



Vancouver

November 1, 2008

The Newsletter of SOUL Vancouver
www.organiclandcare.org/branches/Vancouver/

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Photo by J.R. Rendón

"Trees are the earth's endless effort to speak to the listening heaven."

...Rabindranath Tagore, *Fireflies* (1928)

Message from the Chair

By Martin Harcourt

Laying down the mulch.



I hope everyone had too much candy on Halloween, I had my share. Lisa and I attended the social justice film festival in Agassiz for SOUL in November. We saw three great films and Lisa commented that a video library of these types of documentary programs would be a good idea. Apparently Gaia College already has some and Lisa is going to purchase more. The films we saw dealt with religious conflict, so-called Green power projects, and genetically modified seed. In each case we were shown how to be proactive and could voice our opinion on such subjects. I guess as we get older we want to contribute to society instead of watching it develop around us. I was surprised by the number of people that did not vote in Canada at our last election. 13.7million people did not vote.

I have been an employer for 25 years and over the years I have had more employees than I can recall. I have heard many excuses for being late or absent from work. I remember an employee that said he had to take his sister to the hospital because etc. And I said I was not interested in his/her excuse! The emphatic retort was that it was not an excuse! -- Because it was legitimate. As if everybody else who gave me an excuse was lying. My explanation is as follows (and I say this to all the employees with gusto): "I don't care if you were trampled by elephants or you are lying through your teeth, just call me and tell me you can't make it or are gonna be late!" Not too much to ask is it? We have advanced balloting and absentee balloting. It's easy to do and anyone can do it. I think if all the Afro-Americans and other minorities had not

Correction

In the October issue of the SOUL Vancouver Newsletter, the Book Review of Paul Tukey's 'The Organic Lawn Care Manual' incorrectly identified Timber Press as the book's publisher. Storey Publishing, Timber's sister press, is the actual publisher of the book.

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voted, McCain would be continuing with the destruction of our planet based on the Bush doctrine. Well, it's a choice. And that's all I will say on that.

We have a meeting coming up on Nov 13 and we will be plotting and scheming ways to party before the holidays so now is the time to show up and vote on the theme, place and time.

Until then -- use the fork people and pile those leaves in the garden!

MARTAN!

The SOUL Vancouver Newsletter is published ten times per year by the Vancouver Branch of the Society for Organic Urban Landcare.

This newsletter is distributed free of charge to all SOUL Vancouver members. Please feel free to share this publication. Permission to reprint any materials originally published in this newsletter may be granted upon written request.

Our Mission:

"To support our communities in their transition to organic practices."

Our Goals:

- To foster and promote the practice of organic land care
- To provide opportunities for education in all aspects of organic land care.
- To establish and promote guidelines, standards and specifications for all aspects of organic land care.
- To establish procedures for certification of organic land care practitioners
- To establish and develop a means for the exchange of information and ideas between the public and the organic land care industry.

Editor's Note: Any information, articles or photos that you feel would be of interest to our members would be greatly appreciated. Please forward your submissions to OMGVolunteerHours@gmail.com by the 25th of each month to receive consideration for publication in a subsequent issue of the SOUL Vancouver Newsletter. Bylines and photo credits will be acknowledged wherever applicable.

Cover Photo: 'Tree Reaching Skyward' taken by J.R. at Van Dusen Botanical Garden. Have a photo you'd like to see on the cover of the newsletter? Send it to the Editor!

Wildlife Garden Project kicks off



Photo courtesy Wildlife Rescue Association

The much-anticipated Wildlife Garden Project was officially kicked off at SOUL Vancouver's Oct. 9 meeting. Guest Speaker for the evening was Paulette Tercier, the Wildlife Garden coordinator for the Wildlife Rescue Centre in Burnaby who brought along some slides and a Wish List of priorities to help illustrate her expectations for the project.

Envisioned as a long-term collaborative effort, the Wildlife Garden Project will enlist the elbow-grease and expertise of SOUL Vancouver volunteers in helping to reclaim and rejuvenate the Wildlife Garden which has been largely neglected over the years due to a lack of readily available manpower and expertise. Tercier showed several pictures of the garden in its current state while discussing the 'Wish List' she has developed to guide its transformation. As work proceeds and items on the current list of priorities are completed, she will continue to revise it, adding other desired projects as time goes on.

Joining Tercier was Linda Bakker, the volunteer coordinator for the Rescue Centre. Her presentation provided everyone in attendance at the meeting -- including Catherine Dale's current class of OMG students -- with the Orientation instruction that is mandatory for anyone who volunteers at the Rescue Centre complex.

Three levels of volunteer work are anticipated for the Wildlife Garden Project. Initially, students in the OMG Basic Course, under Catherine's supervision, will be doing practical applications of work they have learned in the classroom -- composting, sheet mulching and garden bed installation, etc. These activities will be based upon projects outlined in the Wish List -- for example, preparing and installing a Native Plant Demonstration Garden, or a Butterfly Garden, etc. Pruning workshops for students will also be conducted (Continued on Page 4)

SOUL Vancouver Executive Committee

Chair: Martin Harcourt
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Treasurer: Barb Bancroft
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SOUL Board Liaison: Lee de Rosenroll
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OMG Coordinator: J.R. Rendón
Email: jrendon@organiclandcare.org
Event Coordinator: Open
Speaker Series Coordinator: J.R. Rendón
Email: jrendon@organiclandcare.org

To contact *all* SOUL Vancouver members, use the listserv account: soul_vancouver@lists.onenw.org Please note that replying to an email sent through the listserv will send your response to *all* SOUL Vancouver members. To reply to a specific member's email, use the 'Forward' command and then copy and paste that individual's email address into the 'TO' line.

Upcoming SOUL Vancouver Meetings

SOUL Vancouver monthly meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of every month (except in August and December) at 7:30pm in the Canada Way Education Centre at 5310 Woodsworth St. in Burnaby, BC.

A special guest speaker is featured at most meetings and a social with tea, coffee and goodies follows at around 8:45pm.

Speakers Series Calendar:

November 13, 2008 - 'Growing Pains: Invasive Plants in Greater Vancouver', presented by Cindy Sayre, Curator of Special Collections at VanDusen Botanical Gardens and Board Member of the Greater Vancouver Invasive Plant Council.

December 7, 2008 - SOUL Visioning Symposium. At the Canada Way Education Centre in Burnaby. Other Details TBA.

December 2008 - Annual Christmas/Holiday Season Party. Date and details TBA. (No December meeting.)

January 8, 2009 - Movie Night: 'The World According to Monsanto.'

February 12, 2009 - Extended Executive Meeting. No Guest Speaker scheduled.

(Wildlife Garden Project, continued from Page 3)
at the Wildlife Garden.

OMGers who have already completed the Basic Course can also opt to participate in the project by arranging to commit a number of their annual Volunteer Hours to working in the Wildlife Garden. OMGers could choose to work individually or in pairs according to their own schedules and there are expected to be many opportunities to apply expertise or focus on specific areas of interest such as Native Plants, Butterfly Gardens, Bog Habitats, etc.

Rounding out the program will be occasional one-day efforts where volunteers will be enlisted from the entire SOUL Vancouver membership to help with such focused tasks as installing a path or clearing a designated area of invasive plants. These would be tasks determined as essential for facilitating other desired projects in the garden and would likely be labor-intensive in nature; but they will also present the opportunity for as many SOUL Vancouver members as possible to work alongside each other in contributing to this unique project.

For more information on how to become involved in the Wildlife Garden Project, or what is required to fulfill the Orientation requirement, contact the OMG Committee at OMGVolunteerHours@gmail.com.

Donate a book, get a Lending Library in return

First there was some talk, and now there's about to be some action. At the last meeting of the SOUL Vancouver Executive, it was agreed that the germ of an idea for a Lending Library for our Branch was in need of some pollination and so the call is going out now to all members to consider helping out by donating any used books or DVDs you might have lying around that you think might be of interest to other members.

Gardening references and of course, books on topics related specifically to organic gardening, would be welcome, as would anything having to do with 'green living' or ecology. If the topic is one that relates in any way to 'Organic Urban Land Care', then it would certainly find a good home and lots of use in our budding Lending Library.

A small number of titles have already been gathered -- including via a generous donation by new member Deborah Jones of a copy of her book 'Lawrence and the Rain Garden'. But with no budget for purchases at this time, it is going to take a collective effort to get *(Continued on Page 5)*

Events and Announcements

We have just completed our first year of participation in the Vancouver-area Farmers Markets, but plans are already underway for SOUL Vancouver and its OMG program to continue hosting Information Tables throughout next year's Summer/Fall season. This year, we hosted five Information Tables at Trout Lake, Riley Park, Kits and the West End. In addition to these, we hope to be adding other Farmers Markets next year such as at Granville Island, or even in locations outside of the Vancouver area. If you would like to recommend a Farmers Market venue, please contact the OMG Committee at OMGVolunteerHours@gmail.com.

The Wildlife Garden Project has also now officially kicked off and anyone interested in participating in this collaborative effort with the Wildlife Rescue Association is encouraged to contact the OMG Committee for more information on how to get involved.

For those interested in volunteering for any SOUL Vancouver event or activity, a sign-up sheet is always available at monthly meetings, or you can do so via email at: OMGVolunteerHours@gmail.com.

Organic Master Gardeners should note that volunteering for these events qualifies toward fulfilling your Volunteer Hours commitment.

It's a Willow!



Born to OMGer Julia Say and her partner on Saturday September 20, a lovely, healthy little girl, just under 8 lbs -- **Willow Victoria Say-Babbs**. Congratulations Julia -- and welcome to our world Willow!

SOUL T-Shirts (\$20) and Stickers (Large Decal - \$8 / Small Decal - \$5) are available for purchase from Lisa Atkins at all SOUL Vancouver meetings.

First season at Farmers Markets provides a fresh perspective

SOUL Vancouver and its OMG Volunteer Program have just concluded our first year of participation in the Vancouver area Summer/Fall Farmers Markets. In all, SOUL Vancouver hosted five Information Tables at Trout Lake, Riley Park, Kits and the West End over the course of the past five months.

Early on proved to be a 'getting to know each other' process. There were, of course, questions seeking practical gardening advice -- such as which varieties of various food crops are 'best' for growing at home; what can be done about smelly compost; and where can you buy worms if you want to start a worm composting bin? But for the most part, the first questions from market-goers seemed to lean more toward inquiries about SOUL itself -- what is it and what does it do?

As the season progressed, though, the questions seemed to reflect a growing familiarity with SOUL. Although the 'which', 'what' and 'where' questions continued throughout, more and more seemed to acknowledge our role as a resource for in-depth



John Sandercock prepares the SOUL Vancouver Information Table for the opening of the West End Farmers Market.



Rochelle LaVieille-Cooke discusses organic matters with a market-goer at the Kits Farmers Market.

answers to 'how': 'How do I know if the soil I have is good for growing vegetables?'; 'How can I get involved in community gardening?'; 'I've never used pesticides but I want to learn more about how to make sure my garden is organic.'; and '

By season's end, our involvement had certainly raised public awareness of SOUL as an organization active in promoting organic and sustainable gardening practices. But it had also provided the opportunity to demonstrate in a 'hands-on' way that we have something to offer that is both worthwhile and especially well-suited to this venue -- no matter the form the questions coming our way might be.

(Lending Library, continued from Page 4)

the Lending Library off the ground and benefiting our membership in a meaningful way.

If a sufficient number of books and DVDs can be gathered in time, the plan is to have the Lending Library open for business just after the first of the year. Members would then be able to check out a title for a month at a time. Just come to a meeting, check something out, and then return it by the next

meeting. A complete list of available titles would be posted on the SOUL website so that members can see what's available ahead of time.

If you have books or DVDs that you would like to donate to the Lending Library, you can do so by bringing them to an upcoming meeting, or by contacting one of the members of the Executive for more information.

OMG News and Updates

This month marks the first anniversary of the SOUL Vancouver Organic Master Gardeners Volunteer Program.

For those first OMgers (Basic Course Fall 2007), it likely feels like time has really flown. But even as it might seem like only yesterday that you were shaking jars of soil and raking out wheelbarrows full of soggy leaves and compost, here's a gentle reminder -- it's already time to submit your **Record of Volunteer Hours** form for this past year.

November 1 was the deadline, but if you somehow missed the email about that, no need to panic. You can still turn in your hours and ensure that you are fully credited and duly recognized for having completed the basic requirements set forth for all who enter the SOUL Organic Master Gardeners program -- completion of the Basic Course *plus the minimum 10 hours per year commitment to volunteering* as an active OMger.

If you need a copy of the Record of Volunteer Hours form, a PDF version can be downloaded at:

<http://www.organiclandcare.org/branches/Vancouver/master%20gardeners.php>

There are three methods for submitting the forms:

Via email:
OMGVolunteerHours@gmail.com

Via FAX:
604.222.3589

Via Snail Mail:
SOUL Vancouver OMG Committee
#401 - 1650 West 13th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6J 2G7

Even if you have only a portion of your 10-hour commitment completed at this time, please submit a record of what you have done to this point; and if you are having trouble finding suitable opportunities to meet your commitment -- either due to scheduling or some other conflict -- please let us know and we would be happy to work with you to find or suggest a means for you to complete your annual commitment in as timely a fashion as possible.

Similarly, if you are unsure whether or not some activity you participated in during this past year is applicable as OMG Volunteer Hours, please fill in the **Miscellaneous Projects** form -- also available for download at the same link noted above -- and submit

it to the OMG Committee for review. Normally, this form would need to be submitted in advance of your participating in the activity, but because of the special challenges we all faced in this first year of getting our program off the ground, all of these will receive special consideration.

Please know that we will be reviewing each and every submitted form and we will also be following up with those who have neglected to submit their hours. Tracking your volunteer hours is an important process that will help us in guiding the direction of the OMG Volunteer Program as well as in planning and pursuing new opportunities that will offer us all the sorts of challenges and hands-on experience across the range of interests your feedback has suggested are important to you.

To those Fall 2007 OMgers who have already sent in your forms, thank you so much. Not only is it interesting -- and informative -- to see what you've chosen to involve yourselves in during this past year, it's also inspiring. You've really risen to the challenge and embraced your role as Organic Master Gardeners -- sharing your knowledge and experience in your own communities and doing so in ways that are bound to enrich them as well as yourselves.

We have big plans for the second year of our program and we are excited about building upon the opportunities that have been developed so far. The Farmers Markets and the Wildlife Garden Project have been exciting additions that have generated a lot of enthusiasm among volunteers.

But we don't plan to stop there. As more and more OMgers are added to our rolls -- the third class will soon be completing the Basic Course and a fourth will be starting just after the New Year -- it's going to be critical that volunteer opportunities are not only plentiful but wide-ranging in order to meet all of our growing expectations.

With that in mind, there are plans to expand on some 'creative' opportunities after the first of the year, and we will also soon be announcing another project that is currently in the works as a direct result of your feedback. So keep an eye out for all of that --and keep your feedback coming. We are always happy to hear it and you can always reach us at:

OMGVolunteerHours@gmail.com

-- Barb Bancroft, Lee de Rosenroll, J.R. Rendón
OMG Committee

Book Review

In Defense of Food

An Eater's Manifesto

Author: Pollan, Michael

ISBN: 9781594201455

Price: CAD \$26.50

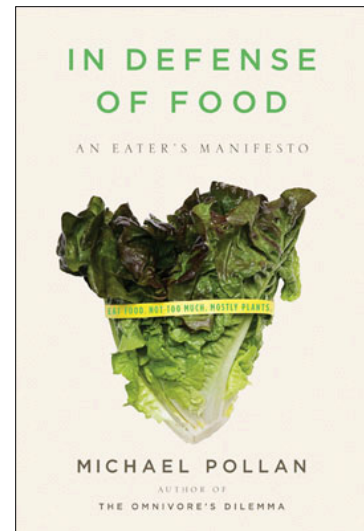
Format: Hardcover

Pages: 256 pp.

Dimensions: 140 x 210mm

Publisher: The Penguin Press

Publication Date: January 3, 2008



Book Cover Image from 'In Defense of Food' ©2008 The Penguin Press.

Sounds so simple: "Eat Food. Not too much. Mostly plants."

These are the first words offered up in Michael Pollan's latest book, 'In Defense of Food', and they are, if you were to read no further, a pithy nugget of advice that might seem incredibly obvious once it's been pointed out in just so many words.

'Of course it's that simple,' enthusiastically responds the healthy eater in all of us, 'that's exactly what I need to be doing.'

Of course. Or, maybe more accurately, 'If only.'

While Pollan's first paragraph is undoubtedly sage advice, it also serves as his pathway to enlightenment about what now passes for food in today's world of pre-packaged, overly-processed, misleadingly-fortified, and even genetically-engineered offerings.

Government, lobbyists, the food industry, food scientists, nutritionists, marketing strategists and journalists -- all have had a role in determining the make-up of what ends up on supermarket shelves, says Pollan. And consumers, who have fallen victim to a marketing strategy of *mo' better, faster, cheaper* -- not to mention *now-more-heart-healthy-and-nutritious-than-ever* -- often don't stop to think about how meager the real food value must be in food products whose expansive list of ingredients sound more like a chemist's concoction than what Mother Nature -- or even our mothers' mothers' mothers -- might have had in mind.

Pollan's opening credo turns out to be just the jumping-off point for this extremely readable though painstakingly researched and fact-filled account of the transmutation of our Western diet from something

that was once traditionally wholesome, healthy, satisfying and well-balanced, to what is now driven by the concept of 'nutritionism'. The irony, Pollan points out, is that even as we obsess over making sure that what we eat is 'fortified' with specific nutrients we've lost focus on what actually comprises a healthy diet. In other words, by placing such an emphasis on the details of our diet -- through attempts to isolate the function of individual nutrients -- we've ended up losing sight of the context within which these are synthesized by our bodies to imbue that healthy, well-balanced diet that we're seeking.

For organic gardeners, the parallels should seem strikingly similar -- if not starkly connected -- to how industrial agriculture and its monocultures have relied on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides to grow 'healthy' crops that are about as far removed from being *healthful* as they can possibly be. That bright shiny apple at the supermarket may have every appearance of being delicious and healthy, but the reality is that it ends up having the taste and mouth feel of something more reminiscent of florist's foam than what used to be harvested in the orchards of our great-great grandparents. Pick up any loaf of bread and it's doubtful that the ingredients would be recognizable to our great-great grandmothers, much less had a place in her larder. As Pollan points out, repeatedly and with biting humor, it's getting hard to find any food in our food.

So how to know what to eat? By using ecology and tradition to guide your choices. Or, as Pollan again advises oh-so-simply: "Don't eat anything that your great-great grandmother would not recognize as food."

-- J.R. Rendón

NOTICES...

The Wildlife Rescue Association of BC, located in Burnaby, has an urgent need for cut greenery to use in their aviaries. Stumps, branches of any size, and evergreen prunings are appreciated.

The Care Centre is open from 8:00am to 5:00pm daily, but there is always someone on hand until about 8:00pm to accept your donations. The Centre is located at 5216 Glencarin Drive in Burnaby. Park in Visitors' Parking and enter at the path on the left. Follow the sign that reads "Injured Wildlife" and someone there will direct you to where the trimmings can be dropped off. There is no need to call first, but if you have any questions, you can contact the Care Centre at 604.526.7275.

Looking for the difficult to find organic gardening products? SOUL Certified Professional Phil Nauta's 'The Organic Gardener's Pantry' carries organic products for organic gardeners. Check the website for a full listing of products and product information:

www.gardenerspantry.ca

Coming Up

At Van Dusen Botanical Garden:

Thurs. Nov 6, 7:30pm in Floral Hall. Cedar Series Lecture: Floral Representation in European Fabrics 1700-1790 with Ivan Sayers. Tickets available in advance from the Administration Office as well as at the door. Members \$10; Non-members \$15.

Sat. Nov 8, 10:00am. Bird Walk. Meet at the Garden entrance. Join Jeremy Gordon from Nature Vancouver for a beginners' birding exploration in the Garden. Rain or shine. Limited to the first 20 people. Free for Members or with Garden admission. For more information on Nature Vancouver, visit: www.naturevancouver.ca

Sat. Nov 15, 10:00am – 3:00pm. Volunteer Orientation. Bring lunch, we'll provide refreshments. Dress for the weather. Learn about the many volunteer opportunities at VanDusen. Tour the Garden with enthusiastic, knowledgeable Guides. Orientation is a prerequisite for becoming a VanDusen volunteer. To register, call Volunteer Director Judy Aird 604-257-8674.

Sat. Nov 15. HSBC VanDusen Family Program, VanDusen Mystery Trail for families with children ages 4-11. I-Spy with my eye the Throne of Nezahualcoyotl. Gallop across the Great Lawn, jump through the Giant Redwoods and hide among the Hollies while baffling your brain on this I-Spy Trail around the Garden. Two sessions: 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. or 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Price: Member Family \$10, Non-Member Family \$15 (includes Garden admission). Children must be accompanied by an adult. Pre-registration required by calling 604-718-5898 or familyprograms@vandusen.org

Sundays at 2:00pm in December. Guided Walking Tours. Free for Members or with Garden admission. Meet at the Information Desk on the Deck.

Thurs. Dec 4, 7:30pm in Floral Hall. Cedar Series Lecture: Looking at Beauty: Photographing the Garden with renowned photographer and gardener, Paddy Wales. Tickets available in advance from the Administration Office as well as at the door. Members \$10 and non-members \$15.

Dec 5 – Jan 4. Festival of Lights, 4:30 to 9 p.m. every evening except Christmas Day (December 25) when the Garden is closed. Children under 6 admitted free. Purchase advance tickets at the Garden starting November 1st or call Tickets Tonight at 604.684.2787 to order by phone.

Sat. Dec 6, 10:00am. Bird Walk. Meet at the Garden entrance. Join Jeremy Gordon from Nature Vancouver for a beginners' birding exploration in the Garden. Rain or shine. Limited to the first 20 people. Free for Members or with Garden admission. For more information on Nature Vancouver, visit: www.naturevancouver.ca

For further information about these and other course offerings at VanDusen please see the Fall Course Calendar available on the VanDusen website at www.vandusen.org

Registration information and a downloadable registration form are

also available on the website.

Upcoming UBC Botanical Garden Courses and Lectures

Sat. Nov 8, 1:00pm – 4:00pm. Mosses and Rock Arrangements of Nitobe Memorial Garden (course). Cost: \$40 (General Public); \$33 (Garden Members). Advance registration required.
Instructor: Tom Wheeler.

Sat. Nov 15, 1:00pm – 4:00pm. Garden Spa Skincare (course). Incorporate herbs from your garden into your skincare! Cost: \$50 (General Public); \$45 (Garden members). All supplies included. Advance registration required.
Instructor: Cheryl Theilade, Owner of Scentimental Creations.

To Register:

By Phone: (604) 822-3928 (please have your credit card on hand)
By Email: botg@interchange.ubc.ca Include the course you are interested in and your phone number, and we will contact you for the credit card information
In Person: at the UBC Botanical Garden Office, 6804 SW Marine Drive, between 8:30 AM and 4:00 PM weekdays.

Have a Notice you'd like to have posted in the Newsletter? Send it to:

OMGVolunteerHours@gmail.com

Notices must be received by the 25th of each month to have it included in the next month's issue. Just put the word 'Notices' in the subject line and indicate somewhere within the body of your email how many months you would like your notice to run. (Example: Post from July 2008 through September 2008)

Notices are free for SOUL members, Garden Societies/Clubs, Continuing Education, and certain other charitable, not-for-profit, or environmental concerns. There is a nominal fee of 15 cents per word, payable in advance and on a per publication basis, for all others. For more info on paid Notices, contact us at:

OMGVolunteerHours@gmail.com

We reserve the right to reject submissions deemed not in keeping with the stated mission and goals of SOUL.