

Winter Gardening Newsletter

by Linda Gilkeson

January 22, 2013

Seeds, pruning, new book

Hints of spring are in the air whenever the sun peeks out....so time to order seeds, prune fruit trees and enjoy your local Seedy Saturday.

But first! The new edition of my pest book for the Pacific Northwest, **West Coast Gardening: Natural Insect, Weed & Disease Control**, is off the press and ready to ship. Read more about it and how to order a copy: <http://www.lindagilkeson.ca/books.html> This edition is accompanied by a new **Pest & Disease Images** section on my web site, which shows the colour version of all of the insect and diseases photos used in the book, plus some extra photos to help you with identification.

Pruning fruit: If you have fruit trees and bushes, it is time to start working on dormant pruning. While you are at it, look for tent caterpillar egg masses. Some people will still be finding quite a few of these this year, depending on where you are in the region. The egg masses look like a small, grey, flattened blob of hardened foam on small branches (See: lindagilkeson.ca/leaf_chewers2.html#30). The masses are about 1.5 cm long and wide and usually wrapped partly around the small branch. Pick at the mass until it pops loose, then destroy it.

If you need to use dormant sprays this year, choose a dry day to apply them. I don't use dormant oil or lime sulphur routinely because they kill beneficial mites and insects, but if a tree had a problem in the previous growing season that can be controlled with these sprays, then I spray just that tree. Dormant sprays are not effective on tent caterpillar eggs, apple scab or peach leaf curl. However, they do help control various species of scale, leafroller eggs, aphids lindagilkeson.com/sap_suckers.html, red mites, apple russet mites and pear leaf blister mites as well as pear scab (a disease that seems to have become more common on pears in recent years). Photos of blister mites and pear scab are coming soon on my web site--just give it another week or so for the rest of the photos from the book to be mounted.

Local Seed Suppliers:

Several people asked about seed vendors so here are some local suppliers with good stuff for this region:

West Coast Seeds: www.westcoastseeds.com/

Salt Spring Seeds: www.saltspringseeds.com/ Includes dry beans and grains for this region you won't find anywhere else

Full Circle Seeds: www.fullcircleseeds.com/ Carries my all time favourite leek cultivar: 'Unique'

Eagleridge: www.eagleridge-seeds.com

There are many other seed houses, of course, and many come to local Seedy Saturdays events (see below). I also really like William Dam Seeds [www.damseeds.ca/]. They are based in Ontario, but have excellent (and certified organic) Dutch and other European varieties that are hard to find elsewhere.

And on the subject of seeds: This weekend starts this year's schedules of Seedy Saturday celebrations in various communities. If you haven't been to one, I urge you to take in a local event. There are seed suppliers and garden tool vendors, seed exchanges and the larger events usually have a program of

speakers. Seeds of Diversity keeps a complete list for Canada on their web site with contact links at: <http://www.seeds.ca/ev/events.php>.

I will be giving a talk on how to deal with new pest and disease problems of food crops at the Qualicum Beach event (see: www.gbseedysaturday.com) and on growing the most food all year around at the Victoria event (www.jamesbaymarket.com/seedysaturday/seedysaturday.htm)

Local Seedy Saturdays (and one odd Sunday):

January 26: Denman Island

February 2: Qualicum Beach

February 9: Ladner; Salt Spring Island

February 16: Victoria

February 23: Vancouver; Sooke

March 2: Pender Island; Courtenay; North Vancouver

March 3: (Sunday): Nanaimo

March 9: Powell River; Cobble Hill; Coquitlam

March 23: Duncan

April 6: Port Alberni

For info on my books or to check my 2013 schedule for talks, workshops and gardening classes in your area see: www.lindagilkeson.ca

You can read all of my previous messages on the Salt Spring Energy Strategy website: www.saltspringenergystrategy.org