



Vancouver

October 1, 2008

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

Volume 1, Number 3



Photo by J.R. Rendón

"In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous."

...Aristotle

Message from the Chair

By Martin Harcourt

Hello to all from your Chairperson of SOUL Vancouver.



I attended the Can West Hort show with Heide in September and it has since occurred to me that we -- SOUL -- were the only ones in the show with something new to offer. I have been attending these shows for a long time and usually there is a fair bit of green wash on many of the products. This time, though, there seemed to be a distinct lack of focus.

But there we were with a steady and straightforward approach that is fresh and easy to understand. I don't know if we sold any SOUL memberships, but there was lots of interest generated in the educational opportunities we were representing. I have been thinking that we all work toward a degree or diploma in this area or that, but our information is often out of date within two or three years. For example, I recently reviewed an IPM program for one of the Cities in the Lower Mainland and found it was the same as I wrote in 1989. No change really. It was still relying on the same synthetic chemicals to achieve the same result -- plants that are unable to take care of themselves because the soil has been destroyed by Casoron, Nitrogen fertilizers.

But now the pitch.....SOUL offers a way for us all to stay in touch and keep our knowledge current! The more people we can bring in, the more we can share experience and knowledge amongst us.

Do you realize that when I started landscaping we identified plant and insect kingdoms and tribes by

looking at the structures? Now entomologists and botanists use DNA and thus plants and animals are being reclassified.

We have dedicated members who are working hard to bring interesting guest speakers to our meetings and develop educational opportunities for our group. So join! And if you are already a member, tell your mom and dad and friends and neighbors to join, too. And I hope to see you all there at our next meeting --

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.

Important Schedule Change!

Paulette Tercier from the Wildlife Rescue Association's Wildlife Garden in Burnaby will be at our October 9 meeting for a presentation and discussion in anticipation of SOUL and its OMG program becoming involved in an ongoing effort to help reclaim and rejuvenate the Wildlife Garden. Be there to hear more and learn how you can get involved.

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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: 'Half-Berried Log' 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!

A Sweet Talk on Pigs, Manure and Composting

A sweet discussion of pigs, pig manure and the composting process that transforms porcine waste into a sublime organic soil amendment held SOULers in rapt attention at September's meeting.



John Sandercock and Catherine Dale listen intently to Cors de Lint's presentation on organic pig manure and composting.

Guest Speaker Cors de Lint, founder of Unique Pig Manure, opened a sample of his product to begin his presentation and passed it around for all to inspect. The rich color and the light -- almost fluffy -- texture of the composted manure were immediately apparent; but SOULers were asked to make special note of its scent - or lack thereof.

"There's no smell," said de Lint with a smile. After a round of deep whiffs, no one could argue.

It was a fascinating beginning to what was a thoroughly engrossing presentation as de Lint, a retired Veterinarian, discussed how he'd become involved in the development of the process used by Unique. Emphasizing that he did not consider himself a
(Continued on Page 4)



SOUL Vancouver Executive Committee

Chair: Martin Harcourt
Vice Chair: Lee de Rosenroll
Treasurer: Barb Bancroft
Secretary: Miel Whipps
SOUL Board Liaison: Lee de Rosenroll
OMG Coordinator: J.R. Rendón
Event Coordinator: Open
Speaker Series Coordinator: J.R. Rendón

You can contact any or all of the Executive members using the listserver account at:

soul_vancouver@lists.onenw.org

Please note that replying to an email sent through the listserver 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 each meeting and a social with tea, coffee and goodies follows at around 9:00pm.

Speakers Series Calendar:

October 9, 2008 - "Wildlife Garden Project", presented by Paulette Tercier, coordinator of the Wildlife Rescue Association's Wildlife Garden in Burnaby.

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. To be held 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. Details TBA.

(Pig Manure, continued from Page 3)

scientist, but instead a 'hobbyist' who constantly challenged himself to apply his own knowledge and experience, plus the occasional 'gut instinct', to his work. De Lint was nonetheless as equally at ease delving into scientific and technical data related to soil science and microbiology as he was in discussing the pigs' own natural behaviors that are responsible for much of the process leading up to the actual composting.

According to de Lint, the pigs are provided with a healthy and comfortable environment so that they are encouraged to do what they naturally do. "The pigs really do all of the work," said de Lint. As an example, he offered the pigs' own rooting instincts. He described how that behavior is utilized to keep the pens clean; by 'rooting' - or using their snouts to dig - the pigs themselves effectively move their soiled bedding to an awaiting conveyor just outside the back of their pens. The conveyor then proceeds to the composting area. No mucking or other human intervention is ever required, said de Lint.

As for the efficacy of the composting process itself, de Lint described in detail how the soiled bedding with its healthy supply of pig manure is moved along a conveyor as precise applications of blown air are applied to maintain strict temperature levels aimed at optimizing the microbiology of the final composted product. To ensure this, de Lint pointed out that samples of the finished organic product are routinely sent to an independent lab for testing. Using the overhead projector, he posted examples of test results showing detailed analysis in support of the quality of the product.

De Lint's presentation was followed by an enthusiastic question and answer session and he was gracious and generous in responding to them all -- including one inquiry wanting to know where Unique Pig Manure is available for purchase. That question was answered promptly when the group was invited out to the parking lot where de Lint's truck was loaded with 60 bags of the composted pig manure. Within minutes, every bag had been snapped up by SOULers eager to try out the product in their own gardens.

Welcome to Our Newest Member

SOUL Vancouver would like to extend a warm welcome to its newest member **Deborah Jones-Nielsen**. Deborah, who is affiliated with Cougar Creek Streamkeepers, was our Guest Speaker in July and gave a wonderful presentation on Rain Gardens. At the time, she expressed interest in becoming a member of SOUL and by September she was, as they say, fully-fledged. Thank you Deborah -- and welcome aboard!

Events and Announcements

SOUL Vancouver will be hosting the last of its Informational Tables at area Farmers Markets this Fall. The West End Farmers Market, on Oct. 4, and the Kits Farmers Market on Oct. 19, will mark the end of SOUL Vancouver's participation in these events for this season, although plans are already underway for the Winter Farmers Market, tentatively scheduled for November through April at Wise Hall. Details will be announced as they become available.

Until then, OMGers John Sandercock (West End, Kits) and Rochelle LaVieille (Kits) have agreed to help out and will be on hand to share advice, distribute information and generally have a good time meeting and talking to market-goers who stop by the SOUL table.

- **Oct 4, 2008** (Saturday, 9:00am to 2:00pm) - **West End Farmers Market**, 1100 block of Comox, between Bute and Thurlow.
- **Oct 19, 2008** (Sunday), 10:00am to 2:00pm - **Kitsilano Farmers Market**, 10th Avenue and Larch.

For those interested in volunteering for any SOUL event, 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.

Congratulations Miel!

Miel Whipps, who has been doing an outstanding job as Secretary of the SOUL Vancouver Executive, will soon be stepping down from her position - but for some pretty good reasons. Miel will be getting married in October and, although the rest of the Executive tried to convince her to multi-task by holding the reception at our next meeting, she had already made other plans. Oh well. We tried.

Congratulations to Miel and best wishes in the New Year as her new schedule will also include pursuing her education via night(!) classes.

Of course, all of Miel's good news means that, come January, the Executive will be in need of a new Secretary -- to go along with an Events Coordinator. So...volunteers?

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

SOUL and Burnaby Continuing Education Join Up to Spread the Good Word on Organics at CanWest Hort Show



With a big assist from the Board of Education in Burnaby, SOUL Vancouver was able to reach out to hundreds of people attending the CanWest Hort Show held at Vancouver's Convention Centre in mid-September.

Burnaby's Continuing Education program partners with Gaia College to offer a range of courses focusing



John Sandercock and Heide Hermary (above and below) were well-prepared to handle the constant flow of questions and inquiries from visitors at SOUL's booth at the CanWest Hort Show.



on organic gardening and sustainable practices for both the homeowner and professional and many of SOUL's members, including OMgers, are graduates of the classes - a testament to the quality of the course work and instruction there. In fact, Burnaby Continuing Education was recently picked as an 'A-List' selection in a survey of Burnaby residents who were asked to name their 'favorite place to go back to school'.

In addition to course information, SOUL also provided show-goers with answers to questions, advice and additional resources, including a roster of recommended reading materials on everything from getting started with some common sense approaches for the beginning organic gardener to in-depth soil science. Pesticide use -- or non-use -- as well as Organic Certification and government resources were also hot topics.



Martin Harcourt (above) shared his insights on the detrimental effects of pesticides to inform and encourage show-goers about the common sense approach behind organic practices.

OMG News and Updates

By the time this newsletter is published, the Organic Master Gardeners program will have just welcomed its third full group of students.

The Fall 2008 OMG Basic Course started at the end of September but was preceded earlier in the month by an information session which began with just three slots still open on the class roster. Burnaby Continuing Education did an amazing job getting the word out to the public about the OMG course and interest was high leading up to the info session. Catherine Dale, who teaches the OMG course, was on hand that evening to answer questions about course material, assignments and other expectations. Barb Bancroft and J.R. Rendón, both among the first graduates of the course in Fall 2007 and who currently make up two-thirds of Vancouver's OMG Committee, also made themselves available to provide insight on their experiences in the course as well as what follows afterwards -- in particular an explanation of the annual volunteer hour commitment and the rapidly growing list of opportunities for OMGers to get involved in our communities as advocates for organic gardening and sustainable practices.

The questions, reactions and feedback from the roughly two dozen prospective students attending the info session were enthusiastic, and by the end of the evening, not only had the course filled up, there was a waiting list of at least 10 still hoping to get in -- if not this time around then hopefully the next. That bodes well for January and the apparently much-anticipated fourth OMG course.

With such a positive and encouraging response to a program that is still quite young, the challenge ahead is one of remaining focused and determined as we continue to explore, develop and commit our efforts to opportunities that will engage us all on a number of levels. From your feedback, the expectations are for hands-on volunteer opportunities with the potential for direct positive impact on our communities while simultaneously reaching across a broad range of interests; and with the expressed desire that these opportunities will challenge and encourage us to achieve more and be better-attuned as accomplished Organic Master Gardeners.

Our participation in the Farmers Markets has been and continues to be an important first step in addressing this mission. These venues offer a relaxed and friendly atmosphere in which to share our knowledge and experience as organic gardeners. Composting and worm bins, selecting and growing food crops, proper soil care and preparation, plus the avoidance of pesticide use -- all are topics that we can easily engage in with market-goers who are often like-

mindful in their concern about food safety and the environment. The Farmers Markets also present a wonderful opportunity to talk about the OMG program and SOUL, both as opportunities to expand one's knowledge of organic gardening and as a means of encouraging more active involvement within our communities.

Another key step in the development of our Volunteer Program is our budding relationship with the Wildlife Rescue Association's Wildlife Garden in Burnaby. Paulette Tercier, the WRA's coordinator for the Wildlife Garden, will be on hand at our October 9 meeting to do a brief presentation and answer questions about expectations for what is envisioned as an ongoing collaborative project to reclaim and rejuvenate the Wildlife Garden. The orientation process that is required of any volunteers working at the Wildlife Garden will also be discussed.

Many long-term plans are already proposed for this project, but a few examples include installing and maintaining specialty demonstration beds -- at least one for native plants and another for attracting butterflies; identifying invasive plants and assisting in their removal; and apple tree and grape vine maintenance.

Before those long-term plans can begin, though, we anticipate asking volunteers to assist in a one-day focused effort where our goal will be to clear a designated area of the garden of invasive plants and debris and perhaps install a gravel path. Once this is done, the other plans can begin in earnest so we'll be encouraging as many volunteers as possible to sign up for this initial effort.

Additionally, if anyone would like to make a special commitment, we will soon be asking for one or two volunteers to step forward to act as ongoing coordinator(s) for the Wildlife Garden Project. In the most general terms, responsibilities would entail acting on behalf of SOUL Vancouver and its OMG Program to work with representatives from WRA to further the development of this project, as well as overseeing our volunteers who choose to participate. There will be plenty of help from the OMG Committee in the near-term, but over time we anticipate that this will evolve as a subcommittee of its own. If you are interested in taking on this responsibility, please come to the meeting to find out more or contact the OMG committee via email at OMGVolunteerHours@gmail.com.

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

Book Review

The Organic Lawn Care Manual

A Natural, Low-Maintenance System for a Beautiful, Safe Lawn

Author: Tukey, Paul

ISBN-13: [9781580176491](https://www.isbn-international.org/product/9781580176491)

Price: US\$19.95

Format: Paperback

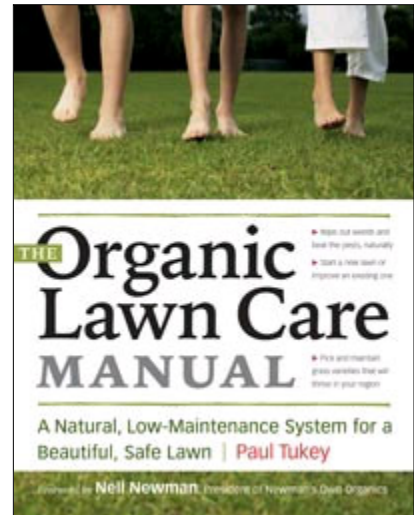
Pages: 272 pp.

Dimensions: 8 x 11 in (205 x 280 cm)

Illustrations: Photographs and illustrations throughout

Copyright: ©2008 Timber Press

Publication Date: June 1, 2008



Jacket Image from 'The Organic Lawn Care Manual' ©2008 Timber Press. Used with Permission.

Like many who grew up in the '60s and '70s, Paul Tukey never thought twice about using pesticides and other synthetic chemicals on lawns and in gardens -- that was just the way it was done and had 'always' been done; or, more accurately, had been done since products such as weed'n'feed were first introduced in the 1940s, after the end of WWII.

Tukey, who started out mowing lawns as his first summer job, went on to build his own professional lawn care company in the Northeastern US employing nearly thirty employees at one point and serving over 800 customers. According to Tukey, the finest years for his company, financially, were when he became most reliant on synthetic chemicals. After establishing himself as a 'licensed pesticide applicator', he was able to charge even more for his services. But it was when he reached that level of 'success' that he ultimately came to the realization of just what it was costing him to proceed down the chemical path.

First, there was the rebuff from a colleague who questioned his use of chemicals when Tukey showed him a lawn where he was working to eliminate weeds. It was a lawn where recovering cancer patients often walked. Later, when Tukey began to experience unexplained nosebleeds and shortness of breath, his doctor made the connection to chemicals and the use of weed'n'feed as the potential culprit. After Tukey was ordered by that doctor to immediately discontinue his use of those chemicals, the symptoms disappeared.

Coincidentally or not, says Tukey, the lessons he took away from these experiences included ending all chemical applications performed by his company and turning his focus instead to researching and presenting alternatives. Tukey has since ceased to work as a

lawn care professional, instead using his years of experience and knowledge to embark on a career as a self-described 'gardening communicator'. Most recently he has been a magazine editor and publisher, and television commentator. He is also spokesperson and founder of SafeLawns (www.safelawns.org), described as "a public awareness campaign that promotes the use of organic lawn care methods."

Instead of focusing on the 'whys', though, Tukey devotes the bulk of this book to describing the 'how-tos' for safe, effective lawn care. The lessons begin with an introduction on the 'language of organics' -- what is meant by various terms and phrases. He moves on to the need for a thorough site analysis and follows with a lesson on the anatomy of grasses. Later, an entire chapter is devoted to seasonal grasses available and appropriate to different North American zones. Soil - including an explanation of texture, structure, depth and drainage - is discussed at length and includes special sections on the Soil Food Web and the role of nitrogen and nitrogen-fixing.

Whether the reader is looking for information on starting an organic lawn care program from scratch or how to transition a previously chemically-reliant lawn, Tukey offers step-by-step instructions and follows up with advice on watering, mowing and other ongoing maintenance. There is even a chapter on 'listening to weeds' which identifies some common weeds found in lawns, how they reproduce, how to successfully remove them, and what their presence can indicate about soil conditions.

-- 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:

Sat. Oct 18, 1:30pm – 3:30pm
Composting, Compost Boxes and Worm Bins. Knowing how to produce good compost will give you a generous supply of excellent organic fertilizer. Come and learn some simple techniques for making your compost box and worm bin produce "black gold". Member: \$25/Non-member: \$35
Instructor Roy Jonsson

Sat. Oct 18, 1:00pm -- 3:00 pm
Plant Propagation Workshop. Grow some new plants! Learn to propagate plants by taking cuttings, dividing and seeding. There will be lots of opportunity to do some hands-on learning and you can take home all of the plants you propagate in this class.

Member: \$30/Non-member:\$40
Instructor Egan Davis

Tues. Oct 21, 7:00pm -- 9:00 pm
Prepare Your Garden for Winter. Learn about preparing your garden for the winter months. Topics include fall planting, pruning, lawn care, soil improvement, plant protection, pest

control and storage of summer corms and tubers.
Member: \$25/Non-member \$35.00
Instructor Roy Jonsson

Sat. Oct. 18, 25, Nov. 1, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

Basic Floral Design NEW.
Learn the processing and care of cut flowers along with the basic elements of contemporary design. The three workshops in this course explore traditional flower arranging but you will use modern techniques to create stylish, contemporary arrangements including an upright vase arrangement, a horizontal arrangement, and a European-style hand-tied bouquet. Flowers, greenery, and containers are included in the course fee. For each class, bring a sharp knife, clippers or snips, and a box to carry your project home.

Member: \$160 /Non-member: \$170
Instructor Coral Ayerst

Wed Oct 15, 7:00 -- 9:00 pm
Sat Oct 18, 8:30 am -- 12:30 pm

Creative Garden Photography.
Stretch your creative horizons photographing the vivid colours of Autumn and learn about the art of beautiful garden landscape and close-up photography. This two part course includes time for presentations and questions as well as time in the Garden for hands-on photography. Participants should have a film or digital camera with manual capability and be familiar with its controls. A tripod is recommended.

Instructor Suzanne Goodwin

For further information about these and other fall 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 Vancouver 2008 - Green Roof Training Courses

Tuesday, October 21, 2008
Green Roof Design 101 Introductory Course 2nd Ed.

In this newly revised introductory

course you will learn about the maximum benefits, how to cost components and benefits of green roofs, how to design a project for estimate for different types of projects and much more. The new course includes the most up-to-date green roof research and design practices as well, as new case studies from this rapidly expanding industry.

Tuition: \$399USD

Wednesday, December 3, 2008
Green Roof Infrastructure: Plants and Growing Medium 401

This course will provide participants with an overview of plants and growing medium design considerations and maintenance for green roof assemblies. It establishes design and implementation best management practices for plants and growing medium in green roofs.

Tuition: \$499USD

WHERE

BCIT, Room 486
555 Seymour St.
Vancouver, BC

To Register:

<http://www.cvent.com>

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.