

Spring Wildflowers

By Terry Theiss

Wildflower season approaches. With it comes the annual picnic that Doane and I take to the Finnerty Islands for his birthday. For over 20 years we have picnicked on the same island and taken an informal inventory of everything that is in bloom on that day, seeing sometimes as many as 30 different species. We began the tradition because, unlike on our land, there were no deer or sheep out in the Finnerties. Perhaps you too rarely see spring wildflowers around your place because of the browsing animals. I know that some Lasquetians make an annual trek to Sangster for the same reason.

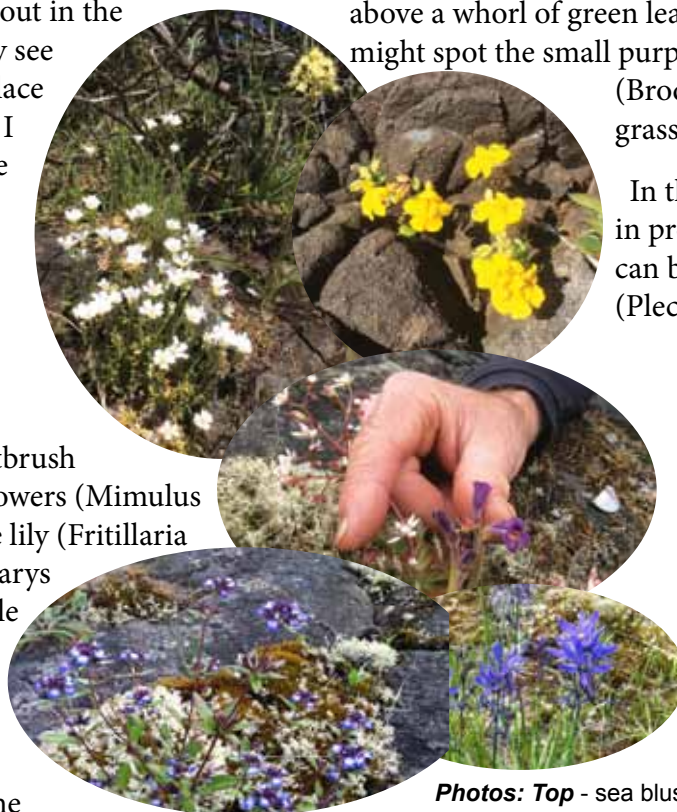
If you look carefully on Lasqueti's rocky bluffs with difficult access for the critters, you may see the following: white field chickweed (*Cerastium arvense*), Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja* spp.), yellow monkeyflowers (*Mimulus* sp.), the very occasional chocolate lily (*Fritillaria lanceolata*), and tiny Blue-eyed Marys (*Collinsia parviflora*). Many people recognize creamy yellow death camas (*Zygadenus venenosus*) and the yellow blooms of Oregon grape (*Mahonia aquafolium* – the tall one and *Mahonia nervosa* – the low growing one). You may be one of the lucky ones to have seen the well-known patch of white



fawn lilies (*Erythronium oregonum*) in the south end or to have walked down a trail and noticed our native orchid, spotted coral root (*Coraliorhiza maculata*), or the very bizarre looking Vancouver groundcone (*Boschniakia hookeri*). Perhaps in an uncultivated area of your fenced garden you've seen the delicate pink starflower (*Trientalis* sp.) dancing on a thin stalk

above a whorl of green leaves. Later in the spring you might spot the small purple flowers of harvest brodiaea (*Brodiaea coronaria*) hiding in the grass on a bluff.

In the Finnerties we see flowers in profusion in April. Cliff ledges can be carpeted with sea blush (*Plectritis congesta*). Mixed meadows are filled with paintbrush, grassland saxifrage (*Saxifraga integrifolia*), chocolate lilies, and more sea blush. We've found large swaths of blue camas (*Camassia quamash*), beds of pink woodland stars (*Lithophragma parviflorum*) in shady patches under shrubs and



Photos: Top - sea blush at Finnerties in April S.Harrington
upper left: field chickweed, right - monkeyflower,
mid - naked broomrape growing with Alaska saxifrage, Terry Theiss,
lower left: blue-eyed Mary, lower right: blue camas S.Harrington

trees, and out on the rocky bluffs, the delicate Alaska saxifrage (*Saxifraga ferruginea*), occasional harebells (*Campanula* sp.), and naked broomrape (*Orobanche uniflora*). There are large areas matted with kinnikinnick or common bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) and its pinky-white urn-like flowers. Exquisite natural gardens appear amongst the silvered skeletons of juniper. Trees and shrubs are in bloom, too, like Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*), Pacific crabapple (*Malus fusca*), and red flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*).

Every year is different depending upon how wet and warm the spring has been. Some years we see pink nodding onion (*Allium cernuum*) in bloom; other years it is barely emerging from the ground. The happy yellow sun faces of Oregon sunshine (*Eriophyllum lanatum*) bloom in outcroppings of rocks when spring is early and warm. Unfortunately, in the past two to three years we have seen nipped off stems of chocolate lilies, so the deer may have reached the Finnerties.

Make it a point to get to know your neighborhood wildflowers, try protecting a small area from the foragers to see what emerges, watch the patterns



unfold through the years, and thank LINC profusely for preserving some of our delicate ecosystems.

Many thanks to Jim Pojar and Andy MacKinnon for having compiled the wildflower lovers' bible, Plants of Coastal British Columbia, which was used as a reference for this article.



Photos: above: Alsaka Saxafrage, Finnerty View: S.Harrington
below: fawn lily close up: Gordon Scott, fawn lilies at Osland Reserve, S.Harrington

Native and Invasive Plants found on Lasqueti

White fawn lily (*Erythronium oregonum*)

Elegant and charming, fawn lilies invite close scrutiny, and larger drifts delight with their collective luminescence. Oblong, basal leaves, dark green mottled with brown or white (a bit like the spots of a fawn) show up in springtime and are gorgeous on their own. The delicate pagoda-like flowers open shortly after and then ripen into long capsules full of tiny black seeds.

Fawn lilies prefer partial shade. They can be found in moist to dry woodlands and grasslands at lower elevations near the coast from southwestern BC as far south as northern California. They like open and moist meadows, woodlands, streamsides and rocky areas. White fawn lily (*Erythronium oregonum*) and Pink Fawn Lily (*Erythronium revolutum*) are both found on SE Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Once common on Lasqueti, only a few patches have survived the sheep and deer grazing. One easily seen location is on the cliffs off Main Road, just south of the hall.



Pollinated by native bees and butterflies, fawn lilies propagate by both bulb division and seed. They can be sown into deep pots with a well-draining soil mixture anytime from summer to mid-winter and then left outdoors to

expose the seeds to the cold and wet. In springtime they will germinate and a single cotyledon will emerge. The second year, a single leaf will grow. It can take up to five years for the first flowers to appear though, so patience is required! If you'd like to re-establish fawn lily or other native plants in fenced areas on your property you can find a list of local nurseries that offer native plants at <http://npsg.ca/where-to-buy-native-plants> - *by Hilary Duinker*

Spurge Laurel (*Daphne laureola*) - the Scourge of Spurge



Photos: left - volunteer in the spurge forest, above - one of many of the piles after cutting, photos Gordon Scott

I first saw spurge laurel several years ago at Newcastle Island. I'd been visiting this stunning marine park for years, but this new invader was moving in on most areas, replacing the once prominent salal, huckleberry, and other native plants. Then, I noticed it back on Lasqueti, creeping up the island from around the south end fire hall.

"Spurge Laurel (aka Daphne) has become widespread throughout southwestern B.C. in recent years. It is a rhododendron-like garden escapee with very toxic leaves and berries. It spreads rapidly through yards and nearby woods, creating dense stands and shading out all other plants." Jean Wilkinson, from Salt Spring Conservancy, described it for the Invasive Plant Council of BC:

"Spurge laurel is recognized as a serious threat to local ecosystems, particularly since it can grow in shady, undisturbed forest areas. It also poses a significant human health risk, especially to children, since eating just 7 to 10 berries can be fatal."

Here on Lasqueti, a wonderful group of volunteers helped us with a series of work parties to purge our

Lasqueti's T'laamin name is Xwe'etay, described by elders as "a strong wood, a wood they used to make wedges." The word "Xweth" is wedge. They named it because of the abundance of iron wood/ yew trees.

own little forest of spurge.

Those who have worked on removal of the plant suggest that cutting the stems 1-2" below the earth is the most effective method. Digging can cause a lot

of disturbance, which might bring in other invasives such as thistle.

It spreads through its berries (distributed long distances by birds and rodents), and by underground lateral roots. If you are removing it, wear gloves, as its leaves are toxic as well. Jean says, "Do not burn or chip plant parts as noxious chemicals will be released into the air."

Thanks to the many awesome volunteers, significant amounts were cut in our first year of the project.

Alternative Native Plants: Western Rhododendron, Evergreen Huckleberry, Tall Oregon Grape, Low Oregon Grape, Salal, Sword Fern, Falsebox.

Non-Invasive Non-natives: Fragrant Sweet Box, Daphne Odora, Burkwood Daphne, Daphnoides Rhododendron, Delavay Osmanthus, Japanese Evergreen Azalea.

- by Sheila (Izzy) Harrington

We need your support for the work of the Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy (LINC).



Join or renew your membership \$5 - \$20. Please send your donations and membership to Lasqueti

**Island Nature Conservancy, General Delivery
Lasqueti Island, BC V0R 2J0
Charitable donations receive
charity tax receipt.**

Ways of Giving

Generosity is a powerful human behavior that builds enduring relationships between people, families and communities. In times like these of wealth and abundance the generosity of our community has allowed LINC to invest right here in our natural environment by restoring habitats, providing ecological information and conserving important natural areas on Lasqueti. The many ways that this community has generously contributed include gifts of volunteer time, money and land.



One of the most significant and generous gifts of land Lasqueti Island has received is the Johnny Osland Nature Reserve, a spectacular 160-acre property blanketed in mature Douglas-fir forest with a substantial wetland-pond nestled in the valley bottom. John Osland lived to the ripe age of 91. Through a charitable bequest he donated his land to the Islands Trust Conservancy for perpetual use as a nature reserve. Today one can visit the nature reserve and see Hooded Mergansers, Buffleheads, Mallards, Eagles and Ravens using the forest and wetland, thanks to John's generous spirit.

A charitable bequest is a gift to a charity, such as LINC, made in a person's will. A charitable gift can include money, stocks, personal property, or land, such as the Osland Reserve. A charitable bequest can be directed to a specific project, an endowment fund or be left to the charity to be used to fulfill its stated mission. Some charitable bequests of land include money for habitat restoration on the property being donated. Charitable bequests are a flexible tool and can be designed to meet individual donor's needs and desires for their estate.

A good local example of a charitable bequest used to protect a valuable island property is the gift of \$1.1 million from the estate of Dan Culver towards the acquisition of Jedediah Island. Dan stipulated in his will that a substantial portion of his estate be used to

acquire, "an ecologically sensitive property to be preserved for the public good". His gift spurred a major fund-raising campaign on Lasqueti and across the province, resulting in the establishment of Jedediah Island as a Class A provincial park. This is the 25th anniversary of the establishment of Jedediah Island Marine Provincial Park.

A charitable bequest is an excellent way for donors to create a lasting legacy for the charities they support. In some cases, a charitable bequest may provide tax benefits to the estate and heirs. The flexibility of a charitable bequest can allow a donor to direct their gift to a specific project or cause.

If you are considering a charitable bequest to a charity in your will you should work with a qualified estate planner or attorney to make sure your goals are fulfilled. It is also a good idea to contact the charity and discuss your plans with them to insure your gift can be used in the way you intend it. Working together with charities and qualified advisors, donors can feel secure their goals will be fulfilled. For more information contact LINC. - *by Gordon Scott*

*photos: above Osland Reserve S.Ray
below Jedediah Marine Park - home bay, S.Harrington*



Bat update: BC bats are threatened by disease, and researchers continue to ask the public for help. White-nose syndrome (WNS), a fungal disease responsible for the death of millions of bats in eastern North America, is spreading on the west coast.

Confirmed to the west and east of the Cascade Mountains in Washington State, just 150 km south of the BC-US border, the presence of the fungus is very worrisome for the health of our bat populations. Outdoor enthusiasts and homeowners with roosts on their property may be the first to find evidence of trouble.” While bats are generally hibernating out of sight this time of year, not every winter bat sighting signals disaster. Bats often hibernate by themselves in a woodpile or basement entryway. If possible, these sleeping bats should be left alone – keep your distance, snap a photo, and report to the BC Community Bat Program. Aimee Mitchell, Fraser Valley Coordinator, BC Community Bat Program. 778-833-2417, fraservalley@bcbats.ca



Look like a burn pile? This is habitat! These piles of brush are often used by birds, such as juncos and sparrows to protect them during extreme weather or for nesting. Why not leave them to slowly rot while providing shelter for wildlife:)

120th Christmas Bird Count Report



Male & female Common Mergansers in winter, photo S. Harrington

Once again in late December, Lasqueti birders joined 2,109 other groups of birders across North America to count 35,484,843 individual birds. Are the numbers of birds decreasing? Everyone seems to want to know. Over the past ten years on Lasqueti we have seen between 67 and 52 different species on count day. This year we saw 55, which is not the lowest, but it is at the low end. And that seemed to be true of the number of birds as well.

As I looked through the records of the past ten years it was interesting to note which birds are always seen, and never miss a count. There are 25 of these species: birds such as mallards, eagles, buffleheads, kinglets, crows, ravens and robins. Also there were some less well-known birds such as Black Oystercatchers, Pileated Woodpeckers, Barrows Golden-eyes and Brown Creepers.

And then there are the surprises, such as the birds that only show up for one count and are never seen on a count day again. This year there was a Golden Eagle and a small flock of Northern Pintails seen. Once someone saw a Wilson's Snipe, a flock of Redpolls, and an American Dipper.

Winter is slowly ending. Song sparrows and Pacific wrens are singing. Woodpeckers are hammering and declaring their territories. Marti Wendt would like to have a count this year of the birds that are on Lasqueti during the breeding season. She will be letting us know more information closer to the count time, which will be held sometime in the middle to end of May. Please call her if you are interested in participating.

written by Sheila Ray

Thanks to so many people, Jedediah Island Marine Park is Protected Forever - 25 years this year!

**Established - September 15, 1995
Park Size: 603 hectares (293 ha upland,
310 ha foreshore)**

Seen In Passing



Special Guest April 25th on Lasqueti

Barb Beasley: coastal ecologist (Ucluelet) founder of the Association of Wetland Stewards for Clayoquot and Barkley Sounds, a non-profit organization that promotes habitat stewardship for amphibians, and author of COSEWIC status reports and management plans for the Northern Red-legged Frog and Wandering Salamander.

Learn about the diversity of amphibians in coastal B.C., why they are important for ourselves and the planet & what's being done to help them survive.

**Saturday, April 25th,
Location: Hike at 1 (tbc)
Presentation at 4 Arts Centre**



Photos above top row:
early bees on crocus, winter heron,
feral goat on Jedediah, S. Harrington
Bottom row: from left valentines in
maple M. Runnings, young garter
snakes W. Schneible, Barred Owl
H. Duinker
left: Chorus frog at Osland, S. Ray



Annual General Meeting: May 17th, Community Hall

Board of Directors: Sheila Ray, Wendy Schneible, Gordon Scott, Sheila Harrington, Barb Brooks, Hilary Duinker, Jordan Barton, Aigul Kukolj, Ken Lertzman
We welcome photos for the Seen in Passing section.

Editor: Sheila Harrington

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