



THE LEAF

THE LYNN VALLEY GARDEN CLUB *Established 1943* *January 2024*

President's Message - Donna Wasylik

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Happy New Year and best wishes for good health, happiness and prosperity in the coming year.

My name is Donna Wasylik and I will be your president for the next two years. I joined the garden club in about 2018 and have served on the nominations committee and as treasurer. On hearing that no one was coming forth to volunteer as president and that there was a concern about shutting down the club, I decided to come on board. I hope that the executive and I will be able to continue the excellent work done in the past and to bring a lot of interesting ideas to fruition, going forward.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing executive members: Lorraine Robson, in her role as president, worked tirelessly to keep her finger on the pulse of the club, ensuring that everything was running smoothly and in her spare time even managed to update the club constitution! The records she handed over to me are meticulously kept and easy to navigate. Thank you, Lorraine!

Thank you also to Judith Broo, outgoing VP, Sarah Gray, outgoing secretary, Members at Large: Brenda Reid, Linda Downs and Marilyn Bullock. Thank you also to Susan Nicholls and Miriam Scott for their work in Hospitality.

I would like to welcome our new Executive members: Penny LeCouteur as Vice President with Daphne Page organizing speakers.

Marilyn Bullock and Lynne Frith will be sharing the position of secretary.

Krystina Madej will be working with Ann McKinnon on Membership.

We have three new Members at Large: Sarah Gray, Miriam Scott and Tom Davis.

Margaret Campbell will be continuing with Maria Issa as a Newsletter Editor.

Catherine Rickey will be heading up the plant table.

Bev Fraine and Brenda Reid will join the Hospitality Committee.

As there is no speaker booked for the March meeting the Executive discussed the possibility of having four informal group sessions set up at four tables in the lobby, covering popular gardening subjects. Each would be 15 minutes long, then the groups would rotate on to the next table. Ideas for subjects might include grafting/pruning, plants for winter display, soil amendment, veggie/seed and winter veggie crops. If you have any other ideas, please let me know at our coffee break or by gmail: wasylikdonna@gmail.com.

If you have expertise in any particular area and would to share your knowledge by heading up a table, please let me know. Since this will happen at the March meeting, we will need to know ASAP to go forward with the idea.

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

**Mount Seymour United
Church**

**1200 Parkgate Ave,
North Vancouver,
BC V7H 2X9
(604) 929-1336**

*Meetings start promptly at
7:00 PM*

**SPEAKER JAN 18
DANIELLE DAGENAIS
CREATING A BAT-
FRIENDLY GARDEN**

If you need to contact
anyone at LVGC please
use email or phone! If you
must send a thing - phone
to get the address and send
it to a VIP (list is on the
next page)

**PLEASE USE
ELECTRONIC ACCESS**

Your emails are welcome:
[Lynnvalleygardenclubne
wsletter@gmail.com](mailto:Lynnvalleygardenclubnewsletter@gmail.com)



Galanthus elwesii



Executive 2024

President

Donna Wasylik

Co-Vice Presidents

Penny LeCouteur

Daphne Page

Co-Secretaries

Marilyn Bullock

Lynne Frith

Treasurer

Jennifer Sydenham

Membership Co-Chairs

Ann McKinnon

Krystina Madej

Members at Large (MALs)

Jacque D'Auria

Sarah-Jane Gray

Miriam Scott

Tom Davis

Committees

Plant Table

Cath Rickey

Hospitality

Sharon Carabetta

Bev Fraine

Brenda Reid

Sunshine / Door Prizes

Hiromi Matsui

Website

Aline Burlone

Newsletter Editors

Maria Issa

Margaret Campbell

Executive Meetings

February Executive meeting will be chez Sarah Grey



Newsletter items to
lynnvalleygardenclubnewsletter@gmail.com by Feb 7, 2024

Thanks to LEAF contributors:

Rosemarie Adams, Judith Brook, Margaret Campbell, Doreen Dew, Taylor Hewstan, Linda Howe, Courtney Mitchell, Lorraine Robson, Wayne Smith

For the first executive meeting of the year I wanted to keep the agenda simple and asked for a free style meeting where everyone could make suggestions for possible activities. We had a wonderfully exuberant meeting with lots of ideas for changes and possible out-trips, but didn't get any [detailed - ed] work done! As a result at our next executive meeting we will have to stick to the agenda. Once we finalize some of our plans, we will be making announcements. It promises to be a great year!

Our next general meeting on **January 18 will start at 7:00 pm sharp**. We really need some extra hands to come ½ hour early to help set up the meeting: a table in the sanctuary and plant table, membership table, etc. in the foyer. If you are young and strong, we need you!!

I'm looking forward to seeing you on the 18th

SPEAKER

DANIELLE DAGENAIS BC COMMUNITY BAT PROGRAM

Creating a Bat-Friendly Garden



Danielle Dagenais has been working and volunteering on the bat projects since 2011. She has been the Regional Coordinator for the Community Bat Programs of BC (bcbats.ca) since 2018. She is also a wildlife educator and consultant under her own company. Each year, Danielle organizes and leads many bat presentations and bat walks throughout the Greater Vancouver Area, and visits schools and summer camps to provide bat education to youth groups. Danielle conducts bat and bat box assessments in the region, and when time allows, Danielle also helps with local bat research.

Meeting starts at 7:00 PM - Tea break at 7:30 PM - Speaker at 8 PM

Co-Vice President - Penny LeCouteur

At January's executive meeting we discussed changes that we felt would help make LVGC meetings run more smoothly as well as make the club feel more inclusive, especially for new members. Some of these have already been made - **7:00 pm start**, "Bright Spots" during the tea/coffee break, no longer reading minutes aloud as they are summarized in *The Leaf*, and (as much as possible) adherence to 30 minutes for business, followed by 30 minutes for the social break thus allowing our **speaker to start on time at 8:00 pm**.

Several other possibilities were discussed - one of which is presented below, with more to come in the next months - and we would welcome your input to these initiatives. If you have questions or comments, please contact us by email, text or phone call. We will try to answer your questions that way unless the issue seems to need further discussion during a meeting: then we will need to fit it in to the 30 minutes allocated.

LVGC Volunteer Hours.

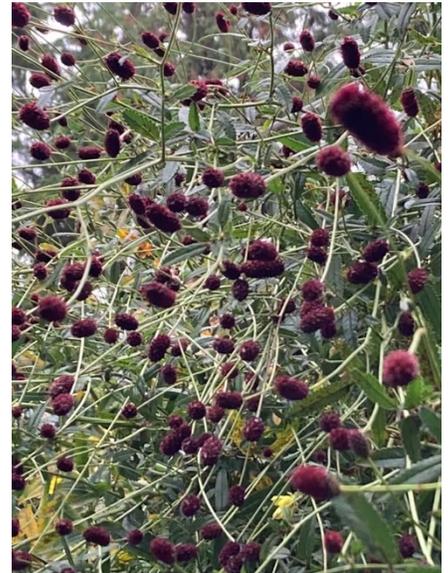
The idea here is for all members to become involved in their club, even if only in a small way, but volunteer hours will **not be assigned**. You make the choice. We don't think approximately four hours in a year is onerous - maybe it's a Saturday morning or an hour or so on the telephone one evening. One thing we did note when we were making this list was how much the work done by the Executive has increased over the years. By relieving them of some of these chores, maybe more of you will feel more able to volunteer to serve

on the executive. These volunteer hours are a great way to include new members in our activities. It is not so daunting for a new member to join with another couple of members to do a small task - this is a way to make the club feel more friendly!! Maybe you go to Costco every month - then your 'chore' could be to buy the cookies, tea and coffee from a list supplied by the Hospitality committee [Yes: you will be reimbursed!]. Maybe you live very near the meeting venue and could help with the setting up or taking down after a meeting. You are a writer and could help edit (or write) for "The Leaf." Consider what you like to do and see how it fits into the needs of your club!

You can choose what you would like to do. The list below is not complete - your suggestions for jobs that need doing are welcomed!!!

We will publish a list of possible "Volunteer Hours" in *The Leaf* and on the LVGC website. Sign-up will be online, by email or phone. Please note that the executive and committee members are already considered to be volunteering! Below are just a few of the possible "choices". The number in brackets indicates the probable number of members needed. Each group can divide the task among themselves to suit the group.

- Volunteer organizers; - phoning, assigning, answering questions. (x 4)
- Audio visual techies at meeting (x 3) [*These highly sought-after positions are already filled -but we are always happy to train new experts - Ed*]
- Set-up and clean-up after the monthly meeting (5 people, for an hour before and an hour after, so each volunteer does 2 meetings -see Christmas party)
- Distributing posters for the Plant Sale (x 3)
- Set-up and clean-up after the Plant Sale (8 people, 4 before and 4 after)
- Plant sale: cash desk, plant tables etc. (10 people each with a 4-hour shift)
- Organizing the Members' Garden Tour (x 4)
- Having your garden on the Garden Tour (x 5)
- Organizing the Bus Tour or some other event/tour/visit (x3 per event)
- Organizing the Christmas Party (x 4 - includes some set up etc.)
- Set-up and clean-up after for the Christmas Party (This would count as one time for the usual set up/clean up people as well as the organizers)
- Collect the Harvest Project "food bank" contributions and take to the Harvest Project, 1073 Roosevelt Cres. (x 5)
- Alternates - members who can step in and do magic at the last moment. (x10)
- Any other task that you think needs to be done or that you would like to do?
[*eg Learn how to manage the website and be a back-up for Aline; help the Treasurer with bank reconciliations; count money (!!!!) and/or run money to the bank during the Plant Sale; be a "hostess with the mostest" at meetings and introduce people to each other; hunt for "diggable gardens"; DIG or don't dig - but come and cheer the diggers on; host dug plants till the Plant Sale; transport plants from people who have plants or hosted some but can't come to the Plant Sale....-Ed*]



We recognize that this might take a bit of organizing and will be a bit muddled for this first year, but we think it is worthwhile to encourage participation and inclusion. If you find that you like doing the job you selected, you can keep doing it as long as you like. We plan to start filling volunteer spots in February.

Questions? Comments? To keep to the meeting time allocated for business you can phone or email Donna or Penny with questions or comments **before the meeting.**

Donna Wasylik, President
Penny Le Couteur, V.P. (half)



Treasurer - Jennifer Sydenham

Bank Balance as of January 1	\$18,469.00
In Petty Cash	<u>\$129.50</u>
Total	\$17,598.50

...in case you weren't paying attention, here it is again:

MONTHLY MEETINGS NOW START AT 7:00 PM (not at a quarter after) and the MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEBSITE - using a link provided in *The Leaf*



Membership – Ann McKinnon & Krystina Madej

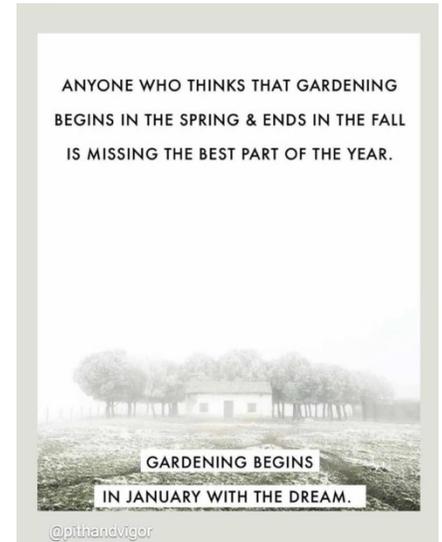
Thank you to all of you who renewed your membership for 2024, especially those of you who mastered the fillable form and the e-transfer. When you joined the garden club, I bet you never expected that those would be some of the new things you would learn.

The fully paid membership count currently stands at 147, which is a mix of renewing and new members. Overall, we expect 142 members to renew and 23 new members to join our club this month for a total of 165 members. This puts us under our membership cap of 175, at least until our annual plant sale.

Of the 33 members who will likely not renew, the reasons given include illness, too busy, not liking going out at night, and various other things that are beyond our control. There's another group of reasons that we have some possibility of affecting. They include things like the sound system in the church and the meeting location outside of Lynn Valley. The executive spent considerable time and effort last year trying to improve those two and will continue to do so in 2024. In addition, we plan to streamline the business end of the meeting so that we can have a longer break and start the speaker on time. One big thing the membership can do to help improve the club is to get to know other people within the group so that people feel connected. Krystina and I will be working on helping the new members get to know each other and the new executive has talked about things that would make the club more fun.

We are hoping to have the new 2024 membership cards ready for distribution at the January 18th meeting and if not, at the next one on February 15th. This should still give you lots of time to collect your card before you want to use your 10% discount at Maple Leaf Garden Centre or GardenWorks. Note that if you need your name badge reprinted, please email lvgc.membership@gmail.com before the January 18th meeting.

After thinking this would be an early start to the gardening season, it now appears that we will have a ski season after all. For those of you who don't ski, it's best not to think of it as a snow shoveling or a plant-killing-cold season and just hunker down with those hot drinks and seed catalogs. Spring always comes eventually.



MALS

[Currently hibernating/ exploring options for a "single location" plant sale, like 'in the good old days'... watch this space.]

Secretaries – Marilyn Bullock & Lynne Frith with Web-guru – Aline Burlone

The minutes of the 2023 AGM (November), prepared by 2023 Secretary Sarah Grey, are ready for viewing on the website through this link:

In case this link gets garbled by the pdf conversion, look in the links file for a hot link. From this date forth, links to minutes of the previous month's membership meeting will be available on the website and a link will be provided regularly in *The Leaf*.

"Gardening is the slowest of the performing arts"
– Mac Griswold

"An optimistic gardener is one who believes that whatever goes down must come up." – Lesley Hall

"... with a spade and a package of garden seeds"
– Dan Bennett on how to gamble healthily



THE HOLIDAY PARTY AND THE (MANY!!) WONDERFUL THINGS YOU DID

2023 was a very good year – and LVGC was bursting with holiday spirit and holiday gifts for people who really, really needed a bit of help. Both Sage House and the Harvest Project received boxes and boxes of useful items. The warmth and generosity of our Club is wonderful, but not surprising, as LVGC is made up of an amazing group of people: the famous green thumbs had bows on them, and decorations!!! Thanks to Sarah & Lorraine for spearheading the operations, and everyone else involved, for making sure the many lovely, decorated boxes got to their destinations. Thanks also to the Hospitality team, especially to the purveyors of the famous LVGC hot cider... (my personal favourite). The buffet tables were a feast for the eyes and the tummies – I developed quite a relationship with certain rum balls... Thank you to all who participated, made merry, and did so much good! [...and an LVGC first: there were no containers or pruners or plates left behind! – at least that I know of!]



There was a lot of wrapping, sorting, decorating, packing, and many good conversations. Lots of yummy food [LVGC you really outdid yourselves!!] and the end result was a huge pile of beautiful stuff to give to Sage House. How good can it get?



During November and December many LVGC members (and friends of members) donated Christmas and all occasion cards for the WISH Drop-In Centre in the downtown east side area of Vancouver. I delivered several hundred cards on December 18th to the WISH office in time for their Christmas dinner, which was held on December 21st. These cards, along with other donations of toiletries, books, and some clothing, were much appreciated by the staff and made available to the women who use the WISH facilities.

Thank you everyone who collected cards and passed them on to me for the benefit of these women. Next December I will again take any cards that are collected during 2024 to the WISH Drop-In Centre, so I hope you will continue to collect cards this year.

Our Donations to North Van District Public Library, the North Van City Public Library, the BC Council of Garden Clubs and the North Shore Hospice

We received some lovely letters of thanks for gifts of money that went to the organizations selected by the Donations Committee (and if you have any ideas – please let them know: the ideas are diligently matched against a list of criteria and the recipients are thoroughly vetted).

From the District library: Kalan Greenwood writes “... This donation will help us connect to our community, share knowledge and inspire stories by ensuring that the library continues to promote and instill a life-long passion for reading and learning...” The books that they added, thanks to us: *Encyclopaedia of Landscape Design*, by Chris Young; *Garden Roses* by Gracielinda Poulson; *Grow Roses*, by Philip Clayton; *Growing Bulbs in the Natural Garden*, by Jacqueline van de Kloet; *Love Affair with Peonies*, by Alec White; *Northwest Home Landscaping*, by Felicia Bower; *Sustainable Gardening*, by Doug Stewart; *Tulips: Ensuring Successful Cultivation in the Garden*, by Matthew Smith; *Ultimate Gardening*, by Nancy J. Hajeski; *What Makes a Garden: A Considered Approach to Garden Design*, by Jinny Blom.

The City library’s Deb Hutchinson Koep writes “...we will publish the Garden Club’s name in our Report to the Community”... and she shared a great quotation from Marcus Tullius Cicero, “If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need. A library is the delivery room for the birth of ideas, a place where history comes to life. A library is not a luxury, but one of the necessities of life.”

From the BC Council of Garden Clubs, Anita Irani, from the Scholarship Fund Committee, writes “...each year, the Scholarship Fund provides students in horticulture and related fields in BC with educational scholarships and bursaries” and she lists many BC universities and colleges whose students have been recipients.

Finally, Judy Savage, from the Lions Gate Hospital Foundation thanked us for our contribution to the North Shore Hospice garden “for helping make every day count”.



BRIGHT SPOTS



Doreen Dew – has the most interesting things appearing in her garden: the garden patch yielded a last crop of parsnips and one artistic stray beet, while the herbaceous border produced some surprises – gnomes searching for snow.

Wayne Smith – writes “can you believe daffodils are blooming in Vancouver; [and] my fuschias are greening up with more blooms bursting.

God rest you merry gardeners
Let nothing ye dismay,
For Spring is soon to come again
With lengthening of days,
The sun will warm the soil once more
And send Jack Frost away.
Oh tidings of composting and Joy!
Compost and joy!
Oh tidings of composting and joy!



Rosemarie Adams -

Mini *Narcissus* "Julia Jane" just coming into bloom. The bulbs were purchased last year from Illahe Nursery in Oregon (link!) who sold their bulbs at the Alpine Garden Club Fall sale. Hopefully these will be in full bloom for me to bring to the LVGC January meeting. Second photo, Sage plant still in full bloom. Not sure if this is *Viburnum Burkwoodii* or *Viburnum Bodnantense* "Dawn". Whatever it is, it has been in my garden for many years. It is 10-12 feet tall and covered in flowers. I try to plant fragrant, winter-blooming shrubs close to outside doors, so at least I get some benefit from their fragrance as I come and go. [Rosemarie also encourages us to prepare for next winter: see below - Ed]



My family are all Nutcracker fans. When they were younger, both my daughters were ballet dancers and took part in many different productions of the Nutcracker, with both their local dance school (Seymour Dance) and with some larger dance companies - in many different roles. Needless to say, over the years we have accumulated a large collection of Nutcrackers of different types and sizes and I love bringing them out every Christmas and putting them around the house.

For the past couple of years I have also made a Nutcracker wreath for my front door - greenery from my garden and little Nutcracker items attached. My grandkids love it!

In years past, (when we had a permanent meeting space and before Covid) we often made wreaths, flowerpot bells, candle centrepieces, *etc* at our December meeting and it was always a lot of fun to see how many variations on a theme people came up with. Every wreath or bell was different: they were a treat to see. Maybe next year, if we do have a good meeting place, we can make wreaths again - in addition to our Sage House Baskets, of course!

I can visualise a Gardener's Wreath - with mini flowerpots, tiny tools, *etc* or a cat, dog or bird theme, with tiny mini critters around it. Maybe Tom could do one with mini carrots, peas and potatoes?

This article would likely be more appropriate in a November *Leaf* rather than January, but it will give us all something to think about, and if you see a fun item to put on a wreath in July - buy it (but remember where you tucked it away!). If we don't have an appropriate meeting space to make wreaths by next winter, you can always make your wreath at home and send in a photo! [and *The Leaf* will publish them!! - Ed]



Public Domain Seeds - safe from Corporate Patents - contributed by Judith Brook

Likely many of us have heard of large corporations owning seed patents and preventing farmers and others from saving and re-growing their seeds. I support farmers and home-growers having the ability to save their own seeds and re-grow their crops, with seeds, that over time, become location-specific to their area.

The concept of 'public domain' was new to me. Read this quote from *Peace Seedlings*, Oregon growers - "Public domain is like "open source" software, so it is free for the public to use. When a variety is offered in the public domain through a

published format it cannot be patented since there is a precedent of it existing, so it is protected from control by a corporation. When a public domain variety is passed from one generation to the next, it becomes a heirloom variety, so we like to think we are creating our generation of heirlooms. This is important because access to food is a human right, seeds are the foundation of our food system, and the more they are controlled the more we slowly lose the freedom to save seeds."

This is their Website, but also see the "links" file: [Peace Seedlings \(peaceseedlingsseeds.blogspot.com\)](http://peaceseedlingsseeds.blogspot.com)

[Judith added: If you are considering ordering seeds this spring and buying from Peace Seedlings, to support diversity, organic gardening, and public domain plant breeding [please note that I] just learned that shipping is \$20 and this is USD, so a bit much!]

Judith also writes: "Check out the flower seed listing for those marked as 'home'. If you would like some 'home' seeds to try this spring, contact Judith Brook [phone number in member list]" or ask lynnvalleygardenclubnewlstter@gmail.com

Aster	Nova	store and home	Gilia	capitata	store and home
Aster	Rainbow	store and home	Hollyhock	red	home-Sarah
Aster	King Size formula	mix store	Hyssop	officinalis	store
Aster		home	Lily	Viewlynn Park	self-saved
Aster	Douglas	store	Larkspur		home
Anenome	Blue	home	Lychnis		home-neighbour
Aquilegia	similar Nora Barlow	home	Liatris		
Aquilegia	cottage	home	Monarda		home
Aquilegia		home	Marigold	Cracker Jack	store and home
Althaea	zebrina	home 2014	Nigella	year 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023	home
Bupleurum		home	Nemophila	maculata	store
Calendula		home	Nemophila	menziesii	store
Cerinth		home		Penny's garden (orange)	self-saved
Coreopsis	Early Sunrise	home	Poppy	California	self-saved
Centaurea	Sweet Sultan	home	Poppy	red	home
Centaurea	Blue Bachelor Button	store	Snapdragon	red	home
Cerastium	Snow in Summer	store	Scabiosa		home
Collinsia	Chinese Houses	home	Sweet Peas		home
Cosmos	Bright Lights, mix	store	Sunflower	Evening Sun	store
Cosmos	Rubenza	home	Sunflower	Peredovik	store
Dianthus		home	Sunflower	tall, yellow	home
Dierama	pulcherrimum	home	Zinnia		store and home
Eryngium		home			



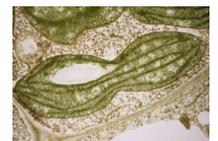
1.75 BILLION Year-old Fossils Explain How Photosynthesis Evolved - by Grace Wade

Published in the New Scientist - see links.

The first breath of green:

The oldest fossil evidence of photosynthesis has been found inside tiny cyanobacteria that lived around 1.75 billion years ago, 1.2 billion years earlier than the previous record-holder. The photosynthetic structures, known as thylakoids, were found inside fossilized *Navifusa majensis*. Cyanobacteria are thought to have triggered the Great Oxidation Event more than 2 billion years ago, which transformed Earth's atmosphere. "One idea is that, perhaps, they invented thylakoids at this time and this increased the quantity of oxygen on Earth," says paleobiologist Emmanuelle Javaux, who contributed to the discovery. "Now that we've found very old thylakoids and that they can be preserved in very old rocks, we think that we could go further back in time and try to test this hypothesis."

This is important because not all cyanobacteria have thylakoids, and it is unclear when these structures, which made photosynthesis more efficient, first evolved, says Kevin Boyce at Stanford University in California. We can now date this diversification to at least 1.75 billion years ago, he says. The oldest fossils of cyanobacteria are about 2 billion years old, though other evidence, like geochemical signatures, indicate photosynthesis has been around for even longer than that.



[FYI - Thylakoids are pouch-like sacs that are bound to a membrane in the chloroplasts of a plant cell. They contain a pigment, called chlorophyll, that absorbs light. The light absorbed is used in photosynthesis and other processes that are light-dependent. Thylakoids are stacked inside the chloroplast. - Ed]

Hydrangeas: Mophead or Smooth?

- Synopsis by Margaret Campbell

The gorgeous flowers that please us all summer long belong to two different varieties of hydrangea. Knowing which is which can make all the difference in the world for your garden.

When the plant has finished flowering, the first response of the eager gardener tends to be to cut off the dead heads and perhaps prune the plant back. "It's too bushy this year, time to clip it back so it fits better in that corner...."

But for hydrangeas, it is vitally important to wield your clippers at the right time or you may have no flowers at all next year. The key is knowing your variety.

The Smooth hydrangea flowers on new wood: the Mophead on old wood. This makes all the difference in the world because it means that Smooth hydrangeas put out new buds in the spring, so can be pruned at any time during their winter/spring dormancy. The Mopheads, on the other hand, put out their buds in late summer/early autumn, so if you cut back the Mophead any time after mid-August, you are removing next year's buds.

But the flowers are so similar. How do you tell the difference?

The key is the leaf. Well, not really the leaf, but the petiole, which is the stem that attaches the leaf to the main stem of the flower. Put on your Sherlock Holmes hat and get out your magnifying glass because this is going to take some detective work. The Smooth hydrangea will have a petiole that is at least 1" long, but the Mophead will have a tiny petiole, less than 1". Here is your test: which is which? *[also see link]*



"Like the hydrangea, life can be unpredictable and full of surprises, but that's what makes it beautiful."

"Hydrangeas are like happiness in bloom."

"Hydrangeas are the flowers of gratitude, grace, and abundance."

How to Make Poinsettias Last -maybe even until next Christmas! - from Linda Howe

An article in The Spruce is particularly pertinent right now. We probably all received poinsettias as gifts over the festive season - bright, beautiful, welcome in our homes.

However, once the decorations are down and the leaves on the plant start to drop, we tend to assume it is time to send them to the trash. This article might change your mind about this.

How long a poinsettia lasts depends on how well you care for it. ... Given the right light and warm temperatures, indoor poinsettia plants will last until March or April, continuing to put out colorful red leaves. If you choose to keep it alive year round as a houseplant, a poinsettia can last for **10 or even 20 years**....

Keeping a poinsettia alive indoors is fairly simple. Place it in a sunny window, ideally an east-facing one, in a warm room and keep the soil moist. (Bright, indirect light is appropriate for poinsettias, which suffer leaf burn in too much direct light.)

Start by watering it once a week, checking the soil between waterings to see how quickly it dries out. Adjust the watering schedule so that you're watering it when the top 2 inches become dry or the pot feels light when lifted.

Of course, much depends on how much work you want to put into the plant. Take a look at the process as recommended by The Spruce:

Here's how to keep your poinsettia growing year round.

1. In March or early April begin allowing soil to dry out between watering.
2. In mid April, move the poinsettia to a shaded location where it receives no sun exposure for 12 to 15 hours every day.
3. In May prune each stem back to about 4 inches, leaving several leaf nodes on each stem. This encourages the poinsettia to branch and become bushier. Repot into a container one size larger using a quality potting mix. Place the plant in a sunny window with bright, indirect light and keep soil moist but not soggy.
4. Begin feeding every two weeks with an all-purpose liquid fertilizer once buds have emerged.



5. In July, pinch each branch back by about an inch to encourage lush growth.
6. Continue pinching back through September and maintain your water and fertilizing schedule.
7. In October, start the process of coaxing your poinsettia to re-bloom for Christmas by putting it in complete darkness for 15 hours a day (*ie*, from 5 pm to 8 am) for the next two months.

If you have been diligent, your poinsettia should start blooming around mid-December. Merry Christmas!

The Porphyrins of our Bird Friends

– Synopsis by Margaret Campbell

Many porphyrins are photochemicals – such as chlorophyll that mediates photosynthesis in plants.

But did you know that they are also found in the feathers of birds? In ultraviolet light, the wings of an owl glow pink. In some species of birds, such as quetzals and parrots, porphyrins cause them to emit in brilliant greens and reds when exposed to ultraviolet light. [\[see link\]](#)

As time passes, the breakdown of the porphyrins results in distinctive aging patterns, so by analyzing age-specific molt patterns in the wing feathers it is possible to tell the age of a bird.

Birds are a must in our gardens, but most of us probably never knew they had this special connection to our plants!

Urban Gardens: A New Kind of Epidemic

– Synopsis by Margaret Campbell

Most North Van houses have strips of green grass separating their yard from the street. That strip is officially under city jurisdiction, but we are required to keep it neat and tidy – and most people do, mowing as necessary, clearing the snow, and picking up the litter.

But perhaps a revolution is on its way. In south-central LA, a resident named Ron Finley decided his strip could be put to better use. He planted a vegetable garden. [\[see link\]](#)

The city reacted immediately, ordering him to remove it, but in no time neighbours joined a protest. In an area known for its liquor stores, fast food restaurants and dialysis clinics, why not have some healthy food growing, people asked their council. And they won! The council backed down, the law was changed, and a group started digging up the neglected strips. Vegetables made an appearance, families expanded their menus, and even the kids got involved, making pocket money by selling excess produce in mini markets along the sidewalk. The transformation was underway.

Finley, now known as the “Gangsta Gardener”, is determined to spread this activity to every block in his area. Enthusiastic supporters have joined him in expanding the work, volunteering to go into adjoining areas to start gardens. Their new name for the project is “LA Green Grounds.”

Is it time to spread the work further? Could this happen in North Van? Maybe it would be fun to have a different kind of epidemic to work on....

Land Life: Re-foresting Degraded Land Worldwide – Synopsis by Margaret Campbell

An innovative way to help combat climate change: A Dutch organization called Land Life has started an innovative system of using donut-shaped planters made of re-cycled cardboard to facilitate tree growth in degraded landscapes. The planters, called Cocoons, are placed around a newly planted seedling and filled with water. A lid placed on top prevents the water from evaporating, even in the harshest, driest climate, and wicks inside the Cocoon carry the water to the roots of the seedling. This arrangement encourages the roots to grow deep and wide.

The Cocoon is then covered with soil and a small cylinder is placed around the seedling to shield it from excessive sun, winds, and small animals.

Land Life has planted over 7 million seedlings in these cocoons so far and their success rate is 95%. [\[see link\]](#)

HOW IT WORKS

The Cocoon is filled with 25 liters of water and buried subsurface with the seedling

Seedlings are protected from harsh rays, desiccating winds and small animals

The Cocoon prevents water evaporation and weed growth

Controlled seepage of water straight to the roots, encouraging a deep, wide root system



“The wonder is that we can see these trees and not wonder more.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson



We've been making clothes from plants for centuries, but the pressure is on to expand the use. No more polyfibres, no more synthetic fabrics. Clothes are being created from leaves, ferns, even petals – so maybe someday we will all be wearing outfits made from nothing but plants. A September fashion show in London presented this dress made from giant butterbur leaves. The fabric felt like silk. The next one was made of discarded banana tree stems. And look at these, made for Earth Day from every plant you can think of – offers a new twist to “going vegan”!

ANNOUNCEMENT - one more time, from the top...

From now on, **REGULAR MEETINGS** will commence at **7:00 PM** sharp!!

The “business” part of the meeting will be 30 minutes – so if you have items for the general populace, please let Donna know in good time for it to be put on the agenda. Please keep comments and announcements mercifully short.

BRIGHT SPOTS will be enjoyed at **7:30** in the foyer to facilitate interactions, questions and tea and cookie consumption.

The **SPEAKER** will start at **8:00 PM** sharp and will talk for 45 minutes; with questions for 15 minutes... after which, you will not be considered rude, if you get up and leave as it's past your bedtime.

Insh'Allah!

Photosynthesis

With carbon and water plus light in addition
 Chlorophyll carries the key to fruition
 As nature's slow cooker
 Assembles the sugar
 Providing our principal source of nutrition

Earth in Peril

Old humans once honored their planet
 It seems now they take it for granite
 But the Earth's plenty strong
 She'll heal before long
 Global warming can't kill us – or can it?

“Originally, the atoms of carbon from which we're made were floating in the air, part of a carbon dioxide molecule. The only way to recruit these carbon atoms for the molecules necessary to support life-the carbohydrates, amino acids, proteins, and lipids-is by means of photosynthesis. Using sunlight as a catalyst the green cells of plants combine carbon atoms taken from the air with water and elements drawn from the soil to form the simple organic compounds that stand at the base of every food chain. It is more than a figure of speech to say that plants create life out of thin air.” – Michael Pollan

COMPOST BIN

It's a new year and as Wayne's poem says, spring, composting and joy are heading our way: YAY! That also means we get to plant new little green things. My vegetablearian acumen is nonexistent. So I sometimes wonder why, why, why? - but each year I keep trying. I plant my veggies. They produce an expensive, labour-intensive, tiny, miserable harvest. I don't know what I'm doing wrong. I feed, water, cover, uncover, protect, thin, explant, tie up, cultivate, weed *etc etc etc* but as my husband says, "no good deed goes unpunished" and the results are typically disappointing- when I'm hoping to be just - PLEEEZZ - a tiny bit self-sufficient. Who am I kidding? In Vancouver, a nice, warm place, with plenty of grocery stores as backup - this is not an issue. For me, at any rate. I can just say " *&^%\$!!! I'll buy some veg." Not so, in other places in our province, or indeed in the Great Canadian North. We, the urban rich, who garden for entertainment, pat ourselves on the back as we are benevolent with other, urban maybe not-so-rich. We cannot even fathom what it's like living "up North". In spite of the world growing smaller, not many of us have even been there - and it's in our own back yard.

My information about food access in the North - some of it is first-hand (I followed the Iditarod in a 3-person plane - but that's a story for another time) but mostly it is second-hand. My savage daughter (Link!) rode her motorbike from Vancouver to Tuktoyaktuk (on the Arctic Ocean/Beaufort Sea - part of the DEW line) and she reported back on what she saw. It wasn't pretty. It was sparse - especially in the vegetable/food department: apparently the grocery shelves in the small towns were more and more barren, the further North the Dempster Highway went. In Tuk, a scrawny 2 lb chicken was \$30. It had to be flown in. Vegetables couldn't be found - too far and too expensive to ship California drip-irrigation-aquifer-destroying-pesticide-intense produce before it rots. So, contrary to how we might like to imagine things - in our North, food insecurity is real. Kids go to school hungry. This I know, because "the other organization" that I'm involved with provides STEM education to Northern sprouts, and we have to provide food for the body as well as mind - or, counter-productively, the kids fall asleep in class, if they even make it to class. [Scientific fact: the brain requires 5 g of glucose per hour which is roughly 420 kcal energy per day]. So what to do?

Under the heading "teach a man to fish" - it might be nice to help Northerners to grow veg.

For aeons, Indigenous peoples (granted, further South) have practiced "Three Sisters" planting: first corn, to grow tall; then runner beans to grow up the corn; and squash to shield the other two from sun and pests. Corn, beans and squash contain complex carbohydrates, essential fatty acids, and all eight essential amino acids, allowing people to thrive on a plant-based diet. Up North, these are difficult to plant, as there is not enough warmth for these plants to mature - but that can be solved by hoop greenhouses (if the moose don't stomp them... Link!). There is a successful community greenhouse project in Inuvik that has done marvels for local nutrition and health - they converted a derelict hockey rink into a green oasis. But that is just one community.

Last May, the Manitoba government invested in the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative which includes gardening education as well. They even have a handy-dandy "what equipment you need" to build a small greenhouse. However, as some of you may know, accessing government programs is not for the faint-hearted...

A greenhouse can solve the "where" and extend the growing season as it can increase the number of frost-free growing days. The extra-long Northern summer days then do their magic and if the plants are kept warm and cosy, they grow like crazy: the Alaska State Fair keeps records of giant veggies (see link) and those numbers are truly impressive! [Just to give an example: bean 3 ft 3 inches, green cabbage 138 lb!]

There are some "how" tricks as well: creating berms to plant on. These are great as they increase the available planting surface area. Berm beds are raised in the middle (as high as 3 ft) and slope down on either side (they have a triangular/trapezoid cross-section). If oriented facing N-S, the heat requiring veggies can grow on the sunny slope, while the cool-temperature ones like lettuce and kale will be happy on the North-facing slope. They also have the added advantage of being 'raised beds' without being raised beds: the soil warms up faster and stays warmer for tender little roots.

Having said all this - food insecurity in the North could be reduced by local vegetable production, but the ingrained preference for (\$\$\$) processed foods is difficult to change. This is where school science programs come in: learning the science, botany, horticulture and providing hands-on lessons can create a different mind-set and result [with time...] in healthy diets and happy outcomes.

So where am I going with all this? Now that I've researched it all - my plan is to try out at least the Three Sisters to see if my pathetic vegetable garden's produce will improve.... just have to source some North-tolerant seeds as my altitude puts me close to Alaska's latitude in terms of temperature.

...and on the "teach someone to garden" side of the equation - I could use some help putting together some practical gardening (how to grow veg; how to improve soil; how to build berms; *etc*) lesson plans for Northern schools. Anyone?

