



Spring 2008

## DIGA's upcoming spring workshops: from organic gardening to becoming 'weird & wonderful'

Workshops over the coming months will dig the dirt on compost and promote a little garden weirdness.

The first, *Green Technologies: How to Compost & Organic Gardening*, is held at City Farmer (2150 Maple Street, Vancouver) on Wednesday, April 23. It will run from 1pm to 2:30pm, with participation \$5.

"City Farmer head gardener Sharon Slack will talk about compost and explain how worm composting fits into the container or balcony garden," explained DIGA Program Coordinator Betty Cheung. "Then we'll learn about organic gardening techniques, building soil health and natural pest control."

There is a limited amount of free parking at the venue – otherwise, there are parking meters nearby on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues.

May's workshop goes under the colorful title of *Weird & Wonderful Plants for Your Garden*.

"Gary Lewis, owner of Phoenix Perennials Nursery, will show us some uncommon and interesting plants of the world and tell us how to grow them indoors or in the garden," continued Cheung. "A guided tour of the nursery will provide opportunity to bring home a few unique plants at discounted prices."

This is held at Phoenix Perennials (3380 No. 6 Road, Richmond) from 2pm to 3:30pm on Thursday, May 29. Admission is \$5 and there is free parking at the venue.

Both are outdoor venues, so bring weather-appropriate clothing.

Info: 604-688-6464 ext. 106.



Spring's first shoots: William and Carla Bischoff, who presented January's Cyclamen lecture – see Page 2 – are seeing the first breakout of colour in their garden.

### Growing opportunity on community land

DIGA has obtained two wheelchair accessible raised-beds at the Pacific & Seymour Garden, a community garden at the north end of Granville Street Bridge.

There are places for five participants, on land donated by ONNI in collaboration with Vancouver Public Space Network. ONNI also provided the raised beds.

DIGA will line up volunteer-gardeners to provide assistance. Contact Betty Cheung to find out more about this, at 604-688-6464 ext. 106.



Judy Newton (Oct. '07)



Meredith Maxwell (Nov. '07)



Tetra volunteers (Feb. '08)



Conway Lum (Feb. '08)

## Workshop reviews – adaptive gardening for all

DIGA events over the past months – since publication of the fall newsletter – have covered a wide range of ground.

In February, members met at GardenWorks Mandeville to learn about starting flower and vegetable seeds for spring. Guest speaker Conway Lum handed out soil and plant pots, and also discussed gardening tools.

Volunteers from the Tetra Society of North America – engineers who invent custom adaptive devices for people with disabilities – then detailed the creation of specialist gardening tools. Tetra's national program coordinator Pat Tweedie, and engineers Brian Johnson and Gregg Harris (pictured above, left to right) showed examples of custom garden tools. For more information about Tetra, visit the website [www.tetrasociety.org](http://www.tetrasociety.org).

For January's workshop, guest speaker William Bishoff made a presentation on cyclamen, from legends surrounding the plants to growing tips. He also gave succulent seedlings out to participants.

The final event of 2007 was held in November, at Roundhouse Community Centre, Vancouver, and included a workshop detailing the creation of holiday baskets (presented by Amanda Jarrett) and DIGA's year-end gathering. This celebratory social event included more than 30 members, with executive director Duane Geddes presenting volunteers Meredith Maxwell (pictured above), Mary Jo Dawe, Peter Dawe and Anna Gasparin with certificates of appreciation – their work to aid DIGA members was featured in the last edition.

And back in October, DIGA held workshop on creating winter planters, held at UBC Botanical Garden. UBC's Judy Newton discussed flowers, shrubs and bulbs that will bloom through winter months, along with how to salvage plants during their dormant period and recycling soil.

There was also a guided tour of the gardens, lead by Nadine Diner. This took in their Food Garden, Herb Garden and Apple Garden.

### Tips and seasonal reminders

**Save on Supplies:** Visitors to VanDusen from mid-April to mid-October can purchase seeds at the cut price of \$2 per package. Go to [www.VanDusen.PlantExplorers.com](http://www.VanDusen.PlantExplorers.com) for rare and unusual seeds. Also, check on special discounts at all major garden shops.

**In print:** Roy Jonsson, who hosted a DIGA workshop two years ago, has released a new book, *Garden Sense – Secrets of an Experienced Gardener*. To find out more, or order a copy, try: [www.royjonsson.com](http://www.royjonsson.com).

**Thanks:** to the DIGA garden volunteers, and Tetra volunteers who make all this possible.

### Vancouver plant sales and events for gardeners

Free admission, except where specified.

- VanDusen Botanical Garden** (5251 Oak Street, Vancouver)
  - BC Primula Group Primrose Sale: Apr. 12, 10am - 4pm
  - Alpine Garden Club of BC Spring Show: Apr. 12-13, 12noon - 4pm
  - Annual VanDusen Plant Sale: Apr. 27, 10am - 4pm
  - Canadian Geranium & Pelargonium Society Annual Plant Sale: May 10-11, 10am - 4pm
  - Taguchi Bonsai Club Annual Show: May 31 – Jun. 1, 11am - 5pm (\$2)
  - Vancouver Rose Society Annual Show: Jun. 22, 1pm - 4:30pm (\$3)

**UBC Botanical Garden** (6804 SW Marine Drive)  
Annual Perennial Plant Sale – May 11, 10 am - 4 pm