

THE LATEST DIRT

WINTER
2002

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER VICTORIA COMPOST EDUCATION CENTRE

INSECTS IN THE GARDEN - EXPLORING PLANT GALLS

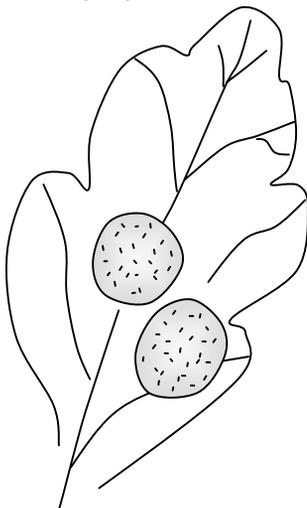
Many gardeners are apt to destroy or remove the unfamiliar from their plants; however, one of the great joys of your garden can also be learning about the amazing processes that happen there. The fun of the unexpected is one of the joys of gardening. The appearance of galls on plants can be unexpected for gardeners. Galls are the strange swellings, bumps or balls appearing on the leaves or stems of plants and are caused by insects.

Gall-makers start the process when they deposit their eggs into plant tissue. The plants respond to this stimulus with abnormal plant cell growth, forming galls of many different types - homes for the gall-maker's larvae. Depending on the species, intriguing swellings of many configurations may occur on various parts of plants.

It is estimated that almost 1,500 North American insect species cause galls - many of them wasps. Interestingly, 60 percent of known galls occur in the oak family, and 30 percent in the rose, willow and daisy families.

The thimbleberry is a member of the rose family and the galls found on them are the larval homes of tiny Cynipid wasps, *Diastrophus kincaidii*, as they go through the cycle of metamorphosis. Wild roses host interesting galls - one a beautiful mossy-looking formation on stems, another a spiny sphere on leaves.

By Sylvia Pincott



Oak Leaf Gall



Moss Gall or Bedeguar Gall



**Goldenrod Gall
(*Solidago Spp.*)**

These galls may house not only the original gall-maker, but also possibly a sequence of other insect species. Another Cynipid wasp, *Diplolepis rosae*, induces the mossy or bedeguar gall on wild roses. Each larva lives in a separate chamber within the gall. The larvae of other gall wasps, referred to as inquilines, may also be found in the same gall. Inquilines, however, do not cause their own galls, but always have to find one ready-made.

Also in this communal chamber may be the larvae of parasitic wasps that will feed on the developing gall-makers or the inquilines - either externally or from within! And then, to make it even more interesting, other intruders frequently feed on them!

The British Plant Gall Society suspects that there could be as many as 25 species living in the bedeguar gall insect community. The insect eventually emerging may not be the original gall-maker at all. It started the process but its larvae may have provided sustenance to many others and long since disappeared!

Galls are typically not harmful to plants and contain a diversity of life. They can be left alone to enjoy in the garden as one of the many mysteries of nature. By the way - be sure to leave those thimbleberry and goldenrod galls for the woodpeckers and chickadees as they don't harm the plant and are a wonderful wildlife benefit!



The Greater Victoria

COMPOST EDUCATION CENTRE

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Lynn Marie

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Hours of Operation

Wed. to Sat. 10 am to 4 pm
Closed on statutory holidays,
long weekends
and the month of December

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Newsletter Formatting

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T H A N K Y O U

Dear Readers,

In our last newsletter, we informed you of our short-term cash flow problem as a result of a delayed grant. We asked for your help to tide us through this period and many of you responded positively. We thank you for this. Your financial support through monetary donations, buying a raffle ticket, and renewing your Compost Club membership helped us through the months of September and October until the grant arrived at the end of October. Thank you for your generosity in supporting our valuable programs.

We would also like to recognize the board members and volunteers who put in many extra hours on behalf of the Centre. With two staff members laid off at that time, our programs would have suffered even more without their help.

Thank you also to Cannor Nursery for selling our kitchen containers for us at their Elk Lake Road location and to the many Garden Centres who sold raffle tickets for us.

With the arrival of the grant we were pleased to welcome back Louise Ditmars as our elementary schools educator and volunteer coordinator. We congratulate Pauline Brest van Kempen, our former office supervisor and secondary schools coordinator, who has since found a position with Habitat Acquisition Trust. For the last year, Pauline has been a highly motivated, efficient, and valuable member of our "compost team" We miss her already and wish her well.

As 2002 draws to a close, we celebrate the achievements of the Compost Centre this year, such as educating residents at over 40 community outreach events, increasing volunteer participation, and a higher attendance in on site workshops. In 2003 we look forward to exploring new areas for funding and continuing our diverse programs.

I thank you again for making this year possible.

Sincerely,
Lynn Marie
Coordinator

**Compost Hotline: 386-WORM
Hours: Wed-Sat 10am-4pm**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

We wish to extend our sincere thanks to the following people
for their generosity in donating to the Centre.

Angela Deering	Marjory E. Blair
Angela Evans	McGavin's Bread Basket
Ann Mariscak	Michelle Desjardins and Chris Gibson
Colleen Loader	Moira Davies
Elizabeth Garrett	Pat McMahan
Elizabeth Mulvey	Petra and Terry Gerard
Gaia Project	Planet Organic
Janet Simpson	Robin and Cedar Boodle
Jeanette Funke-Furber	Robin Grant
Kathy Cook	Shane Ford
Leanne Harrison	Thrifty Foods
Linda Beare and John Olafson	Walter Meyer Zu Erpen
	Wellburn's Market

We gratefully acknowledge the core funding support that we receive from the CRD and the City of Victoria. Additional support is provided by the Fernwood Community Association and through the generosity of our Compost Club Members and the residents of Greater Victoria.



COAST CAPITAL SAVINGS GIVES AWARD AND FAX MACHINE

On November 6th, Coast Capital Savings Credit Union presented the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre with an Eco-Star Community Environmental Award. The ceremony, at Crystal Gardens, celebrated the “outstanding environmental commitment on the part of individuals, businesses and groups in our community”. As the band played in the background, president Angela Deering and coordinator Lynn Marie proudly accepted the Eco-Star award and \$1000 from Coast Capital Savings Credit Union.

Thank you, Coast Capital Savings, for your donation and for recognizing our work in the field of environmental education. We would also like to note that the giving didn't end there! While attending the ceremony, Coast Capital Savings became aware of our need for a fax machine to replace our older, unreliable model. They then generously donated one of theirs to the Compost Centre. We thank Coast Capital Savings for this thoughtful contribution.

VOLUNTEER UPDATE

On September 15th a team of determined volunteers banded together to climb Mt. Finlayson. It was our 2nd annual volunteer appreciation hike and BBQ which took place again this year at Goldstream Park. Following the hike, volunteers and staff relaxed with some burgers and other refreshments while reminiscing about the past year. Thank you again to all those who have volunteered with the Centre in 2002.

If you have visited the Centre recently you will have noticed that the site and gardens sure look good! For the past few months, informal work parties have been taking place on Saturdays, with compost turning, weeding, worm bin making and more being done by volunteers. With a chance to socialize and make a difference at the same time, these work parties will start again in January. For more information, or to get involved, call Geoff at 386-9676.

RAFFLE WRAP UP

On September 4th at UVic's Earth Fest, VI Land TV's EnviroMental host Briony Penn drew five winning names for the Centre's 10th anniversary fundraising raffle.

The winners are as follows:

Grand prize: J. Miller

2nd prizes: B. Yarish and S. Miller

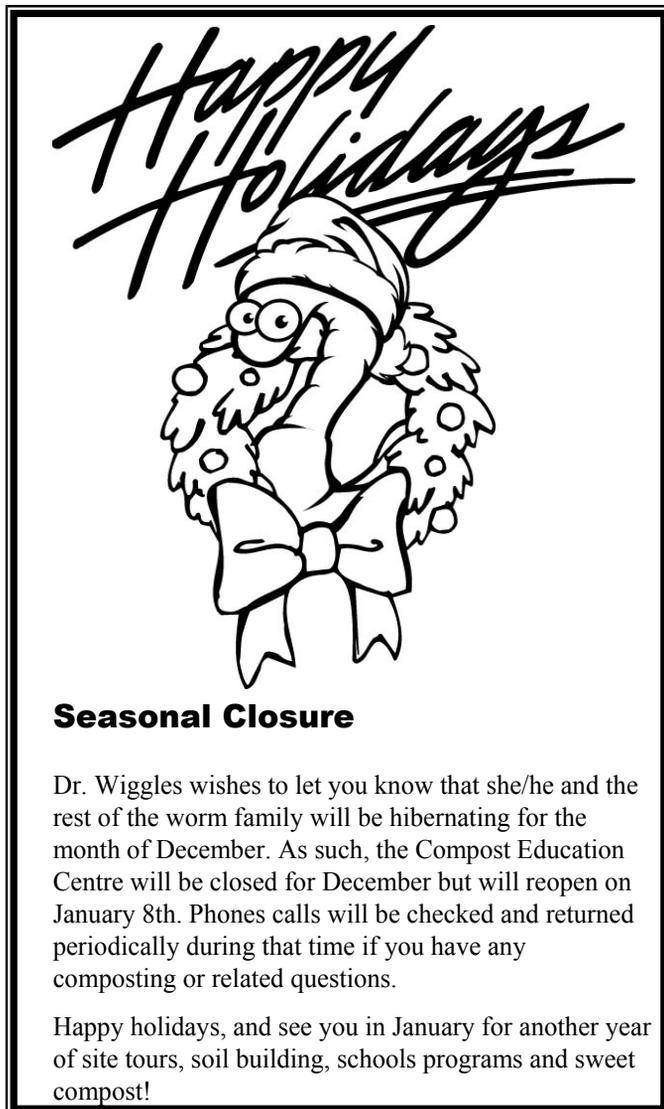
3rd prizes: J. Mara and J. Hockin

Thank you very much to Fiona Chambers for her help with the raffle. Even with a very busy schedule, she chose to devote her fundraising efforts to the Compost Centre this year. We greatly appreciated her leadership, time, and expertise with the raffle.

Thank you also to the volunteers, staff and following partners who sold raffle tickets to raise funds for our education programs: Borden Mercantile, Solstice Café, GardenWorks in Oak Bay and on Blenkinsop, Dig This in Bastion Square, Fairfield Bicycle Shop, Cannor Nursery, and The Garden Path Nursery.

FUNGI FINDS NEW HOME

Fungi has found a new home! We're not talking about those microscopic organisms found in a compost pile, but Fungi the cat. Fungi adopted us about a year ago when he decided life on the streets was too tough and wanted the comforts of a warm office. Although he was a welcome addition to our Centre, we felt he needed more love and care than we were able to give him. Fungi now resides in the Highlands near Mt. Work. His new family describe him as well adjusted, and happy. With lots of good food at his disposal, he is sometimes affectionately referred to him as “Fatso” and has developed a bit of a waddle and pot belly. Ah, life is good. Enjoy your new living arrangements, Fungi!



Seasonal Closure

Dr. Wiggles wishes to let you know that she/he and the rest of the worm family will be hibernating for the month of December. As such, the Compost Education Centre will be closed for December but will reopen on January 8th. Phone calls will be checked and returned periodically during that time if you have any composting or related questions.

Happy holidays, and see you in January for another year of site tours, soil building, schools programs and sweet compost!



WANT TO TURN THAT CHRISTMAS TREE INTO MULCH?

CRD Environmental Services provided this list of chipping services. For an updated list, call their hotline 360-3030 or email the CRD at hotline@crd.bc.ca

Oak Bay Firefighters

When: January 4 & 5 (9 am – 4:30 pm)
Where: Oak Bay Fireman's Park at 1703 Monterey Avenue
Details: Trees will be chipped in exchange for a donation to the Oak Bay Secondary Education Bursary.

Romanian Children and Medical Aid Projects

When: January 4 & 5, 11 & 12 (10 am - 4 pm)
Where: Town & Country Shopping Centre
Details: Trees will be chipped in exchange for a donation to the Romanian Children and Medical Aid Projects.

Esquimalt Kiwanis Club

When: January 11 & 12 (9 am - 5 pm)
Where: Archie Browning Sports Centre, 1151 Esquimalt Road
Details: Trees will be chipped in exchange for a donation to the Esquimalt Kiwanis Club.

The Lions Society of BC

When: January 4 & 5 (10 am - 4 pm)
Where: Broadmead Village Shopping Centre
Tillicum Shopping Centre
University Heights Shopping Centre
Hillside Shopping Centre
CanWest Shopping Centre
Safeway Parking lot, at corner of Fort & Foul Bay
Details: Trees will be chipped in exchange for a donation to the Vancouver Island Easter Seal House.

The Sidney Lions Club

When: January 4 (10 am - 4 pm)
Where: Iroquois Park at the intersection of Lochside Drive & Ocean Avenue.
Details: The Sidney Lions Club will chip trees in exchange for a donation. Only Christmas trees will be chipped. All chips will be used on the town's local pathways.

Tree Preparation

Please remove all screws, nails, lights and ornaments from the Tree before recycling. These items may be potentially hazardous if passed through chipping equipment.

Disclaimer

This is NOT a CRD program and this information is provided only as a courtesy for the convenience of area residents. All chipping locations are independently operated and the CRD accepts no responsibility for any of the chipping services.



NEW BABY

Congratulations to new parents Donna Sanford & Dean Fortin!

Donna, a Board member, and Dean met their daughter, Sophie Sheng, in the Anhui Province in China on October 21st and arrived home in Canada with her on November 1st. Sophie Sheng, 14 months old, has been likened to a squirmy worm and on a recent visit to the Compost Centre met up with her wiggling counterparts. With her wide smile and active limbs, she is happy to be in Canada with her new family. Congratulations also to dad, Dean, on being elected to Victoria City Council.

After many years as a volunteer with the Centre, Donna is stepping down from the Board of Directors, although plans to stay involved as a volunteer as time permits. Donna joined the board of directors in 1997 after completing the Master Composter Volunteer Program in 1996. She served as president for two of those six years. We will miss her great perspective, editing skills, feedback and positive attitude. Thank you Donna for all your years of time and support.

THE LATEST DIRT is published quarterly. The deadline for submissions for the spring issue is February 1, 2003. Submissions to the newsletter can be sent to the Compost Education Centre. Unless otherwise noted, articles appearing in this newsletter may be reprinted only in other not-for-profit publications, with the credit given to the author (when named) and **THE LATEST DIRT**.