



University of Victoria

# University Finnerty Garden Friends

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## July 2007

Dear Friends,

This year for the first time in over 20 years, I missed both the plant sale and the Finnerty Gardens guided tours held on Mother's Day. However, I hear that both were a great success. The plant sale, in spite of the weather, grossed substantially more than last year—a wonderful result. And the tours were attended by some 300 people—it was a gorgeous day for them. I am sure that others will report in more detail on both events.

I have been asked by several people to report on the hummingbird study. The only ones I have here are the rufous. The study is sponsored by the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, and their goal is to have banding stations all over North and South America and, I think, the islands of the Caribbean, the only areas where hummingbirds are found. They do not exist in Europe, Asia or Australia.

Cam Finlay is the coordinator for British Columbia, and he first started banding on an informal basis at my home on Galiano in 1998. At the present moment, all banding stations follow the same protocol—they band every second week from late March to early July, starting within one half hour of sunrise and banding until eleven, recording many details about the birds caught. The birds are trapped in a mesh cylinder suspended about a feeder. The feeder has collapsible sides which are dropped when a bird comes in to feed. The birds are easy to catch in the hands, are wrapped in little blankets of flannelette which are fastened with a pin and placed on a wrapped hot

water bottle to keep them warm. They are then weighed (females weigh about 4 grams and males about 3), checked for parasites, their wing and beak lengths measured, feather colour on their throat recorded, and a variety of other checks made. The females are checked for visible eggs—they carry two tiny ones—and inspected to see if they are brooding. They do



*Anna's Hummingbird*  
 photo: UVic Photo Services

not get a brood patch but use the warmth of their upper legs to hatch the eggs. After all of the data has been collected, they are given

a good feed of syrup. I keep records of the amount of syrup I mix during the hummingbirds' season from mid March to early July (one cup of white sugar to four cups of water) and this gives a good estimate of the minimum number of hummingbirds feeding here. This year, I have so far made 187 litres. Last year the total on the same date was 172 litres, and the 2005 total was 108 litres. In May, they eat about six litres each day, giving a conservative estimate of 1,500 birds feeding here (they eat their own weight in food each day), based on the assumption that they eat only at my feeders, and that is far from what happens.

Now about the banding. Each time, they catch many birds that have been banded here before but they have never caught one banded at another station. The birds are from two main groups—those in residence near my home, and those on their migration north. The rufous are found as far north as Alaska, a very long flight for those birds from their wintering grounds in the southern United States and Mexico. About 30% of the mature birds caught were banded here at an earlier date, some as long ago as 2001. For example, on May 21, they caught 58 individuals, 14 male and 44 female. Two (one male and one female) were this year's juveniles. Thirteen birds had been captured here before—four earlier in 2007, eight in 2006, and one in 2004. On May 7, 53 were captured, of who 19 had been banded earlier, four in 2007, eight in 2006, three in 2005 and four in 2004. On both of the above dates, many birds were captured more than once—I guess they got

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hungry since all feeders except those with traps are removed. On the 7th, two males were caught eight and nine times, respectively. On the 21st, 16 individual birds were captured more than once, including two who were caught eight times each! It appears that they do not find being caught a very traumatic experience! These records of repeated catches are useful in that they give an estimate of the ages of the rufous hummingbirds—originally it was thought that they probably lived only for about two years.

From now on, there will be an increasing number of juveniles in each catch—some local and others on their way south. The last banding session will be held early in July, and after that there are few birds around. I should note that in Victoria, Anna's are present

all year, but so far they have not set up housekeeping here.

I should also note that the number caught depends on the weather on the particular day and on the amount of other feed around. At the present moment, the native red-orange honeysuckle is in bloom as is my large Hall's honeysuckle, and they feed heavily on both of these. If any of you are interested in finding out more about the Hummingbird Monitoring Network, they have a web site at <http://www.hummonnet.org>.

Have a great summer.

*Betty Kennedy  
University of Victoria  
Finnerty Garden Friends*

*Wood Anemones (Garden of Memories)*

*Photo: Margaret deWeese*

# The First and the Last Garden

Margaret deWeese

In ancient writings it is written the first garden was that of Eden. Do you wonder whether we are looking down the short end of a telescope to the Last Garden? A few weeks ago on the television there was a predicted scenario of a weather broadcaster in 2050 standing in front of a brown map of the British Isles, and plastered over all the main cities were day temperatures of between 35°C and 40°C. Now in Marrakesh this would be normal and the few gardens that survive there do so because of underground water which comes to the surface in the form of oases.

Here in Victoria we quietly put up with rain and gray skies. After all, the water and mild temperatures are the reasons we live in such a garden paradise. Warm Mediterranean summers, fairly reasonable rainfall distributed throughout the year, mild winters and zephyrs of wind. Not so this past year.

Because of El Nino, the movement of the jet stream northward, the overuse of water reserves, world temperatures about a degree warmer than the norm, and greenhouse gas eating up the ozone cover, we seem headed down that path to the Last Garden.

Then I heard of the scientific studies of Global Dimming, when air-borne pollutants line the clouds to reflect back the sun's rays into space, thereby making evaporation time on the ground longer and keeping the overheating carbon dioxide levels cooler than they otherwise would be. Should the smoke pollutants

problem be fixed then the carbon dioxide heat levels will apparently rise much more than the one degree that we are experiencing now.

I know I have to take responsibility for my planet, the most beautiful garden in our solar system. Rhododendrons are very thirsty shrubs but they shouldn't take more than their fair share of the allotted water. Fortunately I have a natural pond which I use to bucket water nearby shrubs. Not an easy task but great for building upper arm muscle and much cheaper than a subscription to a gym!

I find it incredible to learn that for 2007 the luxury auto manufacturers—Rolls Royce, Mercedes Benz, and Jaguar—have unveiled even yet bigger fossil fuel guzzlers. Do they think that

the wealthy—for these cars cost in the range of a half million dollars each—are not responsible for their harmful fuel emissions? Are they not heeding or listening to what is going on? Or is it that they don't notice? It seems to me that amongst other caring citizens, gardeners and farmers notice what is happening.

Although I have planted for the future, I now wonder whether my trees will be able to survive the increases and decreases: the pests, the heat, and the sinking ground table water levels. I won't be around to see the Last Garden, and I don't envy those who will.



*Hibiscus syriacus* Woodbridge Photo: Daphne Donaldson



# The Plant Sale Goes Electronic

*Judith Terry*

Cultivating one's garden, getting dirt under the fingernails and giving those rooted things some tender loving care is the perfect antidote to the mad-nesses of the modern world. No wonder when spring comes there is a rush to get into the garden. I do not shy away from electronic marvels, but sometimes they give me a lot of trouble. Never mind, I say to myself, as I plug away at finding the source of error which has choked my computer or printer, this keeps the old grey matter turning over. But I am pleased in an obscure way that for the UVic Plant Sale I must gather together shoeboxes for the checkouts.

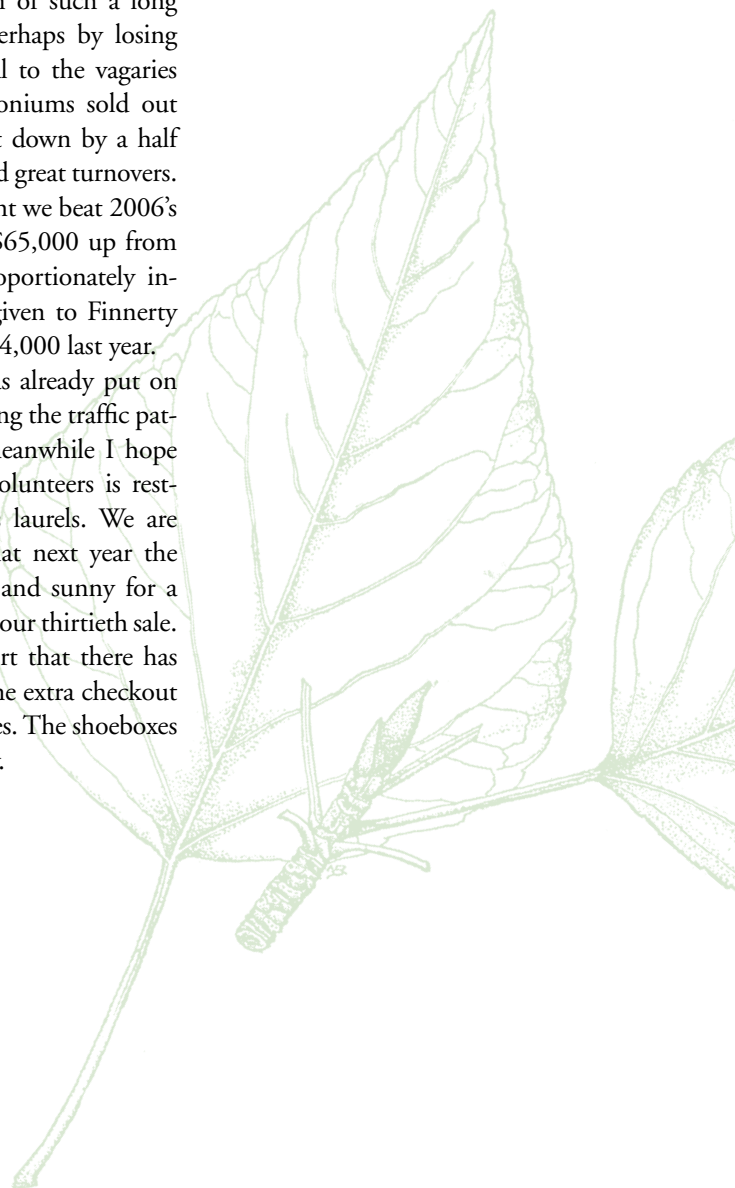
This year, however, as I counted the re-cycled ones and added to their number, I was aware of changes coming and challenges to be met. With the skilled and infinitely patient assistance of many folk around campus, six of the seven checkouts were set up to process payments electronically. In the past we have had just one, and it certainly speeds up payment dramatically. But we also discovered that we must change traffic patterns, since the cables that carry the data and run under the rubber floor mats are too delicate to sustain the weight of buggies being run over them. Quite a knotty problem.

What a cold, showery, blustery day it was. Certainly enough to bring out goose bumps on the volunteers near the exit doors, and not, you would think, the best weather for bringing out customers. But the



queue was there as always, driven perhaps by the frustration of such a long gloomy season, and perhaps by losing more plants than usual to the vagaries of the weather. Pelargoniums sold out completely, Ferns went down by a half – in fact all the stalls had great turnovers. Much to our amazement we beat 2006's record take: just over \$65,000 up from \$60,200. This will proportionately increase the sum to be given to Finnerty Gardens, which was \$24,000 last year.

The Committee has already put on its thinking cap regarding the traffic patterns next year, and meanwhile I hope our faithful band of volunteers is resting contentedly on its laurels. We are certainly all hoping that next year the weather will be warm and sunny for a significant anniversary: our thirtieth sale. I am also glad to report that there has been a call to restore one extra checkout to take cash and cheques. The shoeboxes will still come in handy.



# Finnerty Gardens Mother's Day Tour

May 12, 2007

*Anne Mace*

Our Finnerty Gardens Tour was a popular outing for many on Mother's Day. We began the day early with a special tribute to John Trelawney, a long-time supporter and board member of Finnerty Gardens. His wife, Ruth; two of his daughters, Jill and Daphne; one of his sons, Patrick; and many family members joined us to dedicate a Magnolia "Colossus" donated by the Trelawney family to be planted in his memory. Carmen acknowledged John's contribution to the Advisory Board and his enthusiasm and passion for plants from bulbs to large trees. We strolled through the gardens to admire a large Acer Negundo "Flamingo" that the Advisory Board donated to the garden in John's honour.

It was a beautiful day to share some stories and fond memories. The tour was well received once again with a constant stream of smiling visitors. The gardens were looking fantastic thanks to the efforts of Rhonda and her staff. It was hard to recall the destruction



*John Trelawny Tribute  
Photo: Anne Mace*

from the terrible winter. We provided a map of the garden along with a very informative self-guided tour. They will now be available in the Chapel for Rhonda to hand out to those who are interested.

The Rhodos were show stoppers and "Mrs. Josephine Firth" in full bloom with a delicate fragrance was certainly a highlight. People were fascinated with the orange peeling bark of the Acer griseum and the dramatic leaves of the Gunnera prompted exclamations! As the cameras were clicking, "This is a Hidden Treasure!" was a common phrase reverberating along the trails.

We estimate 300 people enjoyed the garden tours as well as the refreshments and goodies.

Thanks to the board members, Rhonda Rose, Bentley Sly (curator) and Shirley Lyon for making this an excellent event!



*Gathering for guided tours  
Photo: Anne Mace*



## Garden of Memories

*Margaret deWeese*

Some gardens grow from memories such as plants which can be identified with certain friends who gave cuttings or a small rooted plant of something admired in his or her garden. I am afraid my garden has more memories of plants which no longer exist but the memories of those friends remain. So, a walk around the garden is something I like to experience at least once a day to look out for changes and remember how it used to be.

One of my parents' friends, Ethel, affectionally known as Gitchie, always had her spade at the ready to give me a bit of this and that. In my garden her gifts of a creamy white primrose and a

small clump of Wood Anenomes has been divided and divided and divided, until now the ground is creamy white in Spring with Gitchie's memory.

The gazebo with its trailing white *Wisteria chinensis* and a beautiful many-splendored cupped *Magnolia souleanana* were gifts from teaching friends so many years ago and homes to many bird families. A Christmas Spruce in a pot from wandering Ann, who lived at the time in a float house at Fisherman's Wharf, long since planted and which now towers overhead nine meters high. We wait for Ann to return to see how amazed she will be to find again her little tree.

There are also treasures from the raffle tables of many a meeting, these plants being special because they are won out of all odds to be part of this garden. My *Itea* rooted cutting from Dr. McTaggart Cowan who donated it

to the raffle table is now a brightly coloured feature across the pond, searing with reds in the autumn.

And of course, there are the special plants I have bought over the years, some growing to expectation, many others, sadly, have not. But I remember the fun in buying them and if you ask me, I would rather have spent the money on that little plant which didn't quite make it, than on something unmemorable for my dark closet.



*Wisteria chinensis* Photo: Margaret deWeese

# A Progress Report

*R. Bentley Sly, Curator*

Once again, I thank Sam Macey for the opportunity to include a few lines about the Finnerty Gardens and other items of interest on the University campus.

I wonder if any of the Friends of the Gardens are thinking as I am that spring seemed to arrive quickly this year and then passed by with just about the same relentless pace. First the annual plant sale with all of the planning, preparation and the flurry of activity on sale day followed by the magnificent bloom of the Gardens just in time for the Mother's Day guided tours. And here we are, well into June and headed toward summer. Where does the time go?

Speaking of the plant sale, it was my first experience observing this event and I have to admit, I was impressed. Everything went like clockwork and everyone involved with the planning, preparation and set-up at sale time as well as the clean-up afterward is to be commended for their enthusiasm, interest and commitment to ensuring the success of this event. While the weather did not completely co-operate, the support from the gardening community was beyond comparison. Numbers in attendance were up and sales exceeded those of previous years. Also, a quick note to recognize the Grounds team for their work in the background to set-up and put everything back in place afterward.

The Mother's Day guided tours of the Gardens were also a huge success. Attendance was up, the Gardens were at their very blooming best and the seemingly endless supply of cookies, were, according to Carmen Varcoe, Chair of the Gardens Advisory Board, "inhaled". A big thank you goes to



*Rest and refreshments following guided tours Photo: Anne Mace*

Shirley Lyon for arranging the seemingly endless supply of goodies. As well, an extra big thank-you to all those members who volunteered to act as tour guides for the afternoon. I would also like to recognize the Grounds team for their effort in preparing the Gardens for this event. How quick we are to forget what the damage to the Gardens looked like immediately following the winter snow and wind storms.

I thought I would also include a couple of items of interest with regard to recent happenings here on campus. The new Social Science and Mathematics Building is well on its way to being completed as is preparation for the installing of the new green roof. The project team at Facilities Management has advised me that every effort is being made to ensure this building receives a Leed rating that is reflective of the University of Victoria's commitment to leadership in sustainability. Several other building projects are in varying stages of development and construction but more on this at a later date.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Rhonda Rose on her recent appointment to the position of Grounds supervisor responsible for landscape horticulture at the University campus. Rhonda will remain a guiding influence in the Finnerty Gardens but now moves up to play a larger role in influencing the horticultural direction of the greater campus "garden".



*First place winner Photo: Margaret deWeese*

## Garden Shows

*Margaret deWeese*

Every year Victoria blooms with garden shows. Members of the local societies of separate genres put a lot of loving work into showing the public the best from their gardens. Some shows are judged while others are for display, but the honour of winning a ribbon in these competitions is greatly valued.

Special growers set up stalls to sell plants which are hard to find in nurseries. Be warned that members find these sales hard to resist.

Most societies are non-profit organizations which meet regularly throughout the year, bringing in speakers from the island, the province and around the world to keep their members up to date with travels, new findings and other conventions of their favourite flowers, mushrooms, trees, alpines, Bonsai, or ferns. These clubs always welcome new members, so if you are interested you may contact their websites for information.

The general run of the programme includes a Raffle Table with choice plants where the odds are much better than the lottery and a Bargain Table of donated plants from members' gardens and at \$ 2 per plant you can't beat that at any garden centre! An interesting main speaker is followed by browsing through an excellent library of every Timber Press book on Horticulture for a loan of a month. The public library can't beat that....and just gentle reminders if your book is overdue with no fines! And chatting with likeminded people over tea, coffee and donated goodies finishes an early evening.

I think it is the best value in town. Fees vary but they mainly cover the cost of the hall rental with the Show and Sale financing the speakers for the year. There are bonuses of celebrations in December and June, again showing that most gardeners are gourmet cooks.

September is the start of the new garden club year, so keep it in mind when you are planning your calendar.



*Garden show blooms  
Photo: Margaret deWeese*

Further information on Gardening Societies in the Victoria area can be found on the following websites:

### **Peninsular Rose Club**

<http://www.nurserysite.com/clubs/peninsular/>

### **Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society**

<http://victoria.tc.ca/Recreation/VIRAGS/>

### **Victoria Horticultural Society**

<http://vhs.homestead.com/>

### **Hardy Plant Group**

<http://victoria.tc.ca/Recreation/VHS/>

### **Native Plants / Ferns**

<http://www.npsq.ca>

### **South Vancouver Island Mycological Society**

<http://www.svims.ca/>

### **Vancouver Island Bonsai Club**

<http://www.victoriabonsai.bc.ca/>

### **Victoria Rhododendron Society**

<http://www.victoriarhodo.ca>

### **The Container-Garden Club**

<http://container-garden-vic.tripod.com/>

### **Victoria Geranium & Fuchsia Society**

[http://members.tripod.com/geranium\\_society\\_vic/](http://members.tripod.com/geranium_society_vic/)

### **Victoria Heather Society**

[http://society.victoria.tc.ca/show\\_rec.cgi/202](http://society.victoria.tc.ca/show_rec.cgi/202)

### **Victoria Gladiolus & Dahlia Society**

Jo or Hank Iverson 250-592-1997

### **B.C. Fruit Testers Association**

[http://www.islandnet.com/\\_bcfta/](http://www.islandnet.com/_bcfta/)

### **View Royal Garden Club**

Mail: 716 Eastridge Place, Victoria, B.C. V8Z 6B9

### **MEMBERSHIP:**

Membership in the Friends of Finnerty Gardens is \$10 per year (single or couple). Membership includes an informative newsletter published four times a year. Funds raised through membership support enhancements within the Gardens which would not be possible otherwise.

This newsletter is also available on the University of Victoria's website at: <http://www.external.uvic.ca/gardens/>. If you would prefer to view it electronically rather than in hard copy, please let us know and we'll update our mailing list accordingly.