

OVER THE GARDEN GATE



The Newsletter of the Valley Gardeners Club

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"In the depths of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer." - Albert Camus

GOOD BYE

It is kind of sad to retire as newsletter editor for the Valley Gardeners. Somewhat like the times we lose an old friend and think when we see something particularly lovely " I must tell *** about that", but ***is no longer there. I will probably be hanging on to quotes and writing articles in my mind for a while until it all sinks in. However, it is said you should quit while you are ahead and I have possibly depleted my stock of gardening bits and pieces so it is time to hand over to someone else. I do hope one or more of you will keep up this means of communicating with each other. Keeping in touch is vital to any club. I am a Life Member of the club so you can't get rid of me that easily. I will still be around: you never know where I will pop up!

Happy Gardening....

Donna C.

And if you can't quite find the invincible summer in the depths of winter, here is another take on the season fast approaching:

"I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape - the loneliness of it, the dead feeling of winter. Something waits beneath it, the whole story doesn't show."

- Andrew Wyeth

UPCOMING EVENTS

October until Mid-December 2018 - "Our Heritage Hearth: From Field to Farm ", Exploring The Roots of Valley Cooking From Garden to Table. Kings County Museum, Kentville. See Allison Magee's collection of antique garden tools, a 1939 kitchen and more.

November 12, 2018 - Valley Gardeners 35th Annual Meeting and Banquet. Roast turkey dinner with all the trimmings including choices of pie for dessert. The venue is still at the St James Anglican Church Hall in Kentville on the corner of Main Street and Prospect Ave. The entrance is on Prospect Avenue and there is a ramp at the back of the Hall for those who need it. Others can park in the municipal lot, the hair salon lot or the Cornwallis Inn. There is also other street parking on Main Street.

We will meet at 5:30 pm for socializing and paying memberships or unpaid pre-ordered meals. Dinner will be served at 6 pm followed by Michelle Muis speaking on Therapeutic Gardening. The last item is our Annual General Meeting with reports and hopefully some new executive members to take over from those retiring. We have also invited the founding members from 35 years ago to join us.

Members are asked to bring a small live arrangement for the tables with items from your garden or a friend's.

November 22, 2018, 7- 8:30 pm. Founding Cultures, Founding Foods. Kings County Museum · Kentville, NS. Folks from our founding cultures to share their food traditions and knowledge. There will be sampling!

November 27, 2018, 7:30 pm - An evening with Jenny Osburn, Kings County Museum · Kentville, NS. Named Select Nova Scotia's Local Food Hero in 2010, Jenny feels that aside from the obvious benefits of flavour and strengthening the economy, buying local can change your life. From forging new connections with one's community to a sense of celebration in the changing of the seasons, she believes choosing local can lead to increased satisfaction and happiness. Although she sold the restaurant in 2016, she is as committed to these ideas as ever.

December 10, 2018 - Valley Gardeners Christmas Social, Kingstec. Decorating with Natural Materials by Amanda Muis Brown of Humble Burdock Farm. Bring your favourite holiday finger food. Carols, food and good times. Members of the Annapolis Valley Gardeners Face book page are invited to join us in the fun and festivities. Any who are not members are asked to RSVP to sparrowsong@eastlink.ca. to help us with numbers for set-up.

June 7/8, 2019 - NSAGC Convention, Louis Millet Centre, New Minas. Applications for vendors now being accepted. Contact vandadow@bellaliant.net or 902-679-6676

CLUB NEWS

I hope you have all arranged to go to our Annual General Meeting in November. It will be a chance to meet friends old and new and to say goodbye to some of the executive who have kept the club going for the past year. We still need a secretary and Vice President for the upcoming year so if the mood strikes you, please put your name forward. The new executive will need your ideas to make the Club vital and interesting to gardeners, so give them all the help you can.

Philip Longmire has dug into the Club Year Books and Minutes stored in Port Williams and come up with this interesting look at those involved with the first years of the Club.

Tuesday, Feb. 22, 1983 The first meeting to gauge interest in forming a club, held in the Cornwallis Room of the Kentville Research Station. About 50 were present (there is no list of names). Peter Harvey chaired the meeting; Tim Amos spoke of his ideas for the activities of the club. An Organization Committee was chosen:

Steve Balyi Pat Griffiths Tim Amos Peter Harvey Nancy Harvey
Reginald Hamlin Karen Coldwell Melanie Amos agreed to attend to take Minutes.

Thursday, March 3, 1983 Organization Committee met at Peter Harvey's house. The Minutes say that Steve Balyi and Pat Griffiths were absent. The Minutes go on to say that six people were present including Melanie Amos but does not list names.

March 10, 1983 Regular Monthly Meeting

Peter Harvey chaired the meeting. Decisions were made on the name of the club: Valley Gardeners; Meeting day, time and location: Mondays, 7:30 pm, Cornwallis Room of KRS; frequency of meetings/activities: 10 per year; Membership fee: \$5.00 per person; and a Constitution presented at the Executive Meeting on March 3rd was accepted.

Executive Positions were approved, as follows:

President: Peter Harvey Vice Pres. Reginald Hamlin Treasurer: Karen Coldwell
Secretary: Pat Griffiths Plus Program Chair: Tim Amos

April 11, 1983 At this meeting Tim Amos presented the Program for the remainder of 1983. A Show Committee was selected: Peter Harvey, Nancy Harvey and Linda Rice. A Social Committee was also selected: Melanie Amos, Hilda Schnare and Elaine Sinkiewicz.

May 9, 1983 At this meeting Ann Painter's submission for a logo was accepted.

September 21, 1983 Executive Meeting

At this meeting a Nominating Committee was named: Ann Painter, Dorothy Richardson, and Peter Rice.

October 17, 1983 Monthly Meeting

At this meeting John Stewart was the guest speaker whose topic was Organic Gardening. Rosaleen McDonald also brought a display and spoke about herbs. Ann Painter announced she had bought an album to compile a scrapbook for the Club.

November 14, 1983 Annual General Meeting

Executive Officers for 1983-84 were chosen, as follows:

President: Peter Harvey Vice Pres.: Pat Griffiths Treas.: Bob Painter Sec.: Janet Alsop

December 12, 1983 Christmas Social and Plant Exchange

At this meeting Hilda Schnare was appointed Public Relations Officer and a Telephone Committee was formed: Ann Painter, Doris Seaman, Nancy Harvey and Pat Griffiths.

November 12, 1984 Annual General Meeting

The Executive Officers for 1984-85 were named:

Past President: Peter Harvey President: Pat Griffiths Vice Pres.: Tim Amos

Treas.: Bob Painter Sec.: Janet Alsop Program Committee Chair: Peter Harvey

November 11, 1985 Annual General Meeting

The Executive Officers for 1985-86 were named:

President: Ann Painter Vice Pres.: Tim Amos Treas.: Frank D'Argent Sec.: Joan Walker

November 20, 1986 Executive Meeting

The Executive Officers for 1986-87 were named:

President: Ann Painter Vice Pres.: George Alliston Treas.: Frank D'Argent

Sec.: Joan Walker Program Committee Chair: Rosaleen McDonald

November 9, 1987 Annual General Meeting

The Executive Officers for 1987-88 were named:

President: Ann Painter Vice Pres.: George Alliston Treas.: Hector Woodin

Sec.: Shirley Marston Program Committee: Cheryl Smith, Shirley Marston, Barbara Dykens

"NOVEMBER"

"If it is true that one of the greatest pleasures of gardening lies in looking forward, then the planning of next year's beds and borders must be one of the most agreeable occupations in the gardener's calendar. This should make October and November particularly pleasant months, for then we may begin to clear our borders, to cut down those sodden and untidy stalks, to dig up and increase our plants, and to move them to other positions where they will show up to greater effect. People who are not gardeners always say that the bare beds of winter are uninteresting; gardeners know better, and take even a certain pleasure in the neatness of the newly dug, bare, brown earth."

- Vita Sackville-West

SUCCULENTS

Now that the garden is put to bed and you have time on your hands, you can satisfy that growing urge which occurs between leafing through the latest seed catalogue and staring out the window waiting for spring. The latest fad seems to be the growing of succulents. There are a bewildering number and very easy to find. Succulents are plants that have the ability to store water within their leaves, stems or roots. Like a camel's hump, these adaptations allow the plants to survive long stretches without water. Cacti are also succulents, but with spines. There are both hardy succulents, which will overwinter in the garden, and tender succulents which are treated as house plants. Here are some general rules for growing indoor succulents. Keep in mind there are always exceptions, so check out the internet or a good book for specifics.

- Plant succulents in containers with drainage holes. If there are no holes, add some with a drill or use a liner pot with holes.
- Allow plants to dry out between waterings. Succulents prefer neglect — and one of the biggest mistakes made by beginners is overwatering them.
- When you do, water succulents thoroughly. Try placing a succulent pot in the sink and drenching it until water runs out the bottom. Let the pot thoroughly drain, then return it to its saucer on a windowsill. They will not tolerate standing moisture.
- Choose a well-draining potting mix. Look for a cactus potting mix or create your own mix with equal parts of potting soil, pea gravel and coarse sand.
- Give succulents as much sunlight as possible since most are sun-lovers. A south- or eastern-facing window is ideal.
- Occasionally trim succulents to maintain a shape, clip away damaged leaves or clean up dried tips.
- In northern climates, keep succulents in a dry indoor environment for the winter, then you may move them outdoors for the summer.
- The best water to use is rainwater captured off a roof as it doesn't have the minerals that can mar the bloom or the leaves. Never use water from a water softening unit, as salt kills plants.
- Most don't need fertilization, but worm castings sprinkled on the top of the soil gives them all the nutrients they need, and it slowly releases them over months and never burns.

As I said, there are a bewildering number of succulent forms and species. Here are some of the more fun species to look out for:

Lithops or living rocks. Thrive in full sunlight, so provide as much light as possible. In the summer, as the plants are dormant, it is okay to lightly water them if the leaves shrivel.

Conophytum or marble buttons. The spherically-shaped leaf bodies are completely smooth and hairless, characteristically opaque. The cultivation is quite easy, but care must be taken to avoid excess water and to prevent rot.

Fenestraria, or baby toes. These possess translucent windows on their flattened tips. It's even more sensitive to rot than most of its cousins and absolutely can't handle wet soil. It goes dormant in the summer so absolutely don't water then.

LEST WE FORGET

"In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields."

- Colonel John McRae, In Flanders Fields 1918

So many young men and women have died in wars since the world began. Will it never end? Let us retain in our hearts the memories of those who not only suffered and died, but those who came home wounded, and those wives and families who struggled to keep their lives together while their loved ones battled in deplorable conditions and who kept their worlds together after loss of lives. There were so many kinds of loss.

DID YOU KNOW?

There is a surviving military medal in the Imperial War Museum — not for valour but for First Prize tomatoes at the Le Havre vegetable show, August 1918. There are photographs of soldiers from the great conflict of 1914–18 in the trenches carrying watering cans along the duckboards to water their improvised gardens. Remember that most of the gardeners from the great manor houses went to war. Many never came back, leaving many great gardens such as Heligan to disappear.

FROM THE GARDEN RECIPE BOX

Garden lettuce is long gone, so it is time to get out the other salad recipes. Here's one that you can do all winter.

MARINATED RED CABBAGE

Place in large bowl:

4 cups finely shredded cabbage
1 large red onion, peeled and sliced thinly
1/4 cup white sugar
1/2 tsp salt

In a saucepan combine and bring to a boil:

1/4 cup white wine vinegar
1/2 tsp dry mustard
2 Tbsp white sugar
1 1/2 tsp celery seed

Add to mixture in saucepan:

1/4 cup oil

Return to boil, remove from heat and immediately pour over cabbage mixture in the bowl.
 Mix thoroughly.
 Chill overnight.
 Drain well before serving.
 Will keep refrigerated for up to one week.

And to honour the war years, I am including a recipe for War Cake. My uncle always asked that this be made instead of Fruit Cake at Christmas. It is easy and really good. Some recipes call for molasses and corn syrup instead of brown sugar, but this is my aunt Wilda's recipe, so I am staying true to it. My mother also made War Cake, but all of her recipes burned with our house back in the '60s. I wouldn't doubt that this was also her recipe. It originated in WWI but has stayed popular through WWII to the present day.

WAR CAKE

1 lb raisins or dates.
 2 cups hot water
 2 cups brown sugar
 2 heaping tablespoons shortening (probably used lard in war years).
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 1 teaspoon cloves (optional)
 3 cups flour
 1 teaspoon baking soda dissolved in 1 tbsp. hot water

Instructions:

In a large sauce pan, combine raisins, water, brown sugar, shortening, salt, cinnamon, and cloves.

Cook slowly over medium heat for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. You want all of the ingredients to mix well together.

Cool. *This is a really important step. You can leave this sit overnight - for up to a day.

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.

Add flour and baking soda to mixture.

Stir, mixing well.

Pour mixture into a 9x9 baking pan.

Bake for approximately 45 min to 1 hour - The cake will be brown and a toothpick inserted into the middle should come out clean.

This keeps really well and is possibly better after a week. It used to be sent in care packages overseas.

BITS & PIECES



Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Valley Gardener's Club. The Valley Gardeners is a member of the Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs. <http://www.nsagc.com>

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