



# THE BULLETIN

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL  
OF GARDEN CLUBS

MARCH 2026



Hellebores in bloom in Paulik Park, Richmond, BC. Photo by  
Visnja Gasparic Vojvodic, Richmond Garden Club.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## LYNDA PASACRETA

### PLEASE FORWARD TO ALL OF YOUR CLUB MEMBERS

Hubby and I returned home February 28 after a journey through Panama and Costa Rica for a month and a half. Our souls were filled with tropical forests, plants, and birds.

We arrived home to spring already underway in the Lower Mainland. Crocuses, daffodils, hellebores, camellias, and so much more are already on display in our garden.

The hellebores in our garden are reaching for the sky! These plants truly are the jewels of winter and spring. They were just starting to bloom when we left for Central America mid-January.

Hellebores should be in every Canadian garden! These evergreen perennials can grow in zone 3 to zone 9.

They enjoy dappled shade — although we have some in growing happily in full morning sun at this time of year. Their evergreen leaves provide interest all year round.

Braving the chill, hellebores are hardy, compact, and low maintenance. Their flowers produce valuable nectar for early pollinators (already spotted buzzing around in the Lower Mainland).

Photo by Visnja Gasparic Vojvodic,  
Richmond Garden Club.

The best time to plant hellebores in your garden is from autumn to spring in moist, free-draining soil.

The plants can be divided in early autumn or can be grown from seed. *Helleborus x hybridus* are usually long-lived plants, so are reinvigorated when divided. I also add a generous layer of mulch over the soil in the fall.

Newly planted hellebores need additional watering during their first growing season, from spring to summer.

While my hellebores are showing off their pretty, nodding blooms, I will prune back some of the leaves to give them plenty of room to dazzle the eyes.

Even after experiencing an array of dazzling tropical blossoms, nothing compares to the joy of coming home to the rich colours of our own gardens.



**SCHOLARSHIP FUND NEWS**  
**ROBERT MCMULLEN, PACIFIC HORTICULTURE COLLEGE**

Dear members of the Scholarship Fund Committee,

Thank you for supporting the scholarship awards for horticulture and gardening students across British Columbia and, specifically, for supporting the program at the Pacific Horticulture College in Saanich. I recently completed the full-time Pacific Horticulture College foundations program in November and I received a sponsored award for Excellence in Landscape Design. I applied to the program as a way to start a second career following a 30+ year career in the Canadian Armed Forces. The program was excellent and I found that working outside in the gardens reinvigorated my sense of awe in the natural world. It also gave me the opportunity to work with a small group of instructors and fellow students who are passionate about plants. I plan on working in the landscape maintenance field for the next few months to gain some experience before pursuing further education in landscape design. I aspire to build a business around landscape designs that integrate rain gardens and the use of fire-resistant plants and principles.

When our instructor announced the award at the ceremony it took me completely by surprise. Landscape Design was the course that I found the most challenging as it pushed me well outside my comfort level. It was truly special to be recognized in front of my peers for the work that I put into my final project and for the personal growth I experienced in this particular course. Thank you very much for your continued support of horticultural education throughout British Columbia. Your recognition of student achievement in these programs brings significance to the effort we put in to our course work.

Most sincerely,

Robert McMullen



Photos courtesy of Robert McMullen

## SCHOLARSHIP FUND NEWS

### BETTY GIRARD, SCHOLARSHIP FUND CHAIR

Your gift keeps students housed, fed, and on the move!

We have completed a very successful year with \$13,500 awarded in scholarships in 2025. The final reports are just coming in from the academic institutions and the details will be in the next *Bulletin*. We blew past our goal of \$10,000 in donations with a total of \$14,035.40 received from groups and individuals across the province in 2025. Thank you so much for your generosity!

Students are struggling with the high costs of living. No student should have to decide between rent and textbooks. Our individual awards make a big difference but they are relatively modest, ranging from \$200 to \$1,900, depending on the cost and length of the program that the student is enrolled in. Our goal for 2026 is to increase these awards, particularly the ones that are on the lower end of the scale. And for that, we need your help! Details on how to donate are in every issue of the *Bulletin*, and keep your eye on our 2026 thermometer to see how we are doing.



## 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

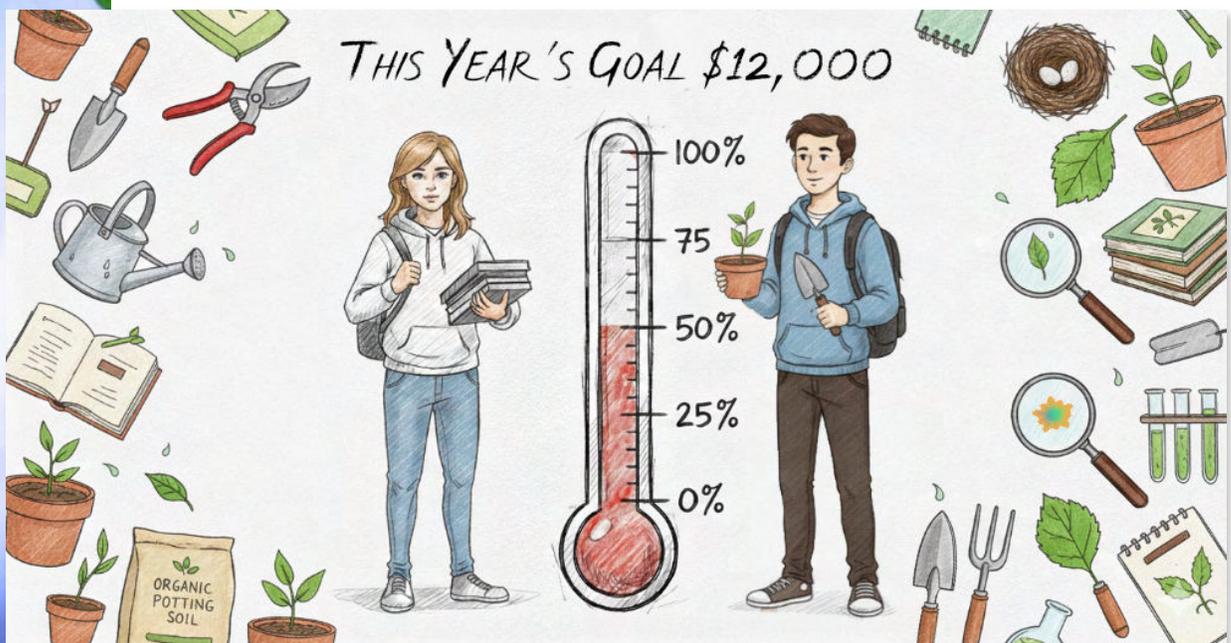
Go to [www.bcgardenclubs.com](http://www.bcgardenclubs.com).

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!



## JOIN THE TEAM — VOLUNTEER WITH US!

The BC Council of Garden Clubs Scholarship Committee is seeking a volunteer for a three-year term (2026–2028), helping support students in horticultural programs throughout the province. Last year we awarded a total of \$13,500 to 13 deserving recipients.

We work closely with the Vancity Community Foundation, which holds and manages the funds raised by the BC Council. We meet by zoom 10 times a year and each committee member liaises with three to four post-secondary institutions. Highlights of the position include receiving thank-you notes from the students and attending the ceremonies where the scholarships are awarded.

You would take on the role of committee secretary for the first year of the term, then treasurer for the second, and finally chair for the third. Lots of support is available from the other committee members, and we greatly enjoy the work we do!

Some familiarity with computers is needed as we use webmail and a cloud-based records system.

Elections will be held at the Spring AGM on April 25. Please consider joining us in this satisfying volunteer role. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the us at [scholarship@bcgardenclubs.com](mailto:scholarship@bcgardenclubs.com).

Betty Girard, Debbie Mellinger, Pam Robertson



# FLORAL ART SHOW & DEMONSTRATION

PRESENTED BY



World Association of Floral Artists Limited



## JUDGED FLORAL ART SHOW

JOIN US SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2026  
SHOW TITLE: "CELEBRATE BC"

12:30 TO 2:30 (DOORS 12:00)  
DEMONSTRATION BY DONALD YIM, AIFD  
TICKETS \$40.00

TO RESERVE CONTACT: [cwafac2@gmail.com](mailto:cwafac2@gmail.com)

### AVAILABLE FOR SALE:

Quality vases, floral design books & magazines,  
bottle collars and fresh mini centrepieces



**CASH OR CHEQUE ONLY PLEASE**

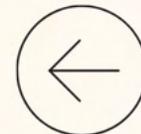
**DRAW TICKETS  
WIN DESIGNS**

# 18 APRIL 2026

AT ST MARK'S CHURCH  
12953 20<sup>TH</sup> AVE, SURREY, BC

**SHOW OPEN TO PUBLIC 2:00 TO 4:00**

BY DONATION (CASH ONLY)



Questions?  
Email Cindy Tataryn - [ctataryn@telus.net](mailto:ctataryn@telus.net)



[www.cwafac.weebly.com/events](http://www.cwafac.weebly.com/events)



[facebook.com/westernfloralartclubs](https://facebook.com/westernfloralartclubs)

**BC COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS SPRING/ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,  
DANA CROMIE, KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
"EDUCATION OF A PLANTAHOLIC — HOW I CAME TO LEARN ABOUT PLANTS AND  
GARDENING"**

Dana is a lifelong Instituto artist and gardener living in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Dana studied Visual Art at Capilano College, Instituto Allende de San Miguel, and the Vancouver School of Art. He then worked in clothing manufacturing as a production manager and as a planner.

The son of a green thumb and ardent volunteer, Dana has a renowned garden full of unusual plants. Dana has a deep engagement with the local gardening community, and his garden has been toured multiple times by the Alpine Garden Club of BC, the Vancouver Rhododendron Society, and the Vancouver Hardy Plant Group.

Dana wrote and photographed 'In My Garden' for *Vancouver Lifestyle Magazine* from 1999-2001 and has contributed to the *Annual* of the Rhododendron Species Foundation and the *Bulletin* of the Alpine Garden Club of BC.

After retiring, he became a Friend of the UBC Botanical Garden where he was head of the FOGs' guides and coordinator of their various propagation units. Dana coordinated the acquisition and catalogue descriptions of the plants for the UBCBG Collectors' Plant Auctions

from 2004 - 2011. Dana has been chair of the UBCBG Treasured Bulb Sale since 2015.

He has studied botanical illustration at UBC Botanical Garden with Alison Watt, at Emily Carr University with Elizabeth Mancini, and privately with Mary Comber Miles.

From 2012-2014, Dana was Artist in Residence at UBC Botanical Garden.

2018-2025, Dana was co-chair of the Vancouver Hardy Plant Group, and co-chaired their 2023 Hardy Plant Study Weekend, which is a conference that rotates between Vancouver, Victoria, Seattle, and Portland.

Dana is a regular judge at the Vancouver Island Rock and Garden Society spring show.

He has travelled widely to visit plants in situ, including five weeks in Chile in 2025.

He lives in East Vancouver with his husband, Greg Brown.



**BC COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS SPRING/ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,  
SAGE KOSA, SCHOLARSHIP AWARD SPEAKER  
"GARDEN OF LIFE: HABITAT CREATION IN OUR GROWING SPACES"**

Sage was raised in the mixed hardwood deciduous forests of Connecticut. Her first training and work was in the field of architecture before transitioning into horticulture. She owns and operates Kindred Gardens, a garden design, install, care, consulting, and coaching business. As an educator and practitioner, she is passionate about supporting local gardens and gardeners and creating gardens that function as healthy, balanced ecosystems.



**BCCGC Reminders:**

✂ When looking for a guest speaker for your group, visit the 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!

✂ 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.

We are here to make your jobs easier! Visit [www.bcgardenclubs.com](http://www.bcgardenclubs.com) regularly.



***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 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026**, 9am to 3:30pm, Michael J Fox Theatre, Burnaby

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

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

**Event Details & Registration go to:**

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

***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!**

***Here is our amazing lineup!***

Gardening as a Practice of Belonging - *David Tracey*

Restoring and Sustaining Soil Health - *Jo Tobias*

Foodscaping: How to Grow More Food in Less Space - *Erin Berkyto*

Cracks & Crevices: The Art of Rock & Crevice Gardening - *Paul Spriggs*

PlantWise - Supporting Responsible Gardening - *Megan Blackmore*

### **Event Details**

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**We hope you will join us for a great day!**

# Get your community involved.



## British Columbia Communities in Bloom

<b>BLOOM</b> Evaluated - 6 Criteria	<b>GROW</b> Modified Evaluation	<b>FRIENDS</b> Non-Evaluated	<b>SHOWCASE</b> My Community
<b>Evaluated Program</b> Registration deadline March 31/26		<b>Non-Evaluated Program</b> Registration deadline May 31/26	

[www.bccib.ca](http://www.bccib.ca)



## 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>.

Gardening is an excellent low-impact exercise for seniors that improves flexibility, strength, and cardiovascular health while boosting Vitamin D and reducing stress. It offers cognitive stimulation and sense of purpose. Volunteering in allotment gardens and other community-based gardens also gives an important connection to like-minded people and gives a sense of belonging.

### Key health benefits:

- ♥ Gardening tasks like digging and weeding build muscle strength and dexterity.
- ♥ Regular gardening can improve bone density, reduce blood pressure, and burn 200-400 calories per hour.

Photo by Visnja Gasparic Vojvodic, Richmond Garden Club.

- ♥ It acts as a therapeutic, stress-reducing activity that can help manage symptoms of dementia and cognitive decline.
- ♥ Seniors eat healthier by growing their own food.
- ♥ Gardening cultivates a sense of community.
- ♥ Gardening gives a sense of joy thus improving moods and changing outlooks on life because it means having a faith in the future!





## 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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