

# **Sechelt Garden Club Newsletter**

www.secheltgardenclub.com

**MARCH 2013**

<b>President:</b>	<b>Mardie Campbell</b>
<b>Past President:</b>	<b>Charmaine Harris</b>
<b>Vice President:</b>	<b>Barbara Peters</b>
<b>Secretary/Webmaster:</b>	<b>Lilli McGinn</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Moira Leishman</b>
<b>Newsletter:</b>	<b>Sandra Friedman</b>
<b>Membership:</b>	<b>Mary Rowles</b>
<b>Speakers :</b>	<b>Sandra Markley/Ardath Hoole</b>
<b>Tours:</b>	<b>Anita Paulin</b>
<b>Directors at large: Christi Blackman, Carol Steedman, Lorraine Blakeman</b>	

**Next Meeting: Monday, March 25<sup>h</sup> at 7:30pm in the Seaside Centre**

**Martin Cook** is a Master Beekeeper with certificates from both SFU and UBC. He has a 30 colony operation around Roberts Creek and sells Certified Organic, natural, raw, unpasteurised honey from both local and other sources at the Sechelt Farmers' Market and at Xmas craft fairs. He will have handouts available on the top 20 bee-friendly plants for the Sunshine Coast and a plan for a backyard beekeeper plus tasters of available honeys. In addition, Laurie Creek will be selling his dahlia tubers.

**Please wear your name tag, bring your coffee/tea cup and *don't* park at Gilligans.**

**Membership:** We now have 166 members plus 6 Lifetime Members. If you haven't already done so, please **renew your membership now** for the 2013 calendar year. Drop your cheque off at the check-in table at the meeting or mail it to Mary Rowles. If you want your receipt and membership card mailed to you, please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. Cheques for \$15 for individual or \$20 for family membership should be made out to the Sechelt Garden Club. If you would like the 10% discount at local nurseries you will need to show a current membership card.

**Rental of Equipment:** For information about our rental policy and fees for our digital Power Point projector, contact Sandra Markley.

## **Volunteers Wanted**

- Volunteers are needed to bake, prepare food and set up and help clean up the Seaside Centre for the July 31 visit of the Gibsons and Pender Harbour Garden Clubs.
- We need gardens for the Gibsons and Pender Harbour Garden Clubs' Tour and for Sechelt Garden Club Tours in August. You don't have to be a Master Gardener or have been featured in Gardens West. Gardens are a work in progress and everyone's garden is different and interesting. Take a chance and contact Anita Paulin.

## March Gardening 'TO DO' List

(thanks to Bob Tuckey from *The Natural Gardener*)

- Prune winter flowering shrubs and vines after blooming
- Plant summer and fall blooming bulbs
- Spray for peach leaf curl, peach leaf blight and canker
- Dormant spray fruit trees and roses if you haven't already done so
- Plant ground covers
- Plant or repair lawns
- Plant grasses
- Plant roses
- Plant fruit trees
- Plant perennials
- Plant shrubs, trees and vines
- Plant warm season vegetables
- Continue any clean up that may have been interrupted by cold weather
- Start feeding your houseplants with an organic fertilizer
- Start feeding your trees, shrubs, perennials and vines with an organic fertilizer
- Look for interesting and unusual plants for your garden

## CONTROLLING APHIDS

Now is the time to start thinking about getting aphids under control. Here are several ways to do that:

### Squishing

If you don't have a lot of plants or too much of a problem, don a pair of gloves and run your fingers up and down the stems of your plants squishing the aphids as you go. It is strangely satisfying.

### Ladybugs

A tried and true method of aphid control. Pick up your ladybugs at The Natural Gardener or your local nursery and bring them home. Spray down the plants in the area where you want to release the ladybugs. The best time to release them is at dusk. If it is not too large an area, cover the plants with a sheet or tarp after releasing the ladybugs and leave on overnight. Usually, within one week of releasing the ladybugs the aphids should be under control (thanks to Bob Tuckey from *The Natural Gardener*)



## Tips From the Garden Shed...



### ORGANIC VS CHEMICAL FERTILIZERS

Intensive food gardening is almost certain to strip nutrients from the soil, nutrients we need to put back in order to grow vegetables year after year. The question then becomes: do you use chemical or organic fertilizer and why.

Most chemical fertilizers provide only nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K). While these macro-nutrients are required in greater quantity than any others, they are only three of the thirteen nutrients plants need. The three chemicals that qualify as secondary nutrients – calcium, sulfur, and magnesium – are generally ignored, as are the trace nutrients: boron, chlorine, manganese, iron, zinc, copper, and molybdenum. While these are needed in far smaller quantities than the macro-nutrients, they are still essential.

Pure chemicals can be hard on the earthworms and micro-organisms in the soil that keep it alive and working, thus making nutrients available to plants. Earthworms not only provide perhaps the best compost available, but they also help aerate soil when they tunnel through it. Without the beneficial effects of worms and micro-organisms, plants have a harder time accessing the secondary and micro-nutrients that are not found in most chemical fertilizers.

Chemical fertilizers can be equally hard on plants themselves, because they bypass the work a plant normally has to do to gain access to nutrients. Pure chemicals will make soil less nutritious, and lessen the plants' ability to access nutrition.

Finally, chemical fertilizers are hard on the environment. Many are synthesized from oil, their production requires a significant investment of fossil fuels, and when they run off into streams or lakes, they can cause further problems. Algae blooms (the sudden growth of underwater plants) encouraged by agricultural run-off can consume oxygen needed by fish and other organisms. Fertilizer that leaches down to the water table may cause more direct threats to human health.

Organic fertilizers, far from being purified and simplified chemicals, are complex compounds that add numerous secondary and micro-nutrients beyond the one or two for which they are best known. Organics such as manures, powdered rocks (such as lime, rock phosphate, and greensand), blood meal, bone meal, wood ash and compost all contain important micronutrients and their texture will improve soil quality rather than degrading it.

Organics contain important secondary and trace nutrients; improve soil texture, aeration, and drainage; provide slow-release nutrition; aid the environment in many ways and harm it in few.

#### Fertilizer Formula

10 parts canola or cottonseed meal  
1 part steamed bone meal  
1 part kelp meal  
1 part dolomite lime  
¼ part blood meal (for dark greens only)

Most of the ingredients for this mix can be purchased at the garden centre. You can apply the fertilizer generously, working it into the soil under each plant. It won't burn and it releases slowly. Use about one cup for each large plant, perhaps half that for a head of lettuce. Use about four litres per 100 square feet to prepare an entire bed. Sprinkle this mix lightly on each layer as you build your compost heap to supercharge decay. It will help break down tough material and create a very fine compost.

Adapted from Eric Vinje: *Planet Natural*, and Randy Shore: *The Green Man*, Vancouver Sun