



THE BULLETIN

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL
OF GARDEN CLUBS

OCTOBER 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LYNDA PASACRETA

PLEASE FORWARD TO ALL OF YOUR CLUB MEMBERS

Hey! Just a minute. We had to turn on our furnace, first time since the end of June.

Hubby was outside picking the rest of the tomatoes this morning. I have moved my indoor plants that just love to be outside for the summer, indoors.

Patio furniture cushions are tucked away. Flowers are fading to muted colours. Thank goodness for fall favourites like bright pink anemones, the brilliant blue colour of monkshood, fall crocus, deep purple sedums, and my favourite, hardy fuchsias pushing out brilliant little flowers for our Anna's hummingbirds who stay for the winter.

This is a time for reflection on what grew well in our food gardens. We had a bumper crop of tomatoes, beets, carrots, lettuce, cucumbers, and Swiss chard this season. We were disappointed that our bean crops failed. We are not sure why but will, of course, plant again next year.

Our fruit crops of raspberries and strawberries kept our cereal bowls filled to the brim. Our dwarf peach tree got a nice bout of peach leaf curl early in the season and produced only

three tiny peaches. We could not find copper spray in any of our local nurseries. Next winter, late in the season, we will try lime-sulphur.

Our September Richmond Garden Club meeting was filled with incredible produce, giant sunflower heads, beautiful hydrangeas, and so much more.

So this month, it seemed appropriate to celebrate our community garden club members of the BC Council of Garden Clubs.

Community gardens have become such an important part of our world when we are living in smaller footprints but want to grow our own food for food security and food prices, and our need to interact with our neighbours, and establish a healthy lifestyle in our communities.

Enjoy your fall harvests, and welcome to the season of shorter and cooler days.

Tis the season of spiderwebs! Photo by Lynda Pasacreta



SCHOLARSHIP FUND NEWS

DEBBIE MELLENGER, SCHOLARSHIP FUND COMMITTEE

I would like to express my sincere gratitude in honouring me as a recipient of the BCCGC Scholarship Award. I was so thrilled to receive the news that I was one of the fortunate individuals selected. The scholarship will help me to continue to pursue my educational and career goals as a landscaper/horticulturist.

I have always enjoyed working outdoors with plants and landscapes, but it was only something I had done for myself or family members. After working as a class one driver for the past 14 years, doing the best I could to provide for my children, I decided I wanted to switch career paths to something that was more of a passion and not just a means of income. I chose to take the Landscape/Horticulture program to venture into a new path with my life. Although I was nervous to go back to school in my late 30's and take on learning a new trade, it turned out to be a great decision! I quickly realized during my studies that my passion was sparked, and I found myself naturally wanting to learn more even outside of class time. It was extra rewarding to see that my grades showed how much I truly enjoy this field of studies.

Since finishing my studies, I have started a business with my wife based out of Summerland. I now spend my days working in my community helping my clients to create beautiful landscapes on their property. It is so rewarding to drive around my town and see gardens that I have planted blooming and thriving!

Receiving the BCCGC scholarship award has not only inspired me and assured me that I am on the right career path, but I am also able to use it to continue my studies and take more courses to expand my skills. I am currently looking at taking a garden design course, as I have found the design aspect is my favourite area of the trade. There is so much to learn in this field and my journey has just begun!

Thank you so much again for your generous support of my education.

Kind regards,

Drew Deptuck





HOW TO DONATE TO THE BCCGC SCHOLARSHIP FUND

If you wish to make a donation by cheque please send it to:

BC Council of Garden Clubs
Scholarship Fund, c/o: BC Council of
Garden Clubs

10952 McAdam Road

North Delta, BC, V4C 3E8

Please ensure that the cheques are made out to the "Vancity Community Foundation" and the memo field shows "BC Council of Garden Clubs." If the person or organization that the donation is from does not clearly show on the cheque, please include a brief note with the cheque indicating who the donation is from and a return address (so that an income tax receipt can be issued).

If you wish to donate online with a credit card:

Go to
www.vancitycommunityfoundation.ca.

Click the "Funds" button on the top right side of the home page.

Locate the BC Council of Garden Clubs Scholarship Fund, either by scrolling through the list or searching "garden clubs" in the search bar.

Once on the BCCGC Scholarship Fund page, click "Give to this Fund" and complete the form.

OR

Go to www.bcgardenclubs.com.

Go to the "Scholarship Fund" on the top bar and click on the "Donate" page below.

Scroll down to the link to Vancity Community Foundation and click on it. This will take you to the BCCGC Scholarship Fund page.

Click on "Give to this Fund" and complete the form.

Thank You!

We are now 80% towards our goal!
Students are back to school so remember to support our aspiring horticultural students. DONATE TODAY!



DUTCH IRISES, SUBGENUS *XIPHium*

RICHARD CYPHER, PRESIDENT, BC IRIS SOCIETY

Dutch irises are bulbous. They like full sun and well-drained soil but can grow in part shade. They show best when planted in groups of five or more bulbs. Space the bulbs 5 to 6 cm apart.

While they are lovely in borders of rock gardens, they can also be grown in containers. They are wonderful as cut flowers.

The variety Pink Panther has been around for a while. The colour on the packaging is not as pink as shown — it is more pale blue with pink veining.

Photo by Richard Cypher,
BC Iris Society



SPRING BULBS TO ATTRACT EARLY POLLINATORS

🐝 Snowdrops - provide nectar and pollen very early in the season.

🐝 Crocus - very popular with bees!

🐝 Daffodils - certain varieties, especially wild types like *Narcissus poeticus*, are good for pollinators.

🐝 Tulips - species-variety tulips are a good option.

🐝 Winter aconite - great choice to plant around maple and oak trees.

🐝 Reticulated iris - best to plant in large clumps.

🐝 Ornamental onions - deer-resistant and a bee magnet!

🐝 Camas - late spring arrival.



Camassia quamash (camas). Photo by Visnja Gasparic Vojvodic, Richmond Garden Club



vancouver/master
gardeners

JOIN US!

The Master Gardener Basic Training program is for everyone with an interest in gardening, from backyard and community gardeners, to garden designers and landscapers. Our program is science-based with instructors from local universities and colleges, as well as ministry specialists, growers and other professionals.

✉ basic_training@vancouvermastergardeners.org

🌐 www.mgabc.org

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SCARECROWS IN DARTS HILL GARDEN PARK

LIZ KNIGHT, SOUTH SURREY GARDEN CLUB

The South Surrey Garden Club contributed a scarecrow to the first-ever Darts Hill Scarecrow Stroll in September.

As befits a garden club, the scarecrow was built entirely from plant material, including cornstalks, hydrangeas, bulrushes, bear's breeches, echinacea, bee balm, lady's mantle, conifer cones, lavender, zebra grass, lamb's ear, kousa dogwood berries, assorted grasses, and leaves.

This work of art was created by South Surrey Garden Club members Fran and Dave Peatling, Linda Stanley Wilson, and Sharon Robinson.



THE EVOLUTION OF GROWING FLOWERS IN PANDORA PARK COMMUNITY GARDEN

LISA ZHU, PANDORA PARK COMMUNITY GARDEN

Established in 2009, Pandora Park Community Garden has been nestled in the northeast corner of Vancouver for just over 15 years. Over the years, I have seen the garden evolve along with the folks who have come through and gardened with us.

One observation I personally have witnessed over the past decade was the evolution of growing flowers in the community garden. Perhaps this is a similar trajectory as other community gardens all over BC. I'd love to hear back at the fall BC Council of Garden Clubs meeting.

Ten years ago, it felt like only a few outlier gardeners would grow flowers. These gardeners were known to devote their entire plot to a myriad of different annuals and perennials. We vegetable gardeners would marvel at those colourful plots while ours were a sea of green with some speckles of red and yellow thanks to the ripening tomatoes and squashes. We would know the flower gardeners by name as there were less than a handful. It was as though flowers were mostly left to grow in the common areas surrounding the garden, but our private plots were reserved to grow as many vegetables as we could squeeze out.

As the years have gone by, some of the original gardeners have moved away and in came new people who have waited for years to finally get a chance to have their own growing space. The pandemic made

gardening more palatable to the public, perhaps even introducing it to a whole new generation. More than before, we are taught the importance of pollinators and what their decline could mean for our crops and food system. Underlying in all of this, our garden experiences a lot of vegetable theft every year and this might have dishearten some gardeners from growing vegetables and shifted them to growing flowers instead.

Today, on the first day of September, as I walk through the garden, there are many plots that have a mix of both vegetables and flowers growing in harmony. The once sea of green is now more of a mosaic of green, purple, pink, orange, red, and yellow. There are still flower-only plots but they no longer stand out as outliers as there are more than a handful of growers who are flower focused. Dahlias have especially picked up in popularity this year. I can count throughout the garden at least 20 different varieties. In addition to dahlias in our personal plots, they now line the perimeters of our garden.

I am sure in another 10 years, the garden will evolve into another look. For those who have made it to the end of this piece, how has your gardening evolved over the years? Reflecting on when you started gardening, what has changed and what has stayed the same?





Seed Saving & Processing Social

Join **Lisa** from **Pandora Park Community Garden** for a 2 hours **social** on seed saving. Together, we will explore the benefits of locally-acclimatized and adapted seeds from our micro climate.

We will have a **hands-on activity** to process some locally harvested seeds and learn to fold seed envelopes. This is an opportunity to process your own seeds, we will have sieves, origami paper and craft materials provided.

Juice and **water refreshments** will be available during the event.

SAT 11/OCT/2025 | 1 PM - 3 PM

2674 EAST HASTINGS STREET

FREE EVENT
FREE SEEDS
LEARN TO MAKE SEED ENVELOPS
HASTINGS PUBLIC
LIBRARY



FUNDED BY GREENEST CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD SMALL GRANT

WHY COMMUNITY GARDENS MATTER

LYNDA PASACRETA, RICHMOND GARDEN CLUB

The Victory Gardens movement flourished during World War I and World War II, where civilians were encouraged to grow food to free up transportation resources. These plots promoted food security, self-sufficiency, and were seen as a patriotic act.

Rising food costs, health and nutrition, and community engagement have encouraged a resurgence of community gardens in our times.

The pandemic really kicked off the growth of growing our own food. With limited space in many of our own yards, community gardens sprang up to fill that need. Due to the isolation caused by the pandemic, there was a strong need for community involvement.

In Richmond, there are now 17 community gardens, managed by Urban Bounty, a local non-profit organization, through the City of Richmond. Gardeners have access to raised beds, soil, tools, water, and administrative support through the program.

City of Richmond strongly supports community gardens, which can be seen throughout the city in nooks and crannies of city-owned land. One particular community garden project that stands out are the gardens all along a narrow strip of land that was once an interurban railway. Lovely log fences separate the gardens from the bike paths in the area. The community gardens are part of the street scene and enrich the neighbourhood experience.

Community gardens come with so many benefits for the community:

🥦 Growing food locally reduces dependence on external supply chains, and environmental concerns around the transportation of food. It enhances food

security, and minimizes waste — especially packaging and plastics that get into our landfills.

🥦 In Richmond, Urban Bounty supports community gardeners by providing educational resources on gaining gardening skills, improving the environment, saving seeds, and storing food. They also provide education on composting, organic gardening, soil health, and practices that contribute to a resilient food system.

🥦 Community gardens are such an important part of fostering community spirit, friendships, and enriching neighbourhoods.

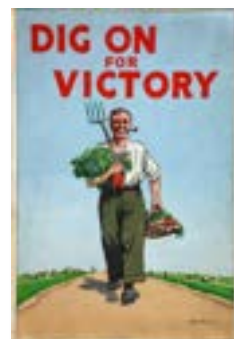
🥦 Connecting with nature is so important, especially when living in an urban environment. Reconnecting with the outdoors promotes physical wellness, and mental clarity, while appreciating the environment.

🥦 Many community gardens feature shared spaces with seating provided where meals can be shared, conversations can flourish, and a great sense of well-being is tossed in for good measure.

🥦 Community gardens offer a huge opportunity to learn about the importance of biodiversity by creating habitats for beneficial insects like bees and butterflies, and enhancing local ecosystems.

NEW! The City of Richmond is piloting the use of recycled plastic recovered from the ocean to create plastic lumber for raised community beds instead of the traditional wood.

For more information about community gardens in Richmond visit www.urbanbounty.ca.



LYNDA PASACRETA

Most resilient organism on earth? This plant has evolved to survive hot lava flows! Its roots can grow more than 10 feet deep and can stay dormant for more than 20 years, just waiting for a chance to pop up again!

Japanese knotweed is native to eastern Asia and was introduced to North America as horticultural plant in the late 19th century.

It can grown in a wide range of habitats, including wetlands, roadsides, ditches, fence lines, and in your backyard! It forms dense thickets of bamboo-like vegetation that aggressively outcompete native plants and negatively impact wetlands and riparian areas.

On a recent trip from Vancouver to the Nelson area of the West Kootenays, I saw Japanese knotweed in many residential areas, especially in the Okanagan. Some yards were filled to the brim with Japanese knotweed and nothing else.


In Britain, if you have Japanese knotweed growing in your garden, you will not be able to get a mortgage or sell your home.


Japanese knotweed can grow through concrete and asphalt, damaging infrastructure.


If you have Japanese knotweed in your yard or you spot the plant in your municipality, contact your local government or regional invasive species organization to report and have it removed. It cannot be removed by homeowners.

For more information contact <https://bcinvasives.ca/invasives/japanese-knotweed/>.

Some non-invasive alternatives to plant instead of Japanese knotweed include:

 Black elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa* var. *melanocarpa*)

 False Solomon's seal (*Maianthemum racemosum* subsp. *amplexicaule*)

 Goat's beard (*Aruncus dioicus*)

 Red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)


 Saskatoon berry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)

Photo by Wikimedia Commons



FALL'S GENTLE WORK FOR SPRING'S ABUNDANT REWARDS

LYNDA PASACRETA

It is so hard to convince ourselves that summer is gone.

Here are some suggestions on how to ease into the new season:

🌿 Do an honest evaluation of your garden. What worked? What wouldn't you repeat next year?

🌿 Look for end of season sales on trees and shrubs. Divide or move perennials around in your garden.

🌿 Plant spring-blooming bulbs. Choose pollinator-friendly bulbs.

🌿 Dispose of diseased foliage

🌿 Bring the outdoors in. Hydrangea flowers make for lovely dried floral displays.

🌿 Continue to water the garden. Roots are still actively growing.

🌿 Rake, shred, and mulch with leaves. Add to your garden beds.

🌿 Take an inventory of your tools and their condition. This is a great time to clean them up and replace old, damaged tools.

BC COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY

Help Fund Your Garden Club with BeSharp Sharpening

Partner with BeSharp Sharpening, a mobile sharpening service based in Richmond, to raise funds for your garden club.

- BeSharp will participate in your monthly meetings, plant sales, community events, and workshops.

A portion of the funds raised will be shared with your club or community gardens.

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We are looking forward to seeing you all at our fall meeting. As mentioned in our August newsletter we are delighted to announce Dr. Elizabeth Elle, Professor, Community and Evolutionary Ecology, Simon Fraser University, as our keynote speaker. We heard that she is fond of bees!!

We will also enjoy a presentation from Balreet Mandair, Program Director, BC Agriculture in the Classroom, and UBC student Mikhayla Roht.

Before our presentations, we will have a short business meeting to approve the BC Council of Garden Clubs 2026 budget.

We would also love to have a **roundtable discussion** on a couple of topics that are important to our members — garden clubs and community gardens —

so please pass on any suggestions to us before the meeting (email: president@bcgardenclubs.com).

We are making it easy this year. You can register online. Register or download the BC Council of Garden Clubs fall meeting registration form [here](#).

Photo by Alice Jensen-Stanley, Richmond Garden Club.





NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

We would **love** to feature your club or community garden in the newsletter.

Tell us about some of the projects your club or community garden is involved in.

You are invited to submit an article at any time (please include photos and name of author). Photos should be high resolution and you should include the name of the photographer if possible. Articles should be in the range of 300–500 words. If you have an idea for a

longer piece, connect with the newsletter editor in advance to discuss your idea.

Articles are due on the 15th of the month preceding publication. If they are submitted after that date, they will be held for the next issue.

The **next due date is October 15 for November 1**. Submissions/inquiries:

newsletter@bcgardenclubs.com

Lynda Pasacreta, Editor

Pam Robertson, Copy Editor

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