



THE BULLETIN

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL
OF GARDEN CLUBS

OCTOBER 2026



Fall aster. Photo by Visnja Gasparic
Vojvodic, Richmond Garden Club.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LYNDA PASACRETA

PLEASE FORWARD TO ALL OF YOUR CLUB MEMBERS

Another road trip to the West Kootenays late September had hubby and I poking around back roads visiting some of the well-known alpine lakes.

For those who know me, I have a strong passion for all pollinator-friendly insects. I love to create gardens in Richmond to support the bees, butterflies, lady bugs, etc.

My colleagues and I have created a full life-cycle butterfly garden in Paulik Park, right in an urban centre in Richmond. When the odd butterfly flies by or we see caterpillar damage on our plants, there are screams of delight.

I could hardly breathe whenever we stopped to poke around in the forests, the lakes, and up forest roads in this area of Castlegar, Nelson, Rossland, and Trail.

We would stop, step out of our vehicle and be surrounded by at least four different species of butterflies, and bees of all shapes and sizes.

Most times we were on a sandy beach gazing at a high alpine lake. We were surrounded by the host and nectar native plants and plenty of small grain gravel.

So. As with everything in life, educational opportunities present themselves over and over again.

We realized that we have not got the formula quite right yet for our urban butterfly garden. We need grainy sand! Butterflies use the grain to help them digest their food.

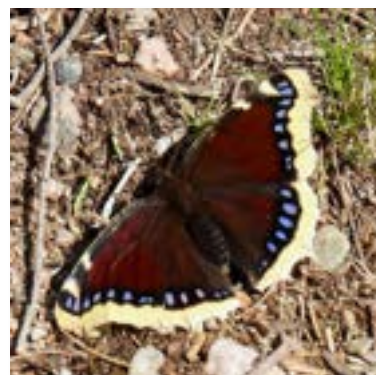
We need a clean supply of water (not tap water if possible) and easy access for our butterflies.

Our butterfly garden in Paulik Park has been created in the shape of a giant butterfly. So we will be adding an access to sand in one of the wings. We currently have a wine barrel full of water in another garden. This water source will be moved to the butterfly garden.

We also found out that the mourning cloak butterfly is not a flower nectar seeker. It loves rotting fruit (and willow and aspen).

Just to leave you with an image that froze me to the spot, I was standing on the beach at Nancy Greene Lake. Surrounding my feet were painted ladies, mourning cloaks, Lourquin's admirals, and Milbert's tortoiseshells. Now that is a good day in the West Kootenays.

Mourning cloak, *Nymphalis antiopa*. Photo from Wikimedia Commons.



SCHOLARSHIP FUND NEWS

UBC HORTICULTURAL TRAINING PROGRAM AWARDS, DOROTHY BARKLEY, SECRETARY, BCCGC

Dorothy Barkley attended the UBC Horticultural Training Program awards held at UBC Botanical Gardens. The UBC Friends of the Garden, UBC Botanical Garden staff, and guests enjoyed a “Welcome Back/BBQ” lunch September 9, 2026. Dorothy presented the BC Council of Garden Clubs scholarship award to David Smith, a student who graduated in the UBC Horticultural Training Program and won the BCCGC scholarship award.

David is a “self-taught” horticulturalist and grower. He decided to take HTP to further his knowledge and understanding of the world of plants. He excelled in the program and applied himself to learning and taking in as much as he could during the short eight-month program. Upon completing the program, he pursued a career with the City of Vancouver at the Sunset Nursery facility. Here, under the direction of the head grower, he helps produce the annual display crops for the city, VanDusen, and the Bloedel Conservatory. ~ Kelvin Devries, Principal Instructor, Horticultural Training Program, UBC.



BCCGC Scholarship award recipient David Smith, University of British Columbia. Photo contributed by Sara Doran-Coelho, Associate Director, Development & Alumni Engagement, Faculty of Science, UBC Botanical Garden. (David Smith, second from the right, and Dorothy Barkley, BCCGC, far right.)



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!



BC COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS FALL MEETING

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2026, BONSOR RECREATION COMPLEX

Have you registered your club/community garden for the BC Council of Garden Clubs Fall Meeting? We make it easy for you — you can register online or download the registration form online at <https://bcgardenclubs.com/resources/meeting-registration/>.

🐝 Ron Long, former sciences photographer for Simon Fraser University, is back as our keynote speaker to present Part Two of his native plant series.

🐝 Liz Knight, South Surrey Garden Club and Darts Hill Conservancy Trust Society, will give us a visual tour of Darts Hill.

🐝 Lynda Pasacreta, Richmond Garden Club, will provide us with some tools we can use to keep our existing members and attract new members.

🐝 Nick Tooke, Okanagan College, will inspire us with his viticulture work and show us why we continue to support horticultural students in BC.

Register today! Lunch is on us!

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.

VICTORIA ORCHID SOCIETY

Orchid Show & Sale



— \$10 Adults - \$8 Seniors & Students —

Fri Oct 16 2026 1-7pm

Our Lady of Fatima

Sat Oct 17 2026 9-5pm

Parish Hall

Sun Oct 18 2026 1-4pm

4635 Elk Lake Dr. Victoria

Theme: Reflections

For more information visit <https://victoriaorchidsociety.com/events/>



Benefits of membership includes posting your local events on our website. Many people in BC communities look for events happening in their area. The events page is one of our most visited pages.

It is easy to do and only available to BC Council of Garden Clubs members. Remember to visit the website often, where everything you need will be just a click away — www.bcgardenclubs.com.

GARDENING WITH NATURE – TOXIC PLANTS, PET PERIL, OR AVOID CAUSING HARM TO PET WITH YOUR GARDEN CHOICES

SIGRIE KENDRICK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OKANAGAN XERISCAPE ASSOCIATION, AND MASTER GARDENER

I uncovered some valuable but rather alarming news the other day after my Frenchton puppy went on a snacking spree while being dog-sat at a friend's garden. It's stress no pet owner needs.

After some research, I learned there are some common xeriscape plants you need to keep your pet from munching on.

For many Okanagan gardeners, the shift to drought-tolerant landscaping has been a welcome one with less watering, fewer weeds, and a garden that thrives through our hot, dry Okanagan summers.

But for households with dogs, xeriscaping brings an added consideration as several of our most popular water-wise plants carry some degree of toxicity to our canine companions.

Knowing which ones deserve a second look, or a spot out of paw's reach, can save you an anxious call to the vet and the accompanying stress I recently experienced.

Few plants say "xeriscape" quite like yucca, with its architectural rosettes of stiff, sword-like leaves and towering flower spikes.

It thrives in poor, rocky soil and needs almost no supplemental water once established, making it ideal for Okanagan slopes and gravel beds.

Unfortunately, all parts of the plant contain something known as steroidal saponins, and ingestion can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and lethargy in dogs.

The sharp leaf tips are also a mechanical hazard for curious noses and paws.

The globe-shaped blooms of ornamental allium are one of my favourites for adding structure and

pollinator interest to a xeric border, and the bulbs are remarkably drought-hardy.

But allium species, including ornamental onion, along with garden chives and garlic, contain compounds that damage red blood cells in dogs, potentially leading to hemolytic anemia, a condition where blood cells burst within the bloodstream.

Bulbs are the most concentrated source of toxins, so dogs that dig, like mine, are at greatest risk.

Symptoms may not appear for several days after ingestion, which makes it easy to miss the connection.

Bearded iris requires minimal watering and rewards gardeners with a spectacular early-summer bloom, but the entire plant is toxic.

Its rhizomes store enough moisture to shrug off dry spells but also contain irisin, a toxic compound that can cause drooling, vomiting, and diarrhea if chewed.

Most cases are mild, but dogs that make a habit of excavating garden beds should be kept away from iris plantings.

Yew hedging is a familiar sight in Okanagan landscapes, prized for its dense, drought-tolerant evergreen structure and tolerance of poor soils and heat. It is also one of the more dangerous plants on this list.

Nearly every part of the yew, apart from the fleshy red aril around the seed, contains taxine alkaloids that affect the heart and can be fatal in relatively small amounts.

GARDENING WITH NATURE, CONT'D

SIGRIE KENDRICK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OKANAGAN XERISCAPE ASSOCIATION, AND MASTER GARDENER

Given how popular yew is in the Okanagan, gardeners with dogs may want to consider whether it belongs near an accessible yard, or whether a safer conifer substitute makes more sense.

Lavender is a xeriscape mainstay for good reason.

This perennial is fragrant, pollinator-friendly, and content with minimal irrigation.

Lavender contains small amounts of linalool, the consumption of which can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and lethargy in dogs.

Fortunately most, but not all, dogs are deterred by the strong scent before they eat enough to cause a problem.

Yarrow, our tough, feathery-leaved native, is a staple of Okanagan low-water borders.

Yarrow is only mildly toxic to dogs, typically causing vomiting, diarrhea, or excessive drooling if a significant quantity is consumed.

It's a good example of how "toxic" covers a wide risk range as yarrow's risk is far lower than that of yew, but worth knowing about all the same.

Toxicity in plants exists on a spectrum, from mild gastrointestinal upset to genuine medical emergencies.

The dose your canine consumes matters, a dog that nibbles a leaf is in a very different situation from one that digs up and eats a bulb.

If you suspect your dog has ingested a toxic plant, contact your veterinarian immediately, and try to identify the plant involved.

None of this means abandoning xeriscaping if you share your landscape with a dog.

It simply means being deliberate by fencing off higher-risk plantings, or choosing dog-friendly xeric alternatives like Russian sage, catmint, or ornamental grasses for accessible areas, and knowing your own dog's habits.

It should be noted that while almost all ornamental grasses are non-toxic, *Cordyline australis*, often used as a centrepiece in annual plantings, is toxic to dogs.

A little planning lets you enjoy a water-wise garden that is also a safe one for your furry friends.



Newton relaxing after nibbling on a few garden plants. Some can be toxic to dogs though, so beware. Photo by Sigrie Kendrick, OXA.



Buds and Flowers Floral Art Club (BFFAC)

invites you to a Helen Mitchell
Wire Workshop



Please join us on:
Tuesday, November 3,
2026, 1pm - 3pm
Cranley Place Hall
2141 Cranley Drive, Surrey

Direct from Australia,
Helen will be
instructing participants
on making a wirework
design

- Cost: \$40
Includes all materials
- Light refreshments

For tickets please
contact Cindy
ctataryn@telus.net

Space is limited



MUSHROOM PICKING SEASON

LYNDA PASACRETA

Hubby and I were recently back up to the West Kootenays. Several fall festivals were happening in the local communities.

Garlic festivals, harvest festivals, all filled with so much local produce and products it fills one's heart with glee!

Unfortunately one of the festivals had a mushroom offering that was thought to be chanterelles. My assumption is that some of the attendees who purchased the mushrooms fell ill.

It turned out these mushrooms were identified possibly *Paxillus involutus* (commonly known as the brown roll-rim or common roll-rim). Ingestion of these mushrooms can cause severe health outcomes, and in rare cases, life-threatening complications.

Symptoms usually occur a couple of hours after ingestion, including nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, and dark-coloured urine.

Interior Health issued a health warning advising folks to throw away any mushrooms purchased at the event.

Anyone who had eaten the mushrooms was advised to get medical care right way.

Interior Health also provided the contact information for poison control — BC Drug and Poison Information Centre, 1-800-567-8911.

A good reminder for mushroom-picking season is to always work with someone who is an expert in picking safe-to-eat mushrooms.

We have a couple of BC Council of Garden Clubs of mushroom expert groups — [Northern British Columbia Mycological Society](#) and [Vancouver Mycological Society](#).

Enjoy the harvest season and the changing landscapes while staying healthy and happy!

Paxillus involutus, common roll-rim. Photo by Achim Lammerts, 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.



Maple delight. Photo by Visnja Gasparic Vojvodic, Richmond Garden Club.



Announcing the 2026 Communities in Bloom Theme — Therapeutic Gardening

This year, CiB is recognizing the restorative power of green spaces — gardens that nurture the mind, body, and spirit. For more information on therapeutic gardening — <https://bccib.ca>.

Therapeutic gardening in the fall encourages mindfulness and give us a feeling of well-being.

Dreams of spring while tucking bulbs into cool soil gives us a meditative ritual and grounding that inspires hope and patience for future growth.

Harvesting late-season crops provides us with a tangible sense of accomplishment.

There is nothing as satisfying as dividing perennials knowing that you are not only saving money but expanding the plants that love to be in your garden.

Seed-saving is a gratifying and eco-friendly process that emphasizes renewal and continuity of life.

Gardening in the fall helps all of our senses engage in the changing season. There is such joy in working in the garden while geese noisily fly overhead and migrating birds get their last bits of food for their journey south. Touching cool soil grounds us, and the smell of crisp air soothes our body and soul.

Enjoy the restorative and calming power of gardening in the fall.

Fall asters. Photo by Lynda Pasacreta, Richmond Garden Club.





The countdown to the 2027 Communities in Bloom program is underway, and we’re proud to introduce a theme that celebrates the heart of our nation.

Ô Canada: Blooming Together | Fleurissons ensemble

In 2027, we’re celebrating the landscapes, people, and places that make communities across Canada unique. Whether you’re creating vibrant red and white floral displays, planting trees and regionally appropriate plants, enhancing community landscapes, celebrating local heritage, supporting environmental action, or beautifying public spaces, every project helps tell the story of your community while strengthening our connection to the places we call home.

Together, let’s grow greener, celebrate the diversity of our communities, and create beautiful spaces that inspire, connect, and flourish.



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

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS

Lynda Pasacreta | President

Vacant | Immediate Past President

Cindy Tataryn | First Vice President

Ron Ouwerkerk | Second Vice President, Insurance

Dorothy Barkley | Secretary

Ann Peters | Treasurer

Debbie Mellenger | Scholarship Fund

Lynda Pasacreta | Communications Coordinator

Lorna Herchenson | Membership Committee

Lynda Pasacreta | Newsletter Committee

Frank Girard | Website

bcgardenclubs.com | www.facebook.com/bcgardenclubs