

# The Native Plant Study Group

January 2010

*Symphoricarpos albus*  
Photo by Rod Innes

## Native Plant Propagation with Brenda Costanzo

By Kristen Harrison

Brenda Costanzo was a perfect guest to end 2009 and begin the New Year. Not only did she attract a record crowd to the Victoria Native Plant Study Group, but she also inspired many of us to propagate our own native plants for the coming season through her propagation demonstration. Now, as I watch the new years growth of local favourites such as Camas (*Camassia quamash* and *C. leichtlinii*), Red-flowering current (*Ribes sanguineum*) and Indian Plum (*Oemleria cerasiformis*), I'm anxious for the coming spring and to apply the knowledge Brenda passed along to our group in November.

Brenda has put a tremendous amount of time and energy into passing her knowledge about native flora along to the public. For example, she has instructed community education classes in native plant gardening, native plant propagation, and wildflower identification. Additionally, she frequently gives talks and hosts workshops for the general public on gardening with native plants. One of her best known accomplishments is her work with April Pettinger in the revised and second edition of the book "Native Plants in the Coastal Garden" published by Whitecap Books in 2002. Since, this book has become a fundamental reference for native plant lovers in British Columbia. Unfortunately, the book is no longer in print which is why I suggest writing the publisher and letting them know you're interested in seeing it published once again! Currently the Senior Vegetation Specialist with the Ministry of Environment in the Wildlife Science Section of the Ecosystems Branch, Brenda's past work experience included working in the native plant garden at the Royal BC Museum and at the University of Victoria, where she was the Assistant Curator of the Herbarium for many years. Also, Brenda designed and installed the first phase of the native plant garden at the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary in 1985, a garden which many of us are intimately familiar with.

Native plant propagation provides a unique opportunity to study the ecological requirements of particular species throughout their lifecycle such as reproduction, germination and growth habit.

One of the first steps for successful plant propagation is to choose species whose growth requirements are appropriate for the ecological conditions of the planting site. In her talk, Brenda described and demonstrated seed and vegetative propagation.

Though growing from seed can be a very slow process, it is often the easiest and least expensive way to propagate native plants. Some types of seeds can be collected from the wild sustainably but should be done with great care (see Brenda's book for more info). Sowing seeds is best done when temperature and rainfall are optimal, in the spring and in the fall. Brenda recommended cleaning and drying seeds prior to planting in a dampened soil of one part peat, one part sand, and two parts loam. Seeds should be buried as deep as the seed is wide and kept constantly moist. Try Woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum lanatum*) from seed.

Vegetative propagation for both deciduous shrubs and perennials encompasses a number of techniques including layering and suckering, stem-tip cuttings, root cuttings and division. Because removing plants from the wild is not ethical, it is best to take cuttings and root divisions from native plants that have been obtained from a nursery or garden (see a list of local nurseries in this issue). Cuttings taken from deciduous shrubs can be divided into three categories depending on the ripeness of their tissue: softwood, semi-hardwood, and hardwood. Softwood cuttings are taken from actively growing tissue from late spring to early summer, semi-hardwood cuttings are taken from the current years growth in late summer to early fall, and hardwood cuttings are taken from the current years dormant wood in late fall through early winter. Similarly, perennials can be propagated by stem-tip cuttings in the spring through fall during active growth and root cuttings should be taken in late winter from dormant plants. Stem-tip cuttings are most successful during active growth in the spring through fall, while root cuttings from herbaceous perennials should be prepared in late winter when the plants are dormant. Try Aster sp. for both stem-tip and root- cuttings. Alternatively, one can try layering and suckering in the spring before active growth begins by nicking the bark of a leaf node and pressing the mark to soil until a root forms.



Cornus stolonifera  
Photo from [www.bentler.us](http://www.bentler.us)

Try Red-flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*) and red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) by layering and suckering. Division is the easiest form of plant propagation for herbaceous perennials and involves simply tearing a clump of the plant off and planting it somewhere else in the late fall to early spring when plants are dormant.

Enthusiasm for native plant propagation has been growing in recent years. Propagating native plants is an enriching experience because the gardener is involved with the entire development of the plant and the process is also a wonderful way to create a dynamic and environmentally-responsible garden with all the beneficial characteristics that native plant gardens afford.

For more information on native plant propagation, see:

Pettinger A, and B. Costanzo. Native plants in the coastal garden, revised and updated: A guide for gardeners in British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest. 2002. Whitecap Books Ltd. Vancouver, BC.

And [http://www.goert.ca/propagation\\_guidelines/introduction.php](http://www.goert.ca/propagation_guidelines/introduction.php) (A compendium of propagation information for plant species characteristic of Garry oak and associated ecosystems in British Columbia)

## E vents & Outings

### Native Plant Society of BC

Thursday, February 4

The Secret History of Bracken Fern with Randal Mindell

Bracken fern, *Pteridium aquilinum*, is one of the most widely distributed species on Earth. In BC, it is ubiquitous and thriving, occasionally overwhelming the landscape. In an attempt to paint this seemingly pedestrian plant in a more noble light, this talk will discuss the biological and cultural history of bracken, relating it to more than 400 million years of evolution with details of taxonomy, ecology, morphology and reproduction.

Randal Mindell is a botanist who specializes in the study of fossil plants from BC. He currently teaches in the Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences at the University of BC.

#### Location & Time:

Van Dusen Botanical Garden, Cedar Room- 7pm  
5251 Oak Street @ 37th Avenue Vancouver, BC  
Free Admission; Free parking

Contact Ron Long | T: 604-469-1651 |

rlphoto(at)shaw.ca

Contact Dawn Hanna | T: 604-831-5069 |

dawnhanna(at)telus.net

### James Bay Market Society

#### Seedy Saturday

Saturday, February 20

Victoria's 17<sup>th</sup> annual seed and garden show

Celebrate SEEDS - open-pollinated, speciality & heritage varieties. Love of gardening, food security & sustainable growing practises bring together the public & vendors of seeds, plants, shrubs, bulbs, small fruits, garden products, mushroom kits, worms & more. Master Gardeners are present, along with garden club & environmental group displays. Bring your saved seeds to share at the seed exchange & take one of the free educational sessions. For the novice to the expert! Check our website for more details.

#### Location & Time:

Victoria Conference Centre from 10am-4pm  
720 Douglas St., Level 2  
Admission \$7; children under <12 free  
Contact | 250-381-5323 |  
<http://www.jamesbaymarket.com>

Please visit our lovely website: [www.npsg.ca](http://www.npsg.ca).

Designed and maintained by NPSG co-chair Valerie Elliott, co-owner of design company iD2 ([id2.ca](http://id2.ca)).

Thanks Valerie and Stephan for the superb work and generous commitment!



Ribes sanguineum  
Photo by Eileen Stark



### Reoccurring Events

#### Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary Native Plant Workshops

Sun, Jan 31 1-4 pm	Sat, Apr 10 9:30 am-12:30 pm
Tue, Feb 16 1-4 pm	Sun, Apr 1-4 pm
Sun, Mar 7 1-4 pm	Sat, Apr 17 10 am-3 pm
Sat, Mar 20 9:30 am-12:30 pm	Sun, Apr 18 10 am-3 pm

#### Victoria Natural History Society Botany Night

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month  
Go to [www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca) to become a member and support our local Natural History Society!

Location & Time  
Swan Lake Nature Centre- 7:30 pm

Contact Darren Copley | [dccopley\(at\)telus.net](mailto:dccopley@telus.net) |  
<http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/>

For all VNHS events: No pets please.  
Bring a lunch and drinks for the all-day outings.  
Wear appropriate attire and footwear.

Contact Agnes | 250-721-0634 |  
[thelynn\(at\)shaw.ca](mailto:thelynn@shaw.ca) | [www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)

Check out these great sites too!

CRD Parks:  
[www.crd.bc.ca/parks](http://www.crd.bc.ca/parks)

Native Plant Society  
BC:  
[www.npsbc.org](http://www.npsbc.org)

South Vancouver Island  
Mycological Society:  
[www.svims.ca](http://www.svims.ca)

Swan Lake &  
Christmas Hill  
Nature Sanctuary:  
[www.swanlake.bc.ca](http://www.swanlake.bc.ca)

Vancouver Island Rock  
and Alpine Society:  
[www.virags.ca](http://www.virags.ca)

Victoria Natural  
History Society:  
[www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)

### Plant Nurseries in Victoria

Cannor Nurseries  
4660 Elk Lake Drive  
250-658-5415  
[www.cannor.com](http://www.cannor.com)

GardenWorks- Colwood  
1859 Island Highway  
250-478-2078  
[www.gardenworks.ca](http://www.gardenworks.ca)

GardenWorks- Saanich  
4290 Blenkinsop Rd  
250-721-2140  
[www.gardenworks.ca](http://www.gardenworks.ca)

Island View Nursery (wholesale)  
2933 McIntyre Road  
250-544-4802

Lochside Nursery  
Lochside Drive  
250-544-3100  
[www.csll.ca/lochside.html](http://www.csll.ca/lochside.html)

Marigold Nurseries  
7874 Lochside Drive  
250-652-2342  
[www.marigoldnurseries.com](http://www.marigoldnurseries.com)

Nature's Garden Seed Co.  
Victoria, BC V8P 5S2  
250-595-2062  
[www.naturesgardenseed.com](http://www.naturesgardenseed.com)

Queenswood (wholesale & retail)  
6458 Central Saanich Road  
250-652-1443  
[www.queenswoodnursery.com](http://www.queenswoodnursery.com)

Russell Nursery  
1370 Wain Road  
250-656-0384  
[www.russellnursery.com](http://www.russellnursery.com)

Thousand Summers  
Environmental Design  
250-727-0229  
[thousandsummers@shaw.ca](mailto:thousandsummers@shaw.ca)

Swan Lake Christmas Hill  
Nature Sanctuary  
250-479-0211  
[www.swanlake.bc.ca](http://www.swanlake.bc.ca)

Nursery information found at :  
<http://www.goert.ca>



## Volunteer Opportunities

The Anti-Ivy League of Cadboro Bay  
Seapoint Dr., Saanich  
Volunteer for great camaraderie, loads of fun and a feeling of satisfaction every Wed. and Sat. from 9am- noon. Start-up in early March and finish about early November. Currently working in Konukson Park on 10-Mile Point.

Contact Harry Drage | T: 250-477-9544 |  
hdrage(at)shaw.ca

### Brodick/Bow Park

West of Univ. Heights shopping centre off of Cedar Hill Rd.  
Invasive species removal and site restoration - every Monday 10 am- noon. Training, tools, and equipment provided.

Contact Judy Spearing | T:250-472-0515 |  
jandd\_spearing@shaw.ca

### Mt. Douglas Park

Alien, invasive species removal and site restoration. Schedule and location may vary. For full details go to:  
[www.mountdouglaspark.ca/calendar.do](http://www.mountdouglaspark.ca/calendar.do)

Contact Judy Spearing | T: 250-472-0515 |  
jandd\_spearing@shaw.ca

### Glendale Gardens Native Plant

#### Demonstration Garden:

505 Quayle Road, Saanich  
Meet every Wednesday morning, snow, rain or shine.

Before coffee we work in the Western Woods restoration project and after coffee we work in the native garden. Volunteers welcome.

Contact | T: 250-658-5740

### Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature

#### Sanctuary:

3873 Swan Lake Road, Victoria  
Swan Lake has a wide range of volunteer opportunities involving plants: nature interpretation, gardening with native plants, and removal of invasive plants.

Contact Robyn Burton | T: 250-479-0211 |  
volunteer(at)swanlake.bc.ca

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The Native Plant Study Group meets on the third Thursday of the month from September through May at the MacLaurin Building, UVic.

#### Please join us!

The NPSG gratefully acknowledges the support of the Restoration of Natural Systems (RNS) program at UVic in securing the use of the rooms and facilities.

UVic parking policy--pay parking is in effect 24 hours a day. You must purchase a \$2 parking permit for the evening.

Save yourself the trouble by riding your bike or taking the bus!  
(<http://www.bctransit.com/regions/vic/>)



## Local Native Plant Gardens

### Glendale Gardens Native Plant Demonstration Garden

505 Quayle Road, Saanich  
The native plant garden at Glendale Gardens was begun in 2000 by members of the Native Plant Study Group, and features rocky outcrops, native shrubs, trees, flowers and a Garry oak meadow. It covers nearly an acre, with a variety of habitats.

Contact | T: 250- 479-6162 | [info@hcp.bc.ca](mailto:info@hcp.bc.ca)

### Gonzales Bay Native Plant Garden:

1843 Crescent Road, Victoria  
A residential seaside native plant garden that includes Garry oaks, western crab-apple, red-osier dogwood, woolly sunflower, mock-orange, sedum, western hawthorn, hairy manzanita, native grasses and bulbs. There is also a small Garry oak restoration area to the east of the Boyle property, beside the walkway to Gonzales Beach. The restoration area is accessible from the sidewalk along Crescent Road.

Contact Pat Boyle | T: 250-370-1812

### Kings Road Native Plant Garden:

Kings Road at Roseberry Avenue, Victoria  
This site is a residential native plant garden in the Oaklands neighbourhood of Victoria. Garry oak habitat was restored over a period of four years by volunteers meeting once a week.

Contact | [info@goert.ca](mailto:info@goert.ca)

### Oak Bay Native Plant Garden:

Beach Drive at Margate Street, Victoria  
This Oak Bay landmark was donated by Mrs. Ada Beaven in 1939 for the purpose of developing a native plant garden. The site is of great ecological value as a

green space and nature reserve. It acts as a preserve for plants indigenous to southern Vancouver Island, many of which are endangered by development. The garden includes more than 120 plant species from all areas of lower Vancouver Island as well as a restored Garry oak meadow.

Contact Carol Davies | T: 250-475-4412 | [ecdavies\(at\)uvic.ca](mailto:ecdavies(at)uvic.ca) or  
Contact Parks and Recreation, Oak Bay | T: 250-592-7275

### Saanich Community Church Native Plant Garden:

4566 West Saanich Road, Saanich  
The garden is being developed under existing mature oak and fir trees and aims to reintroduce species that may have grown on the site before it was developed.

Contact Burl Jantzen | 250-475-0406 | [info@saanichcommunity.ca](mailto:info@saanichcommunity.ca) | [www.saanichcommunity.ca](http://www.saanichcommunity.ca)

### Royal BC Museum

675 Belleville Street, Victoria  
One of the oldest Native Plant Gardens in western Canada (begun in 1967) and features approximately 300 native species.

Contact Ken Marr | T: 250-356-8176 | [kmarr\(at\)royalbcmuseum.bc.ca](mailto:kmarr(at)royalbcmuseum.bc.ca)



*Oemleria cerasiformis*  
Photo by Kent Brothers



Erythronium revolutum  
Photo by David Blevins



Erythronium oregonum  
Photo by Brian Klinkenberg

A sneak peak at Dr. Geraldine Allen, our February speaker...

Dr. Geraldine Allen is a faculty member in the Department of Biology and curator of the Herbarium at the University of Victoria. Dr. Allen received her training at the University of British Columbia and Oregon State University, and has been teaching at UVic since 1981. She has worked on diverse topics in plant evolution and systematics and is particularly interested in the process of speciation, the role of hybridization in plant evolution, and the genetic characteristics of newly arisen species. Dr. Allen teaches undergraduate courses in Plant Systematics and Evolution. She has had graduate and undergraduate students in her lab working on numerous species of plants to study the origins of polyploids, the phylogeography of both arctic and southern taxa, and the genetic or demographic characteristics of rare species. Most recently, Dr. Allen has collaborated with colleagues at the Royal British Columbia Museum to investigate phylogeographic patterns in boreal and arctic plant species, especially in relation to the glacial history of western North America. Dr. Allen will be speaking to the Native Plant Study Group in February on the evolution and biogeography of the genus Erythronium.

NATIVE PLANT STUDY GROUP (NPSG)

(Sub-group of the registered non-profit Native Plant Society of British Columbia and is guided by a steering committee)

The NPSG 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. Participation in outside events, by the group, or by individual members, using the NPSG name is dependent on approval of the steering committee or, where indicated, by the at-large membership. Activities requiring funding must receive approval by the general membership.

Co-Chair	Valerie Elliott T: 519 -0404
Co-Chair:	Nathalie Dechaine  T: 380-1696
Speakers:	Kristen Harrison
Treasurer:	Joan Varley  T: 658-4689
Newsletter:	Ilana Kronick  T: 589-3804 Kristen Harrison Hilary Stead
Plant Rescue:	Todd Doherty  T: 388-9101
Membership:	Agnes Lynn  T: 721-0634
Publicity:	Valerie Elliott  T: 519-0404
Room Set-up:	Pat & Wayne Robertson  T: 479-4271
Plant Raffle:	Heather Pass  T: 479-4175
List-serve:	Linda Beare & John Olafson  T: 658-8993
Refreshments:	Pat McMahon  T: 381-3544
Archivist:	Brenda Pilon  T: 380-3845

Native Plant Study Group members are members of the Native Plant Society of BC.