



THE BULLETIN

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL
OF GARDEN CLUBS

FEBRUARY 2026



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LYNDA PASACRETA

PLEASE FORWARD TO ALL OF YOUR CLUB MEMBERS

By the time you are reading this missive hubby and I will be in the jungles of Panama. We are travelling with Caravan Tours on an eight-day tour of the highlights of Panama.

Panama is home to the famous Panama Canal, a very important transit route between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

The isthmus of Panama connects North and South America. This narrow land bridge serves as a migratory corridor for wildlife between the continents. It allows a rich biodiversity to flourish in Panama.

Included in our tour is a journey in a motorized dugout canoe into the heart of Panama's rainforest. We will be visiting Embera tribal village where we will learn all about their habitat preservation efforts and how they live in harmony with nature.

You may hear a joyful scream (as quietly as I can) when we head out on a bird-watching cruise on the Chagres River — the only river that empties into two oceans! I love the the birds in Central America — home to almost 1,600 species of birds, compared to almost 700 bird species in Canada!

One of the most delightful creatures in Central America is the sloth. We will be visiting a sloth rescue centre where many of these gentle creatures have been in contact with raw electricity due to uninsulated power lines, which they mistake for vines.

All Valentine's Day cards in *The Bulletin* from Wikimedia Commons.

Hubby and I are also looking forward to visiting a butterfly garden after spending seven months creating our own butterfly garden in Paulik Park in Richmond last year. We will also visit an orchid nursery on this tour.

After a couple of days of carefree relaxing in a beach resort we will head back to the bustling city of Panama City. Panama City is a mix of historical Spanish and a modern mix, reminding us of Miami and Las Vegas!

Hubby and I will then fly to San Jose Costa Rica, where we will catch a bus to the west coast of the country, where we will meet up with our friends. We will be staying in Playa Ocotal, known for its black sand and snorkelling, until we return to our real life end of February.

Travelling is a treat, but being home when spring arrives is something we cherish.

Remember to take time to fall in love with the wild beauty of your own backyard.

Happy Valentine's Day.





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.

Back to zero! Because of the generosity of our members and the community, we continue to support our upcoming horticultural students. Donate today!

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!





Elizabeth Elle
Ecology

Would you like to know more about your backyard biodiversity?

Dr. Elizabeth Elle of Simon Fraser University is studying pollinators in Metro Vancouver gardens. **She's looking for 15-20 gardeners** willing to be interviewed about their garden practices and to allow her to catch pollinators in their home garden throughout the growing season of 2026.



Learn more and submit your
garden location for consideration:
elizabethelleecology.ca/participate



Small things count, join us at Spring Seminar 2026 to hear how small things add up to create beauty and cultivate joy in your garden. You will be Inspired!

Five Fabulous Speakers, Gardening Vendors, Sea Soil Sale & Door Prizes!

Saturday March 28th, 2026, 9am to 3:30pm, Michael J Fox Theatre, Burnaby

Early Bird Tickets: \$55 until Feb. 14th. **Regular Tickets: \$65** from Feb. 15th

*Cannot Attend - purchase the **Recordings Only: \$40** & get 1 month of viewing*

Event Details & Registration go to:

<https://mgabc.org/event/spring-seminar-2026/>

MOTIONS FOR APPROVAL

At the Annual General Meeting, members will be asked to approve the following motions:

1. Motion to approve minutes from the 2025 Annual General Meeting
2. Motion to approve election of officers (BCCGC Bylaws, Article 3 — Elections and Appointments of Officers, 4.)

- President
- Secretary
- Second Vice President
- Scholarship Fund Committee Secretary



BCCGC Reminders:

📌 Remember to add your events to the BC Council of Garden Clubs website. It is one of our most visited sites by people in your community looking for gardening events.

📌 When looking for a guest speaker for your group, visit our speakers list on our website. If you had a great speaker and they are not on our list, ask them to consider adding their name to our list. It is a valuable resource for our members!

We are here to make your jobs easier! Visit www.bcgardenclubs.com regularly.



PLEASE NOTE:

Credit for the beautiful Solomon's seal photo belongs to Alice Jensen-Stanley, not Visnja Gasparic Vojvodic as noted in the January *Bulletin*. We are blessed with two very talented photographers in Richmond Garden Club who continue to astound us with their talent.

BC COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY

Help Fund Your Garden Club with BeSharp Sharpening!

Partner with BeSharp Sharpening, a mobile sharpening service based in Richmond, to raise funds for your garden club.

- BeSharp will participate in your monthly meetings, plant sales, community events, and workshops.

A portion of the funds raised will be shared with your club or community gardens.

BESHARP SHARPENS SECATEURS,
LOPPERS, AND GARDEN SHEARS. WILL
ALSO SHARPEN KITCHEN KNIVES,
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778-951-3941 OR
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BESHARP@TUTA.IO

Offer available to Richmond and local
communities only. Visit www.be-sharp.io.



WINTER GARDENS: AN ESSENTIAL PART OF HUMAN AND NATURAL LIFE

LYNDA PASACRETA

My hubby suggested that we go out into our backyard and clean it up. I asked for his suggestion of what “cleaning up” means to him.

I had to plug my ears mid-sentence. “Oh, we can cut down all the spent foliage and vines and just make it look nice.”

I might have used my loud voice when I spoke about habitat for wildlife offering shelter and food for our winter birds and other creatures.

Often from our point of view, the winter garden is sad, but we should look at the season of winter as a necessity for our garden rather than a necessary evil.

In our area of the province, winter reveals the “bones” of the garden, the framework. The monochromatic colours of brown and green, interspersed with pops of colour from winter flowers such as hellebores, do add some interest.

The first lesson about winter for gardeners is to embrace it not endure it. Winter is a time of rest in the natural world, when most plants are dormant and their only activity is taking place underground.

Even with the lack of light, there continues to be a certainty that spring is not that far away! The sense of hope always visits us when we are in the garden throughout the seasons.

After a wander through our favourite park here in Richmond, we were happy to see that magnolias,

rhododendrons, camellias, and other shrubs have already set their buds.

A flurry of winter birds have ravaged the berries in the park provided by mountain ash, viburnum, and holly.

Planning is well underway for the work we do in Paulik Park here in Richmond. The bones of our garden beds (over 40 perennial garden beds in this park) are showing us what needs to be done this year.

We are also watching our wildlife to see if we need to add something to the garden or move plants to help them through the winter and the different seasons.

A flock of robins have parked their butts in one section of the gardens — where we have filled an old oak wine barrel with water and large rocks to sit on — viewed from a fruit tree with spent fruit on the tree!

At this time of year, we walk intentionally through the four acres of the park to see where areas have been heavily walked on due to interaction with parts of the garden. We create wood chip paths where these trampled areas are to invite and engage people into the garden space.

So instead of “cleaning up” it is time to ponder and plan. It brings as much joy as digging in the garden in the spring.

Japanese pink pussy willow, *Salix gracilistyla* ‘Mt Aso’ is now budding in Paulik Park, Richmond, BC. Photo by Lynda Pasacreata, May 2025.





Photo by Jill Wright, Richmond Garden Club.
Viburnum x bodnantense 'Dawn' in Paulik Park.

Photo by Visnja Gasparic Vojvodic, Richmond Garden Club. *Sarcococca confusa* in Paulik Park.



Photo by Jill Wright, Richmond Garden Club.
Hamamelis x intermedia 'Jelena' in Paulik Park.

INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL GARDEN CLUB PLANT SALES

So much planning goes into annual plant sales and in most cases, it is already underway by most clubs, community gardens, and specialty gardens.

Folks in our communities love attending our plant sales, associating them with the likelihood of acquiring affordable and healthy plants for their own gardens.

The plant sale is generally a key fundraiser for not-for-profit gardening groups.

Some key ingredients to make plant sales very successful:

🌶️ Homegrown perennials, unique varieties — edible plants have become very popular these days.

🍷 Offer plants propagated or grown from seed by members, include rare alpines, natives, or cultivars not found in commercial nurseries. Include popular easy-to-grow annuals such as zinnias, sunflowers, veggie starts, pollinator-friendly plants, and attractive hanging baskets.

🌶️ Good marketing (social media, local ads, signage).

🍷 Use Facebook, Instagram, and local community groups to post photos, list items, and create event pages. Announce on local radio, newspapers, community calendars, Google Maps, and of course, the event page on the BC Council of

Garden Clubs website (www.bcgardenclubs.com). Start promoting weeks in advance, highlighting unique offerings and expert advice.

🌶️ Added attractions, like tool sharpening or raffles.

🍷 Short, free workshops (for example, on container gardening) draw crowds. Complement plant sales with homemade baked goods. Offer expert advice (Vancouver Master Gardeners participates in some local plant sales). Sell donated or recycled garden tools and decor.

🌶️ Logistics and presentation are very important.

🍷 Clear labels with plant names, growing conditions, and watering needs. Use recycled clean pots and most importantly recruit volunteers for setup, pricing, selling, and cleanup.

🌶️ Community focus. Showcase how the funds raised will support your gardening projects, scholarships, or education in your community.



The BCCGC has opted to provide Day of Event (DOE) insurance to all those clubs who wish to insure guests attending their functions. The DOE insurance is an optional insurance that can be used to insure guests at their functions who are actively assisting your club in some way but are not members of your club. You can read the DOE Insurance FAQ on our website, www.bcgardenclubs.com.

A brief overview of who and what the DOE insurance covers:

📎 Guests are defined as someone who is attending your function by *personal* invitation from your club. This may be family or friends who have been invited to help out at a plant sale, or a partner at a winter potluck, or a guest speaker (who is not covered by their own insurance). Members of the public are those who are invited by a *public* invitation such as a plant sale where the intent is to purchase plants — DOE insurance does not apply to them.

📎 DOE insurance costs \$0.50 per person but may only be used once for each individual guest attending a function at a club. So if your family member volunteers at a plant sale in April, they may not use DOE insurance again if they wish to volunteer at a

plant sale in August.

📎 Guests need to provide a minimum of information necessary to identify them in case of a liability claim. This information is kept by the club (**NOT** the BCCGC) and is given to the insurance company **only** if a liability claim is instigated.

📎 Payment for the DOE insurance is submitted in November (although it can be postponed if your club has a function in December). However, we ask that you notify the Insurance Chairperson at 2vicepresident@bcgardenclubs.com whenever you use the DOE insurance in order to help us keep track of the numbers and clubs when it comes time to submit payment to the insurance agency.

Once again, more information is in the DOE insurance FAQ, available on our website, www.bcgardenclubs.com



RHODODENDRON HYBRIDS AND THE TREES THAT SHADE THEM: A GUIDE TO DARTS HILL GARDEN PARK

SUSAN MURRAY, CHAIR, DARTS HILL GARDEN PARK COLLECTION COMMITTEE

Ms. Murray taught horticulture and arboriculture at the post-secondary level from 1979 to 2013 at both BCIT and KPU and is now enjoying her retirement activities.

Passionate about plants and photography, Susan has collected thousands of images of plants from around the world, both in their native habitats and in garden settings. This spring, she visited and photographed gardens in Japan and the United Kingdom.

Locally, the Rhododendron and Magnolia collections in Darts Hill Garden Park (DHGP) are favorite photography subjects. Since first touring the garden with Francisca Darts in 1991, Susan has had a keen interest in the plants in DHGP and is currently the chair of the DHGP Collection Committee. Susan is also the author of *Our Sylvan Heritage, a Guide to the Magnificent Trees of the South Fraser*, a full-colour book describing 350 tree species growing along the streets, in the parks and other public spaces of the South Fraser region.

Her most recent publication (2025), available for purchase from the author, is *Rhododendron Hybrids and the Trees that Shade Them: A Guide to Darts Hill Garden Park*. This easy to use and beautifully illustrated guide features over 200 rhododendron hybrids found in Darts Hill Garden Park and includes over 250 full-colour photographs.

The book describes each rhododendron hybrid, highlighting the main features needed to identify the plant in the garden and locates where each hybrid may be found in Darts Hill Garden Park including a map of garden beds.

Notes are included when and where Francisca Darts, along with her husband Edwin Darts, the creators of

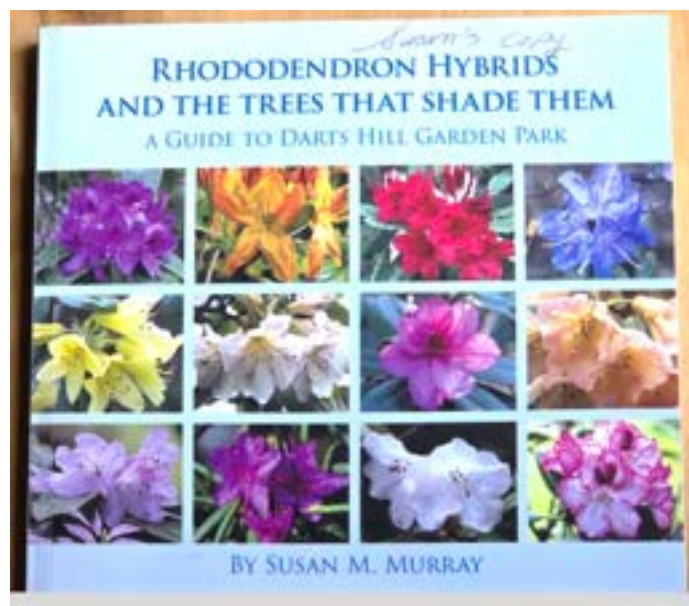
Darts Hill Garden, sourced many of the rhododendron hybrids for the garden.

It also introduces the story of rhododendron hybridization in the Pacific Northwest.

There are highlights of over 70 rare and unusual trees found in Darts Hill Garden Park.

If you would like to learn about the Darts's world-class collection of rhododendrons and trees, then this guide to Darts Hill Garden Park is for you!

To order a copy of this beautiful book, send an email to Susan Murray, susan.murray@telus.net.





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>.

The Canadian Horticultural Therapy Association is the professional organization for horticultural therapy practitioners in Canada. Established in 1987, the CHTA has over 300 active members — including registered horticultural therapists, and professionals such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists, recreation therapists, social workers, nurses, psychologists, landscape architects, and horticulturalists. Anyone who has a keen interest in the connections between people and plants can belong to this organization.

It is so wonderful to see the different settings where the horticultural therapy professionals provide services — nursing homes, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, substance abuse programs, correctional facilities, therapeutic farming communities, and school and community gardens.

Some of us have had the joy of volunteering in gardens in many of these different facilities. I volunteered for a number of years in a dementia ward garden in a complex care home. I was given free rein to design, plant, and maintain a small garden area along with the help of many of the residents. We had raised wheelchair-friendly garden beds built for the residents. For winter interest, we had the residents paint a number of birdhouses in bright primary colours and placed them strategically in a large rhododendron bed. It was amazing to see how residents of different abilities derived so much joy from such a small space!

For more information about the Canadian Horticultural Therapy Association visit <https://chta.ca/>.



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 February 15 for March 1**. Submissions/inquiries:

newsletter@bcgardenclubs.com

Lynda Pasacreta, Editor

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS

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