



LYNN VALLEY GARDEN CLUB

Established 1943

February 2019

### *President's Message - Anna Marie D'Angelo*

Wow, what a great crowd showed up for our first meeting of 2019: 70 people attended in January including two new members and five guests. It is nice to see that more members are coming out to enjoy our gatherings as we used to get a paltry 50 on a good night just a couple of years ago.

Thanks to the membership for making it clear on how you would like to celebrate the club's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. We are going to combine the public awareness part - booth, banner, brochures, bookmarks - lots of Bs here - with our plant sale in May. It looks like we would like to reward ourselves with a visit to Van Dusen Garden as well. 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary colourful T-shirts drew moderate support so we will look at that as well. With public awareness comes an opportunity to get messages out from the club to the public about gardening. Any thoughts about this, please contact me or any one on the executive.

Messages we have come up with have included "anyone can garden," which I especially like because it rings true. With all the novice plant questions I get from my daughter and her millennial friends, my personal message has been to "start small." I think most of us began that way with sometimes not so successful results. I remember my first veggie patch had one poor tomato plant that after a long hot summer finally produced tiny misshapen fruit. It was a regular size tomato plant and not a cherry tomato but I was too naïve to be concerned. My boyfriend at the time noted that the toms were not worth eating and suggested sending photographs of some of the more suggestive shapes to *Playboy*. That was a long time ago. In the past several years, I usually had several big bags of ripe tomatoes from just four plants. They go in the freezer to keep me in delicious sweet pasta sauce through most of the winter.



Breaking news... it looks like the Pig Poo fertilizer order is being arranged to be delivered at our March meeting. Cost is \$8 a bag. More on this at our meeting.

If you haven't already, please be thinking about your contribution to the plant sale this year. It is only a few months away after all. The Members at Large and Veggiemates have been hard at work for some time now, preparing for the plant sale. The more of us who contribute, the merrier it will be in our comfortable new space. Lastly, whether you are a seed-starter pro or not, don't miss the Veggiemates' fascinating seeding workshop at 6:15 p.m. before our regular meeting this month.

### LVGC MEETINGS

3rd Thursday of each month (except July and August) at

**St. Stephen's Church**  
1360 E 24<sup>th</sup> Street

*Please note that meetings start promptly at 7:15 PM*

### SPEAKERS

February 21

**MARGARET NAKAHARA**  
*Orchids for the Home*

March 21

**JIM MORRIS**  
*Bonsai*

April 11

**2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday because of Easter at St. Stephen's**

**MIKE LASCELLE**  
*Beauty and the Feast*

**LVGC Plant Sale May 18!!!!**

### Mailing Address:

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[lvgc.membership@gmail.com](mailto:lvgc.membership@gmail.com)



## 2018 Executive

### President

Anna Marie D'Angelo xx

### Vice President

Penny LeCouteur xx

### Secretary

Jackie Morris xx

### Treasurer

Ginette Handfield xx

### Membership

Susan Huber xx

Sue Callahan xx

### Members at Large

Daphne Page xx

Doreen Dew xx

Hiromi Matsui xx

Linda Howe xx

## Committees

### Newsletter Editor

Maria Issa xx

### Plant Table

Norma Buckland xx

### Hospitality

Carole Cobbett xx

Susan Nicholls xx

Maggie Davis xx

### Sunshine / Door Prizes

Shirley Lawson xx

### Website

Aline Burlone xx

### Executive Meetings

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month  
Next Meeting: March 6 7:30 PM  
Chez LINDA HOWE  
Next Newsletter Deadline  
March 13, 2019

If you have material to delight your fellow members - please submit it *via* the time-honoured routes or email to <mailto:lynnvalleygardenclubnewsletter@gmail.com>

Thanks to all who contributed to this edition: and to Bruce Tennant, Sue Callahan, Anna Marie D'Angelo, Rita Marshall, Jenn Syndenham, Wayne Smith & Doreen Dew for photos!



## VP Report

Penny LeCouteur is currently in South Africa - scratching "Penny," an albino lion cub, under the chin. Picture later. Speakers are still Hiromi's finds.

## Treasurer's Report - Ginette Handfield

- The bank balance at the middle of January was \$9284.63
- In petty cash there was \$530.25
- The LVGC total is \$9814.87

## Membership Report for the start of 2019 - Susan Huber & Sue Callahan

Thanks to all our members who renewed for 2019 -we're now at 117 members including three new members - please welcome Jacqueline, Liz, and Donna to the Club.

When you sign-in at the February meeting, please check for your *Membership card* (if you didn't pick it up @ January meeting) - show this card for discounts at local nurseries including Maplewood and Gardenworks.

A reminder that the fee for attending meetings as a *Guest* is now **\$5.00 per person** - this was effective as of the January meeting.

Lastly, a huge *Thank You* to our outgoing Membership Chair, Judy Sullivan. Judy did a great job over two years and she is a hard act to follow! We are delighted to welcome Sue Callahan to the Membership Committee - please say hi to her at the Membership Desk.

At the next meeting, there will be a *Notice of Motion* about increasing the membership from 125 to 150. The motion will be put to the vote at the March meeting. For your consideration:

*"We move to increase the maximum number of LVGC members from 125 to 150."*

## Plant Table - Norma Buckland

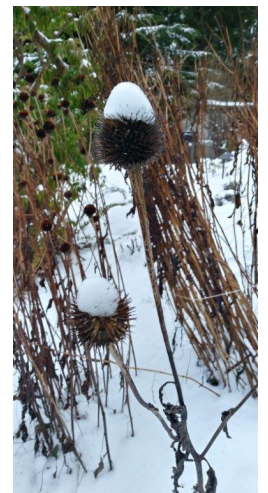
It is looking more and more like there may be a Plant Table at the February meeting, as some members may be bringing plants. Bring your \$\$!.

## Hospitality - Carole Cobbett & Susan Nicholls & Maggie Davis

This month, the Hospitality Team is seriously short-handed: Carole will be wrangling the treats all by herself. *Please offer your help, if you can!*

.... our ever-constant reminder to try and remember to bring your own mug to meetings!!!!

*[...and as you think of your own treats, think of something to treat the foodbank.-m]*



Heaven is beneath our feet as well as over our heads . . . *Henry David Thoreau*

**SPEAKER**  
*Thursday, February 21, 2019*  
**MARGARET NAKAHARA**

**Topic:** Margaret will cover all the basics for enjoying orchids at home: how to select them depending on where they will be kept; choosing the right containers, understanding the different growing media and fertilizers; watering and lighting requirements; and other tips on general care for common varieties of both indoor and outdoor orchids. She'll discuss common orchid diseases and pests, and how to control them using organic means, and she will also demonstrate how to re-pot an orchid.

**Bio:** Margaret Nakahara and her husband Koichi, have been growing orchids since the 1970s and their orchid collection has grown from a few plants to more than 350 today. They are both members of the Vancouver Orchid Society, the Fraser Pacific Rose Society and the Lynn Valley Garden Club. Margaret earned gold and bronze medals for floral art in the World Orchid Show held in Vancouver in 1999. In 2017 one of her orchids received the Award of Merit from the American Orchid Society, and she was able to name that cultivar for registration with the AOS.

Margaret is a past-president of many floral art and horticultural clubs, including the BC Council of Garden Clubs. She is a founding member of the Horticultural and Floral Design Judges of BC, and a senior show judge of Horticulture and Floral Art.

**NOTE:** Margaret, and a friend who also will be attending the meeting, will be bring a some unnamed (but beautiful!) ORCHIDS FOR SALE. Remember to bring your piggy bank and sharpened elbows, as there will be much interest!



... as all rock stars need a warm-up act: back by popular demand, LVGC is pleased to present

*Thursday, February 21, 2019*  
**SPECIAL PRE-MEETING EVENT 6:15 PM**  
***Seed Starting Workshop by The Veggimates***



1. West Coast Seeds has donated a variety of veggie seeds again this year: you can use these to grow veggies for the **LVGC Plant Sale**. Of course if a few seeds happen to drop into your own garden... that's just karma.

2. Due to **POPULAR DEMAND**, *The Veggimates* have had their rubber arms twisted to do another "Seedy Workshop" on how to get those West Coast Seeds, or indeed any others, started and flourishing. This **exclusive special event** will take place **right before** the February meeting. The workshop will be conducted by Aline, Jackie and Yvonne. They will hand out useful information, do a little seeding and transplanting demonstration, and have lots of vegetable seeds available.

At the workshop *The Veggimates* would like to know:

3. *Who is interested in growing vegetables for the garden sale?*

4. *Who would be interested in "babysitting" pre-grown plants from the April meeting until the sale (by April some of us will have run out of space and some plants such as pumpkins can still be started for the sale)*

If you are unable to attend the February meeting but answer 'yes' to either of the above, please call Tom so the Veggimates can get an accurate idea of how to proceed.



*The Veggimates profile a favourite vegetable each month: Here is the second! [Keep 'em coming, Veggimates!]*



*One good thing about rutabagas is that they provide something for turnips to taste better than....*

## Vegetable of the month: "ONIONS"

- Tom Davis

*"And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath" - William Shakespeare*

Although the exact origin of onions is discovered and started eating wild Onions are thought to originate in grown in Egypt, India and China over start onions if you want a reasonable scallions, shallots and leeks}. Long-area. Start them indoors under bright deep in starter mix. Set out the March 28<sup>th</sup> in our area. If your them to 1" tall. This will allow a good root system to develop. You can also buy and plant onion sets from the local nurseries. Onions are mature when 20-30% of the tops have fallen over. Gently lift out the bulbs and place them in a warm, well-ventilated place, away from direct sunlight, to cure {about 2-3weeks for long day onions}. Clip off the tops 2-3" and roots and lightly brush off any loose dirt, or braid them before storing in a cool dry place. Properly cured, they can last 6-8 months.



unclear, it is presumed that our ancestors onions before farming was invented. Asia and the Middle East and onions were 5000 years ago. February is the time to harvest by August. {this also includes day varieties are best for growing in our lights, space the seeds ¼" apart and ¼" seedlings 3 weeks before the last frost, seedlings grow past 3-4" in the house, trim

*"Onion skin thin, mild winter coming in; Onion skin thick and tough, coming winter cold and rough"*  
Anonymous

*(Rumour: next month's vegetable will be "eggplant" and Bruce Tennant!)*



### 11 Proven Health Benefits of Eating Onions

Onions are the most cultivated species of the *Allium* genus, and are also used in many traditional medicines for curative properties and for promoting health. The flavonoids in onion, which are responsible for many of the health benefits, are usually more concentrated in the outer layers of the bulb so try to peel as little of the outer skin as possible.

#### **Prevent Diabetes**

Onions are good for people who have diabetes: people should include red onions regularly in their diet. A single serving of onions contains 27% of the biotin DRI. Biotin has many positive impacts on health, one of which is combatting symptoms associated with type 2 diabetes. Early research suggests that a combination of biotin and chromium might help regulate blood sugar and even decrease insulin resistance.

#### **Fight Cancer**

Onion extract is rich in a variety of sulfides, which provide some protection against tumor growth. Some studies have shown that regular consumption of onions helps to reduce the risk of several cancers such as colorectal cancer, oral cancer, laryngeal cancer, stomach cancer, esophageal cancer, and ovarian cancer.

#### **Build Strong Immunity**

Due to their polyphenol content, onions can help boost immunity by protecting the body against free

radicals. Onions also contain the trace mineral selenium that helps modulate the immune response.

#### **Lower 'Bad Cholesterol'**

Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong show that consuming half a raw onion daily can help reduce the levels of 'bad cholesterol' and raise the 'good HDL cholesterol' by 30%. Other members of the *Allium* family, chives, garlic, and shallots are also effective.

#### **Relieve Earache**

A few drops of onion juice are beneficial to individuals suffering from an acute earache. The ringing sound in the ear (*tinnitus*), may be cured by applying onion juice with a piece of cotton wool.

#### **Reduce Tooth Decay**

Raw onions may make the breath stink, but they can actually improve oral health. Simply chewing a raw onion can strengthen teeth and eliminate bacteria that can lead to tooth decay. Two to three minutes of chewing on an onion can kill most germs in the mouth.

#### **Improve Digestion**

Onions are high in fiber, which is good for maintaining a healthy and regular digestive system.

#### **Boost Sexual Drive**

Onions are said to increase the urge for a healthy sex life. One tablespoon of onion juice along with one spoonful of ginger juice, taken three times a day, can boost the libido.

### **Stimulate Hair Growth**

Onion is rich in sulfur, which is one of the essential nutrients for promoting hair growth. A study has shown that applying onion juice on the scalp twice a week for 2 months will stimulate hair regrowth.

### **Relieve Sinusitis**

For a clogged nose and sinusitis problems, onions can help to loosen mucus, clear the nasal passages and make breathing easier.

### **Onion sandwich recipe:**

Slice onion into medium slices, spread mayonnaise onto 2 slices of bread, add salt and pepper and enjoy!! *[In fact, for a bit of added 'zing', add a few slices of raw onions to all your salads and sandwiches!]*

...and while we are on recipes - here is [... drum roll!...]  
**Anne Pentland's much requested *BEET DIP* RECIPE!!!!**

### **BEET HUMMUS:**

- 1 raw beet or equivalent ready cooked
  - 2 cloves garlic, peeled
  - 1 can cooked black beans, drained & rinsed
  - ¼ cup Tahini
  - 2 Tbsp Lemon Juice
  - 1 Tbsp Balsamic Vinegar
  - 1 tsp ground cumin
  - ¼ tsp salt
- Pulse the beets and garlic, then add all other ingredients & blend until smooth.  
ENJOY!!!

Bonsai at the  
International  
Buddhist  
Temple in  
Richmond



### **Soil Additives**

**- Judith Brook**

If your garden soil needs something specific, here are some good sources:

#### **Nitrogen**

- cottonseed meal
- dried blood (acidifies, lowers pH)
- hoof and horn meal (alkalizes, raises pH)
- composted manure, 6 mths old, dig into 6 inches of soil. Cover with straw, rest 3 weeks before planting
- Alfalfa, grow and till in

- Rock phosphate (P-containing clays)
- Compost, manure

#### **Potassium**

- Rock potash
- Liquid seaweed product
- Compost, manure

#### **Phosphorus**

- Bonemeal

#### **Sulfate or Sulphur**

- Epsom salts (Magnesium sulfate, MgSO<sub>4</sub>)



### **PLANT SALE SOIL**

... will be available as soon as the weather allows. You will receive an email notice. PLEASE limit yourself to what you need in order to pot up for the plant sale. Please 'bag & bring' any extra flowerpots for sharing and leave them by the soil. Your fellow LVGC will be grateful!!



## PIG POO PROCUREMENT!!!!



People purchasing prime pungent *Pig Poo*: please pre-order & preferably pre-pay: \$8 plastic bag.

Pondering planting proportions? Picture a bag about 3x the size of your computer screen.

Please place your orders promptly at the *February meeting* break, or phone Kelly Robertson, PP Purveyor par excellence, who will be pleased to place your name on the provisioning list.

The Porcine Poo Provider will be in the parking lot prior to the *March meeting*: Please prepare your payment, if you hadn't already paid; and your transport appropriately (tarp in car posterior - poo bag plastic probably not pristine...) and be prepared to participate in the procession passing by the purveyor to pick up your personal pile. [Basically, think of it as a pig poo drive through.]

Problems picking up? Please make precipitate private arrangements, as unclaimed Pig Poo poses problems for the parking lot.



**For planning purposes:** - [oh stop it already with those p-s!]

### The April Meeting will be on **April 11**

This is ONE WEEK EARLIER than usual - on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month. This change of date was prompted by Easter being on April 21. As Catholic Easter-tide observances run up to Easter Sunday, the whole week before is full, and St. Stephen's needs the hall. No, this will not happen every year, as Easter moves about - for the 'how' and 'why' of that, see Rosemarie's notes below.

### LVGC Plant Sale **May 18**

The LVGC annual Plant Sale, on the other hand, will be ONE WEEK LATER than last year. This is because the date for St. Stephen's parish Confirmation, chosen by the Archdiocese, was the date of our plant sale. No contest. We would be very much underfoot - so it makes sense to move the plant sale to the weekend after. Our plants will be that much BIGGER then... and also consider the extra prep we have to do with the new venue, the 75<sup>th</sup> celebrations: the extra week is literally a God-send.

Sign-up sheets for plant sale jobs will be circulated at all the meetings before the sale: sign up soon, as the prime spots go fast! There will be new options this year - so more can join the fun! There will be a "Honey Table" as well as an "Invasive Species" table. Contributions to the latter of "the real thing" is welcome - but keep 'em small (eg not an entire Buddleja). On the other hand, "good" plants for the sale need to be the bigger, the better: NO SEEDLINGS please. Thanks to the MALS, there will be a list of "stuff that sells" coming your way.

If you **need to contact someone about the plant sale** - the people you want are the MALs, Doreen Dew, Linda Howe, Hiromi Matsui and Daphne Page. Members' phone numbers will be in the March Leaf, but if you need to reach them sooner, you can email the Leaf and the message will be passed forthwith.

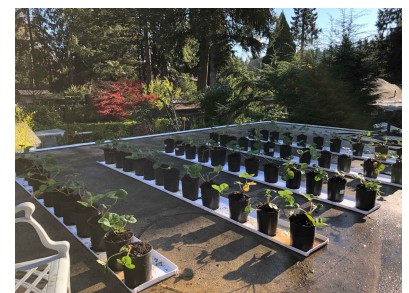


### *Creative containers*

- *Wayne Smith*

For those of us who have visited Wayne's place with the Members' Gardens Tour, and saw his "tomatosaurus" and other huge and healthy veggies, there has always been the question "How does he do that? and whaaaaaat does he feed them?" Here are some (but not all!) of Wayne's secrets.

"A decent day outside is gold this time of year. I have been having fun making long plant trays to hold strawberry plants. I thought that to manage them, I would make trays. I may put a sand and gravel base in the trays and water/feed



with a pump and timer in the summer. Maybe I'll sell strawberry plants in pots with berries next year. [at the LVGC PLANT SALE, I hope!? -ed]. It's been quite a lesson learning how bend the trays with the heat gun, but I'm on to it now after making a dozen. The first few I made caused my coat sleeve to get more than hot, and my bends looked like waves on the sea. [above] The trays and straw-babies are laid out on my dad's deck - I have no more room at my place. I must buy a farm some day."

The trays are not Wayne's only innovative containers! Wayne writes, that he uses "bags for sugar snap peas: I cut the plastic bag to fit the flat, then put the flat on sand in the cold frame. I'm also trying hydroponics in teacups. I made plastic covers for the cups and pinned cut strips of material and plastic mesh to hold the Swiss chard that I will try to grow in different hydroponic nutrients. We'll see whether the coffee cup garden grows or withers as a new idea. I'm also into 20 ft [eaves] troughs. I have them screwed to the south side of my house. There is a wild crazy amount of space in a long trough: I have a perennial seed trough that should give lots of plants for



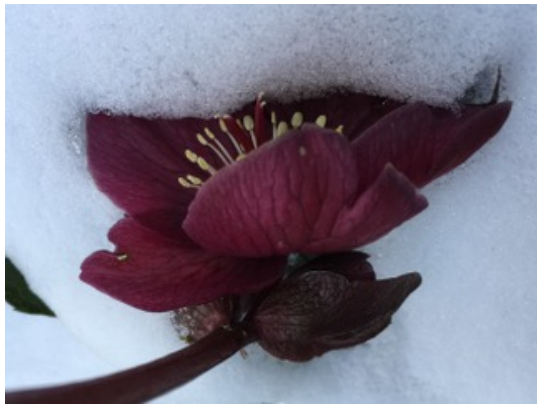
my front bank."



## Ever wonder why Easter jumps around the calendar so much? - by Rosemarie Adams

The date of Easter Sunday is usually the **first Sunday following the full moon** that comes on or after the **vernal (Spring) equinox**. Spring Equinox is usually March 21, but can be March 19, 20 or 21st. Thus Easter can take place as early as March 22 but no later than April 25.

In the Gregorian calendar, Easter falls on a Sunday between March 22 and April 25 from the year 1753 to 2400. In the Julian calendar, used by some eastern or Orthodox churches, Easter also falls on a Sunday from March 22 to April 25, which in the Gregorian calendar are from April 3 to May 10 during the years from 1753 to 2400. Thus, in 2007 Easter fell on the same date (April 8) in both calendars so the Julian date was converted to the Gregorian date. This also happened in other years, such as 2004, 2010 and 2011.



[Hellebore blooming in the snow - also known as 'Lenten Rose']

There have been a number of suggested reforms for the Easter date. For example, in 1997 the World Council of Churches proposed a reform of the Easter calculation to replace an equation-based method of calculating Easter with direct astronomical observation. This would have solved the Easter date difference between churches that observe the Gregorian calendar and those that observe the Julian calendar. The reform was proposed to be implemented in 2001, but it is not yet adopted.

Another example of a proposed reform occurred in the United Kingdom, where the Easter Act of 1928 was established to allow the Easter date to be fixed as the first Sunday after the second Saturday in April. However, this

law was not implemented, although it remains on the UK Statute Law Database.

PS - You may well ask what the Spring Equinox has got to do with gardening? In many cultures the planting of seeds is very much related to Spring Equinox - which brings a balance of light and darkness as the sun rises from the true east and sets in the true west.



## Critters...

This month, the *Leaf* inbox was filled with a large number of wonderful pictures, links, notes - all to do with critters. While "officially" we are plant people, biodiversity is important to us all. We are, after all, one big ecosystem, working (or not!) together... herewith, from big to small:



### "Penny" - by Penny LeCouteur

It seems that many of us are not only gardeners, but also have relationships with cats. (We are their slaves). Besides the ones at home, Penny made friends with another "Penny", an albino lion cub and her twin.

### Raccoons & Crows - Jennifer Sydenham

Under the heading of "or not" - Jenn has been struggling with her lawn-equivalent. Things looked good until the critters

showed up and re-landscaped her yard.

### Hummingbirds - Maggie Davis



At the last meeting Penny passed on information about feeding hummingbirds - here is more. I have been looking for some hummingbird expert advice and found a provincial organization with some great hummer info. Their newsletter from Spring 2012 has a nice article on feeding and a short one on flowers for attracting. I really enjoyed the feature article about saving a hummingbird nest. [so did I!!]

### Butterflies - From Jennifer Sydenham

The District of North Van is looking for volunteers to help create a *butterfly pathway*. This sounds like so much fun but I can't go to the March 9 meeting. I thought maybe someone from the Club might be interested. (Look for the link in the cover email and register!! If someone can go, PLEASE take good notes and bring them to the April meeting!!)



### Attention Vancouver, Richmond and District of North Vancouver residents: You can join the Butterflyway Project!

Wild pollinators such as butterflies, bees and birds are crucial to human survival. Climate change and widespread pesticide use are compromising their habitat and food sources. The national Butterflyway Project aims to help people step up efforts to help pollinators find food and shelter. This year, Vancouver Butterflyway Rangers will join Richmond and North Shore Rangers to:

- Plant pollinator-friendly native wildflowers in and around their properties and neighbourhoods
- Encourage friends, neighbours and school communities to do the same
- Help build municipal- and neighbourhood-scale highways of pollinator habitat
- As citizen scientists, identify prevalent butterfly species and the locations they frequent



To accommodate B.C.'s early planting season, Butterflyway Ranger recruitment in Vancouver, Richmond and the District of North Vancouver begins Monday, February 4. We'll notify selected Rangers before the end of February. They'll join our one-day training program Saturday, March 9 at the UBC Botanical Garden.

### ***Monarch Butterflies (well, actually Milkweed) - Doreen Dew***

*West Coast Seeds* had a great article on Milkweed – see the link in the cover email – and here is the “teaser”. “Not all milkweeds are built the same. Some are obedient garden bloomers that produce clusters of vibrant, sweet smelling flowers from late spring through summer. Other species employ multiple strategies to spread, notably through fast-growing rhizomes below the soil and by silk-bearing, dandelion-like seeds that spread by wind. Butterfly Bush Milkweed seeds, sometimes called Orange Milkweed, is a hearty perennial intensely attractive to butterflies and other beneficial garden insects. It is highly drought resistant, so useful for xeriscaping. Unlike other members of the Milkweed family, Butterfly Weed does not issue a milky sap when broken. Waxy green stems to 70 cm (27") tall are topped by vivid orange flower clusters. Showy Milkweed is the plant at the center of Monarch butterfly conservation efforts. This is the particular species of milkweed that the Monarch caterpillars feed on after hatching, so it is highly prized by egg-laying adults. The flowers are notoriously generous with nectar, so they attract a host of other butterfly species, as well as bees, hummingbirds, and many other pollinators.” [***Xeriscaping*** is the process of landscaping or gardening that reduces or eliminates the need for supplemental water from irrigation.]



### ***Western Conifer Seed Bug vs Brown Marmorated Stink Bug – Rosemarie Adams***



About a month ago I found a bug in my kitchen. I thought it was a Stink Bug, but checked with Tracy Hueppelsheuser - Entomologist, Plant and Animal Health Branch with British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, and found out it was a “western conifer seed bug”, not a stink bug. It is a native insect to BC, and feeds on conifer seeds in the summer. It is not of concern around the home or buildings. I think this one might have come into the house at Christmas time when I brought in boughs of cedar and greenery.

This weekend my sister in Langley found a similar bug in her kitchen. Again we sent the photo to Tracy and she identified it as a Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, the *invasive species* of concern. The Brown Marmorated stink bug is now known to be widely established in urban areas of the Lower Mainland, from Vancouver out to Agassiz. These bugs are doing a lot of damage across Canada and US - both in homes and in crops.

They wander into homes accidentally *via* windows or doors, or come in through vents or other openings. They can also ‘hitch a ride’ on clothing, in boxes or bags of goods coming into your house. They are seeking shelter only, they are not feeding or reproducing over the winter. They do not bite or sting. In the spring they will go outside and feed and lay eggs in the plants.

So as far as what to do: kill them when you find them. Squishing can cause them to release their defensive smell. Freezing them for a couple days works well, as then they don't stink.



### ***Microbiome (and gardening) part 1 – Maria Isssa***

Gardening is good for you... Yes, obviously... it's a pleasant occupation, and if you don't nurture weeds and haul out the good stuff, like I do, then it is very, very satisfying. The next obvious answer is that it's even nicer when you get to eat what you grow: the veggies and fruits, and if you're adventurous, the flowers and seeds... Then, of course, it's great exercise (see below #1)- bending and reaching and digging and lifting and walking, even the lungs get a workout from yelling at deer, slugs, pests targeting our tender shoots. If you are an organic gardener, then what you do is good for the soil, the environment, indeed the planet.... Pretty righteous!

But did you know that gardening is good for your microbiome? “What on earth is a microbiome?” you may well ask. Let me ease you into this gently: start by thinking of yourself not as “me” but as “we”. “We” means 1 human plus

trillions of bacteria that inhabit our surfaces – the obvious outside surfaces and the “outside that is inside” – our gut and other holes. Yes, we are nothing but a walking tube, coated on both sides with a wide variety of bacteria. The more *variety* – the healthier we are.

The more “clean” we are, the more our system is exposed to disease. This seems counterintuitive, as almost our first memory is “Wash your hands!”, “Don’t touch that, it’s dirty!” We wash, clean everything, we send tons – literally!! – of cleaning products down the drain in the form of laundry soap, shampoo, dishwasher detergent *etc etc*. The TV exhorts us to have “whiter than white” clothes, shiny teeth, squeaky-clean dishes... and more, and more and more. We equate “clean” with “healthy” – thanks to the germ theory of the past century (2, Robert Koch *etal*) and the development of antibiotics.

Don’t get me wrong – “cleanliness is (still) next to godliness” and there is (still) a place for antibiotics in this world. The key word for our body’s microorganisms is “variety”. When one organism outcompetes all the others and predominates – trouble (disease) ensues: and it’s time for specific, limited, antibiotics - BUT (3) “[not all bugs need drugs](#)”. Unfortunately, antibiotics ‘carpet bomb’ the microbiome and kill nearly everything, the bad and the good... it’s sort of like treating a garden with weed-killer ... not much remains. Re-establishing a healthy microbiome takes time: just like developing a garden: you have to bring in a variety of new plants, keep out the weeds. Not surprisingly, the scientific literature talks of “gardening” the microbiome. Soooo, also not surprisingly, gardening in the garden actually gardens the microbiome. (Hold your breath for more next time).

### **Background info:**

#### 1. <https://www.thespruce.com/is-gardening-good-exercise-1401896>

We certainly feel like we’ve put in a good day’s work, after gardening for hours on end. But is gardening really considered good exercise? For the most part, yes. According to the University of Virginia, gardening rates right up there with other moderate to strenuous forms of exercise, like walking and bicycling. It all depends on what gardening task you are doing and for how long. Like any other form of exercise, you have to be active for at least 30 minutes for there to be a benefit.

#### *What Makes Gardening Good Exercise?*

While enjoying yourself in the garden, you are also working all the major muscle groups: legs, buttocks, arms, shoulders, neck, back and abdomen. Gardening tasks that use these muscles build strength and burn calories.

Besides the exertion involved, gardening has other pluses that make it a good form of exercise and calorie burning. There can be a great deal of stretching involved with gardening, like reaching for weeds or tall branches, bending to plant and extending a rake. Lifting bags of mulch, pushing wheelbarrows and shoveling all provide resistance training similar to weight lifting, which leads to healthier bones and joints. Yet while doing all this, there is minimal jarring and stress on the body, unlike aerobics or jogging.

The National Institute of Health lists gardening for 30 - 45 minutes in its recommended activities for moderate levels of exercise to combat obesity, along with biking 5 miles in 30 minutes and walking 2 miles at the same time.

Research shows that gardening for just 30 minutes daily will help to:

- Increase flexibility
- Strengthen joints
- Decrease blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- Lower your risk for diabetes
- Slow osteoporosis

#### 2. Koch's postulates:

The microorganism must be found in abundance in all organisms suffering from the disease, but should not be found in healthy organisms.

The microorganism must be isolated from a diseased organism and grown in pure culture.

The cultured microorganism should cause disease when introduced into a healthy organism.

The microorganism must be reisolated from the inoculated, diseased experimental host and identified as being identical to the original specific causative agent.

However, Koch abandoned the universalist requirement of the first postulate altogether when he discovered asymptomatic carriers of cholera and, later, of typhoid fever. Asymptomatic or subclinical infection carriers are now known to be a common feature of many infectious diseases, especially viruses such as polio, herpes simplex, HIV, and hepatitis C.

#### 3. Not all bugs need drugs: This is an excellent book by a BC microbiologist – a good read.

‘Tis my faith that every flower  
Enjoys the air it breathes!  
-- William Wordsworth

## EVENTS:

*Saturday, FEBRUARY 23, 10 am - 4 pm*



### Van Dusen Gardens: **Seedy Saturday**

Join us on Saturday in the Floral Hall.  
*Brought to you by the Vancouver Master Gardeners*  
Meet Seed Vendors  
Free Lectures  
Learn how to grow from seed!



*Saturday APR 6, 2019 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM 2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING*  
*BC Council of Garden Clubs*

Gardening in the New Millennium: Our committee is preparing for our next AGM, We will look at new gardening techniques, innovations in green initiatives, and welcome the voice of our younger gardeners. Firefighters Banquet & Conference Centre, 6515 Bonsor Avenue – Burnaby.



*Saturday, May 4, 10AM-2PM*

*VANCOUVER RHODODENDRON SOCIETY Annual Show and Sale at Park & Tilford*  
*333 Brooksbank Ave., North Vancouver*



## *The Compost Bin*

*- Maria Issa*

Not much in it these days as it's frozen solid – even the (big juicy) worms are asleep. However...

I'm still waiting for ideas for our collaborative *Whodunit?* I have only received ONE very grisly suggestion – but I need a **Victim-with-suitable-name** (someone/character that you would find in North Van: the real estate agent, the old guy with the big house, the snoopy neighbor, the party animals down the hill – who would you like to kill? This is your chance for a virtual retribution. **Murderer** (the developer, the old guy's greedy nephew, the sweet old lady with a secret, a selfish gardener – who should be guilty? **Means** (ohmygoodness: bogles the mind – fertilizer overdose, buried under bags of pig poo, poisonous plant); **Motive** (a coveted plant, a coveted plot of land, a secret source of water...) **Opportunity**.... You get my drift... start emailing them to me!

While not necessarily a "whodunit" – it's more a "why haven't you done it?" **Joined the LVGC Exec?** Being on the Exec is a hoot: I quite look forward to the meetings – even though I'm not a voting member – just a fly on the wall so that I can report to you whatever's coming up. So here is how it works: someone volunteers to host (everyone gets a turn) – and this is how we discover that every LVGC member so far, is a "hostess with the mostest". They bait us to meetings with delicious treats, wines, teas – and sometimes even garden snoops if the weather permits. The 'The Pres' works through the items on the agenda and things get discussed, decided.... Sometimes slowly, as we digress: last meeting's parallel tracks included: Goa, serial killers & bodies in flower pots, cats, archdeacons vs archbishops, graves in the back yard, vegan sausage rolls, bonsai, computers and digital projectors, cannabis catastrophes. JOIN THE FUN