

Report to the JBNA Board: Gardening & Recycling Programs, August & September, 2024

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August was a fairly quiet month, except for a certain amount of excitement around the Get Growing, Victoria! seedling distribution (see below). September, on the other hand, was very busy, with the fall plant swap, an open garden event, and five mulch deliveries from the City, each of which had to be met at delivery time, followed by a work party organized to move it and/or clean up the site.

The Wee Free Seed Box & Seed Box Garden

- A remarkable number of seeds have been donated already this fall: a big bin of seed saved by the Montreal St Allotment gardeners, the seeds left from the Get Growing, Victoria sowings passed on by the City, unsold commercial seeds from big box stores via the Food Hub, and local seeds collected from the JBNA commons gardens and by the seed box volunteers. A big thanks to everyone!
- We have started upgrades to the drought-tolerant garden (the one with the grasses) and will be working on that through the fall - it has needed some priming and reorganizing ever since we had to hastily dig/store/replant a large chunk of it a couple of years ago due to work at that corner.
- We arranged to share a City mulch delivery with the JB United Church, finally solving the problem of how to get a delivery at this garden when there was no place to drop it..

Fisherman's Wharf Herb Garden

- The garden continues to be well used, and there was a good turn out of interested people for the September Open Garden tour. This summer we've had a number of artists visit to collect materials, including a photographer who takes B&W portraits of individual leaves.
- We have been researching and sourcing shade-loving herbs for under the dogwood trees, to increase the variety of herbs available and include more native plants.

Montreal Street Berry Patch

- We refreshed the wood chip paths and amended the garden soil with a layer of compost, and have planned new additions of plants and bulbs for fall.
- We have met two senior garden users, each of whom stops by on their walk to pick one strawberry a day as a treat - it's great to see that people are enjoying the garden in the way it was meant to be used.

Lewis Park Commons Garden

- We tried holding an open garden day here in August, but it was not well attended.

Fall Plant Swap

- The fall swap went very well - no crowds, but a steady stream of customers, which is good for the always less busy fall swap. Lots of people brought trades, We collected

\$425 in donations for the garden projects (highest for a fall swap) - and we even managed to track down and return a plant that got brought to the swap by mistake.

Get Growing, Victoria!

- Because of the tensions in Irving Park, the City asked us, the day before the seedling distribution, to find another venue. With a LOT of help from the James Bay Community School, who gave us use of the school grounds, and Julia Ford at the City, who had redirecting signs printed and installed at Irving Park, we managed to pull it off - and some impromptu telephone and social media 'trees' through the neighbourhood notified a remarkable number of our usual customers.
- Despite the mad scramble, it all went well on the day: lots of people and exactly the right number of plants.
- The neighbourhood mulch distribution also went well (and more calmly!), with supplies of all three materials lasting well into the weekend, which is the goal. Our only problem was due to a rugby tournament, as fans kept moving the stanchions and parking on top of the mulch (!)

Recycling

- We added bubble-pack and foil-lined plastic (e.g. coffee bags) to the materials that can be recycled through the depot, promoted this, and updated the web page.
- We will be sorting out whether we can collect a couple of other recyclable materials which need special handling, and then we will have pretty much reached the end of this spree of adding to what we can collect. Our next project will be to look at how we can partner with groups who collect various materials for re-use.