



# THE BULLETIN

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL OF  
GARDEN CLUBS

SEPTEMBER 2023 🍏

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## LYNDA PASACRETA 🍏

### PLEASE FORWARD TO ALL OF YOUR CLUB MEMBERS



My gosh can the news get any more dire? With the onslaught of wildfires, drought, and some pesky pests, I think it is time to add a little 'whimsy' into our lives through our gardening.

We asked for some whimsical photos from our BC Council of Garden Clubs members. As usual, we heard from folks from all over BC. One member, who lives in Ontario, responded and sent us a photo of his very green view from his home! He is a proud member of the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society.

There are some pretty cool ways to infuse your garden with some colour and lightheartedness.

1. **Use vintage items as containers.** You can use repurposed items such as old bathtubs, sinks, and even toilets. You can add some unexpected striking flowers, and even vegetables, edible flowers, or herbs.
2. **Reuse old garden equipment.** Roll an old wheelbarrow into a corner

of your garden and plant some same-colour flowers and some hanging grasses. Make sure there are some small drainage holes in the bottom of the wheelbarrow.

3. **Add natural accents.** Ordinary grapevine wreaths, hanging from trees in your garden or wrapped around a birdbath, can add an organic twist into a garden.
4. **Use old windows or mirrors in a garden.** Hang window frames or mirrors on a fence or wall as garden art. Add a shelf to a window frame or mirror and position potted plants on the shelf!
5. **Display castoff metal objects.** Group together old pieces of metal objects in the garden. Old metal fireplace screens, metal bed frames, they all add whimsical landscape design into our gardens. 🍏

## SCHOLARSHIP FUND NEWS

BY ANITA IRANI, SCHOLARSHIP FUND COMMITTEE

Dear BC Council of Garden Clubs organizers,

I first developed an interest in horticulture starting in the summer of 2019, when I got a chance to spend a season working at a local market garden in my home town. I fell in love with the work immediately, and after a few more summers, I decided to focus on a career in horticulture and began looking around at options for education. I applied to the Horticulture Technician Certificate program at Camosun College soon after. This program expanded my curiosity beyond food production and into many other aspects of the field under the expert guidance of two phenomenal instructors, Dale Toronitz and Lisa Greig, and skilled technician Rainer Brueggerman. Propagation, arboriculture, and botany became particular interests of mine, in addition to vegetable gardening. Since graduating the program, I've started working as a groundskeeper for Island Health, attending to gardens at various hospital and long-term care facilities around Victoria. I hope to have a long career in the public sector, with growing ambitions to start my own small landscaping business at some point in the future. In my spare time, I look after a shared community garden plot, a modest balcony garden, and an ever-expanding collection of houseplants.

Allow me to express my sincerest gratitude for your generous donation. Receiving the award is both humbling and validating for the belief that I chose the right field in which to pursue my life's work and the best institution at which to expand my education. Just a few years ago, I would not have chosen a career in horticulture. Since then, plants have become a source of joy and meaning in my life. I am proud to share that meaning and joy with patients, staff and visitors at Island Health. I look forward to a long career of creating beauty and life in public spaces

Sincerely,

Michael T Kopp  
BCCGC Award Recipient, Camosun College



*"Ours, in its humble way, is an art as well as a craft. At the same time it keeps us in touch with the earth, the seasons, and with that complex of interrelated forces both animate and inanimate which we call nature. It is a humanizing occupation."* Christopher Lloyd, Great Dixter, family home and gardening writer, East Sussex, England, 1921-2006.





# Join our \$80 for 80 years celebration donation drive! 🎉

Join clubs across BC in celebrating the BCCGC's 80th anniversary and the Scholarship Fund by contributing \$80 in 2023. Over **\$10,150** has been collected to date!

## 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](http://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

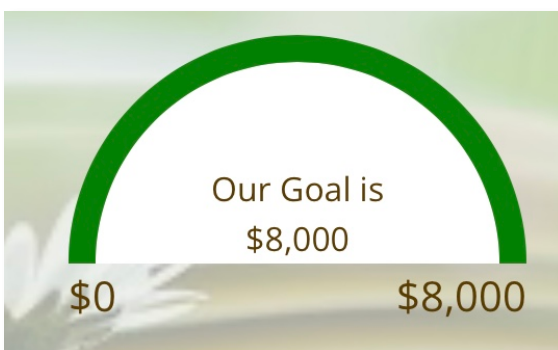
Go to [www.bcgardenclubs.com](http://www.bcgardenclubs.com).

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!



Let's keep it going!  
**Four months** left to blow our goal out of the water!!!!

Dear President Lynda Pasacreta,

Warm greetings from the David Suzuki Foundation! We were delighted to receive your message and learn about the incredible work that the BC Council of Garden Clubs has been doing over the past 80 years to promote environmental stewardship, sustainability, and community engagement.

Your dedication to fostering a deeper connection between people and nature, as well as your efforts to protect and enhance our precious natural resources, are truly commendable. The work you do aligns closely with our mission to inspire positive change and foster a more sustainable and resilient future for all.

On behalf of the David Suzuki Foundation, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the BC Council of Garden Clubs on reaching this significant milestone. The impact of your initiatives is felt throughout the province of BC, as you empower individuals and communities to make positive contributions to the environment and create greener, healthier spaces for everyone to enjoy.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to environmental conservation and education. We wish the BC Council of Garden Clubs continued success in all your endeavours and look forward to witnessing the positive impact you will continue to create for generations to come.

With warm regards,  
Sarah

**Public Information Coordinator**

Vancouver, BC, Canada

[contact@davidsuzuki.org](mailto:contact@davidsuzuki.org)

# CLIMATE RESISTANT PLANT STRATEGIES ESSENTIAL IN A DROUGHT

## JUDIE STEEVES, OKANAGAN XERISCAPE ASSOCIATION

Adaptability and climate-resilience are essential to survival for plants that are native to the Okanagan Valley's arid climate, with its hot summers and low rainfall. More and more, such strategies are needed in other parts of the province as drought conditions and extreme heat occur as a result of climate change.

Escape from death under a blazing summer sun can be achieved in a variety of ways.

Biologist Josh Smith is general manager of XEN Nursery in West Kelowna, which grows and propagates native and xeriscape plants for use through the Okanagan on ecological restoration projects. He is also a member of the board of the Okanagan Xeriscape Association.

He explains that drought resistance can be achieved in a number of ways, including escaping drought, avoiding drought, and tolerating drought.

A common tactic that xeriscape plants employ is to cleverly skip the dry summer months entirely, by blooming during the moist spring months and quickly setting seed for the next generation, before dying back until the next fall or next spring.

Good examples of this strategy in the Okanagan native plant world are the City of Kelowna's flower, the arrowleaf balsamroot or *Balsamorhiza sagittata*. These cheerful yellow sunflowers bloom in masses on the hillsides in early spring, then the big arrow-shaped leaves curl and dry up during the hot summer. However, the plant lives on underground, storing moisture in its deep tap root, ready to sprout new green leaves with winter snowmelt, longer days, and in the spring rain and sunshine.

Spring bulbs fit in this category as well, shooting up in the spring from the nourishment stored from the previous year in their bulbs or corms; blooming lustily for a few days or weeks, then slowly dying back to ground level as the weather warms up.

During their short lives above ground they bloom, set seed, store nourishment underground, and disperse seeds to ensure a new population is created.

The second adaptability trick plants use is to avoid drought by maintaining a high water content by minimizing water loss or by maximizing water uptake.

One method is to reduce the amount of sunlight that can enter the leaves, which decreases light reactions and associated water use.

Such plants include those with silvery or dusty foliage such as the native rabbitbrush or *Ericameria nauseosa*, or the pearly everlasting or *Anaphalis margaritacea*. In the garden, a great ornamental example is silvermound or *Artemisia schmidtiana*.

Drought avoidance is illustrated also by plants with deep tap roots which, are thus not susceptible to surface drying of the soil. Native plants which are good examples are the arrowleaf balsamroot, which is also a drought escape artist, yarrow or *Achillea millefolium*, and brown-eyed Susan or *Gaillardia aristata*.

In our gardens, good examples are the *Gaillardia* and yarrow family plants, as well as such plants as the Missouri evening primrose or *Oenothera macrocarpa*.

Succulents fit into the drought avoidance category as well, storing water in their fleshy leaves or stems and reducing the surface area to minimize water loss and keep cool.

Cactus fit into this category, as well as agaves, hens and chicks or *Sempervivum*, and a huge family of plants that are both native and are propagated for garden use, the sedum or stonecrop family. This includes low-growing *Sedum divergens* and two-foot-tall *Sedum* autumn joy or fire, as well as the native *Sedum lanceolatum*.

## CLIMATE RESISTANT STRATEGIES ESSENTIAL IN A DROUGHT, CONT'D

Lastly, drought tolerance is a tactic used in either morphological (shape and form), or physiological (how they interact with the environment), or biochemical (changes to their internal body chemistry and pathways).

Many plants have more ways than one adaptation.

A great expression of a morphological adaptation that xeric plants use is to have narrow leaves, which reduce the surface area for water loss. A good garden example is the pineleaf penstemon or *Penstemon pinifolius* and another is Russian sage or *Perovskia atriplicifolia*.



Silvermound or *Artemisia schmidtiana* with yarrow in the background.  
Photo by Judie Steeves, Okanagan Xeriscape Association



WHIMSY IN THE GARDEN



Photo by Janet Crich, Armstrong Garden Club



Photo by Wendy Galvin, Walnut Grove Petal Pushers Garden Club, Langley



## WHIMSY IN THE GARDEN, CONT'D



Photo by Cheryl Malmo, Gibsons Garden Club



Photo by Monika Dowker, Mission Garden Club

## WHIMSY IN THE GARDEN, CONT'D

Photo by Veronica Wills, Comox Valley Horticultural Society — member's garden in Fanny Bay



Photo by Darlene Merz, Squamish Garden Club





## FLORAL ART — WHAT IS IT?

### CINDY TATARYN, CANADIAN WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FLORAL ARTS

Floral art is not floristry! While floristry is a commercial enterprise to make a profit, floral art is a hobby that has participants worldwide. Floral artists use plant material in all its' forms to interpret a title. Plant material may be dried, bleached, painted, dyed, skeletonized, manipulated, or processed, such as paper and jute, and of course fresh plant material is most commonly used. Plant material must predominate in a design. Artificial plant material is strictly forbidden.

The World Association of Floral Artists (WAFA) is an umbrella organization of members from 32 countries. They have a world competition every three years in a different host country. This week-long show attracted as many as 60,000 visitors when it was hosted by Dublin, Ireland.

Locally, we have the Canadian Western Association of Floral Art Clubs (CWAFAC), [www.cwafac.weebly.com](http://www.cwafac.weebly.com), which is an umbrella organization for floral art clubs and individuals and floral art judges in Western Canada. The local BC floral art clubs are:

#### BC Floral Art Society:

<https://bcfloralartsociety.com>

#### Floral Artists of the Fraser Valley:

<https://floralartistsfv.ca>

Mid-Island Floral Art Club: [mifaclub2000@gmail.com](mailto:mifaclub2000@gmail.com)

#### Okanagan Floral Art Club

#### Victoria Floral Artists Guild:

<https://victoriafloralartists.ca>

#### Society of Horticultural and Floral Design Judges of BC

BC Council of Garden Clubs hosts a floral art show at our spring AGM and fall general meeting.

BCCGC trains the floral design judges and also teaches floral design workshops. We have developed

several levels, starting with beginners Level 1 – Introduction to Traditional Designs. There are seven workshops, which include: centrepiece (round and oval), vertical, crescent, inverted crescent, triangle, asymmetrical triangle, Hogarth Curve and Pavé and elements and principles of floral design.

Level 2 – Introduction to Contemporary Design. This also has seven lessons, which include: parallel designs (formal, informal, intersecting, and graphic), creative line design, line-mass design, creative mass design, plants and flowers design, miniature design, petit design, and elements and principles of floral design.

Level 3 - Contemporary Design. This level includes such designs as: construction/structure designs, reflective design, illuminary design, spatial thrust design, transparency design, abstract design, landscape and seascape designs, contemporary techniques, and elements and principles of floral design. Levels 3 through 6 are more advanced contemporary designs, which consist of seven lessons per level. Levels 1 through 6 need to be taken in order.

If you would like to **sign up** for the BCCGC floral design workshops please contact me with your name, contact information, where you live, and the club you belong to. Some clubs host workshops for members. If your club would like to **host** floral design workshops, either single workshops or a Level 1 course, please contact me.

The floral design judges are required to take all six levels before they can take the floral design judges course. If you would like to become a floral design judge please contact me, [1vice@bcgardenclubs.com](mailto:1vice@bcgardenclubs.com), with your name, contact information, where you live, and the club you belong to.

# FLORAL ART — WHAT IS IT?, CONT'D



Photos by Pam Robertson, BC Council of Garden Clubs 2023 spring meeting



# CHILDREN'S PROGRAM — QUALICUM BEACH COMMUNITY GARDEN

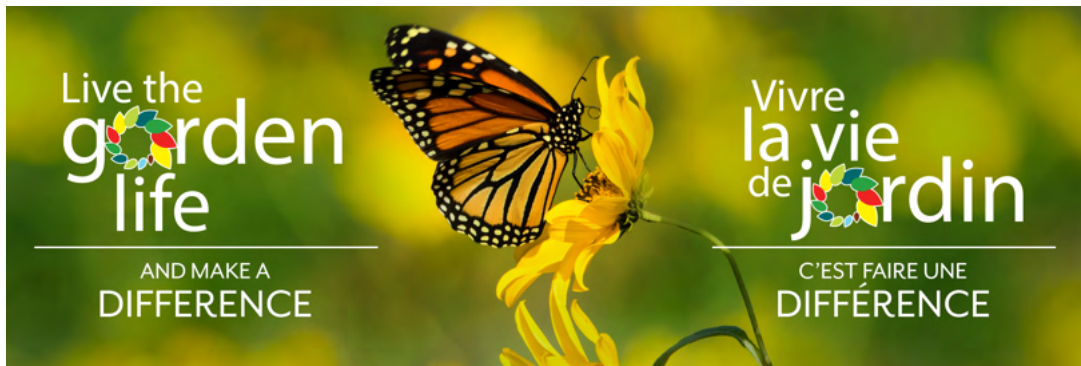
## TANIA ABEL, LEAD EDUCATOR, CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

Tania Abel is the lead educator for the children's program at the Qualicum Beach Community Garden.

Children learn all aspects of gardening, including planting, vegetable and flower harvesting, seed starting and saving, water barrel conservation, composting, winter harvest, and so much more. Photos by Tania Abel.







**Live The Garden Life**

50m · 🌐

Exciting news!



**Communities in Bloom - Collectivités en fleurs**

2h · 🌐

It's official! Orange is the colour of the year for 2024! 🧡 Get ready for an exciting reveal at the 2023 Communities in Bloom Symposium and Awards! Stay tuned for more updates, and join us in celebrating this vibrant choice in 2024! 🎉

[#ColourOfTheYear](#) [#cib2024](#) [#StayTuned](#)





# FALLING IN LOVE WITH COLLARETTE DAHLIAS

BY BETTY GIRARD, VANCOUVER DAHLIA SOCIETY

Collarette dahlias have been around for decades, but for many years they were second-class citizens in the competitive dahlia world. They were usually relegated to the darkest corner of the dahlia show and were only shown as triple entries (three blooms in a vase). They rarely made it to the head table.

This started to change about 20 years ago, when several high-profile hybridizers like Wayne Holland in Naramata and the Walker family in Washington State, started to focus on the collarettes in their breeding programs.

There are currently 294 varieties registered with the American Dahlia Society, with 30 new varieties being registered in just the last six years. There are many reasons for this explosion in interest. First of all these dahlia plants tend to be smaller in size and are floriferous, making for an eye-catching display in smaller gardens and

pots. They have open centres, which means their pollen is easily available, making them a popular stop for bees and butterflies.

Collarettes have a single row of eight petals with a layer of petaloids surrounding the disc centre. These petaloids can be either the same colour as the petals, such as Kelsey Sunshine, or in a complementary colour, such as Bloomquist Sweet. When most people think of dahlias they think of the elaborate and showy blooms they remember in their grandmother's garden. The beauty of collarettes is in their simplicity.

Finally, collarettes are getting the attention they deserve and people are falling in love with them. For many of us who are growing the newer varieties in our limited garden space we are falling in love with these dahlias again.

Photos by Betty Girard



Hy Vera



Bloomquist Sweet



Betty's favourite dahlia — Kelsey Sunshine

# Growers Delight

## Granular Soil Activator

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- Lawn maintenance & care

[www.organicdirtsupplements.ca](http://www.organicdirtsupplements.ca)

Growers Delight is now a member of COTA, the Canada Organic Trade Association. Check us out: <https://organicdirtsupplements.ca/>. Use code BCCG12 for special discounts.



Dave Pounds, member of Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society, lives close to Alliston, on a ponded section of the Nottawasaga River in Ontario. His area has been enjoying wonderful weather with rain, sun, rain, and sun.

Tis the season to help our friend the soil out. It has been a long, hard season with water shortages, and hot, dry conditions. Many of us have lost some plants and have sustained damage to our lawns and fruit trees.

This is a great time to add Growers Delight Soil Activator, allowing your soil to be rejuvenated, and to repair root systems to have them ready for our next growing season.

Growers Delight:

1. Builds a stronger root system, increasing root respiration and root formation.
2. Helps to accelerate microbial activity and soil quality.
3. Provides a great source of energy for beneficial soil organisms, which influence both soil fertility and plant health.
4. Promotes healthy soil, providing nutrients, increasing plant health.

Add 1.5 to 2 pounds of Soil Activator per 100 square feet to lawns.

Add up to 1 pound of Soil Activator to your fruit trees.

Add a 1/2 tablespoon when planting bulbs, add some water and cover with soil, then add a heaping tablespoon on top.

For all of your flower and vegetable beds add a generous amount on top of the beds and let it work its magic repairing the soil over the winter months.



# Herbal Gardens With Ana



[herbalprograms@gmail.com](mailto:herbalprograms@gmail.com)

Programs available for group or individual booking.

1. Explore the exciting world of herbal gardens with variety of ZOOM programs:

- - Growing and harvesting your own herbs.
- - Easy to grow 4 season herbal garden.
- - Tasty and beneficial culinary/medicinal plants.
- - Fall is coming, medicinal berries full of vitamins.
- - Autumn veggies as best source of nutrients for colder season.

2. Discover more with private herbal garden consultation (includes herbal audit)

- Ana Dushyna is a botanical pharmacology specialist and certified landscaper, is actively engaged in native restoration projects, and lives in South Surrey.

With permission from Olaf Kringhaug Photography, brother of the late Kristin Kringhaug Crouch



olaf\_kringhaug\_photography  
Ladner, B.C.



33 likes

olaf\_kringhaug\_photography Every year in Delta, British Columbia farmers participate in setting farm land aside and plant wildlife cover crops. It give those lands a break to recover and provides wildlife with food and safety. The next spring it will be turned over into compost and a new field will be used.

# WOODLAND SKIPPER BUTTERFLY

CINDY TATRYN, VANCOUVER MASTER GARDENERS

**Woodland Skipper (or Western Skipper),** *Ochlodes sylvanoides*

**Range:** The woodland skipper is widespread and common in BC. It is found in and near patches of grassy meadows.

**Larval Food Plants:** The woodland skipper larvae feed on grasses.

**Adult Food Source:** The nectar sources for the adult woodland skipper are numerous and varied from native plants to garden flowers. It will frequent such flowers as sea pink (*Armeria* spp.), a tufted evergreen foliage with red, pink or white flower heads on wiry stems; sea pink looks like grass and clover. It blooms from spring to fall and is attractive to small butterflies like skippers. Japanese burnet (*Sanguisorba obtusa*), which forms a mound of toothy, pinnate leaves with rose-pink bottle-brush-like blooms waving on willowy stems, blooms into the fall.

Woodland skipper will also feed on verbena (*Verbena* spp.). Verbena (*Verbena canadensis*) is a north American native, 18 inches tall with purple flowers. Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), has 3-foot stems with 3-inch daisies of dusty mauve to near white petals with a centre boss of rusty ochre. Sweet alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*), has tiny flowers and are a favourite food source for small butterflies, including skippers.

Ageratum (*Ageratum houstonianum*), aster (*Aster* species), beggar-ticks (*Bidens alba*), butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*), butterfly weed (milkweed, *Asclepias tuberosa*), dogbane (*Apocynum* species), fleabane (*Aster* species), heliotrope (*Heliotropium arborescens*), ironweed (*Vernonia* species), knapweed (*Centaurea* species), lantana (*Lantana camara*), mallows (*Malva* species), marigolds, and porterweed.

Butterfly weed (milkweed, *Asclepias tuberosa*), rudbeckia (*Rudbeckia* species), black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), sedum (*Sedum spectabile*), self-heal (*Prunella* species), thistle (*Cirsium* species), verbena (*Verbena*), and related species), white sweet clover (*Melilotus alba*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), and zinnia (*Zinnia elegans*).

**Time of Flight:** July to August, in some places until frost kills the adults.

## Description:

**Larvae** – The woodland skipper will overwinter as a pupa. There is only one brood per year. The first instar larva has a jet-black head with a pale, putty-coloured body. The mature larva's head is black and the body is buff yellow with seven black stripes.

**Adult** – There are at least five species of skippers in BC. Skippers have a distinctive direct flight. It often holds its forewings and hind wings at different angles when feeding or resting. The woodland skipper shows a remarkable variation across BC and south to the USA. This variation in colour pattern represents a response to different climatic conditions, not genetically different subspecies.



## Native Plant:

Grasses: tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*).

Tufted hairgrass is a very pretty grass with an airy open flower head. It prefers a shady, wet site.

It grows 1 to 2 feet tall; its hair-thin leaves and many tiny spikelets impart a gossamer halo to its bright green basal tufts. It is a densely tufted perennial with numerous stems that grows from 20 to 120 cm tall on fibrous roots. The leaves are flat to folded, narrow and rather stiff, growing to 3 mm wide and 3 to 8 mm long.

The flower inflorescences are narrow panicle, open and loose, 8 to 30 cm, long often nodding. The spikelets are usually purplish to tawny-bronze and glistening, usually darkening at maturity, with usually 2 to rarely 3 flower spikes per plant. The lemmas are thin, about 4 mm long, and hairy at the base.



Tufted hairgrass grows in tidal marshes, beaches, meadows, gravelly river bars, rocky ridges, lakeshores, and rocky areas in bogs. It is common from sea level to alpine. Its' range is from the Arctic to high altitudes in the tropics. *Deschampsia* is named for French botanist L. A. Deschamps (1774-1849).



California fescue (*Festuca californica*) and Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*) are both suited to the dry summers, prairie and meadow areas. The big, bold, evergreen clumps send forth dozens of arching, flowering culms with copious drooping spikelets, creating a dramatic effect.



All photos from Wikimedia Commons

#### Sources:

*The Butterfly Garden: Creating Beautiful Gardens to Attract Butterflies*, by Jerry Sedenko (1991, Villard Books).

*Butterfly Gardening: Creating a Butterfly Haven in Your Garden*, by Thomas C. Emmel (1997, Cavendish Books).

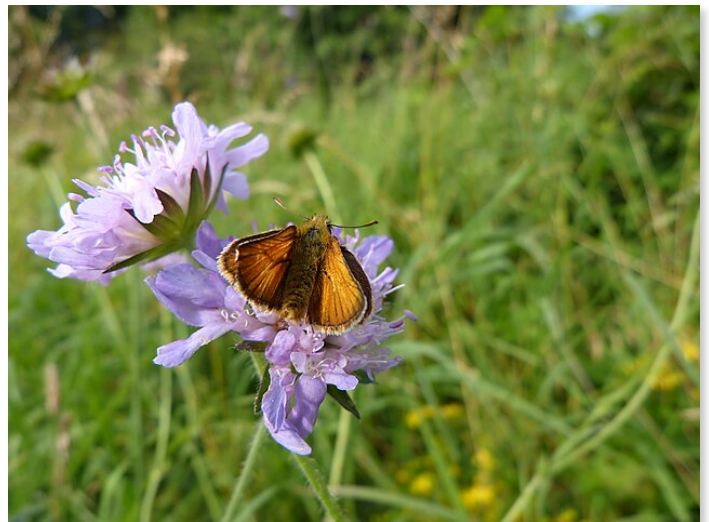
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*Plants of Coastal British Columbia including Washington, Oregon & Alaska*, by Jim Pojar & Andy Mackinnon (2014, BC Ministry of Forests, Partners Publishing and Lone Pine Publishing).

*E-Fauna BC: Electronic Atlas of the Fauna of British Columbia* [efauna.bc.ca]. Lab for Advanced Spatial Analysis, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, by Brian Klinkenberg, 2020/2021.

*E-Flora BC: Electronic Atlas of the Plants of British Columbia* [eflora.bc.ca]. Lab for Advanced Spatial Analysis, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, by Brian Klinkenberg, 2020/2021.





## MORE WHIMSY IN THE GARDEN



Cornelia Unger, Lynn Valley Garden Club, created this eco sculpture at the end of her cul-de-sac. She used a metal frame destined for the dump, covered it in landscape fabric, filled with dirt, and planted with sedums! Photo by Cornelia Unger



A garden in New Westminster. Photo by Rosemarie Daviduk, Upper Lonsdale Garden Club



MORE WHIMSY IN THE GARDEN,CONT'D

Photo by Lisa Zhu, Pandora Park Community Garden in Vancouver — a whimsical bee enclosure



Di Macdonald, Enderby Garden Club — Armstrong Sunflower Festival

MORE WHIMSY IN THE GARDEN,CONT'D

Photo by Rebecca, CROWS  
Point Community Garden,  
Vancouver



Photo by Karen Justice, Port  
Royal Community Garden, New  
Westminster





## COMING TO TERMS WITH WEEDS

JOHN EDWORTHY, PRESIDENT, SOUTH SURREY GARDEN CLUB

*The Oxford Dictionary* defines a weed as “a wild plant growing where it is not wanted and in competition with cultivated plants.” In farming, weeds reduce yields and profitability, slow harvest, and make harvesting more difficult. In ranching, weeds can outcompete desired feed and sometimes poison grazing animals. Invasive weed species can cause serious disruption to our native ecosystems, outcompeting our valued native species. Weeds are generally bad news.

I, like most gardeners, spend lots of time weeding and grumbling about weeding. On occasion, however, I sit back and try to appreciate some good points about the weeds that I battle. I’m constantly pulling creeping wood sorrel, *Oxalis stricta*, from much of our garden, especially as it outcompetes the creeping thyme we’ve tried to grow between our pavers. That said, I’ve read that wood sorrel has several medicinal uses and will grow and give some greenery to covered areas that get almost no water. Blue star creeper, *Isotoma fluviatilis*, just showed up as a weed in one area of our garden. After a very short spell of removing it, I’ve let it go and it has become a very attractive groundcover. I’ve heard it can even substitute for lawn.

Himalayan blackberry, *Rubus armeniacus*, is a problem invasive species – but as a lover of blackberry pie, I admit that I enjoy the berries.

Dame’s rocket, *Hesperis matronalis*, is a difficult invasive weed that chokes out native vegetation, but I enjoy the colour it adds to the lanes and trails in the spring at Crescent Beach. I now seed clover into my lawn to support pollinators where I used to laboriously pull it out. Heather and I planted stinging nettle, *Urtica dioica*, in our garden (the back corner) last year because it’s a

key support plant for several species of butterflies and other pollinators. Just don’t touch it without gloves.

We should all do our best to eliminate noxious weeds, especially invasive species, but we can still appreciate the attributes of some of the weeds we battle in the meantime.



*Isotoma fluviatilis* (blue star creeper). Photo from Wikimedia Commons



*Oxalis stricta* (creeping wood sorrel). Photo from Wikimedia Commons

# 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 September 15 for October 1**. Submissions/ inquiries:

[newsletter@bcgardenclubs.com](mailto:newsletter@bcgardenclubs.com)

Lynda Pasacreta, Editor

Pam Robertson, Copy Editor

## BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS

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Frank Girard | Website

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