



A place to grow

# CVIBGS News

Issued by the Central Vancouver Island Botanical Garden Society

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*“Our preparations for the 2007 Garden Show are underway and include many new initiatives” ... by Phillip Field, CVIBGS President*

As the Romans articulated, “Tempus Fugit”! My, how time does fly! But with all the technological aids available to us today, there is still never enough time for everything that we want to do, or need to do. Anyway, all that is a lead-up to inform our members and all who read our newsletter, that the CVIBGS Board show committee is getting into high gear regarding our plans and activities for the **2007 Celebration of Island Gardening** show in Nanaimo to be held next **March 9 –11**. It seems like yesterday that we were in the throes of the 2006 Annual Garden Show, and here we are, back at it.

As reported in our last newsletter, the CVIBGS Board became more involved in the 2006 Show and for some, it was “a steep learning curve” but we carried through with a fair degree of success. The experience gave us the opportunity to look at the event with a fresh outlook. I am pleased to announce now that we intend to expand the Show’s appeal so as to involve more of the community in terms of exhibits, program of events and attendance.

Some of the initiatives that we are considering, to mention a few, are to incorporate art and music into the presentation of the Show, have hands-on workshops for the young, a leisure indoor garden area for the public, with a focus on a special event for seniors who may no longer have the opportunity to garden. The exhibits area will expand and broaden our definition of garden-related activities so as to include, for instance, educational information on such subjects as allergies. We also want to provide information on the various governmental programs that exist on areas of concern that that can be related to botanical/gardening issues, (such as invasive species eradication/control, practices supporting sustainability of water etc.). There are many more issues that we can include, and we invite you to give us

your suggestions (ASAP though, please).

I wish to thank all those who volunteered their services in presenting the 2006 Show. We will contact you again to ask for your help for presenting the 2007 Show. In the meantime, we are seeking help from anyone who has the capacity and time to assist us in the areas of :

- i) developing and implementing an effective advertising program;
- ii) maintaining an Excel spreadsheet of potential and committed exhibitors; and
- iii) organizing a special event (e.g. workshop, seminar, art display, wine tasting) for the program during the Show.

**If you can help in those areas, or have a skill that you can offer us that could help us run the Show, please contact me directly at tel: 751-1040 or e-mail: [phillipfield@shaw.ca](mailto:phillipfield@shaw.ca). Thank you and kind regards to all of you .**

*Phil Field*

## Waterwise Garden Officially Opens on Sept 15 *All welcome –article, pg 2*

Here is an opportunity to see the demonstration gardens under development through our partnership agreement with Malaspina University-College. **The Opening takes place at 1:30 pm, Friday, Sept 15 at the G.R. Paine Horticultural Centre at 2324 East Wellington Rd.**

# The Waterwise Garden from brain storm to reality

By Connie Kuramoto

When we began to think of ideas for our most recent completed garden at the GR Paine Horticultural Centre, the one thought that was in the forefront of our minds was “Water Conservation”. It seemed important to us to take a leading role in demonstrating that gardens should not need a tremendous amount of water to survive. Living on Vancouver Island we need to be constantly aware of our water usage. Many of us live with wells of varying degrees of dependability, and most of the rest of us are living with municipal water restrictions that are necessary to keep a supply of water going throughout our dry summers. One just has to hear of the dilemma that the Village of Tofino found itself in on September 1st to be reminded about the realities of the water situation on this island. Faced with a severe water shortage, Tofino found it necessary to close restaurants and hotels and advise residents to boil any water that was used for drinking. Water had to be transported to the town to prevent total evacuation. With population numbers swelling all over our beautiful island it is only a matter of time that other municipalities will be facing similar situations. It is costly to build large new reservoirs and water treatment plants, and costly to transport water from the reservoir to where it is needed. The cost of excessive fresh water use to the environment is even greater.

The faculty at the Horticultural Centre Site have also had some hard lessons with water that have increased our awareness and sensitivity to water issues. We started out with a well that had good, clean water, but not enough of it to run our facility. We dug deeper, and the water that we found was contaminated with arsenic, and seven times the amount of boron necessary to kill plants. It is also extremely high in salinity. We currently use it to flush toilets and store some in a large tank for fire protection preparedness. Forced to find other sources of water, we then built a pond to collect rainwater and run off, and also built in a water collection system so that irrigation water from the greenhouses could be recycled. This system was not perfect in that the water needs to be constantly aerated to prevent anaerobic decomposition of the algae that can accumulate from time to time in a pond that is full of re-circulated fertilizer water. We then installed a series of ponds complete with bog plants that can remove most of the nutrients in the recycled water before it gets to the large storage pond. This is a feature of the Habitat Garden that was designed by the Class of 2002, built in 2003 and completed in 2004 with help from the Botanical Garden Society. We put in a bubbler, and most recently, a fountain to help aerate the water. This pond has supplied most of our water needs for our



gardens, our nursery and some of our crops. In the heat of the summer we purchase some water and store it in tanks to supplement our water system for some of our greenhouse crops that are sensitive to certain water borne diseases that are more prevalent in standing water. We have plumbed the runoff from the greenhouse roofs into these large storage tanks to help with the water flow. We installed low water-use lawns in the Hawkens Garden. Keeping our water situation in mind Victoria Drakeford, our landscape design instructor at the time, presented the class with the design criteria. The garden had to be a “Waterwise” Garden, and, as part of that students were to consider the possibilities of adding some sculpture to the garden, since most sculpture needs very little moisture to continue looking good. I did see one work of sculpture at the Massachusetts Museum of Modern Art that was built using tin containers holding young shade trees hanging upside down about 30 feet off the ground, but that is another story. Our idea was to perhaps feature some works of art from the Malaspina Art Department in the landscape that did not need watering, and yet contributed to the ambiance of the garden without adding to its maintenance. Every year the students are asked to produce two designs, the first one they work alone, and the second they are asked to work in a group. At the end of the time given to finish the design we hold a design competition. Students present their designs to a panel of judges from the Horti-

cultural Industry, and the winning design is installed the following year. The winning design for the Waterwise garden was done by Kathy Blackstaffe, Ron McKim, and Jenn Forrest, who called themselves the “Three old sods.” I got a chance to interview Kathy and Ron last week in my office. Jenn was busy with her landscape business in Ladysmith, and Ron and Kathy’s has just slowed down a bit with the hot weather .

**Connie:** *What was it like working in a group?*

**Kathy:** It was fun, Ron kept everyone in line to keep the design simple by limiting the numbers of plant varieties. Jenn was really good at the technical part and drawing up the details, Kathy did the main design, and Ron did the pricing. We had to make sure we were always within budget.

**Connie:** *We know that your main theme was Waterwise, but what else were you keeping in mind when you did your design?*

**Kathy:** Low maintenance. Two of us worked (and weeded) at the Paine Horticultural Centre the summer before the design project and wanted to make the new garden easy to take care of. We wanted to include lots of ground covers, and thick shrubs that shade out weeds.

**Connie:** *Tell me more about your plant selection.*

**Ron:** Too many. My job was to prevail upon my partners that less is better. **Kathy:** I picked plants that I liked that fit the criteria. I like lots of plants and would have definitely put in way too many. I wanted lots of trees, so the trees we did choose were long and thin, so that we could put in more. I also wanted deciduous trees so that they could really show up against the backdrop of conifers. We liked using natives because they are adapted to our dry summers. We included *Cornus canadensis*, Salal, and *Physocarpus* (nine bark) We also wanted some interest at every time of the year, so we included things like nine bark, that has interesting bark in the winter, and strawberry unedo for it’s fruits. We put in some roses for summer, and for a bit of a joke wanted to plant a smoke tree by the student smoking area.

**Connie:** *Sounds like it was a constant struggle for you (Kathy) who wanted to put in more plants and Ron who was trying to limit the varieties.*

**Ron:** Yes, we did that all the time.

**Connie:** *A secondary consideration was sculpture placement. Did you address that in your design?*

**Kathy:** There are a number of places that we thought it would be a good place for some sculpture. In fact the design actually features a viewing platform for a sculpture.

**Connie:** *A viewing platform?*

**Kathy:** Yes, the deck is our favourite part of the design.

One day I was looking out over the site from inside and noticed a natural archway of sorts through a certain area of the forest. We decided to design a viewing platform (below) that would maximize the view into that archway (photo, p 2), and suggested that a piece of sculpture be



placed at the far end of the arch.

**Connie:** *Did you consider deer proof plants?*

**Kathy:** Mostly. We chose Rugosa roses, which tend to be deer proof, and *Pachysandra terminallis*, but some of the other plants were just too cool to leave out.

**Connie:** *Yes, the nine bark was being munched as we planted it.*

**Ron:** Well you are just going to have to train the cat to chase deer.

We hope you enjoy our latest garden. And if you know of anyone who trains housecats to hunt deer, please tell us.☼

### CVIBGS Book Prize Honours Student

The Society received a warm letter of thanks from Mal U horticultural student, Patrick McIntosh, who was awarded two texts donated by the CVIBGS, **Botanica**, an illustrated A-Z guide of over 10,000 garden plants, and the **Canadian Encyclopedia of Gardening** for his achievements. He writes “this wonderful prize will prove to be “a valuable resource in both my studies and future life time of horticultural endeavours.”

Letters to the editor—are welcome along with short garden related stories or garden tours. Let us know about your favourite gardens or garden tips, or if you are a photographer, a picture is often worth a thousand words. If you have ideas on what the Society should be doing or an opinion on how we are doing, share it. The editor retains control over all content. Send to Darlene Booth at [www.secretary@cvibgs.org](mailto:www.secretary@cvibgs.org).

## Booths Now for Sale— 2007 Garden Show

Attention all nurseries and garden clubs, landscapers, pond builders, fencing experts & masons, wine-makers, garden artists, tool & equipment suppliers, specialty growers, garden planter, ornament & furniture retailers, Master Gardeners, ecologists — its time to reserve booth space at the Mar 9-11 Garden Show in Nanaimo. Please contact us immediately to ensure that you are on our mailing list. Early bird rates are available with a special rate for non profit groups. Many businesses for the past 11 years have found the Show a profitable opportunity so please do not delay. Space is limited. Contact us at [www.cvibgs.org](http://www.cvibgs.org) or email [secretary@cvibgs.org](mailto:secretary@cvibgs.org).

## CVIBGS Invites Garden Groups to Form Alliance

Phil Field has written to various local non profit garden groups in the area to meet with the CVIBGS to discuss how the individual groups may be able to collaborate toward mutual goals and interests. In particular, the CVIBGS sees some advantage of pooling resources with other garden groups so that we can optimize our resources and impact. We sense this could be of particular importance when approaching sponsors or foundations for funds in support of the gardens at the G.R. Paine Horticultural Centre.

For more information contact Phil Field (p 1).✧



### CVIBGS Board of Directors

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### OUR MISSION

- ◆ exhibit native and exotic plants in beautiful and informative settings;
- ◆ offer useful and interesting information about plants to the public;
- ◆ give advice on horticultural problems...;
- ◆ provide library reference and study facilities in horticultural, botany and related fields;
- ◆ engage in exchange, testing and evaluation of new and desirable plants to the ultimate benefit of the public;
- ◆ conserve plants that may be in danger ..

## Have You Renewed Your Membership?

Thank you to all those members who have renewed their membership bringing our total paid up membership to 52. If you have not been mailed a membership card with expiry in 2007, then we hope you will consider rejoining today.

**CVIBGS is a Registered Non Profit Organization. Tax receipts will be issued for donations \$20 or more.**

Please use the form below, or go online to [www.cvibgs.org](http://www.cvibgs.org) which provides a secure means for remitting dues, to join the CVIBGS or renew your membership to Mar 31, 2007. Or, attend the opening of Waterwise Garden at the G.R. Paine Horticulture Centre, 2324 East Wellington in Nanaimo on Sept15 at 1:30 (article p 2-3) and sign up in person. Your Membership Card will give you a 10% member's discount when shown at most Nanaimo garden centres.



**Mail to: CVIBGS, PO Box 2227, Station A, Nanaimo, BC V9R 6X9**

**I would like to:**

Renew my Annual membership, or  Begin a CVIBGS membership

Student: \$10.00  Individual: \$15.00  Family \$25.00

Donate the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_

Be a Garden Show volunteer  Help with Fundraising

Serve on the Board of Directors or a committee

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

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