Weeder's Digest

September 2024

A publication of the Kelowna Garden Club www.kelownagardenclub.ca

September Meeting:

Tuesday, 3 September 2024

Doors open at 6 pm, meeting starts at 6:30 pm

Evangel Church, in the Fellowship Room
3261 Gordon Drive (south of KLO)
Enter through southwest door

Due to low demand, Zoom meetings will no longer be available

In this issue:

- Meet KGC's new VP: Marian Morry
- Grow and Show, September schedule
- Articles on
  - Wasps
  - Vegetable Storage
  - Why you should NOT clean up your garden
- Get ready for the October bulb sale
- Upcoming Speakers, Events & Workshops

And much more

September's Presentation

DIGGING DEEPER ON DAHLIAS

KGC members Denise Russell, Brenda Mouat, Julie Holah and Lisa Boulanger are thrilled to share their knowledge!

Denise will be discussing the different forms of dahlias;

Julie will discuss how to set your plant up to be an amazing bloom producer as well as winter storage options;

Brenda will enlighten us about insect pressure in the garden and

Lisa will discuss the creative side of dahlias.

Meet Marian Morry

KGC's new VP

Although I never had a gardening role-model, I have dabbled with gardening since I was a child. My experiences though were all in zone 3 areas – Edmonton and Winnipeg. Once I retired and moved to Kelowna in 2017, I realized I had a lot to learn. What grows in zone 6, how to deal with deer, how much to irrigate, harvesting and pruning fruit trees. In addition, our yard had been ignored for 3 years so I also had to learn what were weeds and what were desirable plants. In 2018, I joined the Kelowna Newcomer's gardening group which really helped. I then took over as coordinator of the gardening group for 2019/2020. Because of covid, I mostly wrote a weekly blog for the group. It was a bit self-serving as each week I picked a topic I wanted to know more about and then Googled the answers. In 2022, I joined the Kelowna Garden Club and volunteered to help with a few activities over the years. After seven years in Kelowna, I have learned a lot about gardening, so much so that this year I won the Water Wise award for the Kelowna Best Garden Selection Contest! In May of 2024 I was asked to take on the position of Vice President for the KGC. I still have a lot to learn about gardening but hope to share what I have learned with you over the next few years.

Get ready for October's Bulb Sale

While you're tidying up your garden, readying it for winter, are there bulbs you could donate to the October Bulb sale?

Saturday, 5 October, from 10 am until noon

to be held on Bev Thomas's drive,

343 Cadder Avenue, Kelowna

If you can't bring your bulbs to October's meeting, bring them **by 9:30 am** to Bev's on the morning of the sale. Bulbs should be

- Clean, securely bagged, and labelled
- with a description (colour, height, time of bloom, do they increase rapidly or steadily)
- and—if possible—a picture.
- Only **named or reblooming irises** will be accepted.

Bring your daffodils, grape hyacinth, crocus, scilla, tulip bulbs.
Let's all try lasagna planting.

Open Gardens

Thanks to all of you who opened your gardens this Spring.

Due to a very hot and dry summer, we all had to struggle to keep our plants , flowers & vegetables happy. Hopefully the weather will cool as we step into Fall and you can open your gardens for a tour.

I have headed up Open Gardens in Kelowna for several years and loved it. I am stepping down now and I am happy to announce that Nancy Kummen will be taking my place.

To Open your Garden , here are the contacts:

West Kelowna - Linda Edser, ledser@shaw.ca

Kelowna - Nancy Kummen, nancykummen@gmail.com

Cheers to Gardens! Marilyn Degraw

SEPTEMBER'S GROW AND SHOW

September 3, 2024

***Class 1: "Dahlia Cup"** donated by Kelowna and District Horticultural Society - one Dahlia bloom with own foliage, any colour, disbudded. One full pair of leaves is to be attached to the stem.

***Class 2: "Henry and Ella Metka Gladiola trophy"** - one spike of Gladiola any colour in a sturdy container.

***Class 3: "Lillian Jeffreys Rose Trophy"** donated by Frank Jeffreys - one single Rose, any type, any colour, with its own foliage, one half to three quarters open. No side buds.

***Class 4: "Sweet Pea Challenge Cup"** donated by Amateur Sweet Pea Association - five (5) sets of annual Sweet Peas, any colour, in a vase.

Class 5: "Fall Beauty" - one stem of Echinacea, any colour or variety.

Class 6: "Summer Sunset" - an arrangement of flowers from your garden predominantly in shades of orange in a suitable container,

Class 7: "Fall Harvest" - a display of vegetables and herbs, any variety, in a basket.

Class 8: "Show and Tell"

Results of the KGC/Miracle Gro, and Communities in Bloom contest,

The Best Garden Selections in Kelowna.

Of the six winners and two honourable mentions,
two winners wand one honourable mention were Kelowna Garden Club members

Curb Appeal –Nancy and George Webb
The garden is an urban oasis with a calming palate.

Waterwise – Marian Morry
The dramatic display of color gives this garden a great rhythm ,and the design and plant material is appropriate for a water wise garden.

Honorable Mention – Teresa and Charlie Hodge – A yard with many features, nooks and crannies where everyone feels at home

Other winners were:
Edible Garden – Nelusha Nugeogoda.
Medium Garden –Kate Woodman and Gene Krupa
Large Garden – Renate Lutz and Tim Woodworth
Container Garden – Bev Shortreed and Roger Hume

Little Schack Farm Tour—June 23

Eighteen members toured Rebecca and Lenny Schack's ¾ acre leased property learning how they transformed and regenerated the soil from the clay they first encountered there 7 years ago.

Their passion for developing healthy, microbial-rich soil was really apparent when Lennie & Rebecca demonstrated some of the hand tools they use for planting, weeding and harvesting.

When they explained how they rotate their crops within any growing season, our group realized the many hours of hard work involved in the success of this refreshing and inspiring market-garden style farm!

WASPS

Wasps, hornets, and yellow jackets are names often given to stinging insects regardless of their shape and color. These are all an important part of the ecosystem as they kill and eat many different types of insects depending of their species. If stinging insects are hanging around a plant such as lettuce, chances are that the lettuce is home for other unwanted pests.

By the end of August the stinging insect population has more than tripled which makes them more noticeable.

As fall approaches the queen quits laying eggs and no longer needs the workers to bring protein back to the hive. She gives off fewer pheromones that keep the wasps attached to the hive. They are then able to develop sex organs and become queens but what people see are wasps interested in sugar.

Wasps can be controlled especially if the nests are found. Typically the nests are within a couple hundred yards of where the insect forages. The gray paper nests are usually attached under an overhang. Once found, they are easy to destroy. Wait until the evening or early morning when the temperature is cool and spray the opening of the nest with an insecticide as per the instructions on the container. A few insects may try to escape but more often they move too slowly to make it through their door.

Nests are also found in other places including the ground, old logs, and in the insulation of buildings. It is harder to destroy these nests unless the entry way is found. Nests and openings can also be covered with plastic which removes the opening and air supply.

Wasp deterrents and traps, if used early in the season, can be effective. As many wasps tend to be territorial, leaving an old nest from a previous season can stop insects from building a new one in that area. It is also possible to purchase deterrents that look like gray wasp nests and create the same effect.

Funnels into jars, or the top of a plastic pop bottle cut off and placed inside the bottom of the bottle are both effective ways of trapping wasps, hornets and yellow jackets. Bait the container with protein early in the season and ripe fruit or sugar later on. Local hardware or garden centers will also have traps.

Removing damaged fruit, picking up fallen fruit, bagging pop cans, and keeping areas free of food makes an area less attractive and less likely to be utilized by stinging insects.

All stinging insects, including honey bees, need a water source. Where possible, remove all shallow water sources or ones with shallow edges that allow stinging insects to collect water easily.

As wasps, hornets, and yellow jackets are a necessary part of the ecosystem removing them all is not an option. Controlling insect nests in areas where there has been a conflict goes a long way to solving the problem.

Linda Tomlinson

Why you should NOT clean up your yard this fall—Marian Morry

Every fall I watch people clean up their yards by cutting back foliage, raking leaves, trimming back grasses and then placing it all in their green bins. There are many reasons though why you should not do this (with a few exceptions).

One main reason to not clean up your yard is to help your plants overwinter. All of the plant matter that people remove could be used to mulch in plants to protect the roots from cold snaps. For example, leaves from your trees can be packed around your perennials as a mulch. In addition, if you do not cut back your perennials the plants act as a snow fence, holding the snow in place, which also protects the plants from cold snaps.

Now there are some plants that do need to be cut back in fall (e.g., hosta, irises, lilies, peonies, salvia, astilbe), but the foliage does not need to be removed from the yard, instead use it as mulch elsewhere. A lot of people lost plants this year because of the January cold snap, but leaving your foliage and leaves in the yard may help protect against future loss. An added benefit to using your garden foliage as mulch is that over time it breaks down and gets incorporated into your soil, as free compost!

A second reason to not clean up your yard is to help pollinators (bees, butterflies), insects (ladybugs, lace wings, praying mantis), and birds. Many pollinators and insects overwinter in the mulch or in the ground under the mulch. If you do not clean up your yard, you are supporting many species of bees, butterflies, praying mantis, etc. for next year. For example, carpenter bees like to lay their eggs in old raspberry canes, sunflower stalks, echinacea stems, and aster stems. Come spring, these eggs hatch, and you have a new generation of bees to pollinate your yard.

By not cutting back your perennial flowers, you are also leaving food for seed eating birds that overwinter in the Okanagan. I have seen many birds eating seeds from my spent sunflowers, asters, hollyhocks, and echinacea plants. Insect eating birds will also scour the leaf matter and hollow stems for overwintering bugs.

Finally, not cleaning up your yard is that it can add visual interest to your gardens in winter. For example, the tall seed heads of Karl Foerster grasses will be visible above the snow adding a bit of interest to an otherwise snow blanketed yard. There is also beauty in seeing snow on dried seed pods, berries clinging to bare branches, or old goldenrod fronds.

There are a few things that you should clean up in the fall. Leaves on grass would be one of them, but rather than placing them in the green bin, pack them around your flower and vegetable beds. Plants with diseases should definitely be removed from your yard. This would include and foliage with powdery mildew.

(What else can you do in the garden, instead of cleaning up? See next page.)

Ahhh, September. Even the word is like a sigh that marks the end of summer.

But here's no time to rest. There's lots to do before first frost, which makes September a busy month for gardeners. It's the month for harvesting, dividing and replanting, and seed saving.

It's a time to take a long look at the perennial beds, planning for next year's blooms, late August/early September is when most plants are looking their summer-best. It's easy to see what's done well, what hasn't, and what needs to be moved or divided.

Plant some of the divisions in an empty vegetable bed to overwinter so they'll be ready for next year's Plant Sale.

Direct sow some quick growing salad greens.

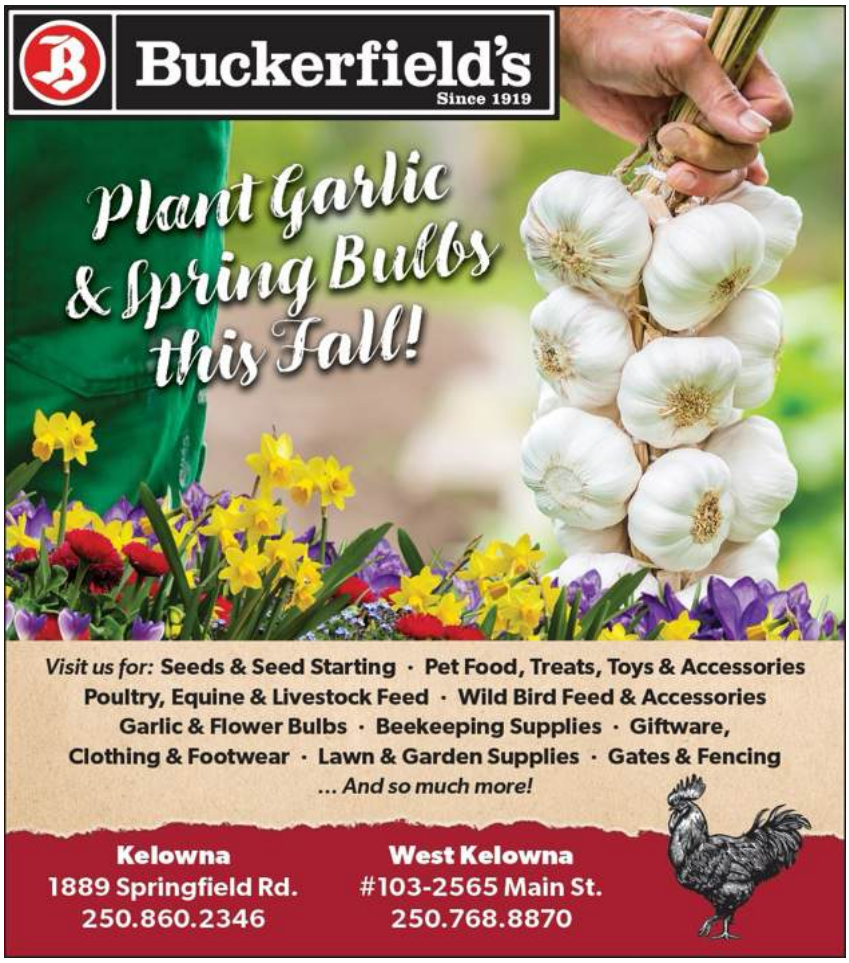
Check local garden centres for plants that will extend the life of outdoor planters and containers.

Plant Spring-flowering bulbs.

Sow cover crops in the vegetable patch or raised beds.

Check out mulch sales at the Big Box Stores. Plan how much mulch and what kind to help your plants over-winter successfully.

Plant garlic mid-to-late September (6-8 weeks before Kelowna's first frost date)



Upcoming Speakers, Events, Workshops

September	Lisa Boulanger, Julie Holah, Brenda Mount and Denise Russell: **Digging Deeper on Dahlias**
October	Matt Groenig: **Houseplants & Fall-Plant Parenting 101** 5 min speaker: Linda E, Overwintering Pelargoniums
November	Year in Review
December	Christmas party
March 4	First meeting of 2025

Events

Oct 5	Bulb Sale: Bev Thomas's drive, 343 Cadder Drive. 10 am to noon Bring your bulbs to the 1 October meeting or to Bev's by 9:30 on the morning of the sale. More details on page 2.
May 3 2025	Plant sale. Divide your perennials **now** so they'll be ready for the first Saturday in May 2025.

Workshops

October 5 1 pm	Pumpkin Centrepiece Workshop. See details on page 12. This workshop will only be held if enough participants sign up. Location to be determined.

Vegetable Storage

Although the abundance of fresh fruit and vegetables ends with cold weather., a number of them can be stored for a few months or longer.

Harvest when the fruits and vegetables are at their peak. Handle carefully to avoid bruising or breaking the outer skin. Damaged or overripe fruit or vegetables should be used immediately or discarded because pathogens from a moldy or rotten item can spread quickly.

When fruits and vegetables leave the mother plant or are pulled from the ground, they are not dead. They continue to respire; take in oxygen, break down sugars and other compounds while releasing gasses, heat and moisture. When too much sugar is broken down, the flavor and texture change often making the produce inedible. Loss of moisture results in shriveled produce. Proper handling and storage slows down the process.

Only harvest or purchase what can be processed that day.

Harvest produce in the cool early morning and store at the appropriate temperature. Root crops do well in refrigerators which are generally set just above freezing. Temperatures in cold rooms vary depending on their construction.

With the exception of onions, garlic and squash, produce do best in areas that contain high humidity; 90 – 95%. It is hard for plants to release moisture in an atmosphere that is already humid Reducing oxygen is as easy as placing the vegetables in a plastic bag that contains numerous small holes. When produce is deprived of all oxygen, respiration stops and the product stays fresher.

Potatoes can be harvested when the stems of the plants start to turn yellow or the tops freeze down. The tubers last longer if they are left in the ground long enough to form a thick skin. If possible, dig potatoes on a warm day allowing the dirt to dry and brush off before packing them in perforated containers and placing in a cold dark area. Potato tubers stored in the light turn green and are bitter tasting.

Carrots also develop a thicker skin as they mature. Dig the carrots, remove the tops and wash all the dirt from the roots. Once clean they should be placed in a plastic bag with either the top open slightly or holes in the bag. Placing a paper towel in the bag will help absorb excess moisture that can cause rot. Be sure to change the towel every couple of weeks.

Onions can be dug when their tops bend over. Do not stamp on the stems as this does not help them mature faster. Once dug, they need to be placed in a warm area to allow their outer skin and roots to dry, then store at room temperature in a mesh container.

Garlic is cared for similar to Onions. Save some of the big heads to plant the end of September, early October.

Tomatoes keep best when stored in a cool, humid area. Place one layer of tomatoes in a box and cover them with newspaper. If they are placed in the fridge or left outside during cold weather, the taste and texture of the fruit will change.

Winter squash will last a few months when stored on a shelf in a cool location.

It takes effort but is worth the work to save produce as it always tastes better than what is in the store.

Linda Tomlinson

We are always pleased to show appreciation to regular advertisers liked Buckerfield's. This ad would have run in our August issue, except August is the only month this year when there hasn't been a newsletter or a supplement.

I'm told there's not so much demand in September for Ladybirds (it's what I prefer to call them) but the picture is so cute I had to include it.

Perhaps Buckerfield's still have some for sale. Perhaps you still have aphids. Perhaps these little creatures will over-winter in your garden, ready to feast on early aphids next year.

Why not give Buckerfield's a call or drop in to the store closest to you?

Newsletter Editor (aka Advertising Director)

Dahlias were very popular in the 1960s then, like other plants, fell out of fashion.

Over recent years, they have been enjoying a HUGE resurgence in popularity.

Dahlias are a very versatile plant to use in your garden. For example, shrub dahlias thrive beautifully in pots or near the front of a flower bed boarder.

Taller varieties are stunning planted in rows or dotted throughout the deeper beds as focal plants.

Dahlias are prolific bloomers and will provide blooms from early summer straight through to first frost.

…. and, while on the subject of Newsletter Editor, did you know….

The Editor of Welder's Divest needs a proof reader.

Preferably someone who will pick up and run with the newsletter if the Editor takes a vacation.

This needs someone who's familiar with the Microsoft package—Word, Excel, Publisher—not Google pages.

Knowing something about Publisher would be a bonus but a willingness to become familiar with it would be truly appreciated.

It's a once a month job for the eight issues of the newsletter and, possibly, two supplements that are mostly photos.

(Of course you spotted the deliberate errors, but the people who painted the SCHOOL sign didn't spot their oops until too late.)

I love to Weed!— Alicja Paradzik

Not having weeded my garden since May, I was happy to be able to get out in the garden again. Yes, I love to weed. I find it therapeutic and as I yank out those unwanted plants, it gives me a great feeling of accomplishment. Once you factor in the fresh air, aaaah calmness is restored.

I thought I would share with you my favourite tools for this endeavour. Gloves, of course, to keep my fingers pristine and preserve my manicure! These are the best gloves I have found and are available on the internet. They are model 370 by Atlas. The rubber is nice and thin so I can feel what I am doing. I just throw them in the washing machine from time to time and two pairs usually last me a whole gardening season.

Next are the secateurs. I don't recommend any particular brand. I have some no name ones purchased at garage sales and some from high end garden tool suppliers. They all work equally well as long as they are well sharpened.

The next item, a flat end screwdriver, is my favourite tool. Why? Because it easily digs into the soil and its nice and narrow to lift out those pesky weeds. It doesn't disturb the soil as much as a wider shovel would. Those little weeds like to cozy up to my plants nice and close. With my husband's screwdriver I can loosen the soil just beside the weed and lift it out nice and easy without disturbing the plant. How wonderful is that!

As I was weeding, a proclaimed non-gardening young friend stopped by and got excited over the screwdriver. She uses a screwdriver to lift and pull out those long crabgrass roots. Not having a lawn I can't speak to that but it certainly is worth trying her method.

Finally, a couple of things for those that are a bit "age-challenged". A bench that is made for sitting or you could flip it over and kneel on it. The best part is that once you kneel on it, you can use it to stand up again. Wow! Makes life a little bit easier for someone my age.

And, because I forget where I put "stuff" 2 second after I put it down, I found some bright pink tape and wrapped it around the handles of my tools. Now, when I "lose" my tools among the plants, they're much easier to find. Hmmm… wonder what else I can wrap with neon pink tape?

Pumpkin Centrepiece Workshop

Fall, Thanksgiving, Halloween. What would be better than to decorate with pumpkins?

With the help of the Okanagan Floral Art Club, we are putting on a Workshop/Demonstration on creating pumpkin centrepieces. We will show you how to make a tabletop design in a pumpkin, garlands using pumpkins, and several more ideas.

This Workshop will be held on October 5 at 1:00 p.m. Location to be announced. Cost will be determined by cost of venue. All materials will be supplied by attendees.

Please sign up at the September meeting or by emailing Trish Lourens, noeltric@gmail.com, before October 1, 2024 to ensure you receive a list of supplies prior to the Workshop.

Bats in Our Gardens by Nancy Kummen

Many of us add plants and other features to our garden to attract pollinators or birds. Have you considered attracting bats? Every night, bats eat more than half their body weight in insects such as cutworm moths and mosquitoes. Perhaps you have seen bats overhead while enjoying your garden at night during our warm summer evenings.

The Okanagan is home to 15 species of bats and almost half are species at risk. Bat friendly gardening can help bats and add a little night magic to your yard.

Bats are nocturnal and feed on insects that are active at night. White and pale-coloured flowers that stay open at night attract insects that bats feed on. Consider adding annual, perennial, tree or shrub species that have flowers that are pale. Native species such as mock orange and Saskatoon are excellent attractants when in bloom. A locally produced list of bat friendly plant can be found at https://bcbats.ca/attachments/Bat-friendly-Garden-GREEN-version-Feb-2024.pdf

Bats prefer moonlight, so limiting man-made light sources in your garden is also recommended. Mature trees provide safe roosts for bats. Loose tree bark and bark crevices shelter them from daylight, predators and bad weather. Bats may also roost in man made structures and even awnings! If you find a single bat or larger groups roosting in areas near your home that you are concerned about, please reach out to bcbats.ca. Okanagan based “bat coordinators” are there to help answer your questions or concerns!

The Regional District at the ECCO lends out backpacks to the public that contain all you need to go on a bat adventure. It is a great activity for all ages! There is an “Echo Meter” device that listens to the bats in your garden or local park and identifies the bat by hearing the “squeak” they make while flying after insects. Many of our local parks, such as Bertram Creek, offer great bat viewing at twilight. Above is a picture of the mock orange growing against the rock cliff in Bertram Creek regional park taken in mid June that is a great bat viewing area. Bats shelter in the cliffs and dive over the mock orange at twilight hunting mosquitoes and moths.

While planning your next garden addition, think about how you can support our BC bats and keep your eyes on the night skies for a little night magic BC bat style!

FORCING BULBS: If you want to enjoy the beauty that bulb flowers bring throughout the winter, you can force bulbs to bloom indoors. Tricking the bulb into thinking that winter is over by providing favourable, spring-like growing conditions indoors is what is meant by ‘forcing’ the bulb. By forcing bulbs you can reap the benefits of the blooms when there is snow on the ground and even throughout the holiday season!

Bulbs should be planted in pots roughly double the height of the bulb. The potting soil should reach the neck of the bulb and should not cover or submerge it. Water in and label the plant name and the date.

Bulbs can be categorized in two ways: bulbs that require a chilling stage and bulbs that do not. Amaryllis and paperwhite narcissus do not need a chilling period to break dormancy. You can simply plant and start watering 8 to 10 weeks before you want them to bloom. Tulip, daffodil, hyacinth, crocus, and iris bulbs require a cold period to mimic winter conditions ranging from 8 to 15 weeks depending on the bulb (refer to the bulb tag/instructions). This chilling can be done in a fridge, a garage, or a basement at a temperature that the tag indicates. Some bulbs come pre-chilled and do not need another chilling/dormant period. Bulbs that require a chilling stage still require water during this period.

Forcing bulbs is a great way to enjoy flowers throughout the winter and if you time it correctly you can have beautiful flowers in bloom over the holidays. (from Calgary Horticultural Society’s e-letter)

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