



THE BULLETIN

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL
OF GARDEN CLUBS

AUGUST 2026

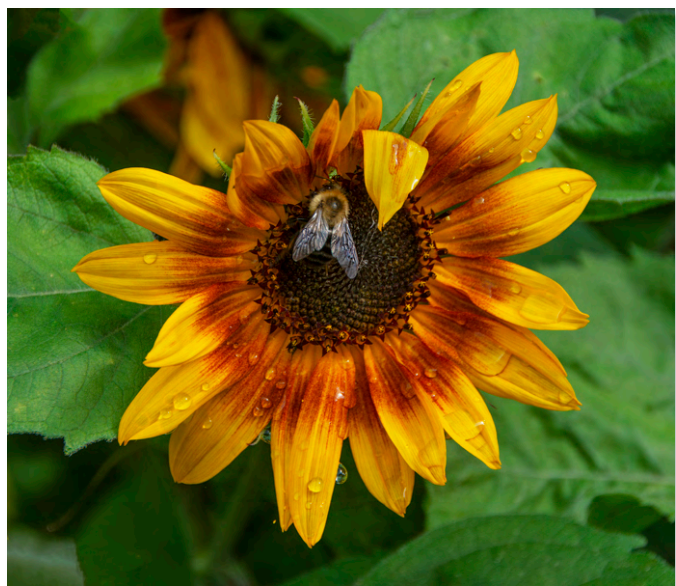


Photo by Alice Jensen-Stanley, Richmond Garden Club
photographer.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LYNDA PASACRETA

PLEASE FORWARD TO ALL OF YOUR CLUB MEMBERS

I ran across something that clearly explains the feelings of gardening in the dog days of summer.

In April, the garden fills you with hope. By August, it teaches you humility.

My vision upon looking outside in April at all the plants working their way up through the soil differs from my view of the garden today:

April: "I have got this!"

August: "The weeds disagree."

I find myself spending more time in the garden especially with all the unwanted noise swirling around us these days — wildfires, tariffs, ongoing wars, artificial intelligence, climate change — just to put my mind at ease and eliminate the racket.

Gardening demands my full attention. Feeling the texture of the soil, listening to birds and insects, and smelling the lovely fragrances of plant life all around me — briefly pulls me away from unhelpful worries.

Hubby's kitchen garden brings me joy as he runs in with cucumbers, onions, garlic, tomatoes, beets, and other "just picked"

edibles from his raised beds just outside from the kitchen.

His vegetable and fruit patch is keeping him on his toes at this time of year. With temperatures soaring, the hose is busy with early morning and late afternoon watering.

The summer vegetable garden is a full-time relationship. Lazy people need not apply.

Hubby is not even worrying about weeds right now — just watering and harvesting daily is on his agenda.

So no matter what is your favourite kind of gardening, summer gardening teaches us our place in nature.

"There is no gardening without humility, an assiduous willingness to learn and a cheerful readiness to confess you were mistaken. Nature is constantly sending even its oldest scholars to the bottom of the class for some egregious blunder." — Alfred Austin.

Photo by Alice Jensen-Stanley,
Richmond Garden Club photographer.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2026, BC COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS FALL MEETING

Our in-person meeting will be held at Bonsor Recreation Complex. We are delighted to announce we have secured Ron Long, former sciences photographer for Simon Fraser University, to present Part Two of his BC native plant series, as our keynote speaker.

We will also have a presentation from Liz Knight, Darts Hill Conservancy Trust Society, and Lynda Pasacreta, Richmond Garden Club, who will talk about attracting and keeping members.

And as always, we have another inspiring student, Nick Tooke, Okanagan College, who will surely continue to impress us with the quality of upcoming horticulturists.

We will be passing two motions in the business part of the meeting — 1. Approval of the minutes from the Fall Meeting held October 25, 2025, and 2. Approval of the proposed 2027 Budget.



Photo by Visnja Gasparic Vojvodic,
Richmond Garden Club photographer.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND NEWS

DAVID SMITH, RECIPIENT OF THE UBC BOTANICAL GARDENS — BCCGC HORTICULTURAL TRAINING PROGRAM AWARD

Growing up in the small town of Marystown, Newfoundland and Labrador, I loved being outdoors and playing sports. My first two summer jobs as a teen were working on a strawberry farm and doing landscaping, but I never imagined that I would one day build a career in landscape horticulture.

My interest in plants began unexpectedly. A close friend living with a serious illness introduced me to the care and patience involved in growing. Watching something flourish through time, knowledge, and consistent care sparked a passion I hadn't anticipated.

Before long, tending plants became something I genuinely looked forward to, teaching me patience, responsibility, and how to properly care for living things.

The person who recognized that passion most clearly was my partner. She encouraged me to consider returning to school, even though I was 43 and questioned whether I was too old to start over. With her support, I took a leap of faith and enrolled in the horticulture program.

Returning to school later in life was both exciting and challenging. I began the program in the fall, and just a few months later, in January, my partner and I welcomed our son into the world.

Balancing the demands of a newborn with classes, fieldwork, and working on the weekends wasn't easy, but it reminded me every day why I had chosen this new path.

Completing my studies became a major source of pride, not only for me but for my family.

As a member of the Inuit of the NunatuKavut of Labrador, my passion for horticulture is a way for me to reconnect with my Indigenous roots. I am a strong believer in land-based healing and growing my own plants and herbs.

Today, I have the privilege of working at Sunset Nursery with the City of Vancouver, helping grow and care for plants that will become part of the landscapes and green spaces people enjoy every day. It is deeply rewarding to spend my days doing work that contributes to healthier, more beautiful communities.

Looking back, I realize that plants changed the course of my life. They taught me that growth takes patience, that it's never too late to follow a new path, and that caring for the land has a way of caring for us in return.

I am sincerely grateful to the BC Council of Garden Clubs for this award. It validates the hard work I put into my studies and helps fuel my passion for this new field. Thank you for investing in students pursuing careers in horticulture. Your generosity helps people like me build a new future and give back to our communities. Thank you for believing in the next generation of horticulturists. ~ David Smith



Photo courtesy of David Smith.

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.



CLIMATE RESILIENT PLANTINGS ARE ESSENTIAL IN OUR NEW REALITY

JUDIE STEEVES, FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF THE OKANAGAN XERISCAPE ASSOCIATION

It was just like living in a treehouse: views from floor-to-ceiling windows of the garden below, Okanagan Lake and Kelowna beyond, framed by the graceful branches of mature, 100-foot-tall native firs and pines. Those beautiful trees are why we bought this home, 26 years ago, and we enjoyed their shade every hot Okanagan summer since.

Until 2023, when smoke billowed from the hills above us, fuelled by gusty winds that blew a devastating wildfire into West Kelowna — then across the lake into Kelowna.

The McDougall Creek Wildfire destroyed hundreds of homes during the three weeks we were evacuated from ours and when we finally returned we couldn't believe our eyes.

More than a dozen of those beautiful evergreens, plus the junipers below, the cedar fence and half-wine barrel-planters were nothing but blackened bones. Only chimneys remained across the street.

Our house was still standing, but our garden was burned to the ground. Blackened spires daubed with red paint designating them as "danger trees" were all that remained of the trees on three sides of our home; the windows were cracked from floor to ceiling; there were holes burned in the deck where the planters had caught fire and fallen through and where the mat outside the door had caught an ember and flamed up, destroying the French doors beside it and the deck underneath.

Only the *Sempervivum* survived; just singed on the tips of its fleshy leaves. The lavender was blackened sticks — a smaller version of the trees. Decades-old bowers of lilacs were only stumps, as were the *Kolkwitzia*, bridalwreath, Oregon grape, clematis, and, of course, the junipers. The concrete birdbath

had a cracked basin and the plastic composter was a circle of melted black with a mound of ashy compost in the middle.

The wheelbarrows had no wheels or handles and the decorative old wagon wheel was just a circle of iron. Instead of a shady haven in summer, our new yard would be searing hot. We had to buy shades for our windows, which we'd never needed before, either for privacy or for protection from the sun. Sure, our gardens evolve with time, but this was dramatic.

With a sense of environmental responsibility, we had always tended to choose drought-tolerant plants that would thrive with less water, a resource that's finite and becoming more scarce.

After the wildfire, our new garden became strictly xeriscape, including a rock garden we carved out of the ashes, using all the rocks that had appeared after the fire.

Many of the small, alpine rock garden plants are very hardy and tolerant of dry conditions and I made a list of those I liked from memories of my mom's and aunt's rockeries and from the extensive plant database featured on the Okanagan Xeriscape Association's website. (okanaganxeriscape.org)

While our home's roof, windows, decks, and a corner that had burned were repaired during 2024, we laboured moving rocks into place, shovelling new soil, and arranging for removal of the danger trees, then some of the stumps left behind.

We did not replace any of the evergreens near the house with new evergreens because they're very flammable. Cedar hedges, for example, can literally wick fire right to your home and catch it on fire, from just a spark. Cedars and junipers burn really well.

CLIMATE RESILIENT PLANTINGS ARE ESSENTIAL IN OUR NEW REALITY, CONT'D

JUDIE STEEVES, FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF THE OKANAGAN XERISCAPE ASSOCIATION

We did not go so far as creating an inflammable barrier within the house perimeter, because rocks, gravel, asphalt, and concrete aren't very attractive, but we did choose our plant materials with care, keeping in mind how flammable evergreens are.

And, our roof is not cedar shakes, which also catch fire very readily and burn well. Our wooden deck railings have been replaced with metal.

Even a short cedar hedge a distance from the house, which partly escaped from the wildfire, has now been ripped out. August marks the third anniversary of that destructive wildfire and most of our neighbours have rebuilt their homes.

Our new garden is lush and full of colour, even though we are only able to use a minimal amount of water on it twice a

week, despite temperatures in the 30s. We even use drip irrigation in our vegetable garden, to conserve water.

It's been interesting to see bulbs planted decades ago that had not thrived under the canopy of trees reappear in the garden, now that those old evergreen roots are rotting. The lavender sprouted back from its roots, as did the lilacs, and the hens and chicks are happy as can be in the open sun.

Like our gardens, we need to be resilient and bend a little with the prevailing wind.

Wildfire and drought are part of the new reality of a changing climate that features extreme weather and we need to accept and adapt to be ready for it. 🔥



CLIMATE RESILIENT PLANTINGS ARE ESSENTIAL IN OUR NEW REALITY, CONT'D
JUDIE STEEVES, FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF THE OKANAGAN XERISCAPE ASSOCIATION



August 2025



July 2026

Gardens, Castles and Wine: The German Rhineland
May 15-26, 2027 with Linda Dietrick



Tour Highlights:

- Dusseldorf Hofgaren, oldest public garden in Germany
- International Garden Exhibition
- Hortus, private garden of Peter Janke
- Botanical Garden Bonn
- Rhine Boat Tour
- Kloster Eberbach Monastery Winery & Tour

For information or to book, email Ruth MacRae, Worldwide Ecotours
ruth@worldwideecotours.com or call 1-888-778-2378

The five episodes of *Some Time in the Garden* (see July 2026 issue of *The Bulletin*) will air over the coming year, with the first episode highlighting our time spent in Paulik Park in Richmond. We sincerely hope you enjoy them. To join the conversation, please find us on YouTube at www.youtube.com/@SomeTimeintheGarden.

Warmly,

Sébastien and Michael

Where to Watch *The Gardener*:

- Apple TV: Stream on Apple TV
- Prime Video: Stream on Prime Video

PANTONE CLOUD DANCER — 2026 COLOUR OF THE YEAR

LYNDA PASACRETA, PRESIDENT, BC COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS

Looking back to the month of January, where we introduced the Pantone colour of the year — Pantone Cloud Dancer — described as *"a whisper of tranquility and peace in a noisy world."*

Pantone Cloud Dancer in your garden gives a feeling of peacefulness, enhanced clarity, a place of quiet reflection, a feeling of cleanliness that inspires well-being, inspiration for new beginnings, a place of serenity to hear our inner voices, and opens the door to new approaches.

In January, BC Council of Garden Clubs members shared photos of their interpretation of white in the garden — from mushrooms in the forest to white roses, dandelions gone to seed, tiny flowers of

Cyclamen hederifolium, primula, hellebores, and white amaryllis!

In the heat of the summer, send us your "white" in your gardens this month! It can be vegetables, fruit, flowers, shrubs, trees — whatever gives you peace at this time of year.

Send one photo, along with which club you belong to, who took the photograph, and your name, to newsletter@bcgardenclubs.com.

Photos will be posted on our website for all to enjoy. (Please advise if you do not want your photos to be displayed on our website.)

"Serenity is not freedom from the storm, but peace amid the storm." ~ Unknown





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>.

Helping wildlife triggers a psychological response known as “helpers high.” It reduces stress, boosts life satisfaction, and creates a sense of community — through shared conservation goals.

Many of us live in urban environments where natural habitat is at a premium for wildlife.

There is a win-win for both humans and wildlife when we protect natural habitats.

Being outside and watching animals lowers our body’s stress hormones. Caring for nature encourages us to spend time outdoors and get exercise through walking. Even spending just 15 minutes in nature can reduce stress and improve well-being.

Wild animals sustain Earth’s ecosystems by pollinating plants, dispersing seed, cycling nutrients, and controlling pests.

They also fight climate change by sequestering carbon through forest maintenance and protecting human health by checking disease spread. (In Panama there has been a significant decline in the frog population — very concerning for a region that deals with mosquito-borne diseases.)

Healthy wild spaces and animal populations directly support human life.

So much of what we do in our gardens very much supports our wildlife. And in turn, wildlife supports our health and well-being! 🐾

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 August 15 for the September issue.



BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS

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