

Sechelt Garden Club Newsletter

www.secheltgardenclub.com

JANUARY 2015

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Next Meeting: Monday, January 26, at 7:30pm in the Seaside Centre.

Laurie Creak will enthrall us with his presentation of *Gardens in Kuauai, Hawaii*. He will emphasize the variety and scope of trees, bushes and vines that have been introduced to the Hawaiian islands and why Kuauai has become known as the Island of Gardens.

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

Membership: We are now collecting membership dues for 2015—\$17 for individuals and \$25 for families. Please bring cheques made out to the *Sechelt Garden Club* to the check-in table at the meeting or mail them to Barbara Peters at Box 2236, Sechelt, V0N 3A0. If you want your membership card and receipt mailed to you, please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

POTTING-UP for the PLANT SALE

The 2015 Plant Sale will be on Saturday, May 9th. Please **save the following dates** so that you won't miss out on the Potting-Up activities.

- Tuesday, March 24th from 10 to 1
- Wednesday, March 25 from 1 to 4
- Thursday, April 9 from 10 to 3

STRAWBERRY TEA

“The Strawberry Tea,” you exclaim, “But we are only in January!” And January is when we start to plan. The Strawberry Tea will take place on Sunday, June 14th and we need somebody to volunteer their garden to host the tea. You don't have to have the very best, most developed, most cultivated garden in the Sechelt Garden Club. You also don't have to do very much, if any, work. All you have to do is offer your garden as a venue and our great group of volunteers will do the rest. If you are interested in volunteering your garden or in exploring this possibility, please contact Charmaine or Christi.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH



Our Co-Chairs and MCs Christi Blackman and Charmaine Harris.

A good time was had by all at the Sunshine Coast Golf and Country Club on Sunday, December 14 when 58 people attended the Christmas Lunch. Along with the excellent food and good conversation, everyone enjoyed the intricate tango display put on by Pat Smit, Alan Barnes and Sara and Michael Gerring, the singing duet of Charmaine and Lester Harris and the poem by June Meyer.

Many thanks to Penny Lyle, June Meyer, Charmaine Harris, Shari Laine and Carol Steedman for planning the event, to Ardath Hoole for hosting the work bee, and to Tricia Smurthwaite, Kay Ogawa and Christi Blackman, Penny Lyle, June Meyer, Shari Laine, Charmaine Harris and Carol Steedman who came out to help at it. Thanks to Linda Lamont and her daughter-in-law Wendy Rodgers who donated prize items and 2 centerpieces.

January Gardening 'TO DO' List

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

- Spend time going over your seed catalogues and plan your garden. Think about new seeds that you would like to try and foster for the plant sale.
- Plant trees, shrubs and vines as long as the ground isn't frozen.
- **Apply dormant spray to fruit trees when you anticipate 24 hours of dry weather.**
- Make sure that any leaves or broken branches are off the lawn.
- Prune out any broken or damaged branches.
- Check your houseplants: divide and re-pot any pot-bound plants. Prune judiciously to create a compact, attractive specimen.
- Succulents – jade, hoyo, sansevieria—may be reluctant to bloom in the house. Grow them in a small pot and hold back the water. This may persuade them to flower.
- Start a Garden Record Chart now allowing space to record the dates of First Frost; Last Frost; Sowing Seeds; Planting; Transplanting; Time of Bloom; First Fruits; Problems with pests, and Other Information.
- Make a careful study this month of three important garden subjects: fertilizers, spraying and best seed varieties.



How to Read a Seed Catalog

by Jean Nick, *Organic Gardening Magazine*

The best part about this time of year is planning your garden with all the flowers, vegetables, herbs, or berries you want to harvest all summer long. Shopping for seeds is pretty easy once you understand what a few seed-speak terms mean.

Variety: A variety is simply a version or strain of a plant. Different varieties have different characteristics—for instance, better disease resistance or a flavor different from other varieties of the same species. You may also see the term cultivar (literally, "cultivated variety"), which is used pretty much interchangeably with variety in the seed world.

Organic: Seeds marketed as organic were grown on a certified-organic farm and have not been treated with pesticides or coated with chemicals to prevent rotting or premature sprouting. They've also never been genetically modified (GM) with things like bacteria or other plant DNA. If you can't find organic seeds, seed catalogs and seed packets usually note how seeds are treated, so you can usually avoid them. Also, the FDA requires seeds treated with poisonous chemicals to be dyed to prevent confusion.

Pelleted: The seeds themselves are coated with some inert material (usually clay) that dissolves once you plant the seed. The idea is to make tiny seeds easier to plant and also allow you to distribute them in the soil in a more uniform way.

Hybrid: A hybrid seed is the product of a farmer carefully making sure one specific plant variety cross-pollinates and fertilizes another specific variety. This is done because both varieties have desirable characteristics and, combined, those characteristics can create a much more desirable offspring variety.

Hybrid seeds are always labeled "hybrid" and/or "F1" (first-generation offspring) or "F2" (second-generation offspring). You can't save seed from your hybrid varieties, plant it the following season, and expect to get the same results. Every seed produced by a hybrid variety will grow into something different. In order for hybrid varieties to retain the desirable characteristics of both parents, the parents have to be crossed each season.

Open-pollinated: These are plants that are created in the most basic form—pollinated by either bees or wind. Unlike hybrids, open-pollinated seeds will reproduce true to type, meaning the offspring will display the same characteristics as the parent plant, and seeds can be saved from season to season.

Heirloom: Just exactly how long a standard variety has to have been around to be called an heirloom depends on whom you talk to, but the end of WWII is a generally accepted cutoff point. That marked the advent of chemical-dependent agriculture and the selection of varieties that grew well in those conditions. Heirlooms can be great choices, because they were developed to grow well in organic conditions. They have also pleased generations of small growers and gardeners well enough to have survived, so they are usually easy to grow and tasty. All heirloom varieties are open-pollinated (though not all open-pollinated varieties are heirlooms), and that means you can save seeds from this season's harvest to plant next year.

