

## **JBNA Garden Advocate's Report, 2019 - 2020**

The Garden Advocate assists those living and working in James Bay to increase food and other gardening activity in our community. I'd like to thank the twenty volunteers – too many to list by name here - who have worked for many hours to make the following JBNA gardening initiatives happen.

### The Michigan/Menzies Garden

JBNA garden volunteers continued to tend the herb, flower, and veg box by Discovery Coffee and the (mostly) native plant pollinator garden on the adjoining boulevard. A new bed, featuring drought-tolerant plants, was planted in the next section of the boulevard, at the corner of Menzies Street, as part of our ongoing efforts to beautify the village core. The garden was featured this year in a boulevard garden walking tour organized by the City of Victoria and in a bicycle tour put on for delegates from across Canada as part of the Livable Cities Conference. Thanks to Discovery Coffee for their ongoing support.

### The Seed Box

We received a My Great Neighbourhood grant from the City of Victoria to install a neighbourhood seed box in the Michigan/Menzies garden. We obtained an old Times-Colonist box, modified and painted it, designed seed packets, and collected and packed seeds, but installation of the box has been delayed by COVID-19. We have arranged to offer our packed food and herb seeds to the community through the James Bay United Church food pantry, so that they are available for spring planting, and will install the box as soon as we can.

### The James Bay Food Trees

The tree stewards continued to look after our 10 neighbourhood-tended food trees, keeping them watered, mulched, and pruned. A new task added this year was banding against winter moth. All the trees continue to do well and we added more flowering spring bulbs around the trees by the tennis courts. Thanks to Sarap Brown and Nourish restaurant for providing water and to Chris Adams for his pruning expertise.

### The James Bay Berry Patch

The berry patch was put on hold for a good part of the year while we worked on other projects. Work has now resumed and a proposal for a berry patch at the Pendray site should go to the City for consideration shortly.

### The Neighbourhood Plant Swap & Sale

The spring and fall swaps were held in Irving Park, with about the same turnout as last year's events. As a new feature, we invited the Master Gardeners to hold a plant clinic at the fall swap. It was well attended, and they are interested in continuing to be a part of the swaps.

### Participation in neighbourhood events

The gardening volunteers staffed an information stall at the James Bay Market; a booth at the James Bay picnic, where we had a jolly time giving away plants; and participated in Window Wanderland with an installation in the Discovery Coffee herb box. I gave a talk on winter gardening to the NGAS allotment holders at their request.

### Ongoing activities

These include a gardening column in the Beacon, coordinating volunteers and a volunteer thank you event (which this year was a very enjoyable guided forage in Fisherman's Wharf Park, thanks to Natasha Sergio), attending monthly Urban Food Table meetings, and answering general gardening queries from residents.

***Kathryn Pankowski***, JBNA Garden Advocate

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