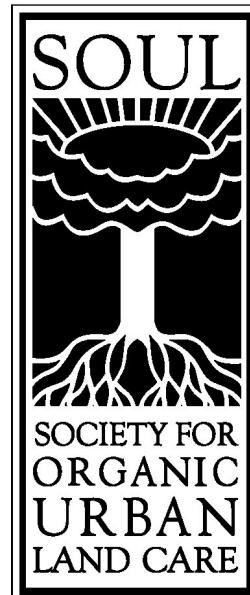


Organic Land Care *with*



"I think the true gardener is a lover of his flowers, not a critic of them. I think the true gardener is the reverent servant of Nature [...]. I think the true gardener, the older he grows, should more and more develop a humble, grateful and uncertain spirit."

Reginald Farrer, In a Yorkshire Garden, 1909

Organic Land Care with SOUL is published ten times per year by the Society for Organic Urban Land Care

Our Mission:

"To support our communities in their transition to organic practices".

This newsletter is distributed free of charge to all SOUL members. Please feel free to share this publication.

SOUL

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www.organiclandcare.org

October, 2006

The Victoria SOUL Branch is happy to announce its first SOUL Meeting in a new and inclusive format!

This meeting is open to all local members and their guests, professionals and home gardeners alike.

Date, time and place:

Sunday, October 29, 2006
2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Camosun College, Interurban Campus,
Portable A, Room 100, Victoria, B.C

Members Free

Non-Members: Donation \$5.00, applied to membership fee of \$30.00.

AGENDA

And what a fabulous agenda it is!

2:00 - 2:30 Welcome and a SOUL update
2:30 - 3:30 Guest Speaker: Dr. Shannon Birch, Ministry of Forests
Topic: The Secret Life of Mycorrhizae
3:30 - 4:00 Break, food and all that great social stuff
4:00 - 4:15 What's new in the world of organics? A science update with Heide Hermary
4:15 - 4:45 Seasonal organic garden tasks with Michael Cowan
4:45 - 5:00 Plant auction
Hope to see you all there!

Thank you note:

SOUL wishes to thank Reuben Butterfield, owner/operator of Helios Landscaping in Victoria, B.C., for his continuing support of the SOUL newsletter, by making available his time, office space, computer, and editing software!

SOUL Questionnaire Summary

SOUL directors distributed a questionnaire to members in the summer of 2006 to solicit input from members ahead of the visioning session. These responses will help set the priorities for the organization in updating its vision and identifying tasks, activities and programs.

The vision our members would like to see SOUL moving in were insightful and encouraging. Many thanks to all who responded by mail, e-mail or fax. We are excited that so many of you care!

On the topic of SOUL's orientation, most responding members recommend that SOUL concentrate on the transition from conventional to organic horticultural practice according to our Standard and Certification. This is ranked as most important general goal, and approximately equals our mission statement. Further options, such as promotion of unconventional holistic practices or of "full organic living", are considered to remain a personal choice. These might follow in a natural progression as society keeps changing.

Presently SOUL seems to be regarded as a grassroots or even marginal society, albeit with great potential. There is broad agreement throughout all responses that SOUL needs to become more of a household name, both with the pros and with home gardeners, and to close the gap apparent between these.

For the near future, keeping and increasing membership numbers, improving public education and outreach, and establishing relationships with similar groups were identified as primary goals. As for "SOUL in 10 Years", optimistic expectations are to become "an internationally recognized organization whose standard and certification are the industry norm"!

Members continue to be attracted to SOUL mainly because of similar core beliefs. This is true for home gardeners as well as for professionals working in the field. Educational opportunities are highly valued by both of these groups as well. Professionals especially appreciate the SOUL Standard and Certification, and note how SOUL membership sets their business apart. They also particularly enjoy networking and informal sharing of information and expertise, something that is echoed by home gardeners.

Strong opinions were voiced regarding the issue of including "the public". To many, this is vital for the society's survival, while some noted how an attempt to do this in the Victoria branch ended "messy". By far the most votes went to the option of SOUL being a professional organization with a focus on our membership but also an outreach component. Pros and home gardeners should be "mixed in a dynamic way". Some of our newer and/or non-Victoria members were not aware of this whole issue.

As a direct result of this, while SOUL's priorities are ranked very closely, communications issues are identified as being in greatest need of improvement, both from SOUL Central to branches/groups and between members themselves. Outreach and visibility rank a close second, as several members recommend working on a functional central chapter before branching out. This ties in with concerns about keeping members interested, informed and involved.

When asked what they might be prepared to help with, some members stepped forward with some great suggestions but many admitted to be too busy to volunteer their time and energy.

The web site is perceived as looking very professional, giving the impression that "SOUL is a bigger organization than it really is"! While concern is being raised over SOUL's image, or lack thereof, in both the professional horticultural community and beyond, members do acknowledge that it is difficult to run a successful organization entirely based on volunteers. (Editor's note: This is why faraway branches need to find their own "movers and shakers" - SOUL has no paid staff or resources to organize meetings or events beyond southern Vancouver Island or, occasionally, Vancouver!)

The nicest remark comes from an Alberta member: "All the volunteers at SOUL rock. Thank you for giving me a lifeline of sanity as I live and work in one of the craziest oil boomtowns in Canada."

SOUL is taking your responses to heart! While a new strategy is being developed for the society, the central and founding branch in Victoria is reorganizing its local members' meetings. The upcoming SOUL meeting in the new format is scheduled for October 29, 2006. Turn over to the front page for details, and check out the on-line calendar entry at www.organiclandcare.org/calendar



Oh, those yummy new potatoes we get to relish in October! And here is fascinating testimony to growing them without any pesticide input at all, from an organic potato farmer in Ireland:

<http://lists.ifas.ufl.edu/cgi-bin/wa.exe?A2=ind0605&L=sanet-mg&D=0&T=0&P=12667>