

AGM Notes 2024-25

Previous years, a tour of each garden and the changes made. This year I want to report using the City's slogan for the gardening program:

- Grow Gardens
- Grow Gardeners
- Grow Community

As always, I'd like to start by thanking the volunteers and our various partners, esp. Huntingdon Hotel and Discovery Coffee.

Grow Gardens

This year we didn't build any new gardens. Because we did three the previous year - or rather, partially did them. Instead it was a year of finishing off loose ends and making small additions to each garden.

Allotments:

- MSAG - added four new raised beds
- NGAS - planting up the perimeter with flower/pollinator border on the sunny south side facing the trees and shade loving native plants at the back under the trees
- Huntingdon - added a communal perennial herb bed for gardeners to share

Commons:

- Lewis and Montreal Berry (the two new gardens): all the structure was completed, with the chairs and planters installed at the berry patch and the woven hazel edging on the island bed at Lewis and planting up continued
- Herb garden: adding shade loving ground cover herbs in the 'back row' and more native herbs

Working on two new projects for next year, one big one small:

- Rithet butterfly garden
- Exploring the possibility of a small garden to protect a mature Garry Oak on a boulevard

Grow Gardeners

One of the ways we try to support local gardeners is by making gardening materials accessible, through our own programs, the seed box and the neighbourhood plant swap, as well as by serving as the neighbourhood partner for the City's Get Growing, Victoria programs - that's the mulch deliveries and the food seedling distribution twice a year.

Seed box - a few exciting developments. First, we've started to get very generous bulk donations of commercial seed (inc from the City). Second, connection with Farm Folk, City Folk - we may start stewarding one plant, nodding onion, which is native to local Garry Oak meadows, and sharing seed with other seed libraries.

Plant swaps continue to flourish - next one is May 3, 10-noon, at Irving Park

Also continue our educational efforts: gardening column in the Beacon, open garden days at the herb garden

Grow Community

People at allotment gardens and in work parties form communities

We are out there, chatting, and keeping an eye on things. Many of the volunteers live nearby. Good relationship with parks

We also work with a number of other organizations. In this last year, deliver flowers each week for the community lunch at the JBUChurch, repackage and send on seedling from Get Growing and the swap for clients of the JBCProject. This coming year we'll be also be supplying plants to Heron House, the Garth Homer Soc residence on Govt St, and looking at how we can support a new youth growing and cooking program at the JBCProject - looking at supplying seeds, plants, and taking the participants on a tasting tour of the herb garden, and we're devoting one bed at the Huntingdon allotments to growing food for the informal food bank at the project.

What's next?

I have an endless list of ideas of what else we could be doing. Satellite herb boxes, so no one is more than a 5-minute stroll from fresh herbs? A pollinator pathway linking existing parks? More allotments? If you'd like to help make any of this happen, let me know.

And a final thank you

To the City, not only for funding, but also to City staff for being consistently supportive, helpful, and enthusiastic.