

Gardening Report
February & March, 2025
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Spring has sprung and things are getting very busy...

The Seed Box

We have been approached by Farm Folk, City Folk about participating in the seed library/savers network they coordinate. Each participating group takes on responsibility for one or more seed varieties and ensures that there is a supply of this seed made available to other seed libraries & boxes across the province. While our seed box is primarily an exchange, rather than a seed library that aims to safeguard particular strains of seeds, the volunteers talked it over and decided that it is within our capacity to safeguard and share seed of nodding onion. This is a perennial native food plant, and we already grow it in several of our gardens, so have a good source of seed at hand.

The Herb Garden

Given the uncertainty around the economy, food prices, and buying American produce, the herb garden volunteers would like to add high-yield food plants, such as kale and chard, to this garden, at least for this year. The focus of the garden would remain culinary herbs, and leafy greens and other food plants would be added between: we have a few bare spots at the moment where some of the large old (and nearly dead) rosemary plants have been removed.

One of the volunteers has built the first of a pair of 'dead hedges' for the garden. (A horrible name for a great thing.) A dead hedge is an ecological enhancement and used in traditional woodland management in Europe. It allows us to recycle larger branches on site, without using fossil fuels for hauling and chipping, as well as providing habitat, especially shelter for small birds and homes for predatory ground beetles that eat pests.

Montreal St Berry Patch

We mulched this garden with compost, laid down fresh wood chips on the paths, and continued to thicken and add layers to the planting. It's finally beginning to look a little less bare this spring, though it still has a ways to go before it looks really lush.

The Food Trees

Chris Adams has done his annual health check and pruning of the apples and hazels and they are all in good shape. (Thanks, Chris!) We have taken down the wire fences around all the hazelnuts for easier access and recut and mulched the tree circles of the five apples at Todd Park.

Lewis Park

The garden is all ready for the new growing season: mulched with compost, weeded, and we are enjoying the spring bulbs that we planted last fall in the open-pick flower garden.

Huntingdon Allotments

All plots are filled and there is a twenty-person waitlist. One plot, where the gardener is on leave for this year, will be used by other plot holders to grow fresh veg for the JB Community Project's informal food bank/table.

We have connected with an organization called ReWood, which uses salvaged wood to make items for community gardens, to see if they might build a shed here. If not, we have a 'pre-fab' shed picked out that we will order.

Get Growing, Victoria!

The first part of the spring program, neighbourhood mulch delivery, went well.

Community Connections

I am working with Heron House (Garth Homer) to provide seedlings for their residents' garden, which they have now enlarged.

We have established a new connection with the youth programmer at the JB Community Project and will be helping source seeds and plants for a gardening and cooking program for teens, as well as giving them a tasting tour of the herb garden.

Environmental Studies Field School at UVic has once again asked if they can have a custom tour of some of the James Bay gardens, looking at how community garden programs can enhance biodiversity and ecological richness.

Admin

We have been awarded the full \$10,000 for the Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator Grant and the \$500 microgrant for garden supplies (these are both competitive grants), and the money has been received. We have also received the money and signed contract to deliver the City's Get Growing, Victoria programs. In addition, the Neighbourhood Garden of All Sorts has received a \$2500 Community Garden Volunteer Coordinator Grant from the city.

The Usual

Also still running four work parties per week (weather permitting), writing Beacon columns, and attending Urban Food Table meetings.