

# Sechelt Garden Club Newsletter

www.secheltgardenclub.com

OCTOBER 2015

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**Next Meeting: Monday, November 9 at 7:30pm in the Seaside Centre.**

**Please wear your name tag, bring your coffee/tea cup.**

Bill Terry will talk about *Growing Perennials from Seed*. He will show lots of slides of plants he's grown from seed and also describe how to do it.

**We will also have a meeting on November 26<sup>th</sup>.**

**Editor's Comment:** Goodbye and Thank You!

I have been doing the newsletter for the Sechelt Garden Club for the past 7 years—ever since taking over from Rayann Alderson in 2008. During that time I instituted the monthly to-do list as well as adding an educational component about different gardening topics. I have addressed the issues facing the Sechelt Garden Club such as the difficulty getting volunteers, encouraging more people to come to the potting up, and providing information about conserving water during the drought this summer. This is my last newsletter, the time has just slipped by and my participation now comes to an end. I would like to thank all the people who have been supportive over this time, who have sent me material and have written articles, gardening tips and poems, and have proof-read the result. Though I have stepped down as a Director, I look forward to seeing you all at the garden club meetings and events. – Sandra Friedman

## Message from Charmaine Harris, the Co-President

1. We are looking for someone to take over the newsletter. Please contact Charmaine Harris at 740-3733 or [daylily@live.ca](mailto:daylily@live.ca) if you are interested.
2. On Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup> members of the Sechelt Garden Club will plant the rock wall outside the Sechelt Aquatic Centre. Penny Lyle is looking for volunteers from 9 am to 1pm and for donations of plants suitable for rockeries. For questions or offers of plants/time/edibles contact Penny at 604-740-9819 or [penjon539@gmail.com](mailto:penjon539@gmail.com) If you can't come, please bring your crawling plants to Ardath Hoole on the 19th or 20th. However, do try to come with your handtools.
3. Don't forget the "Pot Ups" at Ardath's, 6253 Sechelt Inlet Rd. taking place on October 19th & 20th from 9 to 12. It is always good fun! Bring your plants for potting and/or for the pool wall (if you can't come to the pool plant up).
4. Community project - How do you feel about working on the garden at Shorncliffe next year? We have been approached by the Hospice Society. Please contact Charmaine Harris at 740-3733 or [daylily@live.ca](mailto:daylily@live.ca) if you are interested.
5. Don't forget to finish your survey. We will be sending out survey results at the end of October for your perusal. We will go over them at the Nov 30 meeting.
6. We are looking for some folks to help out with the Christmas lunch. Can you donate new or gently used items for the gift baskets? Please bring them to the next few meetings. Anyone who can make centrepieces for the tables or the raffle, please let Charmaine know (604-740-3733).

## Christmas Lunch

Our annual fabulous Christmas Lunch will be held on  
Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at the Sunshine Coast Golf and Country Club.

Cost is \$15 per member and \$25 for guests.

Tickets for the event will be available from Lorraine Blakeman at our meetings  
on November 7<sup>th</sup> and November 26<sup>th</sup>.

To reserve tickets contact: Lorraine at 740-5918 or blakemanlb@telus.net until December 6.

## October Garden "To Do" List

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

- Replace spent annuals with winter pansies, winter kale and/or grasses.
- Prepare soil for autumn planting.
- Plant winter rye or another cover crop.
- Plant spring bulbs.
- Dig and store tender bulbs like Dahlias and Cannas. (Note: The debate goes on about whether to lift the bulbs out or leave them in.)
- Rake and remove fallen leaves.
- Cut back spent perennials/biennials.
- Stop pruning roses.
- Fertilize trees, shrubs and perennials one last time as this will produce stronger plants.
- Plant peonies, poppies, irises.
- Add winter mulch.
- Divide and transplant perennials and ground covers. **Pot some for the May plant sale!**
- Plant bare-root trees, shrubs, ground covers and vines.
- Transplant roses.
- Plant bare-root roses.

## Annual General Meeting/Elections

November 26 is our Annual General Meeting. Charmaine Harris and Christi Blackman will be stepping down as Co-Presidents. We need two people to step forward to Co-President or one person to be President. According to the Constitution of the Sechelt Garden Club, any member can run for president or vice-president. The positions of secretary and treasurer are currently filled and won't be vacant for another 2 years. Please contact Charmaine Harris at [daylily@live.ca](mailto:daylily@live.ca) or 604-740-3733 if you would like to put your name forward. This will be our last meeting for 2015.

### Date to Remember:

Ayuko Inoue will be teaching a 5-week course called "Designing Your Own Garden" through the ElderU from Feb. 4 to March 3, 2016. The course is organized to help home owners who wish to build a new garden or renovate an existing garden. Basic steps of designing an outdoor space will be explained, including simple techniques of measuring a space, etc. Useful design principles will be explained, which will help make a visually rewarding garden, including a review of hard landscape and soft landscape materials. In view of this year's experience, drought-tolerant gardens will also be discussed and explored, as well as invasive alien species. Contact ElderU for more information.

# 10 Tips on Dividing Perennial Plants

## *Divide to make healthier plants--and more of them*

Adapted from Janet Macunovich author of *Designing Your Gardens and Landscapes* and *Caring for Perennials*

### 1. Divide in cool weather

Perennials can be divided at any time of the year if you give the plant appropriate care afterward. However the best time is when the soil is warmer than the air for at least part of every 24-hour period. That's just before peak daffodil season in spring and right after the nights become cool in the fall. These conditions will allow the roots of the division to grow while the tops stay low, out of the sun and wind. Dividing in the fall gives plants more time to set new roots before growing up into the heat.

### 2. Start at the drip line

Some perennials don't need to be lifted for division. (See section 3 for different root systems). For those that do, begin digging at its drip line. The roots will generally extend that far, so digging there lets you lift the plant with most of its roots intact. Dig a trench around the clump, cleanly severing any roots, then cut at an angle down and under the clump from various points around the outer edge until you can lever the plant out of the hole. For large, heavy plants, you may have to first dig the trench, then slice straight down through the center of the plant as if it was a pie, halving or quartering the clump before undercutting and lifting it. Shake or hose the roots free of soil to reveal the root type and the natural lines of division.

In early spring, divide while the new growth is still low to the ground, so the handling of stems is not usually an issue. In summer, tie stems together before lifting the plant to avoid damaging them during the digging. In fall, cut plants back before digging them for division.

### 3. Let the roots be your guide

When you dig up a perennial, you will see that it fits into one of five basic root types: roots that form clumps or offsets, surface roots, underground running roots, taproots, or woody roots. How you proceed depends on what root type your plant has.

**Offsets:** To divide a plant whose roots form offsets (small plants growing at the base of a larger one), snap the connection between any of the sections to obtain a piece with ample roots and three or more growing points (or "eyes"). Some denser clumps may have to be cut apart.

Plants that form offsets include asters (*Aster* spp.), coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea*), hostas (*Hosta* spp.), tickseeds (*Coreopsis* spp.).

**Surface roots:** Some perennials have roots that run on or just below the surface of the soil. They form new crowns and roots when they reach open spaces or make contact with the soil. If you cut between any of the stems as you would cut a piece of sod from a lawn, you will have a division with its own stems and roots. Plants with surface roots include bee balms (*Monarda* spp.), black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* spp.), creeping sedums (*Sedum* spp.), creeping speedwells (*Veronica* spp.).

**Taproots:** Plants that have taproots can be divided by using a sharp knife to slice down the length of the root. Every piece that has at least one eye, some of the taproot, and a few side roots is a viable division. Plants that have taproots include balloon flowers (*Platycodon grandiflorus*), butterfly weeds (*Asclepias tuberosa*), cushion spurge (*Euphorbia polychroma*), Oriental poppies (*Papaver orientale*).

**Underground running roots:** Underground running roots can develop suckers as they grow beyond the shade of the mother clump. These suckers can be cut away from the main plant, or you can dig up the main plant and cut away any piece with an eye or sucker already forming.

Plants with underground running roots include hardy geraniums (*Geranium* spp.), Japanese anemones (*Anemone × hybrida*), ostrich fern (*Matteuccia pennsylvanica*), plume poppies (*Macleaya* spp.).

**Woody roots:** Woody perennials often form roots when stems rest on the ground or are buried by gradually accumulating mulch. Make a new plant by simply cutting between the rooted stem and the mother plant.

Plants that have woody roots include candytufts (*Iberis* spp.), euonymus (*Euonymus* spp.), lavenders (*Lavandula* spp.), sages (*Salvia* spp.)

#### **4. Keep roots cool and moist until they are repotted**

Put them into a bucket or box in a cool shaded place, such as a garage, and cover them with newspaper to retard moisture loss. Sprinkle water to dampen the newspaper if the roots seem to be drying during their “hold” time. If, despite your best efforts, the divisions dry out while on hold, soak them in a bucket of water for about an hour before replanting. **This is important when you are bringing plants to the Potting-Up.**

#### **5. Replenish soil with organic matter**

If you remove a wheelbarrow full of perennials, then put a wheelbarrow full of compost back into that site before replanting to renew the soil, stay ahead of pest problems, and maintain fertility. Without additions, the plants will not have the advantage of renewed, fertile soil and the bed will settle after planting, putting the plants at a disadvantage in terms of drainage and air circulation.

#### **6. Use vigorous sections first**

After dividing, replant pieces that are, at most, 20 to 25 percent of the original clump and have vigorous growth. Smaller sections grow more vigorously and tend to produce stronger, longer-lasting blooms. Dividing a hosta, for example, into pieces with about seven growing points will yield the best results. Perennials multiply exponentially—one stem is likely to triple or quadruple itself each year. So if all you do is halve an overgrown clump this year, it will more than double in a season and need dividing again the next year.

#### **7. Take extra care when a plant's in bloom**

Plants in bloom may not be capable of growing as many new roots as quickly as nonblooming plants. However, given more attentive watering or shade at midday and plants in bloom will do well.

#### **8. Keep only the healthiest pieces**

If you wait until a perennial is declining, has a dead center, or has succumbed to pest problems because it has become crowded and weak, be sure to replant only the healthiest pieces. Usually these are the outside sections. Watch for discolored stems and eroded crowns and roots.

#### **9. Spread out your divisions**

Place a division into a hole that is at least as wide as its roots when spread out. Don't turn a root tip up rather than down or curl it back around on itself to fit it into an undersize hole because you'll defeat the plant's natural regrowth mechanisms.

Root tip growth is regulated in part by chemicals flowing down from the tips of leafy stems to the roots. As in all flows, gravity is involved, so if you plant a root tip up when it was down, the normal flow is interrupted. At least temporarily, that root tip will not grow as vigorously as it could.

Replant divisions in a wide hole and over a wide area. Spread out the roots wide and down over a mound of soil. In the next growing season, the top of the plant will be as wide as the roots are at the time of planting. Ensure that when you spread out the roots they don't overlap and compete with the other divisions.

#### **10. The secret of successful division at any time is to have more roots than shoots.**

Cut away excess foliage and keep the dirt moist and sheltered until the plant is established.

(Thanks to Tricia Smurthwaite for reading this over and making valuable suggestions.)

**When you divide your perennials make sure  
that you save some for the plant sale!**