

December 2025
Volume 15 No. 10

NEXT MEETING:

December 18th
6:00 pm

Things to Remember for the Meeting:

1. Bring your **Pot Luck** item, with serving pieces and a **plate, cup and cutlery** for yourself and your guest.
2. Bring a gift for the **Gift Exchange**, if you wish.
3. Design and bring a Christmas **Table Centre** to decorate our dinner tables, if you choose.
4. Remember your **Festive cheer!**



Past President's Message December 2025

Looking out at the garden on a grey, wet morning I am not tempted to get some much needed weeding done. We have spread some mature leaf mulch on the vegetable plot and the garlic is planted. Small flocks of Juncos are pecking away at the straw strewn over the planting. Crop rotation 'maps' can be sketched out before Spring, but the "gardener" in me is appreciating the lull. Hopes are that the recently planted Spring flowering bulbs provide colour in a few months.

Meanwhile, many across the country are already digging out from snow storms and would scoff at the lightweight jobs and concerns I describe. Fortunately, over the years, the plants have been forgiving of mistakes or given a clear 'end of life' message which usually translates as a trip to the nursery for a more suitable choice and being redefined as "experience".

I should have kept better notes on pruning rules for the vines, the fruit trees and ornamentals. The best solution has been to call in an experienced pruner as ladders are now forbidden equipment. "Twinges in the hinges" are constant reminders of declining mobility. Certainly reducing the scope to include well placed pots is becoming more appealing.

As much as I feel hibernation approaching, I relish the enthusiasm, knowledge and sharing that gardeners embody. Keeping engaged is a wonderful antidote to the "blahs".

To quote Canon Henry Ellacombe (1822-1916):

*The fair-weather gardener, who will do nothing except
when the wind and weather and everything else are favourable,
is never master of his craft.*

Carol Henderson
Past President



NOVEMBER MINUTES

Ladysmith Saltair Garden Club

Minutes for November 20th, 2025 Garden Club Meeting

The meeting was held at the Eagles Hall in Ladysmith on November 20 , 2025 with 45 members attending and 3 drop-ins. . Doors opened at 6:15 pm for set up. Our greeters for the evening were Lauri Stark and Cathy Watts.

Our new co-chairs opened the meeting tonight, **Bennye Miller** and **Carmen Dolinsek**. After welcoming members and drop-ins to the meeting, they both gave a little introduction about themselves. Then they asked members to introduce themselves to a member they did not know that well. A good way to get members mingling as this went on for a little while.

Tom Crowards introduced our speaker tonight: **SEAN RUSTEMEYER**: His topic is Gardening Tool Sharpening Workshop

His company is called Soil “N Green Ecological Landscaping”.

His horticultural background has come full circle, having worked in traditional landscaping and now embracing land care techniques that work. He was trained in Ecological Landscape Design and Master Gardening with Gaia College. He handed out a brochure for members to follow as he went through the power point on sharpening techniques and how to do this thoroughly and properly. At the end of the session he did a demonstration on some of his tools that he had brought in and how to clean and sharpen the tools and what to use for the the cleaning, sharpening, and disinfecting of different tools. Three basic takeaways are:

Keep tools clean and sharp!

Clean, smooth cuts = better healing for the plants.

Sharp tools = less fatigue and more enjoyment for the gardener!

And thanks to him we had a door prize for the evening. He was also selling erasers for \$20.00 and the Gardeners Sharpening Kit for \$80.00. On the brochure he handed out was a couple of websites where you could order sharpening and cleaning supplies. Gail thanked Sean for coming out tonight and giving us the excellent presentation on what we should all do with our gardening tools!

Tea and Coffee Break

We took our break after the presentation by Sean. Thanks to Sandra Lee and Pam Fraser for the delicious goodies. And to Barb and Mi for having our coffee and tea ready.

Bennye resumed the meeting with **Linda Whitten** doing a short demonstration on how to split dahlia tubers.

Linda had dug up some of her dahlia tubers and she showed members how to carefully split the tubers. She did mention that you could leave them in the ground till early spring and then dig them up and split at that time. Cleaning and storing the tubers is important to do properly. You can dig them up in the fall or leave in the ground till very early spring and then dig up.

NOVEMBER MINUTES

If you dig up in the fall it is important to dig up 10 days after we see the first frost. Let them dry out about 24 hours and then you can store them. She uses vermiculite to cover the tubers. You can separate them or wait till you want to plant them in the spring. Thank you Linda for giving us all this information on dahlias.

Thank-yous

Carmen called on **Carol** to come up so we could present her with a card for her great service as being president to the club for many years. Thank-you Carol for all your work and dedication.

Also called up was **Joanne Armstrong**. She is the lady that always made sure members got the correspondence members needed. Benny thanked her for this and also she looked after the raffle items at the plant sale we have in May. We have a Thank You card for **Starla** that Carmen will make sure she gets.

A big thank you also to **Pam Fraser** for looking after our field trips to various locations, the last being Butchart Gardens. **April Robinson** will replace Pam.

Christmas Party

The date for this will be December 18th and will start at 6 pm. It will be our usual, a potluck supper. All supported having our centrepieces again. Create a centrepiece for the evening. There will be more information coming up about this.

January Meeting

This will be a hands on meeting bringing in one of your favourite garden tools, tips for gardening, gardening books or anything you think members would be interested in for their gardens. Keep this in mind for the New Year.

Tom Crowards mentioned that he has NALT calendars to sell for \$20.00 But you have to pre-order before the end of the month at NALT.bc.ca.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

..... Submitted by *Trixie Neufeld*



*Memories of
Christmas parties past . . .*

LADYSMITH SALT AIR GARDEN CLUB
CHRISTMAS POTLUCK

Thursday, December 18th, 2025

Club members and one guest are welcome to join our party!

Eagles Hall will open at 6:00 for set-up,
and our Greeters will be at the door at 6:30,
with dinner beginning shortly after.

Please bring your festive spirit, and . . .

- > a main course, salad, or dessert to share
- > dishes, utensils, napkins & cups or glasses for your meal
 - > serving utensils for your dish
- > a bag to carry your dirty dishes home
- > a beverage of your choice (tea & coffee provided)

If you would like . . .

- * make a **Centrepiece** to display on our tables
- * bring a wrapped item - garden or food related
for our **Present Game** (value \$10 to \$25)
 - *make a **Donation** to the Cookie Jar
for the Food Bank
 - *there will be **Door Prizes**, too

Volunteers Needed
for Set Up & Clean Up
at our *December 18th* Meeting.
Doors open at 6:00 pm for set up!

Thanks to our member
Lauri Stark-
Our Greeter for the December Social



Christmas Crackers

Some people make their own crackers. As a tradition, it originated in Victorian times, as do so many British practices.

Tom Smith was a London confectioner who sold sugared almonds wrapped in twists of paper. Around 1845 he started including mottos with the almonds. They were frequently bought by young men for young ladies, so the mottos often took the form of love poems.

Later, the paper twists became tubes to which Tom Smith added the 'bang' to make them more exciting, and almonds were replaced with small gifts. Tissue paper crowns were added by his sons in the early twentieth century, and the love poems were replaced with jokes or riddles.

Now, all we need are crackers that come with a little beeper that will start on Christmas day at dinner time so we remember to get them out of the closet, and onto the table!

2024 Gardening Series Schedule

The Vancouver Island Regional Library's Virtual Gardening Series is a partnership between VIRL and VIMGA offering practical, science-based home gardening knowledge.

All seminars are online, start at 6:30 pm and last for one-and-a-half hours. Registration is required for all seminars.

Register online at: www.vimga.org/

Feb. 5	Gardening Under Cover	Jo-Ann Canning
March 4	Tomatoes	Dorothee Kieser
April 8	Flowering Perennials: Everything you wanted to know	Group Presentation

VIU Cowichan

Upcoming Agriculture Workshops – Starting February 2026

Our hands-on workshops are back! These short, focused sessions are designed for anyone looking to deepen their skills in sustainable agriculture.

Workshops are held in person at Providence Farm (1843 Tzouhalem Road, Duncan) or at VIU Cowichan Campus (2011 University Way, Duncan).

Fruit Tree Management and Pruning
Learn how to prune, shape, and care for fruit trees to ensure strong growth and optimal yields each season.

Backyard Chickens
Get the essentials on raising healthy hens, including coop design, feeding, flock management, and egg production.

Backyard Beekeeping
Understand bee behavior, hive care, honey extraction, and pollinator support..

NOTICES

Ladysmith Saltair Garden Club ***Upcoming Program & Events 2025***

December 2025

Christmas Party

January 15, 2026

Favourite Gardening Things: Plants,
Podcasts, Tools, Recipes, Beds, etc.
Member interactive sharing.

February 19, 2026

Grafting of Fruit Trees: A talk & demo of
grafting of fruit trees.
Bernie Dinter.

March 19, 2026

Perennial Vegetables.
Cicada Seeds & Greenhouses.

April 16, 2026

Growing Tea Plants & Blending Teas.
Westholme Teas

Saturday, May 9, 2026

Annual Plant Sale

May 21, 2026

Popular Herbs, growing, propagation, care,
maintenance, & uses
Richard White (Hazelwood Herb Farms)

June 2026

Members Potluck

A team of Japanese scientists discovered moss' resilience for space travel after they germinated a clutch of moss spores that spent several months hanging outside the International Space Station. Over 80 percent survived the voyage and were able to germinate successfully.



A Tip from Helen Chesnut . . .

Thoughts on Climate Changes

A reader asked about a newly released Canadian plant hardiness zone map that designated parts of the southeast end of Vancouver Island as 9a, a change from 8a. Does that put us into semi-tropical territory?

No. Our climate is considered to be “temperate,” meaning that it has a distinct winter, with frost. The 9a designation indicates minimum winter temperatures from -7 C to -1 C.

The new 9a area, as in most of the topography on the Island, contains a mix of microclimates with their own variations and surprises . . . Though the new designation reflects a general warming trend, we cannot rely on temperatures staying within the designated 9a range. My own records note temperatures down to -9 C at mid-January this year. In January of last year, I recorded -9 C and -10 C temperatures.

A recent email bulletin from Russell Nursery in North Saanich expanded on my unease. It reminded readers of the “Arctic Intrusion” of January 2024 that killed quite a few of the nursery’s 8a plants. The nursery reminds us that plant hardiness zones are based on averages and the recent changes in the zone map did not include data on the periods of hard freezing weather in the past two winters. . . We should take the new hardiness zones “with a hefty grain of salt.”



22nd Annual Qualicum Beach
Seedy Saturday
'It starts with a seed'

Qualicum Beach Civic Centre
Saturday, February 7, 2026
 10 am – 3:30 pm

- Seed Swap
- Master Gardeners answering questions
- Seed, Plant and Garden-Related Vendors
- Demos
- Educational Displays
- Children's Activity
- Door Prizes
- Seedy Café
- Raffle Draw (cash only)
- No ATM on site
- Pesticide/chemical drop off (in original package)



Admission: suggested \$5 donation

Qualicum Beach Seedy Saturday Association
www.qbseedysaturday.ca • qbsschair@gmail.com
 f qbseedysaturday • @ qbseedysaturday

**Edible Gifts:
 Hot Chocolate Mix**

- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/4 cup chocolate chips
- Marshmallows to fill the jar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- Optional add-ins (e.g. spices, crushed peppermint, espresso powder)

1. Using a 5 oz. size jar with a sealing lid, with a spoon layer in the cocoa powder followed by a layer of white sugar. Top those layers with the chocolate chips, and add mini or normal sized marshmallows to fill the jar.
2. Seal the jar and tie a cinnamon stick to the outside with ribbon or twine.

3. Add a tag for the recipient:



Recipe Note for Hot Chocolate Mix :
 Take the marshmallows off the top and set onto serving plate. Add the jar contents and the cinnamon stick to a pan with 4 cups of milk. Stir the mixture until it is hot, and ladle into mugs.
 Top with marshmallows and enjoy!

CHRISTMAS STORIES

The Christmas Robin

The robin is now synonymous with Christmas, a gift from the Victorians. The Christmas-robin origin story is pleasingly festive, and not very pagan. Victorian postmen wore red jackets, giving them the nickname Redbreasts or Robins. On early Christmas cards (the first of which appeared in the mid-1840s), the Redbreast Posties were shown delivering Christmas cheer. In the 1880s, card artists drew the namesake robin, which was often depicted perched on a red post box with a card clamped in its beak or claws. This has been a seasonal staple ever since.

The little bird was an appealing subject for Victorian Christmas card designers, and robins delivering Christmas cards have long since replaced images of overworked and underpaid Victorian postmen, joining carol singers, snowscapes, sleighs, carriages, snowmen, and Father Christmases as Christmas card must-haves.



There are many older traditions concerning robins, and their conspicuous presence in winter would have made them a natural subject for Christmas cards, even with the help of the postman. The bird has always been regarded with affection due to a combination of its lively, pugnacious behaviour (fuelled by a metabolism that gives it an astonishing 1,000 heartbeats per minute), its ball-like, toy-like shape when fluffed out in the winter, and its insistence on singing during the cold months when most other birds are sulking in silence.

Robins also appear in painted winter scenes from earlier centuries, their splash of red adding a dash of life and colour – like holly berries – to an otherwise grey or snow-washed world. So, it's more accurate to say that the Victorians cemented the association on their Redbreast Christmas cards rather than created the association.

Affection for the robin resulted in it being adopted as Britain's national bird in 1960, possibly because of the robin's fondness for nesting in human spaces such as potting sheds and old boots and kettles. The British robin is a subspecies, *Erithacus rubecula melophilus* (meaning "little red bird", with the subspecies name "song-loving") and is notably friendlier than other European robins, which are essentially shy woodland birds.

Friendliness translates into good luck, hence old sayings such as

"Good luck to you, good luck to me, good luck to every robin I see".

. . .with thanks to Lisa at lisaandherworld-lisah.blogspot.com

RECIPES

Christmas Wreath Salad

250 grams mixed lettuce leaf
 ½ small red onion finely sliced
 1 cup bocconcini (mini mozzarella)
 300 grams cherry tomatoes
 1 cup basil leaves

Dressing Ingredients:

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
 4Tbsp fresh lemon juice or
 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
 ½ tsp salt
 ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
 1 clove garlic minced

1. Mix the salad greens, ½ the basil leaves & the onion in a large bowl. Mix all of the dressing ingredients in a small jar and pour over the salad green mix, retaining a couple of tablespoons to drizzle over the salad.
2. Place the mixed salad greens into a wreath shape on a flat serving dish.
3. Garnish with tomatoes and basil leaves, creating mistletoe like shapes around the wreath. Dot with bocconcini balls. Drizzle with the remaining dressing.

Add or switch the salad ingredients nuts, cucumber, capsicum/peppers, olives etc.
thelowcarbdiabetic.blogspot.com



Apple Celeriac Soup

1 yellow onion chopped fine
 2 Tbsp olive oil
 5 garlic cloves sliced
 1 celeriac root peeled, & chopped in 1/2" chunks
 3 apples (your choice) peeled, cored, & chopped
 2 cups chicken stock
 2 to 4 cups spring water
 ¼ tsp red pepper flakes
 1 tsp thyme
 2 bay leaves
 salt and pepper to taste
 ¼ cup sugar if so desired



1. Sauté onions in olive oil for 3 minutes. Add garlic and sauté another minute. Add celeriac root, apples, & stock. Add spices & herbs. Cook till all is soft.
2. Blend till smooth (remove bay leaves). Add sugar if you think the soup is too bitter. Keeps in the fridge for 4 days or freezes well.

The frost may weave its silver thread,
 Across the earth where dreams have fled,
 Yet in the hush, a light still glows,
 A promise whispered through the snows.
 For every branch that bends with white,
 Holds buds asleep, awaiting light.

RECIPES

Christmas Wreath Salad

250 grams mixed lettuce leaf
 ½ small red onion finely sliced
 1 cup bocconcini (mini mozzarella)
 300 grams cherry tomatoes
 1 cup basil leaves

Dressing Ingredients:

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
 4Tbsp fresh lemon juice or
 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
 ½ tsp salt
 ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
 1 clove garlic minced

1. Mix the salad greens, ½ the basil leaves & the onion in a large bowl. Mix all of the dressing ingredients in a small jar and pour over the salad green mix, retaining a couple of tablespoons to drizzle over the salad.
2. Place the mixed salad greens into a wreath shape on a flat serving dish.
3. Garnish with tomatoes and basil leaves, creating mistletoe like shapes around the wreath. Dot with bocconcini balls. Drizzle with the remaining dressing.

Add or switch the salad ingredients nuts, cucumber, capsicum/peppers, olives etc.
thelowcarbdiabetic.blogspot.com



Apple Celeriac Soup

1 yellow onion chopped fine
 2 Tbsp olive oil
 5 garlic cloves sliced
 1 celeriac root peeled, & chopped in 1/2" chunks
 3 apples (your choice) peeled, cored, & chopped
 2 cups chicken stock
 2 to 4 cups spring water
 ¼ tsp red pepper flakes
 1 tsp thyme
 2 bay leaves
 salt and pepper to taste
 ¼ cup sugar if so desired



1. Sauté onions in olive oil for 3 minutes. Add garlic and sauté another minute. Add celeriac root, apples, & stock. Add spices & herbs. Cook till all is soft.
2. Blend till smooth (remove bay leaves). Add sugar if you think the soup is too bitter. Keeps in the fridge for 4 days or freezes well.

The frost may weave its silver thread,
 Across the earth where dreams have fled,
 Yet in the hush, a light still glows,
 A promise whispered through the snows.
 For every branch that bends with white,
 Holds buds asleep, awaiting light.