

Sustainable Home and Garden Series 2009

February 14 **Planning the 12 Month Veggie Garden** **Geoff Johnson**

Here in Victoria good planning makes it possible to harvest produce from our gardens during every month of the year. Knowing when to sow seeds is important. But it's just as crucial to know when and how to transition one crop to another. This presentation will show you how to make your garden more intensive by planning crop rotations.

February 28 **Mason Bees Part 1** **Gord Hutching**

March 7 **Planning Your Year Round Veggie Garden** **Geoff Johnson**

Have you ever experienced "invasion of the Giant Zucchini's" or "Tomato Fever" during later summer, only to find yourself harvesting from the produce isle as soon as winter hits? Learn to take advantage of the region's mild winters by spreading your veggie harvest throughout the entire year. With good design and planning, you can have broccoli and onions by early spring, just as your leeks and winter carrots are running out. In addition to year-round production, this workshop will also provide easy-to-follow guidelines for other key aspects of garden planning such as: siting the garden, pest prevention, crop selection/rotation, bed design options, and companion planting.

March 28 **No-Dig Veggie Gardening** **Geoff Johnson**

This workshop is for those who want more food and healthier soil for less work. Although repeatedly disturbing the soil is a time honoured agricultural tradition, it's not so romantic from the soil's point of view. In the backyard vegetable patch, regular shovelling, roto-tilling, and hoeing is unnecessary work that often damages the soil in several ways. This workshop, which works very well as an extension of "Ecological Soil Stewardship" will cover the mulch-oriented techniques and strategies that can be used to establish productive no-dig vegetable beds. Topics will include: the no-dig tradition (Faulkner, Fukuoka, Stout, Hazeliip etc.), designing the no-dig garden, various mulching techniques, seed sowing and transplanting, living mulches and utilizing crop residues.

April 4 **Compost Teas and Brews** **Phil Nauta**

Beneficial microorganisms play many essential roles in our gardens. In this class, we will look at these roles and discuss why these helpful critters are often lacking in the landscape. We will demonstrate some new ways by which we can bring them back, including aerated compost tea, effective microorganisms (EM), and Bokashi. We will talk about how to build a compost tea brewer, how to activate EM, and how to make Bokashi. These are incredibly fascinating, inexpensive, and

extremely useful methods of inoculating our gardens with the probiotics needed for optimal health.

- March 28** **No-Dig Veggie Gardening** **Geoff Johnson**
(see above)
- May 23** **Grow the Best Tomatoes** **Mary-Alice Johnson**
Topics covered include: 1. Spectrum of gardening techniques 2. From Love Apple to Beefsteak -The history of *Lycopersicon esculentum* 3. Types of tomatoes (Determinate vs. Indeterminate, Hybrid vs. open pollinated, Seed grown vs. tomato starts) 4. When and how to start (Frost free dates, Indoor vs. outdoor seeding) 5. What do tomatoes want? (Heat, Sun, Water, Pollination, Protection, Fertility) 6. Pruning and staking 7. Saving seed
- May 30** **Winter Veggie Gardening** **Geoff Johnson**
Here in Victoria good planning makes it possible to harvest produce from our gardens during every month of the year. Knowing when to sow seeds is important. But it's just as crucial to know when and how to transition one crop to another. This presentation will show you how to make your garden more intensive by planning crop rotations.
*This workshop will cover similar material to the Planning your Year round Veggie Gardening workshop but will focus on Winter Vegetable Production, season extension and crop specific rotation and management.
- June 20** **Organic Soil Health Management** **Robin Tunicliffe**
Soil chemistry for the home gardener: Have you toiled away all summer and had poor results: tiny onions, bug infested lettuces, and bland tasting carrots? You can blame some of these problems on imbalances in soil chemistry. Just like you need a blood test to tell you what's wrong with your body, you need to get a soil test to tell you what is going on with your soil. Balanced pH, and appropriate levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and micronutrients are essential for successful organic gardening. Learn about these elements, how to test your soil and how to make the most of your garden.
- June 27** **Composting & Gardening in Small Spaces** **Geoff Johnson**
For many of us urbanites, space is the most limiting factor in our efforts to grow food at home. However, with a little knowledge and creativity it's easy to produce fruits and veggies in the spaces we have available. In this workshop we'll explore space utilisation, appropriate plants, potting mixes, and even micro-composting techniques.
- July 11** **Green Roof Design** **Adam Weir**
- July 18** **Chickens in the City** **Angela & Maurita**

This workshop will cover: Lifecycle of chickens; Raising and sourcing day old chicks; Raising and sourcing point of lay hens (5 months old); Organic Standards; Coop and Run Designs; CRD bylaws; Feed and water requirements; Social behaviour; Troubleshooting bad behaviour, sickness and injury; Chicken tractors and permaculture integration techniques; and Tour of the City Farm and City chickens.

- August 9** **Organic Soil Health Management** **Jackie Robson**
Topics include: 1. Feeding the plant vs. feeding the soil 2. Soil texture (Clay – silt – sand – loam, Humus to correct clay and sand conditions) 3. pH levels 4. Macro vs. micronutrients and why they're needed 5. Soil testing 6. It's alive! 7. Ways to build, feed, maintain and protect your soil (Leave it alone!, Hot compost, Cool compost, Minerals, Mulch, Green Manures, Crop Rotation)
- September 26** **Seed Saving** **Mary-Alice Johnson**
- October 3** **Backyard Food Forests** **Geoff Johnson**
A food forest (or forest garden) is a food-producing garden that is modelled on the structure and function of natural woodland. By thoughtfully integrating species of fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, useful herbs and perennial veggies, you can develop a long-term food resource that is beautiful, dynamic, and relatively low-maintenance. In this workshop, we will look at how forest gardens work as well as what is involved in designing and developing them.
- October 17** **Grow the Best Garlic** **Robin Tunicliffe**
Garlic lovers unite! There are few garden crops more impressive than beautiful bulbs of garlic. Learn how to grow bountiful yields of delicious garlic. Topics covered include: an introduction to the many varieties, preparing the soil for planting, nurturing your crop, hanging and storage, and recipes to enjoy eating your harvest. Bring your favourite recipes to share with the group.
- October 24** **Grow the Best Mushrooms** **Justin Napier**
Although they may not know it, most gardeners are already mushroom growers! Find out just how easily delicious mushrooms can be grown by the home gardener. Techniques demonstrated will be the inoculation of straw or woodchip beds with grain and chip spawn. Also learn how to maximize your garden ecology by introducing fungi as mycorrhizae.
- November 14** **Propagating Food Plants** **Geoff Johnson**
Propagating your own food plants is a rewarding way to save money, increase self-reliance, and cultivate a deeper understanding of plants in general. Although more difficult techniques such as grafting are required to multiply some food plants, many more can easily be started from seed, cuttings, divisions, and layers. In this intro-level workshop

we will explore the basics of plant propagation and look at which methods work best for different types of plants.

November 21 **Mason Bees: Part II**

Gord Hutchings

Instructor Bios

Geoff Johnson

Geoff graduated from Linnaea Farm's permaculture design program in 1995, and has focused on studying, practicing, and teaching urban permaculture ever since. Over the past decade he has worked and volunteered with a variety of local organizations to develop several urban agriculture demonstration sites (including the area's first edible park, Spring Ridge Commons). As site educator at the Compost Education Centre (1999-2005) he launched his teaching career by developing and instructing a series of educational workshops on the practice of urban homesteading. Abroad, he has participated in several community agriculture projects in Australia and the Indian Himalayas, and completed a six month internship at the Bullock's Permaculture Centre in the Washington state. Currently, Geoff is developing a demonstration urban homestead and bike-powered food nursery in Fernwood where he practices the methods on which his workshops are based.

Jackie Robson

Confessing herself to be a fascinated plant fool, Jackie Robson was first motivated to learn organic growing by the simple desire to feed herself. The core idea of food security hit her all at once when talking to friend in the mid-80's. Her friend, Paul talked about city dwellers as sitting ducks with no ability to grow food and provide for themselves. At that moment, Jackie decided that she would learn everything she could about providing year-round organic produce.

That decision has lead Jackie down some surprising, twisty turns. She was first hired as the horticulturist for the Sooke Garden Project in 1988, going on to become coordinator/instructor for the Colwood Garden Project. Jackie went on to learn about the politics of food security by working as the garden coordinator for the PATH Project, (Promoting Action Toward Health), helping to found the Wark St. Commons. Jackie continues to work for the commons with other dedicated volunteers. She also gardens and gives tours at The Sooke Harbour House and works as head gardener at Pt. Ellice House, while working with friends and neighbours to create as many beautiful and functional gardens as she can.

Justin Napier

As an amateur mycologist, Justin is working hard at bringing mushrooms into the mainstream of ecology, gardening, and cuisine. With an extensive background in gardening, combined with a passion for mushroom foraging, Justin began growing his

first shiitake mushrooms eight years ago. Since then, he has grown his favorite varieties for pleasure and profit, both in the lab and at home

Phil Nauta

Phil Nauta is an organic gardener. He is certified in Organic Landscape Management from Gaia College, an amazing organization where I now teach. I am a SOUL (Society for Organic Urban Land Care) certified Organic Land Care Professional. SOUL is a non-profit organization for which he is the treasurer and webmaster.

He is the owner of *The Organic Gardener's Pantry*, a business that supplies compost tea brewers, effective microorganisms, and other organic products to organic gardeners (www.gardenerspantry.ca). He has also forayed into studying sustainable and natural building, and am certified in Sustainable Building and Design, as well as being a LEED AP.

Robin Turncliffe

Robin is an organic farmer and passionate food activist. She is a co-owner of Saanich Organics, a cooperative marketing business through which she and other local growers market their produce to Victoria-area residents and restaurants. She can be found at the Moss Street market in the summer and researching food policy issues at UVic in the winter. She has been farming for the past 10 years, and enjoys sharing her love of growing and eating with others. She is on the board of directors for UBC Farm, USC and Farmers without Borders.