

Gardening & Recycling Programs, December, 2024 & January, 2025

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It was a relatively quiet couple of months in the gardens, as far as actual “in the ground” work went, due to the holidays, winter weather, and January being The Month of Paperwork, in which all the various City reports and applications are due. Recycling, however, was hopping with activity.

The Wee Free Seed Box & Seed Box Garden

- The seed box has been removed for refurbishment and one of the volunteers is coming up with a new design for the exterior.

The Herb Garden at Fisherman’s Wharf

- As well as the usual winter pruning, we have been adding various shade-tolerant, ground cover herbs under the trees and shrubs in the ‘back row’ - essentially a trial to see which ones do well. The goals are to protect the soil with ‘living mulch’, add more types of edible herbs, and add more native plants (half are native).

The Proposed New Garden on Rithet Street

- The JNBA’s Expression of Interest for obtaining a license of occupation and making a butterfly support garden at this site has been reviewed and approved by the City. We are now invited to submit a detailed proposal, which includes a planting plan, schedule, and budget, and addresses the concerns outlined by the City in the invitation. (The concerns are all quite reasonable, such as the need to provide sufficient visibility for all forms of traffic at the intersection, and seem quite possible to satisfy with a well thought out garden design.)
- As part of developing the proposal, there will need to be a community consultation process.

Garden Events

- The dates for the JBNA plant swaps (pending park permits) and open gardens have been set for 2025
- The dates for the Get Growing, Victoria! activities in James Bay (2 seedling distributions and 2 soil building material deliveries) have also been worked out with the City.
- Calen and I are developing a shared calendar of JBNA events, so we can both consult it when scheduling activities. We also will be developing some kind of sign up calendar for shared equipment.

Planning for 2025

- We have submitted an application for a \$500 microgrant for supplies for the gardening programs, as usual.
- The Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator Grant Report for 2024 has been submitted; along with the application for a 2025 grant.

- The City has once again invited the JBNA to be their neighbourhood partner for the delivery of the Get Growing, Victoria! activities in James Bay. The terms are similar to last year, the agreement has been signed, and I have attended the mandatory information/training session on behalf of the JBNA.

Recycling

- The Recycling Depots in December and January took incremental jumps to whole new levels of busyness. We were really surprised by the December volume, as that depot was held on Dec 21, so we thought it would be quiet as it was the Saturday before Christmas. And then January (which is normally a busy month as people get rid of post-Christmas packaging) was the busiest depot we've ever had, in part because it was publicized in the Capital Daily newsletter across the region - I talked to people who had driven over from Oak Bay with their Christmas lights. It took two trips in a car to get all the items ReFuse doesn't take out to Esquimalt Return-It, the first time we've had more than a carload.

Other activities

- I attended the half day City training/gathering for all neighbourhood community garden coordinators, wrote the usual Beacon columns, and have been having some interesting discussions with a couple of people about the possibilities of using the community gardens as sites for citizen science projects, such as monitoring biodiversity and the effects of climate change on plants.