

Malcolm Martin

1932 – 2017

Life member of the North Okanagan Naturalists' Club (NONC)



Malcolm grew up in Essex on the outskirts of London, England. In his early teens he became interested in plants after seeing a book on flora with detailed descriptions from which identification was made possible. Malcolm's chance encounter with one of the books by Frank Kingdon Ward on searching for rare and exotic plants in S.E. Asia spurred a life-long interest in botany.

Malcolm moved to Canada and first settled in Calgary where for 13 years he worked as a research analyst for James Richardson & Sons Ltd., a large Canadian agricultural and food industry company. During this time he married Carol and in 1970 they moved to BC, first to Lumby, then in 1975 to Coldstream where they lived for nearly 30 years. Here they grew perennial plants and specialty vegetables and fruit, gradually converting to decorative dried flowers and grasses for which they are still remembered. Both he and Carol were instrumental in setting up the Farmer's Market in Vernon.

Malcolm joined NONC when he moved to Coldstream in 1975. In the early 1980's the Club decided a "Guide Book to the Natural History of Kalamalka Lake Provincial Park" needed to be produced. A number of members including Malcolm took on this huge task of making observations throughout the park over the four seasons, then writing, illustrating, listing and identifying the flora and fauna. The book took several years to complete but has been well thumbed by many NONC members and the general public.

After completion of the Kalamalka Park book Malcolm looked for a similar interesting task and took on the compilation of baseline studies of each of the Ecological Reserves established in and around the North Okanagan. He compiled plant, bird, spider, reptile and mammal species lists of Lily Pad, Griffin Mountain, Mara Meadows, Campbell-Brown and Trinity Valley Ecological Reserves. The reports themselves included maps of the differing ecological divisions within each reserve along with sections on geology, local history and comments on management issues. Later, he compiled plant inventory lists for many of the properties managed by BC Parks (Thompson River Region) from the Fraser Canyon in the south to Blue River in the north.

Over a number of years Malcolm covered several thousand miles doing this research. And each winter he and his wife Carol and their pets, along with the summer collections of flowers, lichens and mosses from the ecological reserves, travelled to the Arizona desert with their trailer where he identified them and did his writing. In Arizona his interest and studies of the desert resulted in his writing on the winter ecology of one region which was lodged with the Bureau of Land Management in Phoenix.

One of Malcolm's favourite undertakings as editor of the Newspacket (NONC newsletter) was providing articles including more than 80 front cover illustrations. For each Field Day for 10 years he also produced questions for the popular field day nature quiz.

Over a 15 year period, 25% of all new locations of BC rare plants entered into the Conservation Data Centre were by NONC members Ernie McNaughton and Malcolm Martin. Some of these rare species were "firsts" for BC. It shows how much two people can do one day a week over the summer months. In fact, along with Ernie, Malcolm has been among the most prolific collectors of rare plants in BC history.

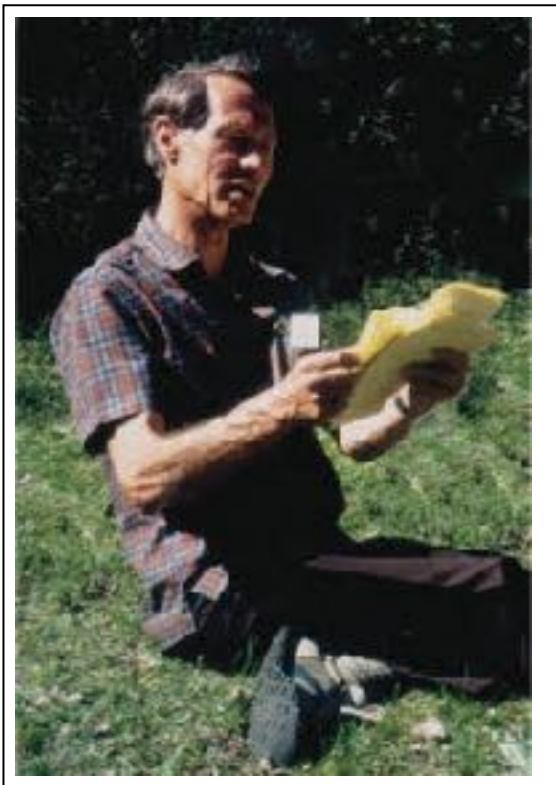
Malcolm and Ernie McNaughton were asked to review and proof read several new botanical books including the review of an eight volume series "Illustrated Flora of British Columbia" which is the primary reference on flora covering this province. As well, they provided the editor with both manuscript corrections and range information. Malcolm also made a number of contributions to the "Electronic Atlas of the Flora of British Columbia" and helped with the processing and proofreading of text for "The Lichens of BC" by Trevor Goward where he is mentioned in the acknowledgements.

As a director for the Native Plant Society of BC, Malcolm wrote many articles for the botanical periodical "Menziesia". His writings provided insight, with some added satire and humor. He often wrote these highly entertaining and informative articles for "NONC Newspanet" as well. Later he was asked to write a Status Report on Mexican Mosquito Fern (*Azolla mexicana*), one of the rare plants found in British Columbia, for COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada).

In 2004 Malcolm became the first recipient of the Outstanding Naturalist Award from BC Nature. This award was established for contribution to the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural history of BC.

As well, Malcolm had been foremost in controlling Purple Loosestrife in the Vernon area and over a 17 year period he has been a one man warrior on the track of this very invasive weed. In 2009 he was nominated by NONC for the Environmental Leadership Award for Invasive Plant Control which he received from Vernon and the North Okanagan Regional District. At the ceremony he was presented with both the Award and a large bouquet of purple loosestrife!

Malcolm died in Vernon on September 6, 2017.



A Tribute for Malcolm

A mentor of all things botanical,
meandering hills and mountains with microscope
studying mushrooms, moonworts and mycelia
not forgetting mayflies, mantids and millipedes.

On roaming found moles, marmots and mice.
Music meant Mozart, mazurkas; maybe mischief.