

SEEDS FOR MALAWI REPORT

Compiled by Susan Evans, September 2009

Volunteer Profile: S4M Ambassador on Vancouver Island

This month's *Seeds for Malawi* volunteer story begins with an avid gardener from Mill Bay on Vancouver Island, **Elaine Scott**. Elaine grew up in a gardening family in New Zealand. She remembers helping her father in the vegetable garden around the age of seven and starting her own cacti collection around eight years of age. "My father was also very interested in New Zealand native plants which was not the 'in thing' at that stage of the game. Mum looked after the flower garden but I must admit that she did not get very much help from me as I was more interested in the vegetables."

Elaine came to Canada in 1967 with a friend, planning to stay for six months as part of their world tour. Forty-two years later she is still here! Wherever possible Elaine managed to have a garden. Even when she was living in an apartment in Regina she had a vegetable garden on a farm outside the city. But she says her "serious" gardening began when she retired in 2000. In 2002, she took the Master Gardener course offered at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific (now Glendale Gardens) and is constantly learning through answering gardening questions. She says that Master Gardeners are now fixtures at the spring Community Garden Show and the Fall Fair in Cobble Hill – both of which are really fun events. (This year's Fall Fair in Cobble Hill was August 29).

Elaine loves working with seeds and searches out unique and different plant varieties from various seed companies in New Zealand, Britain and Canada. She has about 600 plants ready to go each spring for her annual spring plant sale. Elaine heard about *S4M* from Joyce Prothero as they are both members of the Vancouver Island Heather Society. In keeping with the *S4M* theme of "Grower to Grower," she decided to donate her plant sale profits to the *S4M* project, starting in 2005. Two other growers have since joined with her.

Elaine says, "The Mill Bay *S4M* Plant Sale has now become an annual fixture on the last Saturday in April. We have three growers, Barb Kohlman, Sharon Martin and

myself. We began having the sale at Barb's home but have moved to my place the last two years as I have a large garage in which we can always have the sale if it rains. Our profits have gradually increased each year and folks are now beginning to look for our sale each spring." The total of their contributions to the *S4M* project from plant sales approaches \$4,000.



Mill Bay S4M Team: Elaine Scott (right) along with Sharon Martin, (left) and Barb Kohlman (centre)

Elaine's work on behalf of *S4M* goes beyond spearheading an annual plant sale event in Mill Bay. She is a popular garden club speaker, and (like our own Ted Baker) has generously redirected speaker's honoraria to the project, raising awareness as well as money. She has recently agreed to volunteer on the *S4M* Steering Committee, bringing her wealth of ideas, energy, skills and experience. We so appreciate having her on board.

Our thanks to Elaine and her friends, Sharon and Barb, for their generous contributions to *Seeds for Malawi* and to their communities.

Profile by Donna Cochran

Malawi News

In Malawi, year eight of the project is about to begin. Despite the challenge of Teddy's stroke, the core group of volunteers who manage the project in Malawi have successfully carried on — assisting families with food gardens, students with fees, and youth with agricultural training. It was good to hear from Teddy himself via email in July. He wrote that his stroke recovery has gone well, and that he planned to return to work in August.

The *S4M* Steering Committee is now reviewing the budget proposal for 2009-10. In the October *Grapevine* we will report on the activities to be supported in the next project year.

Fall Plantings. *S4M* has a beautiful selection of good plants poised to fulfill your Fall gardening dreams. Contact susanevans@telus.net (250-653-4311) for the plant list, or to make an appointment to visit the nursery.