

# *Sechelt Garden Club Newsletter*

www.secheltgardenclub.com

**SEPTEMBER 2015**

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**Next Meeting: Monday, September 28 at 7:30pm in the Seaside Centre.**

Xeriscape specialist Gwen Steele returns to Sechelt Garden Club to share her knowledge of appropriate plants for water-wise gardening, planting tips and timing, how to make soil more moisture retentive, mulching, tree care, capturing and reusing water, and where to find out more. Her topic is 'Creative Solutions to Avoid Drought Calamities'. She will be bringing copies of her favourite Xeriscape reference book to sell.

**Mark Your Calendar: our October meeting has been moved to Monday, November 9 at 7:30 at the Seaside Centre because of the Art Festival.**

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

**Please wear your name tag, bring your coffee/tea cup. Tip of the hat and many thanks in advance to the Refreshment Crew: Pat Smit, Gail Cron, Penny Lyle, Norma Pruden and everyone else who drops in to help and to Edwin Leung, our fabulous Audio Visual guy!**

**Membership:** We now have 107 members and 4 Life Members: Niels and Frances Ostergaard, Alison Steele and Bill Terry.

## **Christmas Lunch**

Lo and behold. Labour Day is just around the corner and we are already planning our annual *fabulous* Christmas Lunch to be held on Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at the Sunshine Coast Golf and Country Club. Cost and menu are still being negotiated and will be announced at our September meeting. Don't be disappointed. Buy your tickets at our meeting from Lorraine Blakeman.

## **SECHELT GARDEN CLUB MEMBERSHIP SURVEY 2015 /2016**

By now you will have received your **Sechelt Garden Club Membership Survey**. With the beginning of a new gardening year just ahead, the Directors are providing you an opportunity to make your views regarding the future direction of the Club known—so that we can better provide a positive experience for all. Your feedback will help us make plans going forward. If you haven't already done so, please fill out your survey and return it to Sandra Friedman.

## **FABULOUS VOLUNTEER OPORTUNITY**

**Our Director of Membership, Sharon O'Brien, needs help at the membership table. This is lots of fun and a good way to meet people. Contact Sharon at 885-2623 or at [sharonb6316@gmail.com](mailto:sharonb6316@gmail.com)**

## SEPTEMBER Gardening 'TO DO' List

- Prune the cane fruits such as raspberries and blackberries (except everbearing raspberries).
- Plant winter pansies and fall annuals (calendula, dianthus, ornamental cabbage and kale).
- Divide peonies. Be sure to have 3-5 eyes per division. Plant with eyes no deeper than 2" below soil.
- Plant fall-blooming bulbs amongst the fall perennials in your window boxes and planters and in drifts in your garden beds.
- Divide bearded iris and other summer blooming perennials and plant new ones.
- Plant bare root trees and shrubs.
- Plant herbs and ground covers as the weather cools.
- Save seed pods of flowers that you would like to propagate.
- Take cuttings of bedding plants like geraniums, fuschias and heliotrope. Do the same with shrubs and bush fruits, too.
- Prune summer-flowering heathers, and give hedges a final trim.
- Pull up tomato plants by the end of the month and ripen any unripened tomatoes indoors.
- Sow winter vegetables (lettuce, swiss chard and kale).
- Order new fruit trees and bushes and prepare soil by digging in compost and manure.
- Remove yellow leaves from water plants. Remove, clean and store water pump.
- Plant rye grass as a cover crop for your vegetable garden to restore nitrogen to the soil.

(Bob Tuckey from *The Natural Gardener*)

## POTTING-UP

September marks the beginning of a new year in the Sechelt Garden Club. It also marks the beginning of our preparations for the **Plant Sale**—our major fund raiser in May. You can't have a sale without something to sell so the first thing we do is divide and pot up the plants in our gardens in the autumn and then again in the spring.

### **Please contribute to the Potting-Up in the following ways:**

1. There is a potting-up session on Monday, October 19 and another on Tuesday, October 20 from 9 to 12 at Ardath Hoole's house, 6253 Sechelt Inlet Road. Please bring your gardening gloves, trowel and plants from your garden. This is a great learning opportunity for beginners and for experienced gardeners who want to refresh their skills and/or teach others. Our members are generous and non-judgemental with their expertise. It's also lots of fun and the refreshments are great.
2. **Pot-Up at Home:** Divide and pot-up your plants at home. We want to have big, healthy plants in May so make sure you use at least 1 gallon pots. Fill up your pot with soil. Don't use shredded paper or any other fill because everything sinks during the winter. If you need potting-up soil mix bring a bucket to Ardath Hoole's and fill it up. Please label your plants **in pencil** and indicate the colours, how tall they grow, if they need sun or shade, and if they are drought tolerant. Cut-up venetian blinds are the best for labelling. Write out questions that might have arisen while you were potting up and bring them to the potting up or to the meeting. Remember: If you have a question it's more than likely that others do too.

# Tips From the Garden Shed

## *Xeriscaping Principles: Gardening for Water Conservation*

by Debbie Wolfe August 27, 2015 [www.gardeningtherapy.ca](http://www.gardeningtherapy.ca)

Having gone through drought this summer and with a good chance that it will happen again next year, it's a good time to look at ways to conserve water in your garden. Even if your area is not currently experiencing drought, employing the principles of xeriscaping will benefit your garden and save you time and money.

Xeriscaping means using methods to conserve water through creative landscaping. There are a few basic principles in xeriscape: water conservation, drought-resistant plants, little or no lawn, improving soil, mulching, and watering wisely. Using these methods will not just save water, your landscape and garden will require less maintenance, thus freeing up a lot of time.

### **Water Conservation**

The first thing to look at is your garden conditions. Taking note of how much sun the area gets, the natural drainage pattern of the land, and other large plants already in the area will help you determine plant choices. With this information, you can use it to plan a garden that is sustainable with limited water needs and one that can rely on natural precipitation. Grouping plants together based on similar watering needs can also establish watering zones. Watering zones maximize efficient watering by ensuring that only those plants that need a bit of supplementary water are contained in zones.

### **Drought tolerant plants**

The best plants for a xeriscape garden are the ones native to your area. When you take a plant out of its natural habitat, you have to mimic its native surroundings in order for it to thrive. Established native plants will bounce back quickly when the rain returns. Nonetheless, several plants can survive on little water.

Some examples of drought-tolerant plants are: Agave, Artemisia, Asters, Baby's Breath, Black-eyed Susan, Columbine, Coneflower, Coreopsis, Cosmos, Delphinium, Echeveria, Echinacea, Gloriosa Daisy, Iris, Lamb's Ears, Lavender, Macrocarpa, Marigold, Pansy, Penstemon, Phlox, Red Plume Blanket, Rose Campion, Sages, Santolina, Sedums, Sempervivum, Statice, Sunflower, Tulips and crocuses, Vinca, Yarrow, Yucca, Zinnias.

### **Little or No Lawn**

If you want to have a green area, try using low maintenance ground covers or tolerant grass species.

### **Improving Soil**

The perfect soil in a water conserving landscape needs to drain well and retain moisture. You can achieve this by adding good compost and manure to feed your soil. The soil needs to match the requirements of the plants e.g. Succulents and cacti need sandy/lean soil and would not benefit from a compost rich soil.

### **Mulching**

Mulch helps retain soil moisture, mitigate temperature fluctuations, prevent erosion and smother weeds. Organic mulch such as leaves, coarse compost, bark, pine needles or grass clippings will break down over the course of a season and incorporate into the soil. This will help improve the soil over time as well. You need to add more as it breaks down. In order for mulch to be effective, it needs to be several inches thick.

### **Watering Wisely**

In order to water effectively, water needs to be applied to the base of the plant. Drip irrigation and soaker hoses are the easiest and most efficient way to get water to the base of your plants—not over-head sprinklers. If an irrigation system is not in your budget, then hand water in the mornings or early evenings; avoid the middle/hottest part of the day. Watering in the mornings and early evenings will ensure the plants absorb the water and little will be lost to evaporation. Aim for a deep watering 2-3 times a week versus a light daily watering.

**Note: This is good background information for our September meeting. Please bring your questions and Gwen Steele will answer them for you.**