



HeatherDrift

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

Issue #14

Summer – Fall 2006

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 Marj Fowler can be contacted by phoning 748-0595 or by e-mail at <mfowler@island.net>. The Society publishes *HeatherDrift* twice yearly. Contact editor Joyce Prothero, <jprothero@saltspring.com> or phone 537-9215. Finally, 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.

Fall Heather Sale

Saturday
September 30
Mill Bay Masonic Lodge
(details on page 4)

Beginner's Luck – Layering

Layering is the rooting of branch that is attached to a mother plant. The novice heather grower is usually delighted to find that callunas and ericas often layer spontaneously under favorable conditions, and covering prostrate branches with peat/soil/rocks induces and speeds the process.

In this way fast-growing heathers may quickly over-run large areas and other plants. To prevent this, aside from heavy pruning, the gardener can remove the layerings to plant elsewhere. But when a portion of any heather is so moved, it is wise to prune the top growth of both the transplant and the mother plant. This helps them quickly recover from the root loss sustained. It also produces a more shapely plant.

Layered plants are more vigorous than those supported by only a single root system grown from a cutting. They seem to be constantly rejuvenating themselves as the old central stems die out and the new ones take over. As this happens, one has, in truth, a colony of interwoven plants, not just one.

As I have continued year after year to grow certain cultivars from layerings, I have noted that they seem much more easily adaptable to my particular garden conditions than many purchased plants grown from cuttings, some kinds of which I lose time and again. This is to be expected for two reasons. The first is that there is not the shock of adapting to a completely new environment for the plant. Secondly, since only healthy, vigorous and adaptable material will layer, these qualities are inherent in the new plant.

During the droughty summer of 1988 many of my cutting-grown plants died, but none that I had grown from layerings. And the same proved true over the past unusually harsh winter. I lost plants, as did nearly every garden in the Northeast but they were all plants that had been purchased, some years ago, some recently. Not a single plant that died had been grown from a layering. All the latter took the terrible year in stride.

Among these were many plants of *Calluna vulgaris* 'Robert Chapman', known to be finicky in some soils and situations. My clone originally came from Environmentals, and was grown at first in Kennebunkport, ME, where it browned some in summer. But from early layerings of that plant and its sub-sequent progeny, I have had 'Robert Chapman' grow excellently in many different garden locations here in NJ, with no loss at all to either inclement summers or winters. It has become a dependable old favorite.

Some that layer easily are the naturally more recumbent callunas, such as 'J H Hamilton' and 'Mrs. R.H. Gray', and *Erica carnea* 'Springwood White' and 'Pink Spangles'. But even upright kinds can be pinned down and induced to layer. Such plants cost nothing and are nearly effortless to obtain. And layering begets strong plants that should be uniquely adapted to your particular garden soil and microclimate. Try it.

by Joyce Descloux, Randolph, NJ
(reprinted from Heather News #47, p. 17, 1989)

In memoriam—*Ina McDowell*

It is with great sadness that we mark the passing of one of our founding members. Ina McDowell passed away at her home in Shawnigan Lake at the young age of 92 on March 14, 2006.

She was present at the first meeting of the Cowichan area heather enthusiasts and since its inception as a Heather Chapter in 1987 served in almost every capacity from President to Parlor Show judge.

Ina had a formidable knowledge of the plant world and she never lost her love of plants and gardening. An active member of many clubs, she always played an active role with great energy and wonderful sense of humor.

She came with us on our March meeting to visit Russell Farm Nursery and Sandpiper Garden Center in Chemainus just 10 days before she passed away.



Ina was always involved when there was food to be prepared and served at any functions and right up to the end she was very concerned that we have coffee and tea and home baking at our meetings; not Timbits from Tim Horton's.

She had already baked a cake for the volunteers at our Heather Sale on March 25th. Her daughter Marion stood in for Ina on that day and served us cake and coffee.

We will all miss Ina's knowledge, common sense, humor, enthusiasm

and her baking.

The world truly has lost a great gardener; she was a special lady who touched so many lives.

* * * * *

In her dreams, Ina saw beautiful gardens surrounding her church for all to enjoy; so in lieu of flowers, family & friends donated plants and money to the Landscaping Project of Sylvan United Church in her memory.

As at this writing the landscaping and planting is well underway and her family gratefully acknowledges everyone's generous donations

In the fall the after the soil has been amended a mixed heatherbed will be created with heathers and companion plants.

THE ELLEN NORRIS MEMORIAL FUND COMMITTEE

Report by Willie McDermot-Bruce

The Committee would like to thank everyone for their generous donations to date. All funds will be used to continue Ellen's work with heather.

This Spring, the Committee donated 21 heather plants for the Cowichan Valley Hospice Society home on Gibbins Road in Duncan. The original garden was badly neglected and members of the Duncan Garden Club volunteered to clear and replant in order that patients would have beautiful and serene surroundings.

As well, 72 heathers (Erica x darleyensis— 60 Arthur Johnson & 12 Silberschmetze) were donated to the Alumnae Association of the Royal Jubilee Hospital School of Nursing for their new 'Chapel Garden'; which is part of their renovating project of the original stone Chapel which sits on the Royal Jubilee hospital grounds in Victoria. We have been invited to visit the garden when completed and hopefully add it to our 2008 conference garden tour.

Members are encouraged to submit ideas for support by The Fund.

Further donations may be sent to "ELLEN NORRIS MEMORIAL FUND," P.O. BOX 82, DUNCAN BC, V9L 3X1.

If traveling on the Trans Canada between Duncan and Mill Bay

TAKE A DETOUR and visit the
DAN COOKE MEMORIAL HEATHER GARDEN

Cobble Hill at the Farmers Institute (corner of Fisher Road and Watson Avenue)

It is now 3 years old.

The Cobble Hill garden
in Spring 2006
Come and see it's Fall
colors.



Companion Plants for Heathers

by Linda Yemen



Heathers can be grown along with other acid-loving plants to provide you drifts with even more spectacular year round colour variations in foliage and in exquisite flowers.

Daffodils can be strewn throughout the bed or planted in groups at the front of a bed splashing vibrant oranges and yellow to welcome spring. The acid loving Rhododendrons and Magnolias will give a stunning focus of blossoms as will the Azaleas, Camellias, and Viburnums, however these beauties are not deer resistant.

Pieris is an evergreen shrub requiring acid soil and peat at planting time. Pieris japonica, a compact shrub with elegant flower clusters at the end of shoots in spring, is recommended with heathers. P. Japonica "Variegata" and P. japonica "Forest Flame" are splendid shrubs for adding year round interest to the heather bed.

Heathers can be grown in front of the summer flowering shrubs of Lavatera and the Buddleia (Butterfly Bush) that has evergreen varieties. Both shrubs grow quickly and can get fairly large, thus requiring pruning.

The dwarf varieties of Juniperus are remarkably adaptable and prefer full sun, as do heathers. Pinus mugo "Gnom", a globular compact with a height after 10 years of 2 feet will grow in any type of soil.

WEBSITE UP-DATE

www.bcheathersociety.org

Visit the website for the latest information on the activities of the Vancouver Island Heather Society:

- pictures of special trips and outings
- Information on Bryan Taylor's DVD—*Heathers*
- Heather Sales, flower shows, garden visits, study programs
- Ellen Norris Heather Garden at Horticultural Center of the Pacific and Dan Cooke Memorial Garden in Cobble Hill
- Links to North American Heather Society and Heather Society United Kingdom
- Updates on plans for the World Heather Conference in Victoria 2008.

Library Holdings

As a service to members, VIHS maintains a lending library. Our librarians bring selections of these books and journals to the Society's monthly meetings, and accept requests from members wishing to borrow specific publications. For more information, contact Sheila Yaremko (743-6570) or Louise Yaremchuk (743-1105)

- GUIDE TO THE NAMING OF PLANTS. David McClintock, 1980.
- HANDY GUIDE TO HEATHERS. David & Anne Small, 2001. Updated third edition. (Now out-of-print; Fourth Edition expected in 2006 – see note on page 4.)
- HANDY GUIDE TO HEATHERS. David & Anne Small, 1998. Updated second edition
- HANDY GUIDE TO HEATHERS. David & Anne Small, 1992. Small paperback.
- HARDY HEATHER SPECIES. Dorothy Metheny, 1991.
- HARDY HEATHS. A.T.Johnson, 1955.
- * HEATHERS: A GUIDE TO DESIGNING A HEATHER GARDEN. David & Betty Lambie.
- HEATHERS: ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO VARIETIES. Andrew Mikolajski, 1997.
- HEATHERS AND CONIFERS. Sue Phillips & Neil Sutherland, 1998.
- HEATHERS AND HEATHS. Alan Toogood, 1989.
- HEATHS AND HEATHERS. F.P. Knight, 1972.
- HEATHS & HEATHERS: CALLUNA, DABOECIA & ERICA. Terry L. Underhill, 1971.
- LEGENDS IN THE GARDEN. Linda Copeland & Allan Armitage, 2001.
- THE WOODLAND GARDEN. Roy Forster & Alex Downie, 1999.
- * THE WORLD OF HEATHERS BOOKLET SERIES #1: EVERYONE CAN GROW HEATHERS. Daphne Everett, 2000.
- * THE WORLD OF HEATHERS BOOKLET SERIES #2: RECOMMENDED HEATHERS. David Small, Ron Clevely, 1999.
- WILD PLANTS OF SOUTH-WESTERN IRELAND: Kerry, West Cork and Limerick. Charles Nelson, 2001.
- WILD PLANTS OF CONNEMARA and WEST MAYO.- Charles Nelson, 2001.
- WILDFLOWERS OF THE FAIREST CAPE. P. Goldblatt & J. Manning, 2000.
- * These publications also are available for purchase from our heather society – details on page 4.

VIHS Activities scheduled for 2006—2007

September 6, 2-4 pm, MBMH - Tubie Test & bring container with heather+ which you prepared for the 2008 International Conference

September 30, 10 – noon, MBMH - FALL HEATHER SALE

October 4, 7-9 pm, Evening meeting -Sylvan United Church, Shawnigan-Mill Bay Road (beside Kelsey School)—Showing of Bryan Taylor's "HEATHERS" video. Question period to follow. BRING YOUR FRIENDS

November 1, 2-4 pm, MBMH - Arranging with heathers, holly etc.for winter decoration, AGM

December 6, 11:30 am, Silver Bridge Inn, Duncan - Holiday Lunch – bring a gift to exchange. Let Norma Dirom know if you are coming

March 31, 2007 10—Noon, MBMH—SPRING HEATHER SALE

Fall Heather Sale

Saturday September 30
10 am to noon (unless sold out sooner)
Mill Bay Masonic Hall, 2742 Lashburn Street, Mill Bay
 (just north of Mill Bay Shopping Centre—travel directions below)

Hundreds of heathers for selection

The selection of heathers available will include a large number of “unusual” cultivars not generally available on the retail market. We will also have a variety of heathers in full bloom or with colorful foliage. 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 complimentary 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 colorful shrubs in their gardens so that they will be a source of year-round pleasure.

Travel Directions to Mill Bay Masonic Hall

When traveling 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 traveling south on the TCH, turn left at the lights for the Mill Bay Shopping Centre, follow the above instructions.

For more information call:
 Elaine 743-0965, Doreen 743-1716, Marj 748-0595

Books on Heather

The following books published by The (British) Heather Society will be available both at the Feb. 25 workshop and the March 25 Heather Sale. More information: Joan Taylor, 658-0446, <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 Clevely, 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 Note cards. 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 note card design has been generously donated for our fundraising efforts. \$5 per packet of four note cards, with envelopes.

Notice of Evening Meeting October 4th, 2006

This fall our EVENING MEETING will be held at the Sylvan United Church, 985 Shownigan—Mill Bay Road (beside Frances Kelsey School) from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm and will feature a viewing of Bryan Taylor's multi-media DVD, “HEATHERS”; a learning tool that can be used by the individual at his or her computer, by small groups clustered around a TV or DVD-player. The DVD addresses all aspects of heather selection, growing, pruning, and propagation. Bryan's scholarly discussion of heather has been divided into five beautifully-illustrated chapters—*Starting Out*, *Calluna*, *Daboecia*, *Erica*, and *Planting and Growing*.—which can be viewed in any order.

A question period will follow the viewing. The DVD will be available for \$10 00.

This is a wonderful opportunity for all members & friends to view this DVD.

PLAN TO BE THERE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! BRING YOUR FRIENDS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!