linda Stanley Wilson



Ceramics by Connie Glover at her open garden for SSGC members.

Photos contributed by Kathy Starke



Mediterranean cruise.

Photos contributed by Claude Hewitt



Plant sale team already hard at work!

Photo by Linda Stanley Wilson