



THE BULLETIN

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL OF
GARDEN CLUBS

DECEMBER 2023

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LYNDA PASACRETA

PLEASE FORWARD TO ALL OF YOUR CLUB MEMBERS

My head is a'swirling. Hubby and I just arrived home from a tour of Guatemala, land of ancient times, and colonial influences.

With barely 2% of the land urbanized, we were delighted with some superb natural scenery.

Throughout our journey, bright yellow sunflowers and pink dahlias were blooming everywhere. (The mountains of Guatemala are considered the home of origin for today's dahlia ancestors.)

In amongst all the yellows and pinks of the flowers were fields of maize. Poor farmers eat little else but this maize. In the Mayan creation story, it teaches that the first grandparents were made from corn.

We also felt how strong the Indigenous people are connected to the land and to the ancient Mayan beliefs. We witnessed an offering ceremony at Iximché, a Mesoamerican archeological site, where a shaman sat smoking a cigar and guiding the ceremony while family members placed gifts to fulfill their wishes. Smoke is very important to these ceremonies as the smoke creates the mouth of the snake, seen as a vehicle to rebirth and transformation.

As there is a strong connection to their ancestors, there is a very devout belief in Christianity.

Women in Guatemala wear their traditional Indigenous clothing proudly, showing their weaving skills. Each family's weaving tells the story of their community and their beliefs.

Christmas has already started in Guatemala. As there is an abundance of conifer trees in Guatemala (*Abies guatemalensis*, Guatemalan fir, *Pinus ayacahuite*, Mexican white pine, for example) it is not uncommon to see trees tied on to the roof of a rickety vehicle, ready to take home and decorate.

Christian traditions take centre stage during the Christmas season. There are celebrations for the many saints during this period, which involves parades, carrying religious artifacts, playing ancient songs on homemade instruments, and waving incense.

As we head into our own season of family, food, and celebrations of Christmas, Hanukkah, and however you choose to celebrate, travelling to other cultures and embracing their way of life makes it easier to say "Feliz Navidad!"



SCHOLARSHIP FUND NEWS

BY PATTY MOLNAR, SCHOLARSHIP FUND CHAIR

The BC Council of Garden Clubs provides support to those students seeking a career in horticulture, through the Scholarship Fund. Vancity has provided us an overview of how our fund works. As you will see, the Scholarship Fund monies are well taken care of, and in an ethical manner.

“Aside from donations, your fund grows via investments. The capital of our long-term funds, like yours, is pooled and invested together for greater impact. Approximately 90% of the capital of the donor advised fund pool is invested in socially responsible investments with [Vancity Investment Management \(VCIM\)](#). Socially responsible investments screen out harmful practices and industries, including fossil fuels. VCIM's [approach to investing](#) is hands-on and in-depth. They look for responsible, progressive companies with competitive growth potential. Once a company is selected, it is actively monitored for its environmental, social and governance (ESG) progress. VCIM uses shareholder advocacy and resolution processes to encourage companies to continually improve their practices. Our funds are designed to support a long-term philanthropic strategy, which targets a 6.5% average annual rate of return. Of course, every year is different – in years when the portfolio exceeds the target return, the difference remains in the fund to ensure granting can continue in less profitable years. The remaining capital is invested more directly, without sacrificing financial returns. These investments are mainly held in the [Affordable Community Housing Accelerator Fund](#), which advances the creation of climate-ready, community-owned affordable rental housing by working with not-for-profit, cooperative and Indigenous organizations to fund affordable housing development projects.”

Vancity Community Foundation

BC Council of Garden Clubs Scholarship Fund Committee:

Patty Molnar, our current chair, is very involved in gardening. She is the president of North Surrey Horticultural Society, belongs to a choir, and received a diploma in horticulture as a mature student. She loves singing to her plants.

Anita Irani is a member of Richmond Garden Club. Before retiring Anita was the Director of University Admissions at York House School and was responsible for the post-secondary scholarship application process at the school.

Betty Girard is a member of the Vancouver Dahlia Society and South Burnaby Garden Club. Her career took her through nursing while obtaining a BSN and then a master's of nursing. She ended her career with Kwantlen Polytechnic University, School of Health, so she knows how valuable scholarship support can be to many students.

Volunteer opportunity:

The committee meets approximately ten times per year and is charged to take care of the administration duties of the Scholarship Fund, including maintaining contact with: educational institutions receiving awards from the fund, Vancity Community Foundation, as well as with the students receiving the funds.

If you are interested in helping students reach their horticultural goals contact scholarship@bcgardenclubs.com



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 **\$10,530** 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.

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

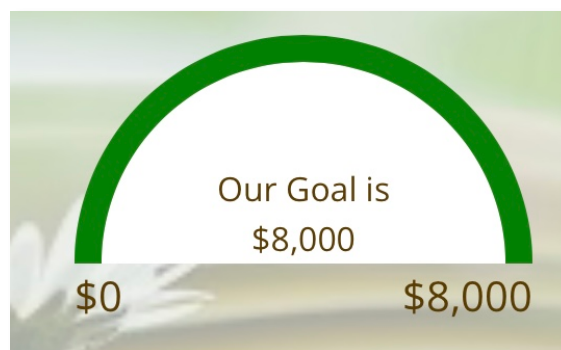
Go to www.bcgardenclubs.com.

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!



Let's keep it going!
One month left to
blow our goal out of
the water!!!!

Squamish Gardeners Club Invitation to Northwest Flower & Garden Show

The Squamish Gardeners Club has a tradition of travelling to the Northwest Flower & Garden Show in Seattle, and this year would like to invite another club to join us. We have fabulous support from Enjoy Tours, who take care of all the details and cater to our every need. They would pick you up and drop off at a pre-arranged spot.

The show has many appealing features, beginning with the enticing scent of flowers as you enter the display area. You can spend a few hours admiring the displays and gathering ideas for your garden. Adjacent to this area is a large vendor's market, with gardening tools, crafts, clothing, and knowledgeable people happy to assist. A large area downstairs is dedicated to plant-related merchandise and another to books, as well as three seminar rooms featuring presentations from gardening specialists. The whole experience is fun and educational, with a big plus being the camaraderie built amongst participants. Take a look at this year's presentations on the garden show website to see if you'd like to join us. Our contact is Diddi Price: diddip@telus.net.

Please see dates and times below:

**Northwest Flower & Garden Show Weekend
February 16 - 18, 2024
Per Person Rates: Double \$649 Single \$949
3 Meals: 2 Breakfast, 1 Lunch**

The Seattle Convention Center hosts the 2024 Northwest Flower & Garden Show featuring six acres of flowers, plants, gardens, exhibits, seminars and many other features. Spend two nights at the Crowne Plaza Hotel offering a special Canadian Show Package. Conveniently located close to the Seattle Convention Center, the Crown Plaza package includes a 2 Day Show Pass, breakfast each morning and Northwest Flower & Garden discounted restaurants. Enjoy a private shuttle to and from the show, an optional shuttle to Seattle attractions and lunch at Village Taphouse & Grill.

PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- 2 Nights accommodation Crowne Plaza, Seattle
- 2 Day Pass Northwest Flower & Garden Show
- 3 Meals: 2 Breakfast, 1 Lunch
- Optional Shuttle: Seattle Attractions

Activity Level: Easy

Friday February 16

7:00am Depart Brackendale
8:00am Delany's Coffee House
9:30am US Border
10:30am Haggen Market Street Cafe Ferndale
12:00pm Village Taphouse & Grill Lunch
2:30pm Northwest Flower & Garden Show
5:00pm Depart
5:15pm Crowne Plaza Hotel check in
- Dinner on your own at hotel or list of NWFG discounted restaurants available

Saturday February 17

7:00am Breakfast in hotel
9:00am Northwest Flower & Garden Show
5:00pm Depart Show
5:15pm Crowne Plaza Hotel
- Dinner on your own at hotel or list of NWFG discounted restaurants available

Sunday February 18

7:00am Breakfast in hotel
9:15am Northwest Flower & Garden Show (Day Pass on your own)
9:20am Optional Shuttle: Chihuly Garden & Glass, Space Needle, Pike Place Market, Seattle Art Museum
1:00pm Depart Show
3:00pm Haggen Burlington
4:15pm Canadian Border
7:00pm Arrive Brackendale



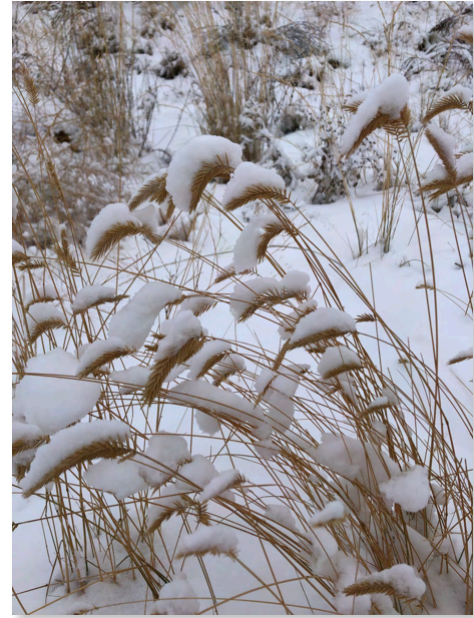
Photo by Anna Kirman, Squamish Gardeners Club



Brenda Viney, Vancouver Rose Society



Betty Girard, South Burnaby Garden Club



Maike van Zwaaij, Vernon Garden Club



Type to enter text.

Lesley Moseley, Powell River Garden Club



Maureen Faulkner, Prince George Garden Club

More Winter Photos



Shelley Seniuk, Nanoose Bay Garden Club



Martine Arnold, New Westminster Horticultural Society



Gillian Roberts, South Surrey Garden Club



Valerie, Clayton Park Community Garden, Surrey



Poinsettias, Antigua, Guatemala



Birthe, David Douglas Botanical Garden Society's Educational Display Garden, Prince George



Goodbye Purple

We spent 2023 celebrating purple! The colour purple in nature is soothing, inspiring, and gives us a sense of well-being.

Thank you to all that sent us purple plants and flowers.

Remember to visit our website, bcgardenclubs.com for more purple inspiration!



Janet Bennie, Gibsons Garden Club

More Winter Photos



Bonnie Friesen, Seed to Sky, Vancouver



Lissa McCulloch, Capilano Garden Club, North Vancouver



Elizabeth Kennedy, Powell River Garden Club



Joan



Trudy Findlay, New Westminster Horticultural Society



Christmas tree, Guatemala City

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.

Growers Delight
Granular Soil Activator
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Growers Delight is a soil activator enriched with organically sourced materials. Along with NPK plus CA, also includes many other trace elements. Improves soil structure and activates the soil's fertility naturally.

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- General row gardens
- Repotting plants
- Trees & shrubs
- Lawn maintenance & care

www.organicdirtsupplements.ca

BC COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS

THE EARLY EDITION WITH STEPHEN QUINN, NOVEMBER 13, 2023

We were delighted to be invited to be interviewed by Stephen Quinn, on CBC Radio. The subject was "How to Prepare Your Garden For Winter". He asked some great questions. We hope to be invited back again.

To listen to the interview: <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-91/clip/16022687> <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-91/clip/16022687>



Linda Derkach, Qualicum Beach Garden Club



Iris pallida 'Albo Variegata'

Source: Walters Gardens



Iris ensata 'Variegata'

Source: Waterxscapes.com

I grow variegated iris in a pot filled with water – year-round. I once had a friend ask how I managed to get mine to survive *in water* when hers grew wonderfully in sandy soil during a drought.

The difference is hers is *Iris pallida* 'Albo Variegata' and mine is *Iris ensata* 'Variegata'. At first glance they look the same, but their preferred growing conditions are very different.

I use this example to illustrate how important it is to understand plant tags before you buy your next treasure. You could end up with the wrong plant or the wrong growing conditions. In this article I hope to explain some terminology and give basic advice on choosing plants.

What's in a Name?

Almost all plant tags give the botanical name.

The first word in a botanical name is the genus; it always starts with a capital letter. The genus gives you an idea of the general growth pattern of a plant. But it doesn't always indicate its preferred growing conditions as my iris example illustrates. Just because it's an iris, doesn't mean it grows in dry soil.

The second word is usually the species; it will tell you something about the plant. That can range from party-trick material (like who discovered it) to what colour it might be (e.g. *alba* means white). Species are always in lower case. If it's a hybrid plant (created by a gardener armed with a paintbrush, mood music, and ulterior motives) there may not be a species.

Hybrids have a cultivar name which is usually in quotation marks or italics. It's just a name (like 'Razzle Dazzle') – often with no real meaning. Sometimes suppliers will add a "cultivar" name to a species to make it look like a hybrid for a variety of reasons, none that benefit you. If you're on the search for a specific plant, it's best to have the entire botanical name – not just one part.

PLANT LABELS DEMYSTIFIED, CONT'D

"Seasons in the Sun"

The label often identifies the exposure best suited for your plant. But what exactly is the difference between "sun" and "shade"? And how important is it?

Sun	5-6 hours of direct sunlight during the heat of the day
Part Shade	4-6 hours of direct sun usually in the morning
Part Sun	4-6 hours of direct sun usually in the afternoon
Part Sun	Hm.... What do you want it to mean?

The "sun" definition is nearly universal.

Most commercial growers don't differentiate between "part sun" and "part shade," but technically, there is a difference. Unless you are purchasing a plant diva, it usually doesn't matter. If in doubt - ask.

The complicated term is "shade." There are very few plants that will grow in complete shade (i.e. no sun). Shade often means less than 4 hours of direct sunlight, or "dappled sun" (i.e. sunlight that is filtered through branches and foliage of deciduous trees). How much is enough dappled sun is a bit of an experiment.

Unless you've seen the plant growing elsewhere, it's often difficult to make a placement decision based on the plant's description. If I'm in doubt, I use the "love factor" – how sad will I be if it dies. If it's important enough, I will grow it in a fancy pot that I can move around easily until I find the right exposure.

And then there is the "fudge factor" – how tolerant is a plant to different conditions. That's plant dependant and it can be significant. My *Bergenia cordifolia* tag reads "sun" but I have mine growing in near full shade conditions. I wouldn't dream of doing this with an *Agave*. Again, if in doubt – ask.

For a more thorough discussion of exposure, try: <https://www.thespruce.com/what-is-full-sun-partial-shade-1402372>.

Moist, Well-drained

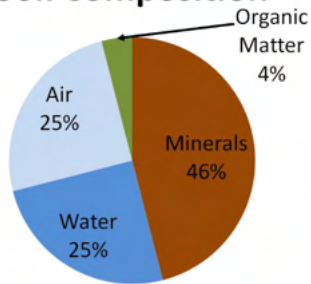
Let me guess. The tag to your latest treasure says it requires "full sun, moist, well-drained soil." Wouldn't we all like to live in a spa, sipping bubbly water under warming lamps?

I can't possibly do a subject like soil justice here. But it is important – probably the most important topic for a gardener to understand. In my opinion, there are three things that are critical to soil science:

PLANT LABELS DEMYSTIFIED, CONT'D

1. Moisture retention affects drainage; but it's not the only thing.

Soil Composition



Source: earthsoils.com

The minerals (i.e. the naturally occurring, inorganic solids – sand, silt, clay) are the biggest determinant of a soil's moisture retention. In ideal soil, they constitute 46% of its volume. The soil's structure (i.e. particle size and shape), texture (i.e. relative proportion of sand, silt, clay), and chemistry (includes acidity) determines how well the soil "sticks together": clay has the smallest particles and tends to be sticky; silt particles are bigger and less sticky; and sand particles are the biggest and don't stick well. Clay by its nature is moisture retentive. The same is true of organics. But in ideal soil, organics should only be 4-5% of the volume. Together they make up the "moist" requirement on your plant tag. If you're curious about your soil, the internet is full of videos to determine soil composition using a mason jar and water. Knowing your soil composition is interesting, but it's drainage that is more important.

"Well-drained" is just fancy words for soil permeability – how well water and air move through soil. Ideally, they are equal, each being 25% of the soil's volume. Permeability is what controls the amount of water and air available to your plant's roots, not just organics, or the soil's structure, texture, and chemistry.

If you garden on a hill, your clay soil becomes less challenging because the water will naturally drain downhill (albeit slowly). Take that same soil and put it on a flat garden that doesn't drain quickly, and your plants could be prone to rot. If you are interested in testing your garden's drainage properties, I recommend watching <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnFFx8srRUs#ddg-play>.

2. Digging in soil amendments isn't a good idea.

We are often encouraged to add either compost or sand to improve drainage.

Water flows differently through different materials. When water reaches the boundary between two different types of soil, it stops or significantly slows depending on its level of water saturation. Don't believe me? Take a sponge and put it in a colander. Slowly pour water onto the sponge. The water will make its way to the bottom of the sponge and sit there despite the holes in the colander. Very little will leak out of the sponge until it is saturated.

Transfer this concept to gardening. As is usually recommended, "dig a hole twice as big as the plant's root ball, then add ample compost." If you're on sandy soil, you've now got moisture-retentive compost (a sponge) sitting on porous native sandy soil (the colander).

Any water that falls on the area will only start to move into the native soil once the soil in the hole is saturated.

In the case of clay-based soil (the soil type most recommended to be amended with organics), the situation is worse. The sponge is effectively sitting in a badly cracked bowl that only drips water instead of a porous colander. Here we also introduce the problem of circling or girdling. Roots prefer to grow in the porous compost than try to penetrate the hard clay. Remember that discounted plant you last bought, the one where the roots had reached the impenetrable bottom of the pot and began circling –that's *girdling*. The plant can eventually strangle itself. Note you can get girdling in sandy soil, it's just not as pronounced.

Digging in excessive organics also introduces other serious problems such as toxic levels of nutrients, pollution, and land settlement. I encourage you to read the three separate articles by Professor Linda Chalker-Smith at the University of Washington called ***Myth of Soil Amendments, Parts I, II, and III.***

What about improving drainage by adding sand to the planting hole. In this case, when the garden bed is watered, the moisture tends to stay in the native soil because it is more moisture retentive and doesn't flow into the sand-filled hole. Unless you are directly watering on the plant, it's not getting much water. Improve drainage by adding sand to the *entire* garden bed, not just a plant's hole.

3. It's easier to buy the right plant for your conditions than change the conditions for the wrong plant.

Obviously, I've been discussing worst-case examples. The more different the amendment is from the native soil and the less it is mixed, the more dramatic the effect. And then there is the plant's "fudge factor" I mentioned. Sometimes it doesn't matter.

So what to do?

Generally, don't amend the soil. Instead, add mulch or compost to the *top* of the soil to moderate the flow of moisture to and from the soil and to add nutrients. And only buy those plants that are suited for your soil and drainage conditions. Unless of course, you enjoy buying expensive compost, packaged as a pretty potted plant.

Sometimes, as in the case of the variegated iris, there are options that look nearly identical that will grow in your conditions.

That said, I've succumbed to charms of some treasure that is completely wrong for my heavy clay soil. If I've fallen in love with something that requires good drainage, I often grow it in a pot. Let's just say that between exposure uncertainties and dealing with poorly drained soil, I have quite the container garden.

Throughout this article I suggest that you "ask." That's one of the major benefits of shopping at garden club and botanical garden plant sales. The inventory is primarily acquired through donation – usually by the volunteers running the sale. Where else can you ask for advice from the person who grew the plant AND benefit a worthwhile cause? I personally have grown over 1,400 different plant cultivars and I know of others in our group who could boast more. Remember, we are gardeners just like you, facing your challenges, but with the experience to help.

SATYR COMMA BUTTERFLY

CINDY TATARYN, VANCOUVER MASTER GARDENERS

Satyr Comma, *Polygonia satyrus*

Range: The satyr comma butterfly is widespread and fairly common in BC.

Larval Food Plants: The satyr comma larvae eats mainly stinging nettles (*Urtica dioica*), but can also be found on wood nettle (*Laportea canadensis*) and hops (*Humulus lupulus*). (An article on the larvae food source, stinging nettle, can be found in the BC Council of Garden Clubs November 2023 newsletter, page 9).

Adult Food Source: The adult satyr comma will eat the nectar of butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*), michaelmas daisy, hebe, dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), sedum, elm (*Ulmus* ssp.), blanketflower (*Gaillardia X grandiflora*), Japanese burnet (*Sanguisorba obtuse*), solidaster, stonecrop (*sedum* ssp.) and hops (*Humulus lupulus*).

Time of Flight: The adults hibernate and come out in early spring. They can be seen flying from March to October.

Life Cycle: The satyr comma butterfly overwinters as an adult, therefore, like the mourning cloak, can be seen very early in the year. They quickly search for mates in spring and lay their eggs to complete their life cycles before they die. Eggs are laid singly on the underside of leaves and hatch within seven to ten days.

The eggs have 10 to 12 vertical ribs and are whitish, turning lead-coloured with the head showing as a jet black spot on top at maturity. When the larvae are mature they will pupate and an adult will emerge at about two months.

Satyr comma adults hibernate in sheltered areas such as hollow trees or stumps, debris piles, house crawl spaces, or barns.

Description:

Larvae – Each larva makes a nettle leaf tent, slightly different from the red admiral, to evade parasitoids.

The mature larvae are variable in colour but usually resemble bird droppings. They have numerous branching spines. Mature larvae have black angular heads that are bilobed, with a spiny tubercle at the top of each lobe. The body is black with a dorsal row of spines and three rows of spines on the sides. There is a broad white or green white band on the back that includes the dorsal and subdorsal rows of spines. The white band has a fine V-shaped black mark around each dorsal spine. The bottom row of spines is also green-white along the middle portion of the body.

The satyr comma pupae are tan or straw coloured and sometimes yellowish on the back. The projection in the middle of the back of the thorax, and the projections in a row down the back of the abdomen, are much taller than in our other anglewings.



Satyr comma, Photo: Wikimedia Commons

SATYR COMMA BUTTERFLY, CONT'D

Adult – The satyr comma butterfly was originally called the satyr anglewing due to its jagged wing borders. The satyr anglewing is the most common anglewing in most parts of BC. The upperside of the wings is bright golden brown, only the grey comma is more golden. Males are darker on the upperside of the wings than the females, and the underside of the wings is a variegated grey-brown. Females are tan-coloured on the underside of the wings. The basal half of the wings is a darker than the outer half.

The wings of this butterfly are adorned with many indentations that produce an almost ragged appearance.

The satyr comma butterfly is generally a medium-sized butterfly. The wings are orange brown with black markings on the upperside, and bark or leaf patterned on the underside. The edges of the wings are ragged in appearance. Males and females usually have quite different patterns on the underside of the wings, the females' pattern being plainer.

While resting with upright wings, it is difficult to see against most backgrounds but has a distinguishing small white "c" (comma) mark on the hind wing, which gives it its name.

Sources:

Butterflies and Butterfly Gardening in the Pacific Northwest, by Mary Kate Woodward (2005, Whitecap Books).

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).

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.



Sanguisorba obtusa, Japanese burnet. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

More Winter Garden Photos - West Coast Style



Connie Todd, Nanoose Garden Club



Val Bouillet, Maple Ridge Garden



Maria Van Dyke, Gibsons Garden Club



Colin Tamboline, Victoria Lily Society,
Camellia sasanqua

Thank you for all of your winter photos! To see all of the photos visit our website www.bcgardenclubs.com.



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 December 15 for January 1**. Submissions/ inquiries:

newsletter@bcgardenclubs.com

Lynda Pasacreta, Editor

Pam Robertson, Copy Editor

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