

Winter Gardening Newsletter

by Linda Gilkeson

January 19, 2009

Still digging out....

Now that the impact from last month's severe weather is more visible, I am getting a lot of questions about whether our beaten up crops will make it. Purple sprouting broccoli and winter cauliflower with all of their leaves stripped off look terrible, but should still produce a good crop as long as the main stems aren't broken. Leeks that are bent down should be fine if they haven't actually broken. Those with breaks along the stem should be dug and used immediately as they will rot at the break (feel along each stalk to check). Chard and other leafy greens laying flat with water-soaked, frosted looking leaves likely still have living crowns and roots that can send up new leaves next month. Kale plants have been smashed but those tough customers will soon be back in production. Lettuce has been iffy in some gardens (I can't even find mine yet.) I had to quarry through stone-like layers of icy snow to dig my carrots and celeriac today, but it was worth it--they were in perfect condition under the mulch, and that cream of celeriac and leek soup bubbling on the stove is balm to the soul.

This was the worst winter for veggies I can remember on the coast since the 1989 killer Arctic outbreak so if you are new to winter gardening, take heart! This is as bad as it gets and most winters will be much less damaging.

Seedy Saturdays on the South Coast

Be sure to check out the Seedy Saturday near you for everything seedy in your local areas: seed suppliers, heritage seed savers exchange, Master Gardeners, garden products, guest speakers, talks and workshops--not be missed! Below are the dates I know of:

2009

Qualicum Beach: February 7. Qualicum Beach Civic Centre

Salt Spring Island: February 14. Farmer's Institute

Victoria: February 21. Victoria Conference Centre Contact: Pat McGuire: patmcgu@telus.net

Vancouver: February 28. VanDusen Botanical Gardens

Courtenay: March 7. Filberg Centre Details: <http://www.cvseeds.bc.ca>

Cobble Hill: March 14. Cobble Hill Hall Contact: Carolyn Webb go.mum@shaw.ca

I have a web site now: www.lindagilkeson.ca

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