
Getting Ready For Spring!

by Cheryl Fiddis

As you are reading this newsletter, February is already upon us and here on the West Coast, we all know that Spring is only just around the corner. You only have to listen to the news to realize how lucky we are and that our biggest concern is usually 'just' the rain. Already the days are getting longer and the skies are brighter and we can all think about getting outside and preparing our gardens for the spring. Now is a good time to take a look at the 'bare bones' of your garden and stop just visualizing the changes you thought about making last year, and start creating them. Remember that plant you wanted to move? Stand in front of that spot and try to visualize the way the sun hits the various areas in your yard when it is higher...did you have that plant in the best possible spot? Is that spot protected, or too exposed to sun or wind?

Many gardeners, the very organized ones!, make notes as the year progresses, to remember things they want to change. Try this if you are having trouble remembering what you wanted to change.

Some gardeners say that a few of their plants have frequent flyer miles due to the amount of times they have been moved! Usually if you have had to move the same plant more than a few times, it just might not be the plant for your yard and it might be the time to 're-gift' that plant to someone else. A friend or a neighbour, or someone in your very own garden club, just might have the perfect spot.

So, what are you waiting for? If there's a dry spell, or even just a light drizzle, grab your gardening gloves and head outside. Even if you only have a limited time to spare, you can make a big difference. If you have a lot of tidying up to do after our winter, start small by choosing a different area each time you get out...how about the front entrance area? (You know

how important first impressions are!). Start at the street level and walk down your sidewalk and imagine you are seeing your yard and entranceway for the first time. What do you see? What would you like to see?

If your door mat has seen better days, turf it and go shopping for a new one to welcome the spring!

And don't forget to clean out the birdbaths. I know mine have been very popular no matter what the weather is doing, and I always scrub them out and keep them clean all winter long.

So, get out there...the fresh air and the exercise will be great for you, and your garden will love the attention!

Upcoming Column!

It's time for a new column! And time to get our members participating again! Starting next month we will introduce our new column, "Not-So-Secret Gardens".

Have you seen some fabulous gardens on your travels? Did you take the trip of a lifetime, and visit a special garden or a conservatory in a far away place? We want to hear from you! Even if you haven't flown to an exotic place lately, have you found a special place in Metro Vancouver that you'd like to tell others about? If so, please email Cheryl Fiddis at ecfiddis@telus.net and let us know for future newsletters. Don't worry about writing a lengthy article...just tell us where it is and why it impressed you. I'll give you a little sneak preview of what we'd like to see...

"One of my very favorite vacation spots is sunny Palm Springs in California. Moorten Botanical Gardens is the most wonderful place to visit. It was created in 1938 and now boasts 3,000 examples of desert cacti and other desert plants grouped by

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geographic regions: Arizona, Baja California, California, Colorado, the Mojave desert, the Sonora desert, South Africa, arid South America, and Texas. Outdoor collections include agaves, bombax, crested Cereus, cardon and boojum trees, arborescent "candelabra" Euphorbia, a two-story Pachypodium, thorned Caesalpinia and Bursera, and aloes of southern Africa and Madagascar. In the "Cactarium" greenhouse are cacti and succulents, with caudiciform species exhibiting thickened root crowns, many species of Asclepiads, Aztecia, Gymnocalyciums, Alstromeria, Euphorbia, and Ferocactus, plus two Welwitzia mirabilis from Namibian deserts.

Wow! I didn't know all this information until I checked their website, but what I did know, it's a great place to wander around and see something very different from our own Burnaby gardens. It's magical. They rent out the place for weddings and special occasions too!"

Special Thanks

BRAGS would like to say a very special thanks to Lanny Hui for all her hard work preparing this newsletter up until now. She has done a wonderful job, especially of late with her busy schedule, and we thank her a bunch!

Next Meeting

February 2, 2011 New Trends in Gardening by Brian Minter. Brian's passion for plants was transformed into 32- acre [Minter Gardens](#) which today draws thousands of visitors each year, and has become a favourite destination for weddings. He is 'BC's go-to garden expert' through his experience at both the garden centre and the display gardens. As such, he has hosted countless radio and television shows, is a frequent gardening columnist, and is the author of Canadian Best Seller, [Brian Minter's New Gardening Guide - Fresh Approaches for Canadian Gardeners](#)

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The meeting starts at 7 pm, at the Burnaby Village Museum, Main Building, on the 2nd floor. Refreshments are served. All are welcome.

Don't forget to bring your own mug to be eco-friendly and save a Styrofoam cup!

BRAGS Membership

Annual membership cost \$12. Members share various gardening interests and enjoy 10% discount of regularly priced items at Garden Works by presenting their membership cards.

Burnaby Garden Scene on Twitter

If you have visited the BRAGS (brags.ca) website lately you may have noticed a new feature on the front page. The Burnaby Garden Scene Twitter feed is a continually updated source of information for gardeners about what is happening in the broadly defined gardening world of Burnaby and nearby. This same feature also appears on some other garden club websites -- South Burnaby Garden Club, New Westminster Horticultural Society, Burnaby & Region Allotment Gardens Society, and individual Tweets (notices) are often picked up and re-Tweeted (copied) on other Twitter sites such as the BurnabyNow.

This feature has been welcomed by the other gardening clubs that carry this feature and is seen as an easy way for members to share information about their activities with members of the other clubs. In particular, it carries information about forthcoming meetings and speakers, plant sales, garden tours, etc.

The Burnaby Garden Scene feature is maintained by David Forsyth, BRAGS webmaster. Check it out.

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Sheila Chowdhury
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Refreshments

Helen Vaughan
299-2014

Speakers

Rosemary Daviduk
604-431-6207

Website

David Forsyth
298-6350

Out and About

To March 31, 2011, Emotional Geometry at VanDusen Botanical Garden. an exhibit of works by renowned Mexican sculptor SEBASTIAN, creator of VanDusen's Throne of Nezahuacoyotl, in honour of the bicentennial of the Republic of Mexico. Displayed on the Great Lawn and curated by noted SEBASTIAN expert Dr. George Drake. Presented in conjunction with the Consulate General of Mexico and the Vancouver Biennale.

Spring Gardening Courses at VanDusen

Sharpen your gardening skills by taking in a course at VanDusen Botanical Garden. VanDusen is dedicated to increasing the awareness and appreciation of the Plant Kingdom through public education and training in botany, horticulture, ecology, garden design and related fields.

Courses vary from a couple of hours to a few days spread out over several weeks. Courses are taught by staffers from VanDusen and experts from elsewhere in the community. Some specific examples coming up in the near future include Plant Propagation Workshop with Egan Davis (VBG), Spring Pruning with Gerry Gibbens (VBG retired), and Keep Good Lawns from Going Bad with Catherine Dale, well known as a Burnaby gardening educator and ex-Head Gardener at the Eagles Estate. For more information check out the VanDusen website at vandusengarden.org or phone 604.257.8666 for a brochure.

February 1, Tuesday, 730pm "Starting Vegetables" with Arzeena Hamir

speaking to the South Burnaby Garden Club monthly meeting. Arzeena's passion is organic vegetable gardening. She spent a number of years in the seed industry including at West Coast Seeds analyzing up and coming vegetable varieties. Her articles have been published in the Vancouver Sun, WestCoast Families Magazine, Suite101.com and Organic Living. When she's not planting peas or harvesting zucchini, Arzeena runs Terra Viva Organics at <http://www.tvorganics.com>. Meeting at Bonsor Rec Centre

March 5, Saturday "Mason Bee Workshop" at Eagles

Estate. Learn how to have happy healthy mason bees in your garden with Brian Campbell. Brian has a certificate in Permaculture Design, is a Certified Bee Master, and is very active in food security and conservation issues. In this introduction to the native Blue Orchard Mason Bee you will learn about their life cycle and how to attract them to your garden. There will be a hands-on opportunity to wash cocoons and identify some common diseases and pests of these gentle beneficial insects. Mason Bee cocoons will be available for purchase at the workshop. Refreshments and snacks will be provided. Pre-registration required. Phone 604-733-2313.