



THE BULLETIN

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL
OF GARDEN CLUBS

MAY 2026



Richmond Garden Club Plant Sale. Photo by
Visnja Gasparic Vojvodic

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LYNDA PASACRETA

PLEASE FORWARD TO ALL OF YOUR CLUB MEMBERS

We have been delighted with the recent uptick of young people joining the Richmond Garden Club this year.

As with any organization, it is important to find out why people join your clubs. Referral from a friend always leads the top reasons for joining. Recently Facebook came into play. A young person found out about our club and our activities on Facebook! Imagine the excitement from us "boomers."

Richmond Garden Club is extremely involved in the community. Our work promotes creating habitat through our rewilding efforts, including intentionally created full lifecycle gardens for our wildlife (i.e. butterfly habitat presentation garden, "feeding birds naturally" plantings, our native plants demonstration garden).

Paulik Park is our signature project, involving over 4 acres of perennial gardens developed by the Paulik family in the 1930s. We maintain Mrs. Paulik's original gardens and have added more gardens featuring conifers and intense plantings of spring and fall bulbs, all with attracting pollinators and feeding wildlife in mind. Paulik Park is also on the migratory path for many bird species so we ensure food and water are

available through the time these birds visit the park.

We also have a team of Richmond Garden Club members planting and maintaining 22 containers on the Steveston boardwalk for the Steveston Harbour Authority. We proudly showcase a mixture of native and other perennials that attract pollinators (and people) to this lovely display right on the ocean. All the containers have plants that continue through all the seasons.

So guess what? We attract young people to help us out with these projects. Our focus on sustainability, hands-on social experience (so many thank you's from the community while we are working), and our ongoing outdoor eco-conscious projects that showcase native planting, habitat planting, hardscaping with nature, and engaging our culturally rich community attracts young people. Our volunteer projects are extremely flexible — join us when you can!

Sometimes we feel like we talking to the "air" when posting on the social media platforms but it sure feels great when we get a membership from someone who saw us on Facebook!!

Invasive species removal in Paulik Park.
Photo by Visnja Gasparic Vojvodic,
Richmond Garden Club



SCHOLARSHIP FUND NEWS

DONOR PROFILE: THE DUNBAR GARDEN CLUB GETS GROWING TO GIVE BACK

For over 50 years, the Dunbar Garden Club has brought gardeners together on the west side of Vancouver with the goal of fostering a friendly and supportive community. The club is dedicated to learning and promoting environmentally sustainable gardening practices, while building connections among gardening enthusiasts of all skill levels.

They meet eight times a year — last Tuesday of the month, through the fall and spring — at the Dunbar Community Centre. Each meeting features a show bench, for which members bring in themed seasonal bouquets featuring what's currently in bloom in their gardens, and an expert speaker. The meetings are also on Zoom and recorded for those who can't make it in person. They currently have close to 130 members, and about 60 regularly attend the meetings.

The club's annual perennial plant sale takes place at a member's home on the last Saturday of April. The plant sale is their main fundraising event each year, and the primary source of their yearly donation to the BC Council of Garden Clubs Scholarship Fund. The club has been a dedicated annual donor for many years, contributing significant funds to help support post-secondary students in horticulture programs across BC. Over the past 15 years alone, they have contributed more than \$15,000 to the scholarship fund.

The club's focus on education, sustainability, and connection led them to hosting their first

community seed swap in February. They reached out to club members, UBC Friends of the Garden, Master Gardeners, and others via various social media groups, and seed donations poured in. Over 100 people showed up over the two hours. Many brought seeds from home to swap, others — either new to gardening or having stumbled across the event — were excited to be able take seeds home, due to the generosity of the gardening community. Club members were there to offer advice and answer gardening questions — and there were many!

Like many garden clubs in BC, the Dunbar Garden Club focuses on supporting local, neighbourhood-level projects, including ones that promote environmental sustainability and community beautification. Last fall the club was able to use surplus funds to make one-time donations to several local nonprofit organizations — the Vancouver Fruit Tree Project, Environmental Youth Alliance, Flower Fun: Sending Sunshine to Seniors — and an extra donation to the BCCGC Scholarship Fund, as well as to the GVRD Food Bank.

In so many ways, their commitment to horticultural education is a stellar example of how a passion for gardening and a dedication to sharing both knowledge and resources can have a huge impact on the community at large — and students in particular.



Photos from the Dunbar Garden Club



SCHOLARSHIP FUND NEWS

BETTY GIRARD, OUTGOING SCHOLARSHIP FUND CHAIR

Janet Rhodes Kelsey is our new scholarship committee member voted in at the AGM. Janet is from the Langley Garden Club and comes to us with a wealth of experience. Janet has a great love for all things flora and looks forward to this opportunity to share and pay this love of gardens forward to our next generations.

Debbie Mellenger will assume the duties of committee chair, and Pam Robertson will take over the treasury. Pam and Debbie are from the South Surrey Garden Club.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the scholarship committee members, both past and present, for their solid support of the BCCGC Scholarship Fund. I also want to thank the BCCGC executive committee for their guidance over the last three years.

Please consider supporting the scholarship fund. We are well on our way to meeting our 2026 goal. Details on how to donate are in this issue of the *Bulletin*.



Thank you Betty for leading and exceeding our scholarship fund goals for 2025!

From all of us at BC Council of Garden Clubs

SCHOLARSHIP FUND NEWS

DEBBIE MELLENGER, INCOMING SCHOLARSHIP FUND CHAIR

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to Betty Girard, who has guided me over the past two years while I've served on the scholarship committee. She has truly been a guiding light, and I will deeply miss her wisdom, kindness, and unwavering support — although she assures me she won't be far away.

It is an honour to step into the role of chair of the scholarship committee and I look forward to continuing this meaningful work alongside Pam Robertson and Janet Rhodes Kelsey. Having previously worked within a university foundation, I have seen firsthand the profound impact that financial support can have on a student's educational journey. One of the greatest privileges of being part of this committee is the opportunity to meet these

students and hear their inspiring stories, plus their determination, resilience, and dreams for the future.

As we move forward, I am committed to building on the strong foundation that has been laid before us and to ensuring that we continue to support and uplift students in meaningful ways. Together, I am confident we can make a lasting difference in their lives, just as this committee has done for so many before.

Thank you for your support ~ Deb.



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

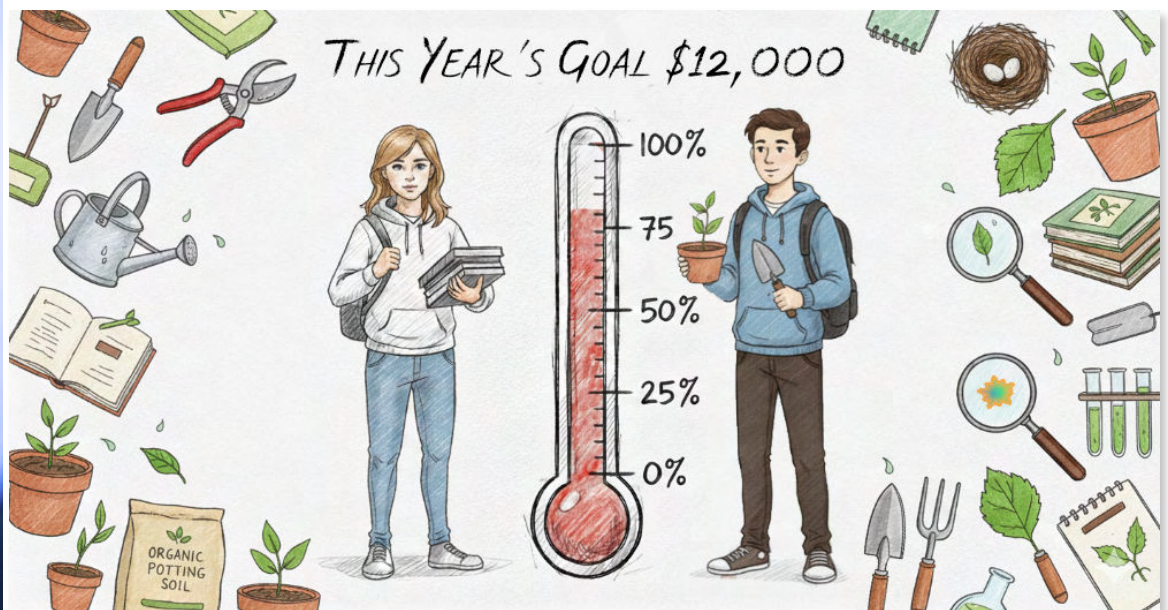
Go to www.bcgardenclubs.com.

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!



HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY VERNON GARDEN CLUB

MAAIKE VAN ZWAAIJ

The Vernon and District Garden Club (VDGC) will celebrate their 100th anniversary this year and will be acknowledging citizens who celebrate this milestone with their club.

VDGC will deliver a bouquet of flowers to those folks who are turning 100 years old this year.

The group maintains the Rose Garden, located at the Hospice House in Vernon.

Happy birthday Vernon and District Garden Club! 🎂

KAMLOOPS GARDEN CLUB HAPPENINGS

CAROL WOZENCROFT, PRESIDENT

Exciting spring for the Kamloops Garden Club. We attended our first Seedy Saturday event as an information vendor. Our new sandwich board arrived — designed for all our events, and proudly displaying our new club QR Code, and brand new website.

Our March presenter was well-known Jay Akerley, who is a rock gardening enthusiast with unique experience gardening at sea level in Vancouver and at sub-alpine elevations in Canada's second largest ski resort, Sun Peaks Resort. His degree in geography from SFU and training at the Pacific Horticulture College in Victoria nurtured an interest in the world's mountains, high steppes, desert plants, and landscapes.

His gardens have featured the widest possible variety of rock garden plants in BC's wettest and driest environments, from USDA Zone 3 to Zone 8.

Jay is a regularly featured speaker for the North American Rock Garden Society and its chapters, as well as a former president of the Alpine Garden Club of BC. Jay's presentation was informative and excellent.

Happy springtime from the Kamloops Garden Club.

www.kamloopsgardenclub.com



COATED SEEDS: WHAT ARE THEY AND SHOULD YOU USE THEM?

ANNE SPRUNG, SOUTH SURREY GARDEN CLUB

Seed coatings are not new. There have been examples of seeds coated in clay found in Egypt from the era of building the pyramids. Coatings were created to protect the seeds and enhance their growth. What we see in seed packages today looks new, as the seeds are now bright-coloured little balls.

What are seed coatings, and why were they created?

Seeds are coated to make the seeds more uniform, and planting easier, with added extras to help with germination and early growth. The bright colours allow the seeds to stand out in the soil so they can be seen easily. Seed coatings can protect the seeds from moisture, dust, and disease. The addition of some microbial nutrients or minerals can encourage early growth. Pesticides or fungicides can also be added to protect the seeds. Coated seeds cost more, and you get fewer per package. Germination may be more consistent. Seed viability duration does not change with coatings.

What are seed coatings made from?

- Mainly clay, graphite, polyethylene glycol, or chitosan.
- Minerals can be added for growth or pH control.
- Natural colourants add visibility, and hope to deter pests.
- Binders like gum arabic keep it all stuck together on the seed.
- Microbial agents or soil microbes are for root development and water absorption.
- Chemical pesticides or fungicides are added to repel pests and diseases.
- Organic coatings are available, using natural colours, minerals, and binders.

Whether you used coated or naked seeds depends upon your specific situation and needs. You should use coated seeds if you...

- Have trouble holding seeds to plant them.
- Are dealing with growing conditions that are not ideal and need the extra fertilizer or minerals.
- Can afford the cost of the seeds.
- Want to try to protect your seeds from pests.
- Want ideal spacing.
- Do not mind using chemical enhancements.
- Do not need to see what the seed looks like.
- Do not have pets who could consume the seed, as some coatings can cause gastric issues with pets.

You should use naked seeds if you...

- Are on a budget.
- Have good growing conditions and can consistently care for your plants, adding minerals or fertilizer as needed.
- Prefer natural conditions in your garden.
- Do not mind less germination, potentially.
- Like to see the condition of the seed before planting.

You can see there is a lot to consider, and of course this is all just my own opinion — everyone will make the best choice for their own situation. Speaking personally, I prefer naked seeds. I like to see what I am planting, and I like to control what goes into the soil. For now, at least, my fingers can still hold small seeds and I am able to space and look after plants. And anyway, I plant seeds from a very diverse group of plants, most of which do not come in a coated form. I don't object to coated seeds; we hand them out at the Surrey Seed Library to those who want them. They just aren't for me!

COATED SEEDS: WHAT ARE THEY AND SHOULD YOU USE THEM?

ANNE SPRUNG, SOUTH SURREY GARDEN CLUB



The Surrey Seed Library is held at the Ocean Park Library. Photo by Pam Robertson.



Natural romaine lettuce seeds are a lot smaller than coated (aka pelleted) romaine seeds. Photo by Pam Robertson.



Some seeds can just be scatter planted; others do better with specific placement. Photo: Pixabay.

MOTIONS PASSED AT BC COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

APRIL 25, 2026

1. Motion to accept the agenda for the annual general meeting by Lorna Cloutier, New Westminster Horticultural Society, seconded by Victor Froese, Floral Artists of the Fraser Valley. Motion passed.
2. Motion to accept the amended minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held April 5, 2025, by Debbie Mellenger, South Surrey Garden Club, seconded by Claude Hewitt, South Delta Garden Club. Motion passed.
3. Motion to accept the nominations and elections as recorded by Garth McFadden, African Violet & Gesneriad Society, seconded by Shawn O'Neil, North Surrey Horticultural Society. Motion passed.

2026 Nominations and Elections:

- First Vice President – Cindy Tataryn re-elected
- Treasurer – Ann Peters re-elected
- Communications Coordinator – Lynda Pasacreta re-elected
- Scholarship Fund – Janet Rhodes Kelsey elected

Thank you to Frank Girard, the BC Council of Garden Clubs webmaster. 🐝

For those unable to attend the Spring/AGM, Frank recorded the meeting which you can access with the following link: <https://bcgardenclubs.com/agm>. Enjoy!



Dana Cromie, keynote speaker; door prizes; Sage Kosa, former scholarship fund recipient. Photos by Lynda Pasacreta.

2026 BC COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS EXECUTIVE AND CONTRIBUTING POSITIONS

President	Lynda Pasacreta	president@bcgardenclubs.com
First Vice President	Cindy Tataryn	1vicepresident@bcgardenclubs.com
Second Vice President	Ron Ouwerkerk	2vicepresident@bcgardenclubs.com
Secretary	Dorothy Barkley	secretary@bcgardenclubs.com
Treasurer	Ann Peters	treasurer@bcgardenclubs.com
Scholarship Fund Chair	Debbie Mellenger	scholarship@bcgardenclubs.com
Membership	Lorna Herchenson	membership@bcgardenclubs.com
Webmaster	Frank Girard	webmaster@bcgardenclubs.com
Insurance	Ron Ouwerkerk	2vicepresident@bcgardenclubs.com
Newsletter	Lynda Pasacreta	newsletter@bcgardenclubs.com
Communications	Lynda Pasacreta	communications@bcgardenclubs.com
Floral Arts	Cindy Tataryn	1vicepresident@bcgardenclubs.com

Thank you so much to Lorna and her team from New Westminster Horticultural Society for organizing and managing the door prizes — all monies raised go to the BC Council of Garden Clubs Scholarship Fund.

Thank you to our busy bees — Lucette and team from South Burnaby Garden Club — for keeping us organized.

Thank you 2026 vendors for your ongoing support!

 Front Yard Farms

 My Father's Jams

 Peatlands Society

 Growers Delight

 Fraser Valley Rose Farm

 Kelpman

All monies from the vendors registration fees go to the BC Council of Garden Clubs Scholarship Fund.

'ON MULBERRY STREET' SIBERIAN IRIS

BC IRIS SOCIETY

'On Mulberry Street' is a midseason bloomer and grows to around 31 inches. Falls are wide and ruffled, as are the standards and style arms. The falls are blue and heavily washed and veined with blue-violet and red-violet. They have a yellow signal veined purple. Standards are pale blue with red-violet dappling and veining. The style arms open brassy striped red-violet and change to a pearl-blue with age. Another feature of the blooms is their slight sweet fragrance. 'On Mulberry Street' is a hybrid created by Marty Schafer and Jan Sacks. It was registered in 2012.

For those who want to join the BC Iris Society, contact them at bcirissocietypresident@gmail.com.



Photos by BC Iris Society





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>.

Granny hobbies have taken on a new look — with a Gen Z twist!

Gen Z's are looking for a slower pace of life involving less technology and embracing analogue activities to boost mental health.

Granny hobbies are considered pre-tech pastimes — knitting, crocheting, sewing, needlepoint, baking, gardening, birding, and raising chickens — and have caught the eyes of 14 to 29 year olds who are looking for ways to unplug and improve their mental health. Granny hobbies reduce stress hormones and provides a sense of calm.

In the digital world we find ourselves bouncing from one task to another all day. This is called "popcorn brain" — searching for instant gratification.

Granny hobbies are actually very good for you. They force you to unplug and focus intently on a task. You can't make a sweater in an hour!

Gen Z's have discovered how to fill their life with purpose that has nothing to do with work or school — actually creating a passion for growing food, knitting a sweater, sewing an outfit — something that reflects their unique personality.

Many of us have found young people eager to learn how to attract pollinators, grow food, and protect the environment through gardening. They love to showcase their healthy tomato plants and other projects on TikTok and Instagram to promote a "JOMO" (joy of missing out) lifestyle.



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 May 15 for June 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

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