



# HeatherDrift

news and information from the  
**Vancouver Island Heather Society**  
Chapter of the North American Heather Society

Issue #18

Autumn 2008

## About our Society

The Vancouver Island Heather Society (VIHS) links heather enthusiasts on Vancouver Island and provides opportunities for them to meet and share experiences with other heather gardeners, and to learn more about heathers and their companion plants. We meet monthly for study sessions or garden visits.

## How to join VIHS

Membership dues, \$10/year (cheques payable to Vancouver Island Heather Society), can be mailed to Doreen Wheeldon, VIHS Treasurer, PO Box 82, Duncan, BC, Canada V9L 3X1. For additional information contact Membership chair, Willie McDermot-Bruce at 250-743-5312 or <[wmb@shaw.ca](mailto:wmb@shaw.ca)>.

## Society Information

President Michael Krieger can be contacted at <[kriegerm@telus.net](mailto:kriegerm@telus.net)> or 250-391-6225.

VIHS publishes its newsletter *HeatherDrift* twice annually. Contact Editor Joyce Prothero at <[jprothero@saltspring.com](mailto:jprothero@saltspring.com)> or phone 250-537-9215.

Information about VIHS can also be found on the VIHS website [www.bcheathersociety.org](http://www.bcheathersociety.org) or via links to VIHS on the NAHS website, [www.northamericanheathersoc](http://www.northamericanheathersoc)

## What are these heathers called Bud Bloomers?

At their September 27 sale this year, the Vancouver Island Heather Society will be featuring bud bloomers, as well as having a wide range of other heathers and heather kits available for sale. As bud-blooming heathers are at their peak in the autumn, it is a good time to describe what wonderful plants these are.

According to an article in the Summer 2005 edition of the North American Heather Society's *Heather News*, bud bloomers are *Calluna* cultivars whose buds develop colour but do not fully open. Therefore, bud bloomers stay fresh and bright for months, prolonging the heather colour season through late fall and into early winter. Bud bloomers were actually discovered because they still had colour in late fall when all the other summer-blooming heather flowers around them had turned brown.

Appalled by the waste of plants generated by the widespread German practice of using frost-susceptible South African heathers in November to decorate graves for All Saints' Day, Kurt Kramer (of 'Kramer's Rote' fame) applied his considerable hybridizing skills to the bud bloomers. His goal was to offer an alternative hardy plant that could survive outdoors in northern Europe. Bud bloomers appear to be particularly suited to withstand harsh weather.

Today, as many other plant breeders have also worked with bud bloomers to produce notable hybrids, we have a wide selection available to us. It is interesting to note that Kurt Kramer, during a recent visit to some of our gardens in this area, was amazed to see the wonderful selection of his hybrids that are now growing in British Columbia.

The biggest advantage of bud bloomers remains their very long season of bloom. Most develop good colour by late August and retain it for months. Their ability to withstand early frosts, wind and rain without fading makes them extremely valuable for late garden colour in cold climates. They nicely fill that time in the garden between the summer blooms and the colour of the winter blooming heathers. Some are neat and compact, some upright, some sprawling,—just like ordinary heathers. Bud bloomers are now available in a wide range of flower and foliage colors.

A wonderful selection of bud bloomers, including new introductions from Kurt Kramer, will be available at the VIHS FALL HEATHER SALE, which will take place on Saturday September 27 at the Farmers' Institute Hall, 3550 Watson Avenue, Cobble Hill. The doors will open at 9:30 and the sale will take place between 10:00 and noon. Be there early for the best selection.

As well as bud bloomers, three different types of kits and a selection of winter-blooming heathers will be available. VIHS members will be there to provide you with advice and demonstrations on pruning, planting, and flower-arranging utilizing heathers. Members of the Victoria Master Gardeners Associations will also be on hand to answer your general gardening questions.

Everything will be under cover so it will be a fun morning come rain or shine.

*Elaine Scott*  
VIHS Heather Sale Coordinator

**Sept. 27, 2008 ★ FALL HEATHER SALE ★ Details, p.4**

## Images & Impressions from the Third International Heather Conference Victoria, BC, July 31 – August 4, 2008



As a novice to heathers I was so impressed with individual knowledge of the various types of heathers by many of the attendees. The dedication many of the societies have to the planting, tending of community heather "beds" which all seem to be flourishing - great volunteerism.

A great deal of enthusiasm and pride was shown by the photo presentations in the poster contest.

And the wonderful arrangements and variety of heathers produced by David Wilson together with the posters made an impressive display to the Conference. Well done everyone - I am humbled.

*Heather Schyf*

My highlights of the conference are twofold:

1. The poster competition organized by VIHS. It was a wonderful idea and the winning entry (Germany) clearly demonstrated how effectively heathers can be used to reclaim an area.
2. The wonderful containers, baskets, table arrangements and North American introductions produced by David Wilson and the booklet organized by Joyce Prothero that described the North American introductions.

*Elaine Scott*

The mezzanine got my vote for being a great meeting place. The display set up by David Wilson rated the WOW factor. And the poster display boards generated lots of discussion and were a nice way to get to chat with all our guests. *Sharon Martin*



PICTURED ABOVE ARE SOME OF THE PLANTED CONTAINERS (TOP) AND TABLE ARRANGEMENTS (ABOVE) IN THE DISPLAY PREPARED BY DAVID WILSON FOR THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL HEATHER CONFERENCE.

I felt the International Heather Conference was a valuable learning experience.

I especially enjoyed the Keynote Speakers. Even though I am not a grower, Brian Mintner's entertaining address gave me a lot of information to take into consideration for resale value while planning my garden and home renovations to appeal to younger buyers, even though I'm not planning to sell in the near future.

The lovely slides of Luci Hardiman's heather gardens were full of unusual eye appealing designs and colours; her ideas and shots of poor landscaping practices were most helpful.

It was great to have the opportunity to meet heather growers and gardeners from both US and Europe and exchange gardening info. and also learn about their gardens and clubs through the poster competition.

*Linda Yemen*

## (most of) The TIHC Planners and Doers - and some Pats-on-the-Back

### North American Heather Society



**NAHS OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDING TIHC** (FROM LEFT): Stefani McRae-Dickey, *NAHS Secretary and Overall Conference Coordinator*; Sharon Hardy, *Director / Representative Heather Enthusiasts of the Redwood Empire*; Mario Abreu, *NAHS President / TIHC Master of Ceremony*; Ramona Bloomingdale, *Director / Representative Oregon Heather Society*; Joyce Prothero, *NAHS Vice-President*; Ella May Wulff, *NAHS Past President / TIHC Program Organizer*; Michael Krieger, *Director / Representative Vancouver Island Heather Society*; Mary Matwey, *Director / Representative Northeast Heather Society*.

### Vancouver Island Heather Society



**VIHS LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE MEMBERS ATTENDING POST-CONFERENCE CELEBRATION** (FROM LEFT): Heather Schyf; Marilyn Day *VIHC Secretary*; Elaine Scott, *TIHC Master of Ceremony (with Mario Abreu)*, Norma Dirom, *TIHC Registrar*; Sharon Martin, *Coordinator, Poster Displays*; Michael Krieger, *VIHC President*; Sheila Yaremko; Linda Yemen; Doreen Wheeldon, *VIHC Treasurer*.

### A MESSAGE FROM IRELAND

I would like to offer my congratulations to all your team for such a wonderful conference.

I came away with really good memories of interesting speakers, lovely gardens, good food and a wonderful heather ambience. All of you worked so hard to achieve this marvellous event and I hope you are now sitting back relaxing after a job so well done.

I thought Victoria was an interesting city and had a lot to offer. I would have loved to have gone up country and explored some of your wilder places.

The gardens we saw made me very envious and determined to work harder in my own, but I have returned to a rain-sodden, weed-filled jungle that has no design and half-dead plants. So I am feeling a little despondent.

Please pass on to all your helpers my very best wishes for all their hard work which resulted in a superb Third International Conference.

*Susie Kay*

[Conference Manager, The Heather Society]

### ALSO FROM DAVID WILSON

I thought all the people who helped with the event were brilliant and just a little tired at the end. The support I received from the time I arrived with the plants to the very end was fantastic.

Thank you to all.

### AND FROM MICHAEL KRIEGER

Once again, thank you to all the hard workers in the VIHS for helping make the Third World Conference of Heather such a success.

I have attached a photo from our get together on Wednesday. We missed those who could not come and celebrated for you.

## VIHS Schedule, 2008-09

- Monthly meeting – Wednesday, October 1**  
Study session on cultivars  
2-4 pm, Mill Bay Masonic Hall, 2742 Lashburn St, Mill Bay
- Monthly meeting – Wednesday, November 5**  
AGM (plus Program TBA)  
2-4 pm, MBMH
- Holiday luncheon – Wednesday, December 3**  
11:30 am-1pm, Silver Bridge Inn, Duncan
- Winter outing - Wednesday, February 4** (date tentative)  
Visit to Glendale Gardens (plus talk, topic TBA)
- Monthly meeting – Wednesday, March 4**  
Plant exchange (excluding heather!) plus discussion of companion plants, for heather 2-4 pm, MBMH
- Spring Heather Sale / Event – Saturday, March 28**  
Doors open at 9:30 am, heather sale from 10 am-noon  
Farmers' Institute, Cobble Hill

## Library Services

As a service to members, VIHS maintains a lending library, available at monthly meetings. Sheila Yaremko, our librarian, brings at selection of books and journals to meetings, and also accepts requests from members wishing to borrow specific publications.

For a general listing of holdings, contact VIHS librarian Sheila Yaremko (743-6570), or visit the revised VIHS website at [www.bcheathersociety.org](http://www.bcheathersociety.org).

## TIHC Commemorative Booklet



The idea that a booklet such as *Hardy Heathers Cultivars originating in North America* should be published in conjunction with TIHC was conceived by Joan and Bryan Taylor, former VIHS members and current curators of the Ellen Norris Heather Garden at Glendale Gardens and Woodland. Textual descriptions for the 85 cultivars described in this 24-page booklet are primarily derived from two overlapping sources: the *International Register of Heather Names* (Nelson & Small, 2000) and *The Handy Guide to Heathers* (Small & Small, 2001). Copies of *Hardy Heathers Cultivars* will be available through VIHS (\$5, Chapter members \$4) at plant sales, chapter meetings and community events. Further information is available through Willie McDermot-Bruce (743-5312, <[wmb@shaw.ca](mailto:wmb@shaw.ca)>) or the VIHS website [www.beheathersociety.org](http://www.beheathersociety.org).

## IMPORTANT REMINDER

### VIHS Fall Heather Sale<sup>+</sup>

NOTE NEW LOCATION

**Saturday, September 27**  
**Farmers' Institute Hall**  
**3550 Watson Ave. Cobble Hill**

**Doors open at 9:30am** for demonstrations on pruning, planting, and propagation plus flower-arranging demonstrations using heather in floral displays. EXPANDED Heather Sale also includes a display of heather photos, *and* Master Gardeners to answer general gardening questions.

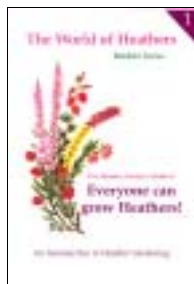
**Heather Sale begins at 10am** for buying winter-blooming heaths, summer blooming heather with coloured foliage, tree heaths, and starter kits complete with planting diagrams.

**NOTE: Payment for a VIHS membership (\$10) entitles the new member to immediate discounts on purchases of plants and books.**

**For more information** phone: Elaine 743-0965, Doreen 743-1716, Marj 748-0595.

## Heather Books for Sale

The following books published by The (British) Heather Society will be available at Heather Sales, and through Willie McDermot-Bruce, 743-5312, <[wmb@shaw.ca](mailto:wmb@shaw.ca)>.



**Everyone can grow Heathers**  
Daphne Everett, 2000

This 20-page publication, Booklet #1 in the *THS Booklet Series*, provides an intro to heather gardening. Topics range from choosing plants, to planting, and aftercare. Numerous colour photos.

\$10 (Chapter members, \$8)



**Recommended Heathers**  
David Small and Ron Cleveley, 1999

Booklet #2 in the THS booklet series lists 100 heathers recommended by THS members. It includes full descriptions for these heathers plus 28 colour photos. To help in plant selection, groupings by foliage and flower characteristics are included.

\$10 (Chapter members, \$8)

### ALSO AVAILABLE –



#### Heather Notecards

Les Harper has been a life-long artist. He worked as a free lance artist, for newspapers, ad agencies, as a book illustrator and fashion designer, and with the provincial Queen's Printer for 28 years. His notecard design has been generously donated for our fundraising efforts. *\$5 per packet of four notecards, with envelopes.*