

# THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

OCTOBER 2005

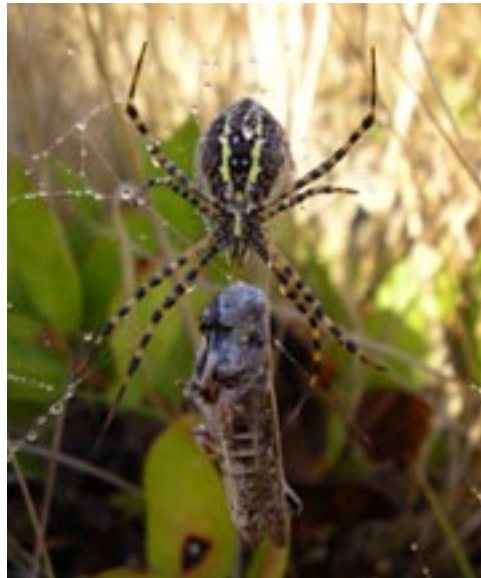
A spaghetti western or more on the amazing diversity of the insect world? It was Linda Gilkeson (herself no stranger to taming the "bad" forces of nature) rather than Clint Eastwood who delivered a fascinating presentation on garden insects at the September meeting. Gilkeson lead us through a selection of the "good" insects, including the introduced honey bee, the small and fuzzy native honey bees and the indigenous blue orchard bee. The latter is an excellent early season pollinator that is tolerant of cold, wet weather and probably just what we should try to attract, to ensure pollination of our fruit trees.

Most insects have a four stage life cycle that progresses from egg, through the often voracious larva, the metamorphic phase when "resting" as a pupa and the final adult breeding stage.

Others, like the aphids, minute pirate bugs and stinkbugs hatch from their eggs into a nymph form which is similar to their adult body. Aphids have a fascinating life cycle, in which their final generation in the fall is composed of both male and female of the species. They mate and overwinter as eggs, then all the succeeding generations until next fall are live-born female. If they run out of food, they produce a generation with wings that can fly to a new food source. Gilkeson asked us to stretch our perceptions when asking "are aphids really pests?" She pointed out that they play an important ecological role by moving nutrients around and are crucial fodder for different life stages of many other insects.

Lady beetles in both their larval stage and as adults feed on aphids, although

it is not readily apparent because the juvenile lady beetle looks more like a miniature alligator than a beetle. Likewise, the larval stage of many of the hundreds of species of syrphid flies or flower flies, which superficially mimic bees and yellow jackets, are aphid predators as well as aphid midge fly larva. Some parasitic or trichogramma wasps, which are the size of the point on a pin lay their eggs within aphid bodies. Lacewings, which appear so delicate to our human perceptions, are one of the fiercest predators of the garden. Their



**SPIDER AND GRASSHOPPER**

larvae feed on aphids, caterpillars and other insect forms. As adults they leave their fierce appetites behind and feed on nectar.

With such varied and minute aphid predators abounding, Gilkeson suggests that the best control method for aphids is to hit them with a stream of water. The water forces the aphids

off the plants, usually damaging their mouthparts in the process and most will not be able to climb the plant again. However another water spray treatment should be performed in a few days, to catch any newly hatched young. This treatment does not harm the "beneficial" predators, who are able to remain attached to the plant. Using soap products or the "finger-squishing" methods destroy both the aphids and their predators indiscriminately. In the "life is stranger than fiction" department, some parasitic wasps have a long, darning needle-like ovipositor which they use to inject their eggs into a hapless larvae hiding under the bark of a tree. Is there nowhere safe in this bug eat bug world?

Tachnid flies parasitize tent caterpillars, usually injecting their eggs behind the head of their hosts, as adults they become vegetarians, sipping on nectar and pollen.

Some of our most beautiful insects are butterflies and moths and it is important to remember that from their caterpillar form emerge these flying jewels of the garden. The large, striking anise swallowtails need plants of the carrot family to feed their young, who go by the less than attractive name of parsley worm. Gilkeson encourages us to supply a diversity of plants for the insect life in your garden by planting flowers of the aster, mustard and carrot families, which provide excellent food and habitat. Plant small flowers such as alyssum, thyme and verbena and well as larger ones like goldenrod and fireweed.

The good, the bad and the ugly, it's all relative, isn't it?

# NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP

OCTOBER 2005

**Sun Oct 23, 2005 10 - 4**

Mushroom Show: Swan Lake Nature House, hosted by SVIMS (South Vancouver Island Mycological Society) Admission by donations.

## *GORP 2005 Fall Volunteer Activities*

- Saturday, October 22** Camas Park  
10-12 blackberry & ivy
- Sunday, October 23** Wetherby Park  
10-12 ivy & blackberry & replanting
- Saturday, October 29** Mount Tolmie  
10-12 blackberry, ivy & broom
- Saturday, November 5** Camas Park  
10-12 blackberry & ivy, replanting
- Sunday, Nov 6** Mount Douglas Summit  
10-12 broom & replanting
- Saturday, Nov 12** Little Mount Douglas  
10-12 broom seedlings
- Sunday, Nov 13** Feltham  
10-12 ivy, blackberry & daphne
- Saturday, Nov 26** Chatterton Hill  
10-12 blackberry, mulching trail
- Saturday, Dec 10** Mahon Brook  
10-12 sheet mulching

The Land Conservancy (TLC) has a list of volunteer opportunities from painting to gardening that can be found on their **website: [www.conservancy.bc.ca](http://www.conservancy.bc.ca)**

### **Volunteer at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary**

Become a volunteer at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary and expand your knowledge of the natural history of this area. Volunteer opportunities include Nature House Receptionist and Assistant Naturalist (working with school groups). A commitment of 2 to 3 hours once a week is all that is required. Training is provided. For further details contact Joan at 479-0211 or email [volunteer@swanlake.bc.ca](mailto:volunteer@swanlake.bc.ca)

## *Book Review*

### **Butterflies and Butterfly Gardening in the Pacific Northwest**

By Mary Kate Woodward, Whitecap Books

If you are a "newby" butterfly enthusiast like me, you need help identifying even our most common butterfly species. This book provides lovely, large photographs of many of our butterfly species, although there are some disappointing exclusions.

"The author provides detailed tips for attracting, supporting and enjoying the butterflies of the Pacific Northwest. Topics covered include favorite food plants and larval hosts, garden layout and design, a butterfly directory, sources of plants and seeds (resource guide), index of common names, and many other essentials to relax, observe and enjoy your butterfly garden" (from the website for Firefly Books).

Unfortunately the author recommends some non-native and invasive plant species, so some discernment is necessary in the translation to your gardening practices.

I appreciate the pictures though and can you ever have too many reference books? Unfortunately I have misplaced my copy but I believe it was about \$20.00

### **The good, the bad, the ugly, con't...**

Dr Linda Gilkeson is the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) specialist for the BC Ministry of Environment and the author of:

Rodale's pest and disease problem solver : a chemical-free guide to keeping your garden healthy.

Winter Gardening on the Coast  
Insect, Disease & Weed I.D. Guide:  
Find-It-Fast Organic Solutions for Your Garden

# NP SG

## **NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP**

(Sub-group of the Victoria Horticultural Society)

The NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP is a non-political group dedicated to learning about B.C. native plants, as wild populations and in garden settings, and to supporting conservation of native plants and their habitats. The group is guided by a volunteer steering committee. Members are encouraged to volunteer for this committee. Participation in outside events, by the group, or by individual members using the NPSG name, is dependant on approval of the steering committee or, where indicated, by the at-large membership. Activities requiring funding must receive approval by the general membership.

# UPCOMING EVENTS AND NEWS

## CRD Parks

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### October

**Sat 29 & Sun 30 10-4 pm**

Salmon and Mushroom Festival at Lake Cowichan's Old Firehall, Midtown

For more information, contact Ingeborg Woodworth at: 250-749-6291; mayocreekgardens@shaw.ca

### November

**Sat 5 Fungus Among Us**

10 am East Sooke Park

**Sun 6 Horth Hill Hike**

1 pm Parking lot off Tatlow Rd.

**Thurs 10 Witty's Way Back When**

10 am Nature Centre-Metchosin Rd

**Fri 18 People Plants Places**

1 pm Thetis Lake

**Sat 19 Meander Matheson Lake**

10 am Matheson Lake parking lot

**Sun 20 Coles Bay Blitz 1 pm**

Parking lot off Inverness off Ardmore

### December

**Sat 10 Craigflower Creek Trail**

10 am Trailhead off Highland Rd off Watkiss Way

**Sun 11 Roche Cove Ramble**

11 am Parking lot off Gillespie Rd

**Sun 18 Island View Beach**

10 am off Homanthako Rd off Island View Rd

## From VNHS

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### Thursday November 3

HAT is hosting a gala dinner with the new Environment Minister, Barry Penner. For details and/or tickets, please call the HAT office at 995-2428.

### Tuesday November 8

Natural History Presentation  
The Late Prehistoric Mortuary Landscape of Southern Vancouver Island

Darcy Mathews will talk about how the ancestral Straits Salish peoples may have constructed, maintained and contested their social relationships using burial cairns. Everyone welcome. Bring your coffee cup and a friend. 7:30 pm, Fraser 159, University of Victoria.

### Saturday November 12

Field Trip - Mushroom Study Session at Mystery Location

Bring your favourite field guide. Please note this is an observation trip, not



MUSHROOM

intended for collecting. Bring lunch, snacks and drinks for the all day outing. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 9:00 am to car-pool. No pets please. Call Agnes at 721-0634 or email: thelynns@shaw.ca for more information.

### November 15, 2005

Botany Night,  
Flora Poetica - Plants in Poetry  
Andy MacKinnon, Poet Laureate of the Botany Nights, will moderate evening that will combine beauty of plants and poetry. Admission: In lieu of admission bring one or more poems that deal with plants. No roses, tulips, or lilies, please. ,  
Swan Lake Nature Centre, 7:30 p.m.

### November 18 - 20, 2005

Annual Fraser Valley Bald Eagle Festival  
Celebrate the biodiversity of the Fraser Valley. The weekend focuses on the lifestyles of the Pacific Salmon and the natural habitat of the Bald Eagle, as Harrison Bay and Harrison Mills provide the third largest population of over-wintering birds in North America. <http://www.fraservalleybaldeaglefestival.ca/index.html> for more information.

### Wednesday, November 23, 2005

Birders' Night - Birds and Marine Animals of the Cold Continent - Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.

David Ashurst will be our guest speaker for this evening. David has worked as a scientist and lecturer on tour ships in Antarctica. Everyone welcome. 7:30 p.m., Fraser 159, UVic. Bring a friend and your coffee cup.

### Sunday November 27

Adventure to the Big Trees  
Visit the Red Creek Fir near Port Renfrew plus other big trees on the way. Bring lunch, snacks and drinks for the all day outing. Starts from Victoria at 9:00 am. You must pre-register for this trip due to transportation limitations. Guaranteed spot if you are willing to bring your 4-wheel-drive for carpooling. No pets please. Date may change due to weather conditions. Call Agnes at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns@shaw.ca) to register or for more information.

### Monday, 28 November 2005

Marine Night - Marine Life of the Pacific Northwest: A Photographic Encyclopedia of Invertebrates, Seaweeds and Selected Fishes  
The authors, Andy Lamb and Bernard P. Hanby, will discuss the trials and triumphs of publishing an encyclopedia of this size. Room 157 - Fraser Building,

# NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP

University of Victoria.

## December 2 & 3

Musical HATS!

Two fun-filled evenings of fabulous music and food! Both nights will be held at the Prospect Lake Community Hall. For details and/or tickets, please call the HAT office at 995-2428.

## Tuesday December 6

VNHS Natural History Presentation

Members Night

Did you go on any trips this year? Or maybe you have taken many pictures and just want to share them. VNHS Members Night is the place for you! Tell us about your adventures and dazzle us with your pictures. We can accommodate digital pictures with our laptop computer and digital projector, and good old fashioned slides with our reliable slide projector. Anyone interested in doing a presentation can call Ed Pellizzon at 881-1476. We meet at 7:30 pm, room 159 at the Fraser building at Uvic.

## From TLC

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Wild Mushroom Identification

Nov. 5th (repeated Nov. 6th), 2005

Mycologist Rob Countess will lead a very interesting workshop on wild mushroom identification (at Wildwood). You will learn about the diversity of fungal species that inhabit this area and the lifestyles of the various species. They will also collect edible mushrooms through the course of the day to supplement lunch. Please bring mushrooms from home if you would like Rob to identify.

**Course Fee:** TLC members \$45 (incl tx)

Non-members \$55 (incl tx)

Registration is necessary.

Phone 479-8053 (TLC in Victoria)

or contact Jay (250-816-1816)

(jay@conservancy.bc.ca)

## Other TLC workshops coming up:

Identifying Native plants in the winter

(for non scientists) **Nov. 19/05**

Tapping the Western Maple (for sap)

**Jan. 28/06**

Identifying Native plants in the spring

**March 18/06**



PUFFBALLS AND SLUG

Mushroom propagation - **May 6/06**

Introduction to Spring Birds (dba)

Cedar Basketry (dba)

Honeysuckle basketry (dba)

## Volunteer Opportunities

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### Uvic Herbarium Needs Volunteer Help

The University of Victoria Herbarium houses a collection of 50 000 dried vascular native plant specimens used for both education and research. Along with many other natural history collections around the world, we are in the process of transcribing information about each of our specimens to an electronic database that will be accessible via the world-wide-web.

We are hoping to find a couple of computer-savvy plant-lovers willing to help with data entry. If you are interested, please contact Erica Wheeler at (250)721-7097 or by email ericaw@uvic.ca.

### Tree Appreciation Day In Saanich

**Sun, Nov. 6, 2005** at Cedar Hill Park,

Rithet's Bog and Mt Doug Park

9:00 am - noon

This years Tree Appreciation Day events will focus on planting some new trees and maintaining already existing trees. The planting and maintenance will commence at 9:00 a.m. and should be finished by Noon.

Anybody interested in planting a tree and caring for our future urban forest is welcome to participate. Planting tools will be provided, but bring a shovel and gloves if you have them. Please remember to bring rain gear and boots since planting will occur rain or shine.

For further information:

Cathy Weston: 475-1775, extension 3506 or westonc@saanich.ca

## Bulletin Board

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Member planning a birding/natural history trip to Costa Rica in Feb would like to share travel expenses with other members who might be interested. 1 to 4 (max) others would be ideal.

Contact Clive at 250-385-7264 or cprior988@hotmail.com.

Jeremy Tatum would like to remind all the birdwatchers that an Annual Bird Report will be published for the year, so remember to send in your records. Please contact Jeremy at jtatum@uvic.ca or 477-1089 for more

# NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP

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## *Favourite Plants*

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### EVERGREEN HUCKLEBERRIES (*Vaccinium ovatum*)

Has there ever been a more wonderful native gardening plant? With small sharp-toothed, glossy, evergreen leaves, small bell-shaped white and pink flowers, delicious and prolific "blueberries" and a tolerant nature, this plant deserves to be front and centre in any gardening scheme. It seems to thrive in near drought conditions to lightly moist soil, part sun to shade, poor to rich soil, it handles it all with aplomb, never looking tired, dull or droopy. The berries ripen through Sept and October, with quite a variation between shrubs and can they can last well into the winter.

The leaves are alleged to be efficacious when used in a tea to lower or modify blood sugar levels and to have a positive effect on diabetes and urinary disorders. The leaves and berries are high in vitamin C. The foliage is browsed by elk, deer and rabbits, the flowers attract butterflies and it is an important summer and fall food for some grouse species. All these wildlife attributes make it a great candidate for hedgerows.

Evergreen huckleberry requires excellent drainage and acidic soils. It can be grown from cuttings and seed, both of which are ready to harvest now (fall). Success with cuttings is enhanced with bottom heat and an application of 0.3 to 0.4% rooting powder. Fresh or stored and cold-stratified seeds can be sown directly into flats or small pots (a salt shaker can be used for sowing). Plant in a mixture of sand and peat moss. Seedlings will begin to emerge in a month and will continue to emerge for a long period thereafter. Transplant seedlings into larger pots 6 to 7 weeks after emergence. Plant outside after the

first growing season. Seedlings are slow growing, and it may take 2-3 years for a nursery-sized plant to develop.

There are some very attractive evergreen huckleberry shrubs at the Pacific Forestry Centre, and more along the highway past Sooke, on the way to Port Renfrew and in East Sooke Park, if you care to view them in the wild.

Information taken from:  
Plants of Coastal BC by Pojar and MacKinnon and US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service Plant Guide at: [plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/cs\\_vaov2.pdf](http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/cs_vaov2.pdf)

## *Interesting Tidbits*

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### **Why garden with native plants for butterflies?**

Local native butterflies and native plants evolve together. This strong relationship is particularly important for butterfly caterpillars and their host (food) plants. Some butterfly species will use only a single native plant species (or closely-related group of species) as a host and won't use plants brought in from other places. Also, native plants also benefit a variety of native insects and birds, and they are easy to care for because they are well-adapted to our climate. Please be aware that some non-native plants promoted for butterfly gardening can even be harmful to butterflies and the environment. Butterfly Bush, in particular, is a nectar plant that is beginning to escape along our local streams and crowd out native willows -- which are choice butterfly host plants! And the common garden violet can be fatal to fritillary caterpillars if eaten. Ouch!!

### **Some Tips for Butterfly Gardening with Native Plants**

1. **KNOW YOUR SITE:** and match the plant to your site conditions. Plants each have their own needs for sun, water and soil type. Evaluate your yard or garden to determine which plants would do best. More information on propagation and requirements of native plants can be found in *Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest* by Arthur R. Kruckeberg, and *Propagation of Pacific Northwest Native Plants* by R. Rose, E. C. Chachulski, and D. L. Haase. Be aware that these books cover plants from several ecoregions, and do not have the critical \*local\* orientation for best native plant gardening!

2. **THINK LOCAL :** Insist on plant stock propagated locally to preserve local genetics. Importing plants from out of the local area can affect our local plants in the wild, and cause loss of local unique colors and other features, and can adversely affect the flowering times of our local populations -- and that could affect butterflies! Try to get seed or plant stock originating from within 20 miles of your garden site. If not, from farther is OK, but the bottom line should be that the plant's origins must be from within Southern Vancouver Island. This is important so that local plants aren't harmed by hybridizing with plants that evolved in other areas under different conditions, and that may differ genetically.

Thanks to Bruce Newhouse and his January 2001 article in the Eugene-Springfield chapter of the North American Butterfly Association's newsletter [www.naba.org/chapters/nabaes/btrfly-gdng1.html](http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabaes/btrfly-gdng1.html)

# NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP NOTES

OCTOBER 2005