



# HeatherDrift

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

Issue #15

Winter – Spring 2007

## About our Society

The Vancouver Island Heather Society 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 the Society

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 743-5312, <wmb@shaw.ca>.

## Society Information

President Michael Krieger can be contacted by phone at 391-6225 or by e-mail at <kriegerm@telus.net>. The Society publishes *HeatherDrift* twice yearly. Contact editor Joyce Prothero, <jprothero@saltspring.com> or phone 537-9215. Finally, [www.bcheathersociety.org](http://www.bcheathersociety.org), our Society's website, is an excellent source of local and worldwide heather information; webmaster Bryan Taylor can be reached at <bryan@bcheathersociety.org> or by phone at 658-0446.

## Heather Sale

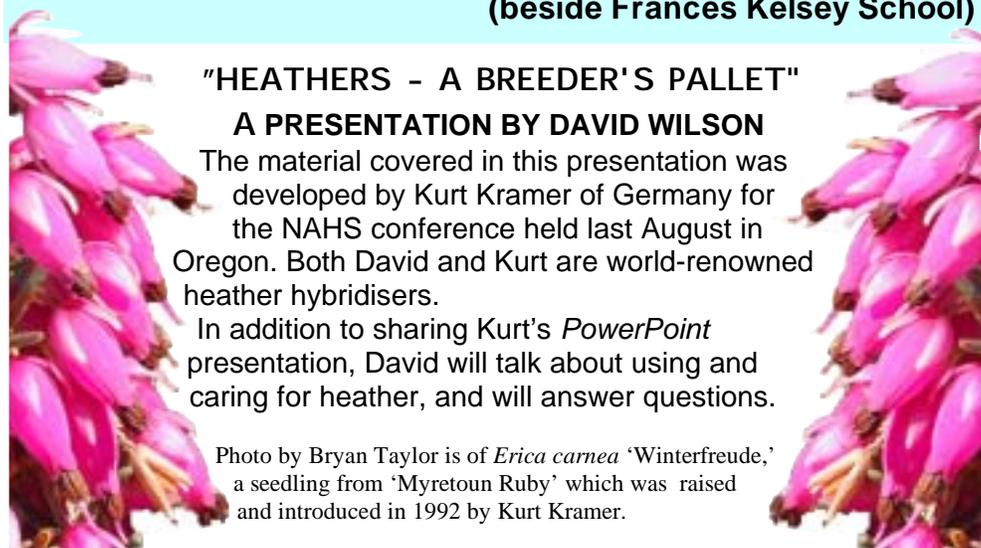
**Saturday March 31**  
**Mill Bay Masonic**  
**Lodge**  
(details on page 4)

## EVENING MEETING ★ GUEST SPEAKER

**Wednesday, 7th March 2007 at 7:30pm**

**Sylvan United Church**

**985 Shawnigan Mill Bay Road, Mill Bay**  
(beside Frances Kelsey School)



### "HEATHERS - A BREEDER'S PALLET"

#### A PRESENTATION BY DAVID WILSON

The material covered in this presentation was developed by Kurt Kramer of Germany for the NAHS conference held last August in Oregon. Both David and Kurt are world-renowned heather hybridisers.

In addition to sharing Kurt's *PowerPoint* presentation, David will talk about using and caring for heather, and will answer questions.

Photo by Bryan Taylor is of *Erica carnea* 'Winterfreude,' a seedling from 'Myretoun Ruby' which was raised and introduced in 1992 by Kurt Kramer.



**HEATHERS**, Bryan Taylor's multi-media DVD, is a learning tool on all aspects of heather selection, growing, pruning, and propagation. The DVD will be available at the March 7th meeting for a \$10 donation.

## Other VIHS activities scheduled for 2007

**Dedication of Ina McDowell Memorial Garden.** March.14, 2:30pm, Sylvan United Church, Mill Bay. Reception to follow.

**Spring Heather Sale.** March 31, 10-noon. Mill Bay Masonic Hall. (see page 4)

**Outing to The Heather Farm, Chilliwack.** April 1, Details to be finalized.

**Outing to Salt Spring Island.** *Tuesday*, May 1, Details to be finalized.

**Fall Heather Sale.** September 29, 10-noon. Mill Bay Masonic Hall.

**Other scheduled monthly meetings.** Wednesdays, June 6, September 5, October 3, November 7 (includes AGM), and December 5 (lunch).

*For additional details on any of the above, consult the VIHS website [www.bcheathersociety.org](http://www.bcheathersociety.org), or contact Michael Krieger, VIHS president, at <kriegerm@telus.net> or 250-391-6225.*

## Creating the Ina McDowell Memorial Garden

Ina McDowell was one of the founding members of the Vancouver Island Heather Society. She continued to be an active member until her death at age 92 on March 24, 2006. Before her death, Ina indicated her desire to have a beautiful heather garden at her church, the Sylvan United Church. Ina's family requested that, instead of sending flowers to her funeral, money be collected in her name so that the Sylvan United Church could create a heather garden in Ina's memory.

With the combined efforts of the Landscape Committee of the church and VIHS members, a plan was formulated for the sunny southeast-facing side of the church, which had not previously been landscaped. The area slopes down 45' from the church to a driveway, and has a width of about 50' near the building to 60' at road level. The incline varies from 25° to 50°.

The initial steps included adding some topsoil and peat moss, and then laying some underground drip irrigation hoses. This was done during the summer of 2006 by the church landscape committee, with advice from our membership. The planting design was drawn up, and plants were ordered from *The Heather Farm* for a planting scheduled for the fall.

For plants material, we chose a mixture of *Erica xdarleyensis* and *Calluna vulgaris*, both of which thrive in our climate which is sunny and dry in the summer and wet much of the rest of the year. We chose varieties that would become large in size with an easy-to-maintain shape. The *Erica* included 'Arthur Johnson', 'Archie Graham', 'Jenny Porter', 'Furzey', 'Kramer's Rote' and 'Spring Surprise'. The *Calluna* included 'Firefly', 'Hammondii Aureifolia', 'Kerstin', 'Velvet Fascination', 'Silver Knight', and 'Spring Torch'.

Our plantings were done in groupings, each with several of the same variety, alternating the *Erica xdarleyensis* and the *Calluna vulgaris* both vertically and horizontally. We reasoned that such a large planting would look better with groupings of plants rather than individual specimens.

Planting day was quite an event. Our group supervised and provided much of the personpower of the planting. The weather was perfect for our purposes. It remained cloudy and then rained after we were done. Despite the large number of plants involved (over 200), the labour was finished in about



PLANTING INA'S GARDEN. Taking a pause from their planting activities last October, Marj Fowler (left), Sharon Martin, and Willie McDermot-Bruce smile for the camera.

three hours. This was followed by a coffee, tea and baked goods reception provided by the church members.

The winter of 2006-2007 was unusually cold, with a mixture of snow, wind, and rain. The local deer population tasted and pulled up 10 of our plants. Fortunately, the plants were retrieved by vigilant church members and returned to their assigned place without any serious loss. We look forward to watching the garden develop over the next few years.

The dedication of this garden is scheduled for March 14 at 2:30 PM. Ina had many friends, including her neighbours, church members, gardening friends in VIHS and the Mill Bay Garden Club, as well of those she encountered in her other community activities. We hope they will attend the dedication, and continue to enjoy the garden Ina envisioned for years to come.

Michael Krieger, President

## VIHS's Dan Cooke Memorial Garden now in its 4th year

The memorial garden at the Farmers Institute in Cobble Hill, at the corner of Fisher Road and Watson Avenue, is an illustration of how a well-designed and well-tended heather garden matures. As you design, expand, or remodel your own heather plantings, visits to these two heather plantings in the Mill Bay area should be most instructive. Planting sketches, showing the layout and cultivar names, are available on request from VIHS.

## VIHS Officers and Directors

Recent elections have resulted in the following Board for 2007: *President*, Michael Krieger; *Vice-President*, Bryan Taylor; *Treasurer*, Doreen Wheeldon; *Secretary*, Bryan Taylor; *Past President*, Marj Fowler; *Directors*: Sharon Martin, Jan Maandag, Willie McDermot-Bruce, Joyce Prothero, Heather Schyf, Joan Taylor, and Linda Yemen.

## President's Report for 2006

2006 has been a sad year and a somewhat strange one for me, and perhaps for the Society. The death of Ina McDowell in the spring saddened us all. We miss her. Now the recent death of Ken Wilson, David Wilson's father and a founding member of the NAHS, has increased that feeling.

Ina will be remembered in a garden at Sylvan United Church, where she was an active member, and for which we ordered and planted over 200 heathers. Members also personally contributed to the Ina McDowell Garden Fund. The plants were put in place on October 15<sup>th</sup> by an enthusiastic group of both Society and church members; it took three hours. Thank you to everyone who helped.

The Program Committee planned interesting and active meetings in 2006. They included: historian Bill Dale speaking George Fraser, an early nurseryman in Victoria and Ucluelet; visits to the G.P. Paine Horticultural Centre at Malaspina College in Nanaimo, and Norman Todd's Rhododendron Centre at Elk Lake, as well as many garden centres. We also had tubie tests, viewed planters designed for the 2008 conference, and held an evening meeting at which Bryan Taylor gave an interesting talk on the history of *Daboecia* in Ireland.

Community events included a workshop in February at Dinter's Garden Centre, a display table at the Nanaimo Garden and Flower Show in March, and two very successful heather sales coordinated by Elaine Scott. Through the Ellen Norris Fund, we donated heather plants to the Duncan Hospice Society, Cowichan Manor, and the Royal Jubilee Hospital Pemberton Garden. Maintenance of the Dan Cooke Memorial Garden in Cobble Hill was continued.

In September a few of us attended a meeting in Nanaimo called by the CVI Botanical Garden Society to discuss the formation of an alliance of garden groups for mutual goals. Plans for the 2008 International Heather Conference in Victoria have

been on hold until we hear from NAHS..

Several of our members (including me) were away at various times during the year, which is why some of the ideas planned did not get done. All in all it was a busy year. Thanks to all of you for your support.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marjorie Fowler, (President, 2003-2006)

## Remembering Ken Wilson

The heather world has lost another of its greats with the death on October 4, 2006 of Kenneth Wilson. It was in Ken's office at the University of British Columbia that the initial meeting of what eventually became the North American Heather Society took place in 1977. Ken was the founding president of NAHS. Ken's life-long love of plants spanned more than seventy years, and his name will be perpetuated by *Erica xwilliamsii* 'Ken Wilson', the beautiful heather hybridized by his son David Wilson. Our condolences to the Wilson family.

## Ellen Norris Fund Report

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING 2006

- **Alumnae Chapel Garden, Jubilee Hospital.** Provided 72 heathers (60 'Silberschmetze' and 12 'Arthur Johnson') for mid-April planting.
- **Cowichan Valley Hospice Society, Duncan.** Donated 21 heathers to be used by members of the Duncan Garden Club to replant badly-neglected original garden, thereby providing patients with beautiful and serene surroundings.
- **Cowichan Lodge** Donated more heathers to enhance the grass bed.
- Revised **VIHS Membership Kit** for new members; updating of articles is still needed.
- Started a **resource binder** containing articles of interest, past *HeatherDrifts*, special meeting programs, etc.

### PROJECTS STILL IN PLANNING STAGE

- **Interpretive Center at Beacon Hill Park.** Contacts are Bill Dale and Joe Daley.
- **HEATHERS DVD Project.**— will provide funds for blank DVD's upon request.
- **Obtain large picture of Ellen Norris** to use on special occasions in remembrance of Ellen's vision and tireless work in community education on heathers, and to familiarize new members with one of our founders.

MEMBERS OF ELLEN NORRIS MEMORIAL FUND COMMITTEE: Heather Schyf, Marj Fowler, Jan Maandag, Doreen Wheeldon, Willie McDermot-Bruce

## International Heather Conference Victoria BC – July 31–August 4, 2008

Plan to attend The Third International Heather Conference which will be held in Victoria in 2008. The conference program, organized by the North American Heather Society, will be implemented and promoted by VIHS. Don't miss this quadrennial worldwide gathering of heather enthusiasts from the German, Dutch, British, and North American heather societies. Be part of an exciting program of talks and discussions on all aspects of heather, displays and poster presentations, and tours of local gardens. On Sunday, August 3, enjoy an outdoor concert by the Victoria Symphony Orchestra which concludes with the 1812 Overture complete with bells, cannon and fireworks. For more information, photos and updates, visit the NAHS website often at [www.northamericanheathersoc.org](http://www.northamericanheathersoc.org). To add your name to the electronic mailing list for conference updates, follow the guidelines on the website.

# Heather Sale Saturday March 31

10am to noon (unless sold out sooner)  
Mill Bay Masonic Hall, 2742 Lashburn Street, Mill Bay

### Hundreds of heathers for selection

The selection of heathers available will include a large number of custom-propagated varieties from the Wilson Collection not generally available on the retail market. We will also have a variety of heathers in full bloom or with colourful foliage. The doors will open at 10am sharp so come early for best choice—plants often sell out before the advertised closing time.

Society members will be available to offer advice on plant selections and to respond to individual questions.

### Starter Kits to be available

The Starter Kits, complete with planting diagrams, were first introduced at the Spring Sale in 2003. For each sale, the kits are newly-designed and contain different heather combinations. Newcomers to heather gardening can use these kits to incorporate this versatile and colourful shrub in their gardens so they will be a source of year-round pleasure.

### Travel Directions to Mill Bay Masonic Hall

When travelling north on the Trans-Canada Highway (TCH), first turn right at the lights for the Mill Bay Shopping Centre turn-off, turn left at the stop sign and the hall is on your left just beyond the Mill Bay Food Bank. When travelling south on the TCH, turn left at the lights for the Mill Bay Shopping Centre, follow the above instructions.

For more information, contact Elaine 743-0965, Doreen 743-1716, or Marj 748-0595

## VIHS Library

As a service to members, VIHS maintains a lending library. Our librarian brings selections of these books and journals to the Society's monthly meetings, and accepts requests from members wishing to borrow specific publications. For a general listing of holdings, consult a previous issue of *HeatherDrift* or contact Sheila Yaremko (743-6570).

## Heather Books for Sale

The following books published by The (British) Heather Society will be available at the March 7 program and the March 31 Heather Sale. More information, contact Joan Taylor at 658-0446 or <[joan@bcheathersociety.org](mailto:joan@bcheathersociety.org)>.



**Handy Guide to Heathers.**  
David and Anne Small, 2001.

Updated third edition lists more than 1100 currently-available species in cultivar order. Also included are distribution maps, colour chart, 41 colour photos of cultivars. 168 pages.

TEMPORARILY  
OUT OF PRINT



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

This 20-page publication, Booklet #1 in *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 Cleevely, 1999.

Booklet #2 in *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.

[www.bcheathersociety.org](http://www.bcheathersociety.org)

Visit the VIHS website for information on future activities of our Society, and a gallery of photos from recent events and outings.