



# HeatherDrift

news and information from the  
Vancouver Island Heather Society

Issue #19

Winter-Spring 2009

## 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)

## Heathers with Coloured Foliage



Winter Colour in the Heather Garden

As you drive around you will notice bright splashes of red and orange in gardens from the planting of heathers with foliage that changes colour in the winter. This is a great way to add interest to your garden.

There are three ways through which we get colour from the foliage on heathers and heaths. The first is through planting heathers and heaths with foliage that contrasts in colour. Colours of foliage available in heathers and heaths include mid green, dark green, grey green, yellow, silver grey, orange gold, bronze green and many shades in between. In many plants, these colours stay the same throughout the year, thus providing a palette of colour in your garden.

A second way is to plan for seasonal variations in the palette through planting heathers and heaths that change the colour of their foliage in winter. The main genus that gives us colourful winter foliage is *Calluna*, also known as summer-flowering heather. Callunas are great workhorse plants in the garden as they not only give us flowers in the summer but wonderful coloured foliage in the winter. For example, *Calluna* 'Firefly' has orange foliage in the

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*Evening Meeting — Public Welcomed*

**Wednesday March 4, 7-9 pm**

**Using Heathers in Your Garden**

**Speaker: Elaine Scott**

Sylvan United Church Hall,

985 Shawnigan-Mill Bay Road (beside the Frances Kelsey School)

**March 28, 2009 ☆ SPRING HEATHER SALE ☆ See, p.4**



Seasonal Changes  
in Foliage Colour



Colorful Spring Tips

summer but red foliage in the winter, giving a great splash of colour during that time of the year when we really need it.

The third way of obtaining foliage colour from heather and heaths is through planting those varieties that develop spring tips. The range of colours include orange, cream, red, yellow, and pink—all of which comes from the new growth in the spring. Some examples of *Calluna* cultivars with colourful new growth are: ‘Arina’, which has orange tips in the spring, ‘Cream Steving’ with cream spring tips, and ‘Flamingo’ with wonderful red spring tips. If you grow the varieties of *Calluna* that produce colourful spring tips, the timing of their pruning is important. Prune these plants shortly after they finish flowering, but no later than the end of September. If you wait until the end of February, which is when one usually prunes *Calluna*, you will be pruning off the lovely spring tips.

So, think about adding more colour to your garden through the use of a variety of heathers (*Calluna*) and heaths (*Erica* and *Daboecia*). These plants are relatively maintenance-free and deer-resistant, and will provide colour in the garden twelve months of the year.

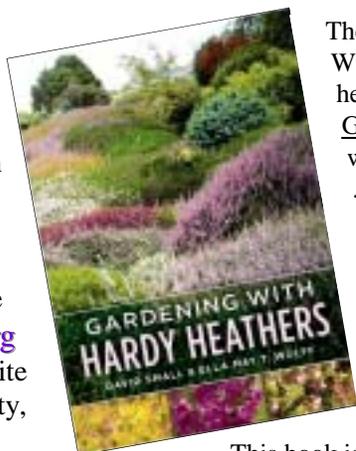
The Vancouver Island Heather Society will be holding its 2009 spring sale on March 28<sup>th</sup> in the Farmer’s Institute Hall in Cobble Hill. The doors will open at 9:30 am for demonstrations on pruning, planting, and flower arranging using heather. The plant sale will begin at 10 am and will finish at noon or when sold out. Be there early to get the best selection.

The heather sale will include an excellent selection of winter-blooming heaths, summer-blooming heathers with winter coloured foliage or spring tips, summer-blooming Irish heaths, and tree heaths in bloom. Planter arrangements and an interesting selection of kits (10 plants plus a planting diagram) will also be sold. Members of the Society will be on hand to help you with your selections.

*Elaine Scott, VIHS Heather Sale Coordinator*

## Additional Sources of Information on Colourful Foliage

Visit [bcheathersociety.org](http://bcheathersociety.org), the VIHS website to check out the information and photos. Also, follow links on the VIHS site to other excellent sources with photos and information on heather cultivars, such as NAHS web-site [northamericanheathersoc.org](http://northamericanheathersoc.org) and the award-winning website of The British Heather Society, [www.heathersociety.org](http://www.heathersociety.org)



The recent publication written by David Small and Ella May Wulff also is an excellent source for selecting and growing heather with colourful foliage. The February 2009 issue of The Garden published a review of this book by Adrian Bloom which reads in part:

*... An important and comprehensive coverage of a long-neglected and valuable group of garden plants. . . [the] contribution [of Ella May Wulff] adds a greater dimension to the subject, both in suggesting innovative ways to use heathers, and by including experience of how to grow them in demanding cultural environments . . . This book can be dipped into by beginner and knowledgeable gardener alike . . . Probably the ultimate reference on the subject.*

This book is available in the VIHS Library and from major booksellers.

## 2008 President's Report

### Meetings during 2008

VIHS held regular meetings throughout the year, some of which featured special discussions and some of which involved organized outings:

Special topics of discussion included:

- A talk on *Cape Heaths* presented by Elaine Scott with display of heathers by David Wilson
- A discussion of “our favorite late summer heathers”
- A quiz on *Erica xdarleyensis* presented by Heather Schyf, followed by a discussion

Outings for the year included visits to:

- Saanich Peninsula: visits to the Tsartlip Native Plant Garden, Glendale Gardens and Woodland, and the Brentwood Bay Nursery.
- Salt Spring Island: to Catherine Crombie's garden featuring bonsai trees, Joyce Prothero's garden with heather, naturalized plantings and Pacific Coast Iris, and also a visit to Thimble Farm Nursery
- Victoria: to Abkazi Gardens and Gov't House Garden
- A work party in the Ellen Norris Garden hosted by Bob Norris; also work party at the Dan Cooke Heather Garden.

### Heather Sales in 2008

This year our group made some changes to our heather sales events. We moved to a larger venue, the Farmers Institute Hall in Cobble Hill, and added demonstrations of planting and pruning heather to the sales events.

The VIHS has succeeded in bringing heather to Vancouver Island. Thanks to our sales events and public education efforts, heather is now available for sale year-round at our local nurseries, and garden designers are using heather to give ongoing colour and foliage effects to their gardens.

We will now plan to offer only one heather sale annually featuring varieties not commonly available; we will continue to offer the “kits” which are very popular.

### Third International Heather Conference

The Third International Heather Conference was hosted by our society and held in Victoria, BC. from July 31 to August 4. All of our members gave many hours to the planning and execution of the conference. The conference was a big project for a small club.

We added a new feature to this conference which encouraged all participating societies to bring photos of their gardens and to display them on posters in the reception area. This became a very popular event and may be seen at future heather conferences. Thank you to Sharon Martin for a job well done.

## Scheduled Activities, Spring 2009

**Wednesday, March 4 Evening meeting, public welcome**  
*Using Heathers in Your Garden* – Speaker: Elaine Scott  
7-9 pm, light refreshments  
Sylvan United Church Hall, 985 Shawnigan-Mill Bay Road

**Friday-Sunday, March 13-15**

**VIHS Booth, Celebration of Island Gardening Spring Festival** (Nanaimo Garden Show), Beban Park Social Centre, 2300 Bowen Road, Nanaimo

**Saturday, March 28 – Spring Heather Sale –**

Doors open at 9:30 am, heather sale from 10 am-noon  
Farmers' Institute, 3550 Watson Avenue, Cobble Hill

**Wednesday, April 1 – Monthly meeting**

Tubie Test and Plant Exchange. Bring heather stems for showing, and plants (not heather) for exchanging and describing their positive attributes  
2-4 pm, Mill Bay Masonic Hall, 2742 Lashburn St, Mill Bay

**Wednesday, May 6 – Spring outing**

Trip to Lake Cowichan to view native plants and flowers.  
Lunch (brown bag) at Gordon Bay Provincial Park or at the March Meadows Golf Club, Honeymoon Bay. Details TBA.

**Tuesday, June 2 – Annual outing to Salt Spring Island**

Visits to the Baker and Prothero gardens, also to Thimble Farm Nursery. Take 9:30 am ferry from Crofton

Bus tours organized for conference participants included: Krieger Garden, Wheeldon Garden, Scott Garden, Norris Garden, Dan Cook Memorial Garden, Ina McDowell Heather Garden at Sylvan United Church, Glendale Gardens and Woodland (HCP), and Butchart Garden.

Social interaction between all the participants was encouraged by having our membership sit at different tables during meals.

I want to thank everyone who participated in the planning for the conference as well as those who actively participated in the event. We give a special thank you to our co-master of ceremonies, Elaine Scott, who kept the conference lively and interesting. We also thank our member, David Wilson, who provided an outstanding display of North American Heathers. Thanks to Joyce Prothero who produced the illustrated booklet about North American Heathers, a copy of which all attendees received. Thanks to Norma Dirom for organizing the reception desk as well as all those who worked with her. Doreen Wheeldon worked with the NAHS to arrange our tours and to keep track of the money. Thanks also to Shirley Cook for arranging the entertainment.

Although I have only mentioned the chairs of the various committees, thanks also for the efforts and sacrifice of the other members who helped make this conference a success.

*Michael P. Krieger, VIHS President*

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT for SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2009

**NOTE NEW LOCATION** →

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

Farmers' Institute Hall, 3550 Watson Ave. Cobble Hill

Doors open at 9:30 am for demonstrations on pruning, planting, and flower arrangements using heather. The expanded Heather Sale also includes a display of heather photos, and Master Gardeners to answer general gardening questions.

Heather Sale begins at 10 am 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.



**STARTER KITS** PROVIDE THE PURCHASER WITH A SELECTION OF TEN HEATHER PLANTS PLUS A PLANTING DIAGRAM DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A HEATHER BED WITH YEAR-ROUND INTEREST. THEMES FOR SPRING 2009 COLLECTIONS ARE: "TIPS," "FOCUS ON FOLIAGE," AND "SCOTTISH HILLSIDE." STARTER KITS COST \$30 FOR NON-MEMBERS (\$25 FOR MEMBERS).

Be sure to visit the VIHS Booth at the "Nanaimo Flower Show"

March  
13-15  
2009



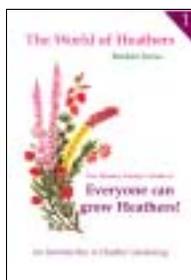
## VIHS Library

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

Recent acquisitions include *Gardening with Hardy Heathers* (see page 3) and *Hardy Heather Cultivars Originating in North America* (see below)

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

## Heather Books and Notecards for Sale

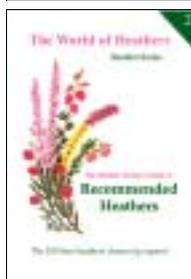


### Everyone Can Grow Heathers

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 Cleevly, 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)



### Hardy Heather Cultivars Originating in North America

Joyce Prothero, 2008

A 24-page publication with descriptions and photos of 85 heather cultivars which originated in North America, as chance seedlings, mutations, or by hybridization.

\$5 (Chapter members, \$4)



### 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.

This material is available for sale at VIHS Heather Sales, also from Willie McDermot-Bruce, 743-5312, <[wmb@shaw.ca](mailto:wmb@shaw.ca)>.