

Sechelt Garden Club

SGC talk March 25, 2024 via Zoom

Topic: Building Soil Health and Fertility and Cultivating Edible Landscapes

Speaker: Lucretia “Lu” Schanfarber writer, editor, consultant, radio host for “Gabbing about Gardening”, manager of 2 edible food gardens on Cortes Island

Lu began her talk by describing her work helping with regenerating food forest farm gardens on Maui after the fire damage. This was her 6th trip to Maui where she works on a 10 acre farm with international workers. They interplanted fruit and vegetables such as avocados, mangos and papaya. When harvesting fruit such as pineapple, they leave the cuttings around the tree which becomes mulch. Other plants also provide biomass for soil enrichment. She showed slides of many fruit and vegetable varieties as well as pictures of their beehives. It is a sustainable, year round growing operation. She will return in November.

She went on to her main topic about soil health and referred us to a book

‘Start with the Soil’ by Grace Gershuny

Six steps for healthier soil

Step 1 Observe soil and learn and think about what healthy soil looks like, how does it affect us and what can we do to avoid damage and make improvements.

There are 5 soil layers; from top to bottom:

organic layer call humus with dead plant and animal material which is very fertile

top soil containing microorganisms and minerals

sub soil where the earthworms are working

parent material such as small rocks

bedrock consisting of newly formed rocks

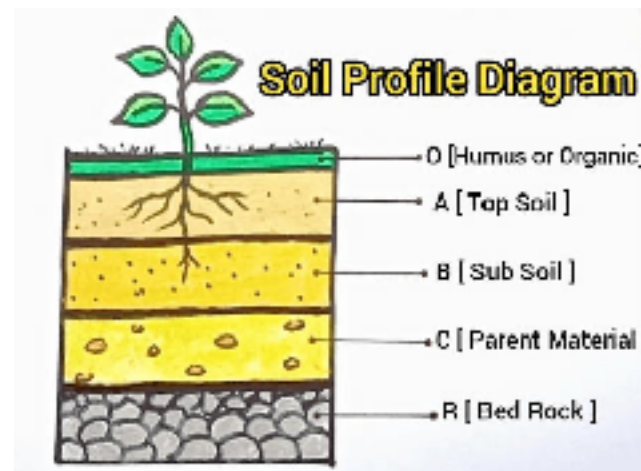


photo from Career Power



photo from Wolff's apple house

Lucretia Schanfarber cont'd

Step 2 Feed your soil community which consists of micro-organisms and insects

One tsp soil contains 13,000 species bacteria

Soil can be improved with seaweed, organic matter, alfalfa pellets which contain nitrogen and minerals. Lu also suggested human waste "Think Poop" and suggested reading 'The Humanure Handbook

Worms *Lumbricus terrestris* are also excellent for improving soil

Step 3 Walk gently and avoid compacting soil

Step 4 Use garden paths, stepping stones to avoid walking directly on soil. She also uses cardboard to protect soil which also acts as mulch

Step 5 Build soil structure Dig less Fork more

Sept 6 Mulch; don't leave soil bare, build up the soil

Lu went on to talk about plants for a healthy garden. She suggested growing more food plants interspersed with flowers.

Some good food plants she suggested include: e.g. strawberries, rhubarb, blueberries, black currants, figs, garlic (plant once and harvest forever), chives and their edible flowers, asparagus, and kale

She mentioned gumi, *elaegnus multiflora* a tree berry with good nitrogen fixing ability

Herbs and wild plants, such as dandelions, chickweed and nettles also enrich the garden and are healthy

With this type of planting we can create more biomass, (chop and drop) plant material and create layers of healthy soil. The edible landscape will also attract pollinators.

Lu ended her talk by welcoming members to her gardens on Cortes.

Coming soon..

Guided Tour of the Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden

Sunday April 21, 11:00-1:00

Cost: Members \$5, Guests \$10
(to provide honorarium to docents)

If weather permits, bring along a picnic lunch which can be enjoyed on the Pavilion patio.

\$1,000 challenge for charity

The Sechelt Garden Club has accepted the challenge made by Chris

Hergesheimer (cf March newsletter) to support the Food Program at the

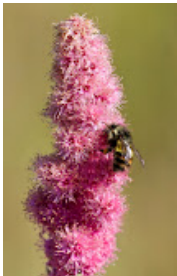
Sunshine Coast Community Services

Susan Murray has provided a money jar for donations at our monthly meetings.

We started off with a bang and collected \$77 and hope we can meet the target in the coming year.

Go Native!

Hardhack *Spiraea douglasii*



Rand Rudland photo



Spiraea douglasii is a BC native offering very showy spires of pink fuzzy flowers that are popular with pollinators. A sweet-smelling deciduous shrub and a member of the rose family, it is most often found near streams, bogs and swamps but will tolerate drier conditions.

It has dark green, oval-shaped leaves with pale, wooly undersides. Ranging in height from 0.5 - 2.5 m it is a vigorous spreader through rhizomes and often forms dense colonies. It can quickly become the dominant species in a wetland habitat.

Sometimes browsed by Black-tailed deer, it is fire smart, bear smart and provides cover for birds.

nativeplantspnw.com
www.bcinvases.ca

SGC Plant and Bake Sale May 25, 10-3

Cascade Green Butterfly
Garden
5669 Cook Place

Mark your calendars and tell your friends. We will have a wide variety of plants including those that are drought resistant, and delicious baked goods provided by our members.

Other events

June 23 Strawberry Tea 1-3 pm
at Sunshine Coast Botanical
Garden. More information to
follow

Early Spring gardening tips

Now that Spring is here, there are a number of garden chores that will set you up for a healthy, bountiful garden this year.

- Clean up garden furniture, repair winter damage to fences, walls
- Clean and sharpen tools
- Tidy up beds, borders and greenhouse
- Make any needed soil amendments
- Set up rainwater collectors
- Prune trees and shrubs
- Divide and transplant perennials and shrubs
- Plant cold hardy vegetables such as peas, potatoes, lettuces
- Apply mulch
- Get new plants at the **Sechelt Garden Club Plant and Bake Sale** Saturday May 25 10am-3pm at Cascade Green Park Butterfly Garden.
- Be mindful of the fire season and choose plants that withstand fire and remove those such as broom which burns easily. <https://secheltgardenclub.com/wordpress2021/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Fire-Resistant-Native-Plants.pdf>
- For more gardening information go to secheltgardenclub.com. Also see [Linda Gilkeson](http://www.lindagilkeson.ca)<http://www.lindagilkeson.ca> > garde...Linda Gilkeson || [West Coast Gardening || Gardening Tips](#)



Sechelt Garden Club spring clean up crew

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Next Meeting

Monday April 29, 2024 7 pm at the Senior Centre

Speakers: Pam Dangelmaier and Elke Wehinger of Botanus

Topic: 1 Container, 2 Container, 3 Container More. The speakers will provide us with all the tools and ideas to create our container gardens