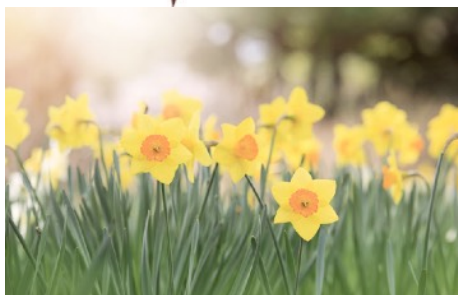


Sechelt Garden Club



Get Ready for Spring

Feb. 27, 2023 General meeting

Speaker John Yue (the Plant Daddy) from Coastal Sun Nursery

Tips for transplanting and growing vegetables on the Sunshine Coast



John started his presentation by telling us a little of his gardening background. He started early helping his family run a Market Garden in Burnaby, and then worked on a variety of farms, grew produce for his own roadside stands, built and worked in commercial greenhouses, landscaped golf courses, took agricultural courses by correspondence and ultimately ended up starting Coastal Sun Nursery on Pell Road in Sechelt in 1997.

Prepping the soil:

March is the time you should be adding lime to the soil as it takes time to absorb. Apply compost and manure at the same time. Wait a month, then fork over the soil and wait another month before planting in May.

There are several types of lime available - opt for "garden lime" or "dolomite lime" and make sure that it contains calcium carbonate and magnesium. Apply at a rate of 50 lb/ 1000 sq feet or 1 tbsp/1 sq foot (should be on the package direction)

John Yue cont'd**Temperature**

Before transplanting seedlings, the air temperature should be at least 4 C (soil temp is usually 2 C warmer than air). 8-10 C soil temperature is ideal for plants to uptake phosphates, which are necessary for roots to grow. If the temperature is too cold for the plants, leaves and stalks will turn purple.

For a short term fix (a few weeks only), potassium or potash can be added to create sugars which will be absorbed by the plant to keep warm, and they may hang on until the weather warms up.

Bigger plants can withstand harsher conditions.

Light

Plants require heat and light to grow. If it is cloudy for extended periods, Epsom Salts (Magnesium Sulphate) will help the plants build more chlorophyll which is essential for growth. Dissolve in water and water plants with the solution.

If it is light but cold, plants will grow thin. As a temporary fix, use lime water to stunt growth for a couple of weeks.

Winter

Because of the reduced amount of light it will take twice as much time to grow.

Good candidates for winter growing - Napa cabbage, Kale sprouts, Carrots can be planted as late as mid July.

DON'T Water then the weather freezes. Sap will not freeze but water will, you will blow your plants.

Fertilizer

Plants do not take in fertilizer through their leaves. If the fertilizer is sprayed on, it will need to be rinsed so that the nutrients end up in the soil.

Water soluble last 3 days

Granular last 3 weeks

Slow release last 4-6 months

Slow-release needs moisture to absorb, mix into the soil to make it work.

Nitrogen is required for green growth, potassium for roots and flowers (potassium is a building block of pollen)

Seaweed contains potassium (slow release). It should be collected in fall to allow salt to wash away before adding to the garden. It also comes in processed form as "green sand". Wood ash is another natural source and it contains potassium, phosphorus and magnesium - clean wood only!

In NFLD farmers were quite successful using seaweed and capelin (small fish) to fertilize their gardens.

Fungicide:

To treat powdery mildew - Serenade or Rhapsody (preferred because it can be applied to both soil and foliage).

Rhubarb

Very heavy feeder, and need lots of nitrogen as we don't want them to flower. Chicken manure is good fertilizer.

John Yue cont'd

Tomatoes

Blossom end rot can be avoided by using lime in your soil (to provide calcium).

Blossom end rot can occur even when the soil has enough lime because the plant can't absorb calcium if the temperature is too high or if there is not enough nitrogen in the soil.

One suggestion is to rinse out your milk container and water the plant with it at night when it is cooler.

Too much calcium causes cell wall rigidity which may result in tough skin on your tomatoes.

Even watering means different amounts are needed at different temperatures due to transpiration and evaporation.

Pollen is released only between 22 C and 26 C. Vibrating the plant at the correct temperature will help fertilization, especially in a greenhouse with fewer insect helpers.

High heat kills pollen.

4-10-10 is the ideal fertilizer ratio for tomatoes - heavier early on and then back off.

John will be providing a tomato growing fact sheet to share with members.

Eggplants

Like tomatoes and peppers, they like heat +26 C. They are reasonably drought tolerant and like a high PH (more lime).

Should not be planted outside before the 1st week in June, and if you have a greenhouse, grow it there.

Notes by Dianne Tarris and Muguette Macdonald

Seedy Saturdays on the coast

One Straw Society

March 4, Quality Garden and Pet, Gibsons

March 11, Roberts Creek Community Hall

March 18, Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden, Sechelt

March 25, Halfmoon Bay Nursery

see website for more details

www.onestraw.ca/seedsofmarch2023/



Upcoming meetings

March 27, 2023 Speaker Jon Bell
"Growing Tropical Plants Outdoors"

May 1, 2023 Speaker tbd

Possible date May 7, 2023 Tour of
the Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden
to be confirmed

Go Native!

Common Yarrow

Achillea millefolium



Yarrow, a perennial herb, found throughout North America is thought to originally come from Ireland. It is named after the Greek hero Achilles, who used it to treat battle wounds. A member of the aster or composite family, yarrow has flat-topped or dome-shaped clusters of small white flowers that bloom from April to October.

An attractive hardy perennial, yarrow can grow to 1m (3ft) and spreads through rhizomes. With a sweet scent it attracts and provides sustenance to pollinators. While a nectar source for butterflies and a host plant for native moths and beetles, its natural oils are known to repel mosquitoes.

Prefers clay, loam or sandy soil, full sun to part shade, drought tolerant, and can spread like a weed.

Common yarrow is toxic to cats, dogs and horses.

Companion plants are lavender, tomatoes, beans, spinach, basil, rosemary and thyme.

Susan Essiembre

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News Flash

Read Suzan Essiembre's excellent article on Butterfly gardens in the March issue of Canadian Wildlife Magazine

<https://blog.cwf-fcf.org/index.php/en/cwf-certified-cascade-green-parks-butterfly-garden/>