

# THE BULLETIN

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL  
OF GARDEN CLUBS

MARCH 2025

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## LYNDA PASACRETA

### PLEASE FORWARD TO ALL OF YOUR CLUB MEMBERS

My fingers are itchy. I find myself reaching for my secateurs while watching birds enjoying all the seedheads we have left for them in the garden.

Daylight is longer these days so the call of planting something is strong.

I am spending a lot of time daydreaming of the magic I will create this year in our gardens.

In our garden hellebores are bravely flowering through the snow. Winter heather is in bloom and teasing me with the need to add more colour. Snowdrops have risen but are too chilly to open their faces to the sun.

Here on the West Coast we are definitely in the first stirrings of life but it is not the beginning of spring. The return of light has fooled us into thinking we can don our gardening clothes to get out amongst the birds and clean up our gardens.

Hubby and I were in a fog recently when we both visited a garden centre (our first clue should have been the meagre supply of plants) and came home with a heuchera and nepeta! So we have added to our houseplant collection.

Experts who ignore the itchy fingers tell us this is a time to weed, to get ahead of the season of growth. We can prune apple, pear, medlar, and quince trees. We can prune wisteria, cutting back the long growths to 2-3 buds making sure to avoid flowering buds.

Back to daydreaming!

Dark-eyed junco feeding on *Actea* (formerly *Cimicifuga*) in Paulik Park. Photo by Visnja Vojvodic Gasparic, Richmond Garden Club



## SCHOLARSHIP FUND NEWS

### DEBBIE MELLENGER, SCHOLARSHIP FUND COMMITTEE

I am the fortunate recipient of the scholarship from the BC Council of Garden Clubs Scholarship. First of all, allow me to thank you for this unexpected windfall. As I am sure you know, the BC wine industry has been particularly hard hit by two consecutive winters that registered freezing temperatures beyond the capacity of *Vitis vinifera*, common grape vine, to thrive. While many vines survived at the root level, the extreme cold caused the buds to perish, resulting in two years of extremely limited crop levels, and in some cases, total vine death.

I completed my coursework at Okanagan College last winter, during the extreme cold, when the future of viticulture in the valley was foremost in our minds. I devoted a portion of my capstone project to innovating ways to keep the buds alive, and since graduating, have put those methods into practice within an experimental vineyard I planted in May of 2024. The money you granted me will help my colleague and I to continue our experiments.

For certain, I am not the only one working hard to innovate and adapt to climate change. Quail's Gate, for example, are experimenting with stringing LED lights along the fruit wire, in close proximity to the buds, in order to raise the temperature in the near vicinity. But at sixteen thousand dollars per acre, the cost will be prohibitive to many. What I have done is not new at all, but re-introduces a growing method long passed over in favour of vertical shoot positioning along a trellis that facilitates mechanization and higher planting densities. I am training my vines without a trellis, in the ancient method of raising 'bush vines'. The idea is that by

training the horizontal cordons close to the ground, the vines may be more easily cloched, wrapped, or otherwise insulated during the cold months. And so far so good! When I checked this morning, the ambient temperature was -8 degrees, but inside the straw-filled cloche I have employed, the temperature was -2. Even a single degree of difference can mean the difference between a dead bud and one that survives. In addition, allowing the vine to 'be' a vine, by not forcing it to adapt to the architecture of a strict trellis, the vine will enjoy improved sap flow, resulting in a healthier, and more longer-lived plant. There will be some challenges to this method, but I sense I'm already rambling on too long, so I'll leave it there.

I have a Masters in English Literature, an MFA in creative writing and am a published novelist. Viticulture and wine making has long been a hobby of mine, but is blossoming into a second career of sorts. I was hired by my instructor at OC upon completion of the course, quit teaching at UBC, and have been working in vineyards since then. It is hard to say at this point where this path will lead. At the very least, the 150 vines I planted on my colleague's farm last May will survive, and we may convince others to follow our lead. Thanks to your help, we can continue to brainstorm new ideas and may be able to positively contribute to an industry in peril.

Thank you again for your generous gift, and all the best.

Nick Tooke





## 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!

CONTINUE TO HELP PEOPLE LIKE NICK  
TOOKE FIND NEW WAYS TO HELP OUR  
FARMERS THROUGH A CHANGING  
CLIMATE!

**DONATE TODAY!**



## EXPLORING THE BEAUTY OF SOUTH SURREY'S GARDENS

### CYNTHIA WAIZ, DARTS HILL CONSERVANCY TRUST SOCIETY

Garden tours are one of my favourite things to do. When I travel, my first stop is the local botanical garden. I want to learn about native plants, and see new plants that grow there.

I feel inspired by ideas that are not always practical, but it is fun to dream. After seeing a giant sundial in Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens, I found a way to set one up in my own garden. The visit left me wanting a huge agave too. But that one isn't happening in Canada!

When I heard that Darts Hill Garden Park needed more guides, I wanted to be part of giving visitors access to all the rare and unusual plants that Mrs. Darts had collected. Slowly, I learned more of the stories and history of the garden.

Garden club members are among the most appreciative visitors to Darts Hill. Since it is right in the neighbourhood, the guides wanted to share the Glades Woodland Garden as well. If you've come this far, why not visit two gardens instead of one?

The Darts Hill volunteer guides have learned the history and features of both locations. As a result, we now offer a Two-Garden Day Out. At just \$12 per person, this dual tour is an ideal choice for garden clubs looking to plan their spring activities.

Photo by Roland Kirk, Darts Hill Conservancy Trust Society

#### Tour Schedule for the Darts Hill and Glades Day Out

- 9:45 am — Arrive at Darts Hill Garden (1633 170 Street).
- 10:00 am — Guided tour of the horticultural highlights of Darts Hill Garden.
- 12:00 pm — Picnic lunch in the upper meadow (bring your own lunch).
- 1:00 pm — Drive six minutes to Glades Woodland Garden (457 172 Street) for a tour of the mature rhododendrons.
- 2:30 pm — Easy return to the freeway.

To book a tour or for more information, please contact [info@dartshill.ca](mailto:info@dartshill.ca) or visit the webpage: [dartshill.ca/visit-the-garden/#tour](http://dartshill.ca/visit-the-garden/#tour).

More details can be found at [dartshill.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Info-for-Book-a-Tour.pdf](http://dartshill.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Info-for-Book-a-Tour.pdf).

I hope you have a chance to visit! I would be happy to meet you and hear about botanical gardens you have visited.



# REVOLUTIONARY EDIBLE GARDEN IN BRITIAN

## BIRCH FARM, NORTH DEVON

LYNDA PASACRETA

I recently added Scribehound, an app featuring experts in the British horticultural field, to my winter reading. It is expensive but well worth subscribing to especially in the winter months.

One article caught me eye — Huw Richards, a permaculturist and *Sunday Times* bestselling author — wrote about Birch Farm, in North Devon, created by Joshua Sparkes.

In keeping with Community in Bloom's theme of 2025, edible gardening, this article talks about "embracing the complexity of nature" to create an edible garden. Go on, I am intrigued!

Richards describes the garden as a food forest on steroids. An ecologist would find it a theme park for nature.

Sparkes admitted that he is a beetle farmer first. He created beetle banks spaced 12 metres apart to ensure the little creatures have safe refuges within their hunting range.

Oh my gosh! Beetles are the natural predator of slugs!

Sparkes allows nature to create a natural balance, which may take a couple of seasons. Where there is prey there will be predators.

Birch Farm has adopted chop-and-drop mulching, eliminating the dependence on compost, introduced

polyculture (rather monoculture or one crop), and has introduced perennial vegetables (in our area, asparagus, Egyptian walking onions, rhubarb, horseradish, chives, for example) into the garden.

Birch Farm may be the example of ecological edible gardening in the near future — it is a garden that uses nature to feed us — blurring the boundaries between farming, gardening and working with a wild ecosystem!

To get yourself as excited as I am about Birch Farm, tune in to YouTube and watch a video of the gardens!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UVwfqPa4fg>



Photo by Wikimedia Commons

## MARIE-CLAIRE FINDLAY-BROOK, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, LANGUAGE, ARTS AND CULTURE, DIVISION OF CONTINUING STUDIES

### [March 8 - Mason Bees: An Incredible Pollinator to Host in Your Garden](#)

In this bee-loving workshop, you will learn about mason bees and how you can host them while benefitting from their incredible pollinating skills for larger fruits and vegetables. You will learn about their life cycle, what plants they feed on, their habitat needs and the seasonal responsibilities of the mason bee keeper. Finally, you will look at the various styles of houses (nesting boxes) available to accommodate them in your garden and learn how to harvest and safely store their cocoons for the winter.

### [March 13 - Garden Border Design](#)

The garden border has been a staple element for our gardens, especially in the PNW where we have a 12-month season to be in the garden. There are so many decisions one can make when developing a garden border and established borders have their own unique planning dilemmas. This course takes a hard look at what are the possibilities for a brilliant bed. It doesn't matter how much space there is but rather how the space is used.

### [April 2- 16 - Gardens in History: Japanese Gardens](#)

Throughout garden history Japanese gardens have been revered for their flawless design details and inspirational compositions, properties which have elevated them from mere gardens to havens of peace, serenity and introspection.

Join landscape horticulturalist and master gardener Susan Hawkins as we explore the history, philosophy, horticulture and design elements of Japanese gardens including Zen gardens, tea gardens and stroll gardens. We will examine some of the best-known Japanese gardens of Victoria and Vancouver including; Butchart Gardens, Hatley Park, Gorge Rd. Park, the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific, and the Nitobe Gardens at UBC. This course will also provide practical knowledge for today's gardeners on water features, placing stones, specific design techniques, selecting plant material and inspiration to create your own magnificent garden sanctuary whether in a pot, patio or a yard.

### [April 5 - Gardening with Native Plants](#)

In this workshop, you will learn how gardening with our local native plants can give you a water-saving, low-maintenance garden that brings colour all season long, making them the ultimate ecological choice. Native plants are adapted to the area's conditions making them ideal for organic gardening- no supplemental fertilizers or pesticides are needed. Whether your garden conditions are wet, salty or xeric (dry, dry, dry) there are native plants that will thrive and support great pollinators and our local ecology too! With year-round interest in mind, we will explore how to keep the garden beautiful from spring to winter and tap into valuable local and online resources to help you along the way!

### [April 9- Nature-Based Mindfulness](#)

All are welcome at this workshop where we will explore the benefits of nature-based mindfulness as a tool for stress management, personal development, setting intentions and expanding our appreciation of, and place within, the natural world. You will learn the benefits of nature-based mindfulness, including tools and practices applicable in everyday life. Study tools will include memories of special places, tuning into sensory information, embodied awareness, movement, grounding and poetry.

### [May 3- Introduction to Permaculture](#)

Be introduced to the permaculture principles and how to integrate them into our landscapes and lives. We'll explore permaculture in urban and rural settings and how to create thriving garden ecosystems no matter how much space you have available. Discover sustainable techniques of plant curation, composting, water conservation, and various other invaluable permaculture practices, including a guided tour of the UVic community garden to see some techniques in action.

### [May 10 - Drought Tolerant Gardening](#)

Are you under water restrictions but still want an abundant garden? Learn how you can choose flowering perennials while still enjoying fruit and vegetable production through the use of native plants and xeric landscaping techniques that will produce throughout the growing season despite the hot, dry summers that we are experiencing. We will also touch on water harvesting to help prolong the watering season into the summers, and tips and tricks for a thriving garden in our evolving landscape conditions.

For more information: [laccoord@uvic.ca](mailto:laccoord@uvic.ca).

## TIME TO CLEAN OUT YOUR BIRDHOUSES

Gardeners and birds go together like peanut butter and jam! We are always delighted when our feathered friends decide to habitate in our gardens.

There is a warning of a recent outbreak of salmonella in our bird population, which is usually caused by bird feeders where bird droppings are allowed to accumulate. Pine siskins were hit hard in 2021 causing alerts from BC SPCA to remove feeders throughout the province.

Besides cleaning your feeders regularly throughout the winter season, this is a good time to take care of birdhouses in your garden.

Whether you noticed birds nesting in your birdhouses last year or not, you will want to clean them out.

Make sure to watch for any bird activity in case some brave souls are already checking out a new home.

Put on some rubber gloves before you start to clean. Take down the birdhouse and remove old nesting material (make sure to admire the work before disposing) and scrape off any organic material.

Mix one part chlorine bleach with 9 parts hot water and scrub the inside completely with an old toothbrush. Make sure to get into corners and holes. It is also a good idea at this stage to clean any hardware to hang or mount the birdhouse.

Rinse the birdhouse and hardware thoroughly for several minutes with clean water. Air dry the birdhouse in the sun. This will help eliminate cleaning solution residue and minimize the potential for mold or bacteria to grow on the wet surfaces.

**Photo call!** Send us your photos of your unique birdhouses in your garden and we will showcase them in the April newsletter and on our website. Send your photos to [newsletter@bcgardenclubs.com](mailto:newsletter@bcgardenclubs.com).

Bushtit on *Euphorbia* in Paulik Park. Photo by Visjna Vojvodic Gasparic, Richmond Garden Club.







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\*Service charges and mailing fees apply



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One of our BC Council of Garden Clubs members followed up about our article, How to Keep Rabbits Out of Your Garden, in the February 2025 issue of *The Bulletin*.

As a former landscaper, he has read numerous reports of cayenne pepper causing extreme eye irritation to both rabbits and squirrels. Both tend to rub their heads with their fore paws. He used *Deer-be-gone* when dealing with pesky critters in the garden.

He agreed that rabbits and other wildlife can cause major damage to our gardens and recommends that we be kind to all creatures who share the gardens with us.

Photo from Wikimedia Commons



## BC COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS SPRING AGM

BONSOR RECREATION COMPLEX, 6550 BONSOR AVENUE, BURNABY

SATURDAY APRIL 5, 2025, 10:00AM TO 3:00PM

We are pleased to announce that Ron Long, former sciences photographer at Simon Fraser University, will be our guest speaker at our spring meeting this year. He will be filling our souls with beautiful photographs he has taken of native flora in British Columbia and will speak on this very popular topic.

“The fascination of our native plants lies in their stories. But those stories are hidden and rarely told. The stories are fragmented throughout the literature, but when the bits are gathered they tell of a plants evolutionary journey, of its relationship with insects, the tricks it uses to induce pollinators to do its bidding, the elaborate structures that have evolved to allow plants to thrive in every one of the vast range of habitats that exists in BC — and on and on.

The plants have a human history as well. The earliest voyages to our coast by Cook and Vancouver included physician/naturalists who made the first plant collections that created a sensation in England. Later, the Lewis and Clark expedition and plant hunter David Douglas introduced hundreds more of our native plants that transformed science, gardening and economies in England and Europe.

Every plant has its own unique story and almost certainly you will not have heard them before

Photo with permission from Ron Long, <https://infigo.ca>

now.” — Ron Long.

Mr. Long, through his career and his love of photography, has developed a deep interest in nature. He loves to travel around the world to visit and photograph plants, birds, and animals as material for his presentations.

He is past president of the Native Plant Society of BC. He is currently coordinating a biodiversity study on Pink Mountain with the objective of protecting this unique site.


Pink Mountain Park is located northwest of Fort St. John and offers scenic mountainous habitats and a variety of wildlife — noted as a favourite area for photography, scenic viewing, and wildlife viewing.


Registration forms and further information will be arriving in your inbox in the next few weeks. **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!** You will not want to miss this one.



## BC COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS TEAM NEEDS YOU!

At our spring meeting, Saturday, April 5, 2025, we will be electing **two positions** to join our team. If you love to be creative, if you love to work with people from all over BC, if you have an hour or two to spare each month (and a couple of in-person meetings), you will want to join the BC Council of Garden Clubs executive team (we are not fancy but we are fun). You will want to raise your hand and put your name in for one of the following positions (to view the responsibilities of each position visit <https://bcgardenclubs.com/about/exec-board/>):

 **Secretary** - This position will be required to attend the two in-person meetings (April and October). Will also be responsible to manage the "question line" on the website.

 **Secretary for Scholarship Fund Committee** - This position is open to anyone in British Columbia!

If you can join our team and are interested in one of these positions please send an email to [communications@bcgardenclubs.com](mailto:communications@bcgardenclubs.com).



*Pulmonaria officinalis* in Paulik Park. Photo Visnja Vojvodic Gasparic, Richmond Garden Club

# VANCOUVER BOTANICAL GARDENS ASSOCIATION

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS OPPORTUNITY

Are you interested in utilizing your leadership and professional skills to give back to your community and support a worthwhile mission?

The Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association (VBGA) is seeking interested persons to volunteer to join our Board of Directors starting in [May 2025](#). We invite all interested people who have a passion for botanical gardens to apply. The Board is particularly looking for three persons with professional expertise in Indigenous Relations, Civic Planning, and Community Engagement.

Learn more and access the nomination form here

<https://www.vandusengarden.org/2024-board-of-directors/>

Nominations close [March 14, 2025](#).



VanDusen Botanical Gardens.  
Photo by Visnja Vojvodic  
Gasparic, Richmond Garden  
Club

# CANADIAN WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FLORAL ART CLUBS

## ANN PETERS AND CINDY TATARYN

You are invited!

Canadian Western Association of Floral Art Clubs (CWAFAAC) is having their annual floral art show on April 12, 2025, at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 256, 1630 East Wellington Road, Nanaimo.

The show will be open to the public from noon to 4:00 pm, entry by donation (cash or cheques only please). This year the annual show is being hosted by the Mid-Island Floral Art Club.

If you have ever wondered what floral art is, now is your chance to see it in person, and to see the creative designs made by members of the floral art clubs throughout BC. You may be interested in this very popular and enjoyable hobby. Come to the floral art show and see what you've been missing!

Floral art is a worldwide hobby with floral art clubs around the world! In the U.K. alone there are over 16,000 members belonging to over 800 floral art clubs.

If you want to learn how to make these creative floral designs yourself there are six clubs in BC. You are welcome to join them — they would love to teach you how!

Canadian Western Association of Floral Art Clubs (CWAFAAC) [www.cwafac.weebly.com](http://www.cwafac.weebly.com) is the umbrella association for:

BC Floral Art Society (New Westminster) <https://bcfloralartsociety.com>.

Buds and Flowers Floral Art Club (Surrey) [budsandflowersfloralartclub@gmail.com](mailto:budsandflowersfloralartclub@gmail.com).

Floral Artists of the Fraser Valley (Chilliwack) <https://floralartistsfv.ca>.

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

Okanagan Valley Floral Art Club (Okanagan Valley)

Victoria Floral Artists' Guild (Victoria) <https://victoriafloralartists.ca>.

The Society of Horticultural and Floral Design Judges of BC.

For more information on floral art clubs or the floral art show you can check the websites above or contact the CWAFAAC president Ann Peters at [annp2212@gmail.com](mailto:annp2212@gmail.com) or Cindy Tataryn at [ctataryn@telus.net](mailto:ctataryn@telus.net).



**Canadian Western  
Association of Floral Art  
Clubs Presents:  
A Floral Art Show  
"Where Land, Water and Sky  
Meet"**

- Saturday April 12, 2025
- Canadian Legion Branch #256  
1630 East Wellington Road, Nanaimo
- Open to the Public from 12 - 4:00
- Cost by donation - cash or cheque
- Special Event: We will be selling quality vases  
suitable for floral design - cash or  
cheque only





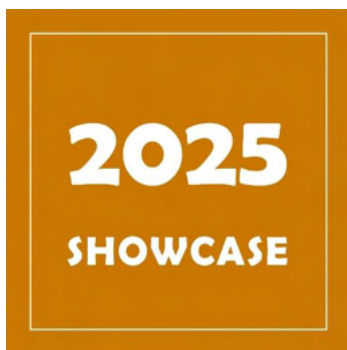
Cindy Tataryn



Ann Peters



Photos by Cindy Tataryn



## Special Invite to Garden Clubs - Showcase a Place or Project

Get provincial recognition for community enhancing projects and acknowledge your volunteer groups.

### DETAILS:

- Submit a Showcase Entry with 3 photos and a 250-word description with \$50 fee.
- All entries will be featured in the BC CiB Growing Together Newsletter, website and social media as they are received.
- Entries will receive recognition and a frameable certificate if submitted before the deadline.
- **Last year we awarded three prizes one for each: Group or Business, Municipal and Garden Club**
- Photos must be from the 2025 season.
- Submit 3 of your best photos with full rights in high resolution (a minimum of 300dpi at print size or a minimum weight of 800kb). These photos will be used by BC Communities in Bloom for the promotion of your group and the BC CiB Program.

<b>PROJECT NAME:</b>	
Name of Club or Group	Contact Person
City and Postal Code	
Phone	Email (required)
Social Media/Facebook	Website
<b>Please supply a Description (250 words Maximum) and three JPEG or TIFF photos (Ideally 1MB each)</b>	
<b>2025 Showcase Fee: \$50</b> for Garden Club or BC Council of Garden Club Member	
Email with form: <a href="mailto:c.kennedy@telus.net">c.kennedy@telus.net</a> or Mail: Attn: Catherine, BC Communities in Bloom, 4451 212 St. Langley, BC V3A 7Z8	
To be recognized in this year's BC CiB Provincial Awards PowerPoint, please enter <b>before Sept 5</b>	



Check out our website [2024 Results](#) for all Showcase Entries.

PHOTO: VERNON AND DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB – Showcase entry featured the North Okanagan Hospice House Rose Garden in our August Newsletter 2024.

THE GARDEN CLUB OF VANCOUVER – Showcase entry featured Garden Volunteers at the Vancouver Hospice in the September Newsletter.

KELOWNA GARDEN CLUB – 100 years and the Gardening into the Future Event. Showcase featured a write-up and photo collages in our June Newsletter. (Winner 2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Equinox Planter Set)





## 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 March 15 for April 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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