

Gardening Report, February & March, 2026

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The generally cool and damp weather these months slowed down on-site gardening, but lots got done on the planning, building, and community outreach fronts, and the gardens are beginning to look like spring is here. There were no major problems, just some minor surprises (such as the unexpected arrival of a beer fridge and the unexpected disappearance of leaf mulch).

The Commons Gardens

Lewis Commons, the Berry Patch, and the Seed Box Garden have resumed regular weekly work parties after their winter break, and the butterfly and herb gardens have continued theirs.

We have held planning meetings for the season ahead for all gardens and made our 'to-do' lists; seeds and seedlings have been farmed out to be grown on by various volunteers.

We are having an increasing problem with dumping: household garbage, including a beer fridge (unfortunately neither plugged in nor stocked) at the berry patch and random plants, including a large and prickly pot of cactus (not what one wants in an open-access pickable garden!), at Lewis. The City has been very helpful in promptly removing the dumped garbage from the berry patch.

New Projects

The Butterfly Garden: Most of the hard elements have been installed and the planting begun. We organized a field trip to Satinflower Nursery to buy native plants for the garden (and everyone who went also came home with native plants to add to their own gardens) and we are busy dividing other native plants, as well as raising some from seed to complete the planting.

Work on the Croft St boulevard has not yet begun, but will start soon.

The spring bulb recycling pilot has had modest success so far. We've received hyacinths and primroses, now planted by Discovery Coffee, grape hyacinths and daffodils added to the Lewis Street cutting garden, and snowdrops. I think it's worth doing again next year, but February is too early to start collecting - we should begin in March.



A recycled primrose from a mixed pot, now gracing the parking lot in front of Discovery Coffee.

Events

Neighbourhood mulch day went well, though the delivery of leaf mulch was cancelled on short notice by the City, as the pile hadn't 'cooked' enough to pass contaminant testing. We did distribute compost and wood chips, but, with one material missing, they went very quickly.

The James Bay Spring Plant Swap has been scheduled for Saturday, May 9, 10 - noon in Irving Park and the Get Growing Victoria seedling distribution will follow on Saturday, May 30, also 10 - noon in Irving Park.

Community Connections

The JBNA has given seeds of nodding onion - a native edible plant - gathered from the herb and seed box gardens to PEPAKEN HÁUTW Foundation, a not-for-profit that manages a food garden and plant nursery at the ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School in Brentwood Bay, for the students to add to their food gardens.

I was invited to help conduct the group discussion at the JB United Church's world water day event, along with Helen Boyd. We talked about rain gardens, buried streams, watersheds and

CRD water tours, where storm water goes, and small-scale actions people can take locally to protect water. JBNA Clean Team information was handed out to those interested.

I have circulated information about the Curbside Co-op project to people who are on the wait list for a plot at the Huntingdon allotments.

The Usual

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

Priorities for the next two months:

- Keep the existing gardens looking good (always the first priority), finish spring planting
- Finish Rithet hardscaping and start on Croft St gardens
- Plant swap, seedling distribution and other spring events, including Jane's Walk.

And a big thanks! To this year's Board for all the help and support.