How is the Garden Growing?

Some organizations pay for a Master Plan and leave it on the shelf. Not this Garden! Our copies are well-thumbed and much discussed, and we are moving forward with Phase One, a beautiful, high-functioning entrance.

This summer our supporters gave enough money – $50,000 – to begin the new entrance and surrounding areas. With the promise of a matching funds guarantee, we will surpass $100,000 by the New Year. We have a long way to go ($1,000,000) so we are working hard to get there.

Detailed construction plans are now underway, and we are determining how much we can accomplish in 2018 and 2019 and in what order. Getting the fine details right is so important, and our team is working again with Lees + Associates Landscape Architects to get the construction plans ready for tender before next summer.

A great way to get involved is to tell everyone you know why you support the Garden, and let us know, too. Throughout Salal you’ll see prompts in boxes. Drop us an email about why you value the Garden. If you haven’t had a chance to go over the Master Plan, please drop in to the Pavilion, where there are enlarged plans displayed and a full copy to look through. Ask specific questions, book a guided walk to see where the improvements will be, and talk it up in the community. This will help us get the message out to many more people. Spread the word through Facebook and around the coffee table, or bring someone to one of our upcoming events.

Your help makes all the difference! To contribute to the Master Plan, drop in, mail a cheque, or click here to donate right away. Make a note that your donation is earmarked for Phase One.

Thanks to these Very Special Donors
YOU CAN DOUBLE YOUR DONATION!

In late summer, we received an offer that took our breath away, from a couple who have been members and supporters for years, Brenda Christenson and Tom Barry. If the Garden collects $5,000 in donations from new off-Coast donors by June 30, 2018, Brenda and Tom will double that amount. We cannot thank them enough for motivating us to seek new support from off the Coast to complement our on-Coast fundraising efforts. Already we have received a qualifying donation of $2,000 from the Vancouver Rhododendron Society! This gift, doubled by Tom and Brenda, becomes $4,000.

Inspired by these philanthropists, another member has anonymously offered to double any donations from on-Coast, but only until December 31, 2017. That’s only a few weeks away!

Let’s show our appreciation of the doubling donors by giving now!

— Paddy Wales
president’s message

What an amazing fall. The colours at the garden as elsewhere on the Coast were absolutely glorious. But the rains have come, the ponds are full and the early cold spell has us prepping for winter activities. Make sure to take time to see our Winter Lights exhibit or stop in for a bit of seasonal cheer at Woodland Christmas (Dec. 10).

In my new role as president of the SCBGS, I try to spend time at the garden each week to watch the changes and connect with our volunteers and visitors. I’ve been really lucky to spend most of my “hands in the dirt time” in our expanding Native Plant Gardens. Under the leadership of Harry Hill, our collections of Pacific Northwest plants continues to grow and there is always something to see as the seasons move through. This year we got a start on both the Mount Elphinstone and the Cascadia garden areas. Check out the Master Plan to see how these areas fit into the long term development of the garden.

I love the sense of community that flourishes among the many volunteer groups. Here at the garden there is such a culture of celebration and fun, whether it’s growing food for the food bank (an amazing 1,300 pounds this year), pulling invasive weeds or cleaning the pavilion. Everyone is so motivated by the spirit of community that inhabits this garden. It’s true at the board level as well – we always share a meal as part of our meetings to ensure that we never lose sight of the place of community in this Garden.

We have incredible volunteers who commit their time and energy to ensuring that the garden has strong, effective leadership around the board table. This year we said goodbye to three such leaders – Rosemary Bates Terry, Heather Gordon and Linda Shute. Each of these women has made an extraordinary contribution to the Garden through their efforts in fundraising, governance and financial sustainability. They will be missed.

And we welcomed two new board members who have already shown their willingness to get their hands dirty. Alexis Harrington has taken on the role of treasurer and Mieke Kang is digging into fundraising and special events. I’m so delighted to have these talented women joining us.

As this calendar year winds down, I want to extend my gratitude to the donors who have supported the Garden in 2017. Your support is what makes it all possible. And if you haven’t had a chance to make a contribution yet this year, there is still time.

Wishing everyone a peaceful festive season and the best in 2018. Hope to see you in the Garden!

— Jean Bennett, President, Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden

salal

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Adverting rates: $25 per issue, or $85 for four issues. Tax is not included or added. To advertise in Salal, please contact Kathleen Hudson: kmhudson@telus.net

Salal is the official publication of the Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden Society, a registered charity. Salal is published four times per year. All issues are available for viewing at: www.coastbotanicalgarden.org

Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden is located at: 5941 Mason Road, Sechelt • 604.740.3969

board of directors

President: Jean Bennett
Vice-President: Ian Macdonald
Treasurer: Alexis Harrington
Directors-at-Large: Douglas Justice, Mieke Kang, Heather Till, Paddy Wales, David Watkins

Contact any of the above by email: info@coastbotanicalgarden.org

thank you!

Wheelbarrows of thanks go out to the following:
• Swanson’s Ready Mix for the Harvest Festival Sand Box
• Top Quality Top Soil for the soil and mulch for our veggie garden
• Paul Clayson for his wonderful delivery service
• Our volunteer program presenters Sheila Watkins, Harry Hill, Paddy Wales and Karin Tigges
• The community groups who joined us for Harvest Festival this year
• Sunshine Coast Nursery for the tree donation
• All the dedicated volunteers who have helped make this past year the best ever at the Botanical Garden!

Winter Hours at the Garden

October 1 to April 30
Open Friday to Monday, 11 am - 4 pm
Closed Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
The Pavilion is available for rental every day.
After a very dry summer, it seems we had only a week or two of fall before being thrown right into winter. Our first snowfall at the beginning of November was followed by some lovely clear, crisp days. Many trees still clung to their fall foliage, and the combination of bright reds and oranges with a dusting of snow on top was stunning. I hope you had a chance to enjoy the spectacle, either in your own garden or at the Botanical Garden.

We’ve had some great events over the past couple of months, starting with our annual Harvest Festival on Labour Day weekend. It was wonderful to see so many families out to enjoy a day in the Garden. Without the dozens of volunteers (both from the Garden and other participating groups), we could never pull it off. Thank you, volunteers!

Harvest Fest was followed by a weekend devoted to trees. Sheila Watkins led a hands-on workshop showing a great planting method for trees. You can see the newly planted Oxydendron arboretum (sourwood tree) in the area southeast of the Pavilion. This tree will be part of our new four seasons garden when the entrance is redone. It was generously donated by Sunshine Coast Nursery. The next day, Harry Hill led an entertaining and enlightening tree walk through the Garden.

An October workshop saw Paddy Wales sharing the bulb planting techniques learned at England’s Great Dixter garden. Be sure to look for pots of colourful blooms next spring brightening the Pavilion entrance.

In early November, a small delegation from the Vancouver Rhododendron Society (VRS) paid us a visit. They were joined by our dear friends Alleyne and Barbara Cook. The VRS has generously donated $2,000 toward the care and display of our two rhododendron collections – the Cook collection, and the Knight collection.

Our November wreath-making workshop was once again a sell-out. There will be some lovely wreaths decorating Coast doors this winter. Thanks to Karin Tigges for leading the class and to all our volunteer elves for gathering such interesting material.

At the AGM Oct. 2, Rosemary, Heather and Linda officially retired, and new directors Alexis Harrington and Mieke Kang were welcomed to the board (see their bios below). At the quick board meeting immediately following the AGM, (now) Past President Paddy passed the “Trowel of Leadership” to incoming President Jean Bennett. Rounding out the executive for the coming year is Ian Macdonald as vice president, and Alexis will serve as Treasurer. Returning directors-at-large are Douglas Justice, Heather Till and David Watkins.


Welcome to our new directors

Alexis Harrington joined the society in 2008 and has served as a cow pie remover, a garden tour leader, an original Harvest Festival organizer, and chief bird nerd. She has worked in the accounting industry for nine years and run her own business for the past two. She is passionate that numbers are not just figures for reporting but tools of information to power change and growth. Alexis looks forward to ensuring the numbers continue to be accessible and understandable.

Mieke Kang has been married for 41 years and is the proud parent and grandmother to six. She has been a Master Gardener for almost 18 years and strongly believes in the need for proactive stewardship of our planet. She is very excited to be a part of the future growth of the Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden.

At the board meeting Sept. 25, we said thank you and see you later (definitely not goodbye!) to three exceptional directors. Rosemary Bates Terry has served on our board since 2013, and has carried out her duties as Vice-President and Chair of the Fundraising Committee with great humour and grace. Heather Gordon is our longest serving director, and has just completed a full 10 years. Heather was instrumental in securing the funding for our GroundWorks project, and was the bright light that led us to completion. Linda Shute joined the board in 2014 and has been an admirable Treasurer. During her tenure, we’ve seen great strides in financial sustainability for the Society. The Botanical Garden owes a huge debt of gratitude to all three for their service, and we wish them all the best in the future.
please give this holiday season

Winter may appear as the season of rest for gardens. Not so! At the Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden now is the time to prepare for the future on the land and at the planning table. It is a key season for raising the money needed to keep the Garden welcoming, open and healthy! Besides preparing for Winter Lights, our staff is busy preparing for new plantings, clearing new areas, and improving the paths.

Our Operations Budget keeps us going. It was set in June for the following 12 months, and it depends on your generosity in the income column. As members, it is important that we support what we believe in – the value to our community of a botanical garden that provides us a fine place to visit, opportunities to learn and share skills, to conserve habitats and plants, to celebrate. The joy we find is not fleeting, but a gift also to future generations of families who will share this Sunshine Coast treasure.

The backbone of our Operations is supported by our Perennial Friends – those who have made the commitment to give monthly. It’s surprisingly easy, and the impact is huge.

THANK YOU, Perennial Friends!

Perhaps you prefer to give an occasional or annual gift. We know from experience that now is the time for many people to do just that. This is the last chance to celebrate Canada’s 150

— Paddy Wales

upcoming events

Winter Lights
December 3-5, 10-12, 17-19, 4:30 to 8 pm
The Garden will be aglow with thousands of twinkling lights. Stop by the pavilion and pick up a cup of hot chocolate and then head out to enjoy the sparkle. Suncoast Phoenix Community Choir will be performing in the Pavillion on December 18. Bring your singing voice! Winter Lights is generously supported by the Sunshine Coast Credit Union. Admission by donation.

Woodland Christmas
December 10, 4 to 8 pm
Enjoy fun for the whole family at our annual Woodland Christmas. You’ll find a bake sale, kids’ crafts to make and take home, seasonal music, and a visit from Santa! After dark, take in the sparkling Winter Lights. Admission by donation.

Hair of the Dog Day
January 1, 11 am to 4 pm
Welcome the New Year with a brisk walk around the Garden with your favourite pooch. This is one of only a few days each year that well-behaved leashed dogs are welcome in the Garden, and a great way to start 2018. Admission by donation.

Armchair Travel
January 18, 7 pm
Go back a century in time, and join Bill and Rosemary Terry on a photographic alpine plant-hunting safari in Lesotho, The Sky Kingdom. Entirely surrounded by South Africa, Lesotho is a constitutional monarchy, slightly smaller than Vancouver Island, nestled in the high plateau of the Drakensburg mountains. No part of the country is below 5,000 feet. You’ll travel by jeep on incredibly bad roads, enjoy spectacular scenery, get a sense of the way of rural village life, and – of course – discover alpine plants in their native habitat, some of which can be grown in gardens on the Sunshine Coast.

Pruning Workshop at the Garden
January 27, 1 pm
Certified Arbourist Cheryl Topping will demonstrate the tools and methods for proper pruning of trees and shrubs. Bring a notebook and your pruning questions. Admission by donation.

Hands-On Pruning Workshop
January 28, 1 pm
This hands-on workshop will be held in a private garden, and participants will have the chance to work on established trees and shrubs. Limited to 10 participants, and registration is required. Call the office at 604-740-3969 or email info@coastbotanicalgarden.org to sign up. $15 members, $20 non-members

Tickets and registration for all events through the Garden office:
Call 604-740-3969. Email info@coastbotanicalgarden.org
In October I had the good fortune to attend a symposium on native plants held in Boston by the American Public Gardens Association. It was a great opportunity to meet other people working with locally native plants in their botanical gardens. Although most of the attendees at the symposium were from the eastern U.S., many of the challenges are similar to what we face on the Canadian West Coast.

Presentations focused on the practicalities of gardening with native plants, plant adaptations to climate, and the role of botanical gardens in saving rare species and protecting endangered habitats.

Amy Highland, Director of Collections at Mt. Cuba Center in Delaware, said native plant gardens give visitors a sense of place and provide a story of who we are and where we live.

Uli Lorimer, a curator at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, which receives one million visitors a year, said it’s amazing how quickly uncommon birds and native pollinators will find your garden if you plant it with wildlife-friendly species.

Speakers talked about their success in getting schools to take part in studies on bud break and flowering times of local species, as well as taking notes of associated animals. We can use animals to hook students and gardeners to become more interested in native plants.

Recent studies have pointed to an alarming worldwide drop in insect numbers, and presenters discussed how botanical gardens can help counter this decline. When planning gardens we should give thought to the needs of native bees, honeybees and other pollinators, and choose plants that are close to their wild ancestors. Flowers that have been hybridized or selected by breeders for their extra petals or longer bloom times often produce less pollen and nectar than true wildflowers.

For information on how to create a pollinator garden (and info on a nine-year-old science prodigy), Google Kedar Narayan pollinator.

— Harry Hill

A pond at Boston’s Garden in the Woods reflects the fall foliage.

three cheers for wendy

Early in the New Year, Wendy Gibson, our long-time keeper of the membership list, will be retiring from this post. Wendy has been handling new member sign-ups, existing member renewals, and any changes to contact information since 2014. With a membership as large and geographically diverse as ours, this has been no small task. Her attention to detail and always present good humour have made working with her an absolute delight. We wish Wendy much happiness as she steps back to spend some well-deserved time with family, and will look for her to visit us often.

We’re thrilled that Kathleen Hudson has agreed to take on the membership database. Kathleen has been an integral member of the Salal team for many years, and we know the list will be in good hands.

— Mary Blockberger

The ever smiling Wendy took part in the recent Wreath Making event at the Garden.

Photo by Mary Blockberger

In Your Words ... Volunteers!

Why do you volunteer at the Botanical Garden?
Email your words to info@coastbotanicalgarden.org
You will automatically be entered to win a free year of membership!

In Your Words ... Donors!

Why do you support the Botanical Garden?
Email your words to info@coastbotanicalgarden.org
You will automatically be entered to win a free year of membership!
appearing this winter

December is always a busy month for the rental business at the Garden, and the revenue generated supports both operations and our program offerings. In addition to company and community group Christmas parties, we’re delighted that both the Pender Harbour Choir and Arbutus Sounds Chorus have chosen our venue for their Christmas concerts. Here are some details on both performances. More information can be found on their websites, listed below.

The Pender Harbour Choir invites you to enjoy Christmas Memories, a winter concert for the whole family. The community choir, now in its 45th year, will perform both familiar and new music to get you into the spirit of the season. The program will also include solo and duet performances, music by SASS, and a chance for the audience to join in the singing. The performance is 7 p.m., Friday, December 8. Tickets are $20 (children 12 and under, accompanied by an adult, are free) and are available from EarthFair Store in Madeira Park, the Sechelt Visitor Centre, and from choir members.

See www.penderharbourmusic.ca/choir for more details.

Arbutus Sounds Chorus (pictured here in concert at the Garden last year) will take you on A Winter Walk on December 17 at 2 p.m. through an imaginary, old-fashioned Christmas village, with four-part a cappella carolling. Admission is by donation.

See www.arbutussounds.org for more details.

which are your favourites?

When gardening is one of your favourite pastimes, it always entails getting prepared to go outside. Once the outer garb is on, the choice remains relating to which pair of gardening shoes are the most suitable. Urgent decisions have to be made! Where you put them on, how you fasten them securely, whether there are any annoying bits of gritty gravel inside the shoes to cause an irritation, and if they are suited for the day’s weather and the tasks that await you. Maybe you have just one pair or several to choose from.

For me, the gardening shoes I choose are governed by the socks I wear – smart wool, cotton, the ones with a butterfly décor or the latest sock acquisition of fairies dancing against a black background! Do you remember the rhyme “There are fairies at the bottom of my garden”?

So, what to select? I own a sturdy pair of suede Mephistos worn for years. The soles have over time become smooth and the heels have worn down on the outside corners, thus giving my feet a warped walk. They have had a few pairs of new laces too, the latest being elastic ones that stretch as they are put on, thus eliminating the need to tie them up.

In contrast are the authentic bright yellow Sloggers – or so the name says on the sole. Feet slip into them easily, and there is no need to sit down, bend over or crouch to tie up fraying laces. However, being elastic ones that stretch as they are put on, thus eliminating the need to tie them up.

Choosing just the right pair of gardening shoes is an important consideration. Hand-me-downs are always amongst my selection of gardening shoes. Remember the Crocs? Mine are a bright pink, but only when I have scrubbed them clean. Passed on by a grand-daughter, whose feet have long out grown them, her surprising comment was: “Grandma you’ve still got my Crocs and you’re wearing them too!” How grateful I feel that she is able to see them in full service!

There are then the expensive types of runners! From Reeboks to Asics, Brooks to New Balance, they are always well worn and have the honour of being relegated and maintained for garden work. However, they do need regular servicing! Their indented rubber soles require “tooth-brushing” to get out the imbedded soil, and the nylon composite tops are open to moisture.

The most serviceable are a classical pair of black lace-up shoes. With rounded toes, and a size or two larger that I normally take, the feet are not cramped and they are waterproof too. If I have to do an errand just before or after my garden labours, I can still wear these shoes as they match any of my supermarket shopping outfits. I even will take out the traditional Kiwi black shoe polish and give these worthy garden shoes a shine.

In retrospect, perhaps indeed these handsome black shoes are my favourite gardening shoes.

Do you have a favourite pair?

—and June Meyer
Thanks to Andrea Paetow for hunting down these historic aerial photos of the Mason Road neighbourhood from 1957 to 2003, part of her Pond Restoration Research Project. Andrea is doing her MSc project on pond reclamation, and has been conducting extensive surveys of plant and amphibian life in all our ponds. We look forward to her final report next year.

Click on the thumbnail photos to view high-resolution images, then use your zoom function to find and explore our land’s history.

By 1957 the swath of power line cuts across Mason Road. The farm is just to the north, on the left side of the road.
news from the veggie patch

What a crazy year for gardening! Between our late start due to the wet spring and then the months of hot dry weather, it is incredible that the veggie garden produced an amazing 1,300 pounds of vegetables for the food bank (plus close to 1,000 of pumpkins that were sold by donation).

With the harvest finished and the garlic nestled in its beds, we can relax and enjoy the fruits (and vegetables) of our labour.

If you have a bounty of carrots you might like to try this recipe for Dilled Carrots contributed by veggie volunteer, Christine Twaits:

Chris’ Pickled Carrots
Fill 1 litre jar with:
- washed carrots (ends cut off)
- 3-4 garlic cloves
- 1 head of dill
- 1 tsp. of pickling spices
For each jar, boil:
- 1 cup of water
- 1 cup vinegar
- 2 Tbsp. pickling salt
Fill jars and place upside-down to seal for at least five days. You do not have to refrigerate after pickling.

— Pat Kolterman

Some of our wonderful volunteers pose for a selfie taken by our young English Rotary volunteer, Grace.

The last cucumber has been counted, the last tomatillo has been tallied. The lettuce has been listed, and the potatoes packed off. This year, our incredible Veggie Garden Volunteers grew 27 different crops, and took over 1,300 pounds of produce to the Food Bank. They worked through a horribly damp spring, and a challenging summer drought, and they did it with smiles and good cheer. Thank you to all of the volunteers, and to West Coast Seeds and Top Quality Top Soil for all your support again this year.

Photo by Mary Blockberger

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Winter Hours at the Garden

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Closed Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday – The Pavilion is available for rental every day.
the buzz about bees

The bees have had their formic acid treatments and feeding completed in readiness for winter. We started our spring with seven hives and are entering into winter with nine hives. Sometime in late December, we will treat with oxalic acid for varroa mites.

We have worked hard at the apiary this year. We sold 14 nucs or beginner hives to our club members, we harvested 320 pounds of honey, and we have installed a storage shed for our bee equipment and extended the electric fence to encompass it. Thanks to Harry and Betty especially, the flower garden surrounding the apiary has expanded and still has some blossoming calendula.

Bruce Haines recently spoke to us of his adventures beekeeping for an organic commercial beekeeping enterprise in New Zealand and of his adventures working at Beaverlodge, which is located in Grand Prairie and is where much of the national honeybee research is done in Canada. He offered an interesting perspective from both places.

We still have honey available for sale if you are looking for that special present. It is local and about as organic as it gets. Both formic and oxalic acid treatments qualify for organic certification and the bees’ foraging area remains healthy. If you are interested, contact Harry at 604-885-2900 or Sally at 604-886-4863.

Merry Christmas to all.
— Sally Burke

The hives in the Garden produced 320 pounds of honey this year.

Do you have a story or photo you’d like to submit for the Salal newsletter? Submissions are always welcome! Email till@dccnet.com

Picture this:

A welcoming, beautiful entrance encourages visitors to find out what is in the Garden. It sets the stage for them to explore paths and habitats, learn about plants and nature, and enjoy themselves. The new entrance route features:

- Clear road signs
- A four-season planting along driveway, with an iconic sculpture
- Increased handicap parking
- More parking spaces by sensible layout of rows
- Welcoming walkway from parking to garden and pavilion entrance
- Bioswales and permeable surfacing for best environmental practice

Funding Opportunities

LEES + Associates
Landscape Architects

ARTIST’S CONCEPTUAL ILLUSTRATION

Click here to find out about donation options
We had the very great pleasure of hosting some members of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society on Nov. 5. They came to tour the Cook rhododendron collection, and present us with a very nice donation for its care. It’s always great to visit with Alleyne and Barbara Cook, and even better to make new friends!

Timber the beaver has made the northwest pond his/her home this year and is busy with remodelling projects. Thanks to patient photographer Aspen Wing.

Harry Hill has been busy planting some Sequoia sempervirens (Coastal redwoods) in the Cascadia Garden. This area will feature species from Northern California, Oregon and Washington. This fine specimen may reach 300’ in height, and live for over 1,000 years.

Participants learned the proper way to plant a tree Sept. 30 in a workshop hosted by Sheila Watkins. Many thanks to Sunshine Coast Nursery and Flower Farm for donating a beautiful Oxydendron (sourwood tree) for our developing Four Seasons Garden.
About 420 people came out to Harvest Festival on Sept. 3. This annual event is made possible through the hard work and dedication of dozens of volunteers - thank you!

Fibre artist Ursula Bentz crafted an amazing weaving in the trees, made from willow frames and jute netting.

Kids of all sizes enjoyed the big sandbox courtesy of Swanson’s Ready-Mix Ltd.

A full house signed up for the wreath making class on Nov. 25. There was an astounding selection of material to choose from, and some very fine wreaths were produced.
These community businesses generously support Salal with their advertising dollars. Please show your appreciation by supporting them in return.

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10 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

HOURS: 10 - 4
Thursday to Sunday
Last day of our season Dec. 10
1826 Sunshine Coast Hwy
604.886.2796
www.sunshinestumsnursery.com

Being Neighbourly is in Our Nature

Enjoy our Outdoor Greens in 2018
We hope you will join us for some fun, fitness and golf.

We have introduced a NEW Social Membership which may appeal to the Botanical Golfer, who would like to be more active at the Blue Ocean Golf Club.

For details on our 2018 season please check www.blueoceangolf.ca

Blue Ocean Golf Club
604-885-2700

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