

Grow with DIGA



Spring 2009

DIGA announces spring meetings

Upcoming workshops will equip members to get the most from their plants.

The first, **Thursday, April 30**, features a presentation on adapted gardening tools by Tetra Society volunteer engineers, a lecture by “Garden Communicator 2006” Conway Lum on outdoor gardening and a hands-on session creating a vegetable and strawberry planter.

“Tetra’s star volunteers will explain how they adapt tools and create assistive devices to assist you in gardening,” said DIGA program coordinator Betty Cheung.

It will be held at the George Pearson Centre (601 W. 59th Ave., Vancouver) activity wing from 2 - 4:15pm. Admission is \$5, with free parking.

On **Wednesday, May 27**, DIGA meets 1:30 - 3 pm at the Greenhouse in Queen’s Park, New Westminster to create a dazzling basket of summer annuals, led by Joan Miller. It costs \$10, which includes the planter and all materials.

Contact Betty to reserve a place or ask questions: phone 604-688-6464 ext 106 or email bcheung@disabilityfoundation.org.



Growing ambition: Members and volunteers at the DIGA community garden in downtown Vancouver.

Opportunities for all as community gardens blossom across Vancouver

DIGA members are good to grow at two Vancouver community gardens.

The non-profit has six accessible raised-bed plots available – with an additional six currently in use – at sites located at Pacific & Seymour and the George Pearson Centre on West 57th Avenue, with volunteer support.

Last year four participants joined DIGA at Pacific & Seymour to grow a variety of vegetables on individual 3 x 6 ft. areas. Thanks to ONNI we have additional gardening space this year. So far six people are signed up and there is space here for two more.

And a new community gardening project has created additional accessible space on one acre of George Pearson Centre land. Pearson Community Garden coordinator Jen Rashleigh has offered DIGA one-and-a-half tabletop beds, explaining “each... measures 3.5 ft. by 8 ft. long.” This space can accommodate four gardeners.

“The community gardens proved very popular last year, and I expect they will do again this year,” said DIGA coordinator Betty Cheung. “They are suitable for beginner or veteran gardeners, and we can provide supplies, volunteers and share knowledge.”

Contact Betty immediately if you want to join DIGA in either garden this year.



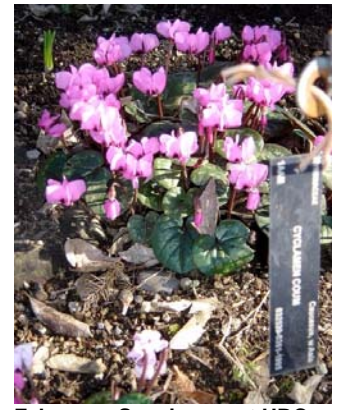
October: Sandy Knoll talking about bonsai.



November: Terry LeBlanc receiving help with his planter.



January: William Bischoff talks about colourful house plants.



February: Specimens at UBC Botanical Gardens.

Workshop reviews: adaptive gardening get-togethers

The most recent workshops enabled members of Disabled Independent Gardeners Association to get to grips with a wide variety of plants.

Back in October 2008, speaker Sandy Knoll from the Taguchi Bonsai Club considered the difference between bonsai and topiary. He described the creation of a selection of beautiful bonsais he brought in, including how to use different tools for pruning and trimming and how to wire branches to train them to desired angles

Then participants, in November, created festive poinsettia planters. Horticultural consultant Amanda Jarrett showed how to prepare a sparkling Christmas creation.

“The plants were beautiful and mine is now proudly perched on a table in the living room,” said participant Linda McGowan.

The New Year got underway in style with January’s houseplants review. William Bischoff, member of the Alpine Garden Society and former chairman of the Vancouver Orchid Society, showed a collection of bromeliads and spoke about their unique characteristics, cultivation, growing conditions and propagation. He suggested a few species that are best suited for house and window culture, and gave out some plant seedlings for participants to bring home and grow.

February’s event featured a lecture detailing the *Travels of a Modern Plant Hunter* and a tour of UBC Botanical Gardens. Guest speaker Ron Long detailed the thrill of his 2008 trips to California, Oregon, Ontario and Colorado with slides of wildflowers in their natural state.

The subsequent gardens tour allowed member to view beautiful mosses, lichen and some early spring flowers.

Plant sales and garden events

VanDusen Botanical Garden (5251 Oak Street, Vancouver – info: www.vandusengarden.org).

Apr 11-12: Alpine Garden Club of BC spring show.

Apr 26: VanDusen Plant Sale - more than 40,000 varieties.

May 9-10: Canadian Geranium & Pelargonium Society plant show & sale.

May 30-31: Taguchi Bonsai Club spring bonsai show (\$2).

UBC Botanical Gardens (6804 SW Marine Drive, Vancouver – info: www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org).

May 9: Perennial Plant Sale in the Botanical Garden parking lot.

Vancouver Orchid Society (info: www.vancouverorchidsociety.ca).

May 14-17: Vancouver Orchid Society annual show and sale, at Richmond Curling Club.

Contact DIGA for gardening info

One-on-One Assisted Gardening

DIGA continues to extend links between members and volunteer-gardeners. Contact Betty Cheung if you would benefit from some volunteer help.

Adapted Tools from Tetra

Tetra Society of North America recruits volunteer engineers to create assistive devices for people with disabilities, free of charge. Tetra volunteers most likely can create adapted tools and other equipment to assist your gardening. Call Betty for more information.

DIGA is looking for volunteers

Contact Betty if you can give some time to help members at their home or a community garden. We find that both parties gain from sharing knowledge and enthusiasm in this way.