APRIL 2023/ISSUE #4

RICHMOND GARDEN CLUB

April Enchantments

"Every spring is the only spring - a perpetual astonishment."
(Ellis Peters)

IN THIS ISSUE

Garden Club News
- Club Updates
- Events Calendar
- Volunteer oportunities

Grow Your Garden Savvy
- Discover Richmond's local Treasure: 'Urban Bounty"

Find Inspiration
- For Beauty's Sake (Inspired by Thomas Hobbs)

Message from the President

Lynda Pasacreta

There is something about April - that indescribable fragrance of life's awakening, the juicy, dewy, dripping new greens and spring blossoms, the sense of enchantment, anticipation and new beginnings. And wowzer - the new energy!

We are feeling it and we know you are too. It's a great time to set new goals for your garden this season and learn how to make them happen.

We fill this newsletter with all the latest goings-on in the club, new volunteer opportunities, upcoming fun events. We include some simple steps to get started on gardening more sustainably in the *Grow Your Garden Savvy* section - and we will continue to explore different aspects of this subject all year in future newsletter issues.

We shine a spotlight on Urban Bounty - the local organization that manages community garden plots in Richmond and offers some terrific educational programming. And we wrap up with a little tribute to the artistry in gardening and some highlights of Thomas Hobbs' writings on how to get that elusive, inspiring x-factor into your gardens. And that's just a teaser before his talk to our club at the April 26 meeting (so save that date)!

Lots happening this month. Enjoy the newsletter and we look forward to seeing you out there.

Magnolia in UBC Botanical Garden. Photo by: Jill Wright

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 1-23
Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival
Home - Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival (vcbf.ca)

April 8
Vanc. Dahlia Society Tuber Sale, 10 am-3pm Floral Hall, VanDusen Gardens

April 13
Gary Lake of RGC giving a presentation called "Paulik Park Through the Seasons" to Cloverdale Garden Club

April 14-16
Bradner Flower Show
10am-4pm daily, Bradner

Club News Update

BC Council of Garden Clubs - President

We are so proud to announce that our own RGC President, Lynda Pasacreta, has just been elected President of the BC Council of Garden Clubs (BC CGC) for a two-year term, commencing April 2023. She will continue to serve as our RGC President simultaneously.

Richmond is a member of the BC Council of Garden Clubs and Lynda has represented us there for many years; she is also the editor of their monthly newsletter that goes out to all garden clubs in BC. Lynda will bring terrific experience, perspective, and communications skills to this new role and we look forward to watching her bring her unique style to the helm of the BC CGC. Way to go Lynda!

Annual Plant Sale - More Volunteers Needed!

Community Hall, Admission $2.50. More info: https://www.bradnerbarker.com/news/the-power-of-the-flower

April 15-23
City of Richmond BC - Earth Week -- Paulik Park free events (registration required, click *here*)

- Spring Container Workshop (Adults) Apr 15, 23 at 10-11a.m.
- Soil Demonstration (Adults) Apr16 at10-11 a.m.
- Tour of Paulik Park Trees. (Adults) Walk with RGC members to learn of tree highlights. Apr 16 at 1-2p.m.
- Tour of Paulik Park (All ages). Walk with RGC members to learn about park ongoing work and projects in general. Apr 15 and 22 at 1-2p.m.
- Bees Workshop - Learn how bees interact with each other and ways to help them survive in garden. Apr 22 at 9:30-11:30 a.m.

April 19
7 - 8 p.m.
"Gardening Talks with Gary Lewis: Container Gardening" Richmond Public Library - Brighouse. Register *here*.

April 22
10a.m.-2p.m.
Canadian Western Association of Floral Art Clubs - Floral Art Show and AGM
https://cwafac.weebly.com/store/c1/Featured_Products.html

April 26
6:30 p.m. RGC Club Meeting and feature speaker, Thomas Hobbs

Coming up in just one month, the annual plant sale will be Saturday, May 6th, 9a.m. to 1 p.m. in the South Arm United Church parking lot. Additional volunteers are still needed to help at the hanging baskets distribution, work the sale tables, set-up, and take-down. Members interested in participating in this project, please contact Kate Herring c/o richmondgardenclub@gmail.com.

Steveston Boardwalk Planters

*Update and photo by Karen Hakansso*n:

Our planters at the dock survived a winter of heavy snowfalls, wind and rain and continue to look great. In the photo above, you can see the September planting of daffodils about to bloom, yellow pansies, rainbow spurge, several types of heuchera and one ornamental kale about to flower. The Karl Foerster grass was pruned in February when we removed our Christmas greenery. The Angelina Sedum and the miniature Bergenia you can see on the left side of the planter were planted several years ago and have been happily growing year after year.

Last week we planted a couple of primulas in each planter to fill in the gaps and to provide some cheerful Easter colour. There are still some original perennials in the planters waiting for warmer weather before they appear. Rozanne geraniums, miniature Shasta Daisies and echinacea and summer annuals will provide colour this summer.

Thank you to our great team of volunteers: Ruby Hayashi, Mae Yesaki, Sharon Calvert, Lynda Walsh, Liz Newcomb, and Karen Hakansson.

April 29
Urban Bounty Spring Fling and Compost Fundraiser
10a.m. -2p.m. at 7611 Ash Street office
Compost pick-up, seed library, information table, kids activities, Paulik Park tours run by RGC
Urban Bounty Spring Fling and Compost Fundraiser Tickets, Sat, 29 Apr 2023 at 10:00 AM | Eventbrite

May 6
RGC Annual Plant Sale
South Arm United Church
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

May 10
7 - 8 p.m.
"Gardening Talks with Gary Lewis: Edible Containers"
Richmond Public Library - Brighouse. Register *here*.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

Our club is 100% volunteer-run; we have no staff! So, no matter how much or how little experience you have, if you are ready to have fun and pitch in somewhere, there is a place for you. It's a great way to get to know others in our club, learn a few new skills, and help keep our club vibrant. Here are a few options to consider.

- **Membership Committee looking for extra hands**

A few extra hands are needed to help the existing membership committee greet and sign up new members at monthly meetings. It's a great way to meet other members in the club. If interested, please send a note to us at richmondgardenclub@gmail.com

- **Newsletter Team - Writers Wanted!**

Members' writings about their gardening passions, research, reflections, inspirations, travels and adventures always welcome. Contact the Newsletter Team (Lisa Colby) to discuss further at: *richmondgardenclub@gmail.com*.

- **Seeking volunteer 'Buddies' for new members**

The 'buddy's role is not to teach gardening, nor is it a large time commitment. It's about being neighborly, being available for occasional phone calls to help answer a new member's questions about the club, to be a friendly face for new members to talk to at club events, and to introduce them to a few other club members or projects as they find their bearings within the club.

Members who are interested in being a welcome buddy for new members, please send us a note at *richmondgardenclub@gmail.com* and we'll add you to our list.

New members who have joined within the past year that would like to be assigned a buddy, please also contact us to be matched up with a 'buddy' phone number.

- **Looking for a Place to Garden?**

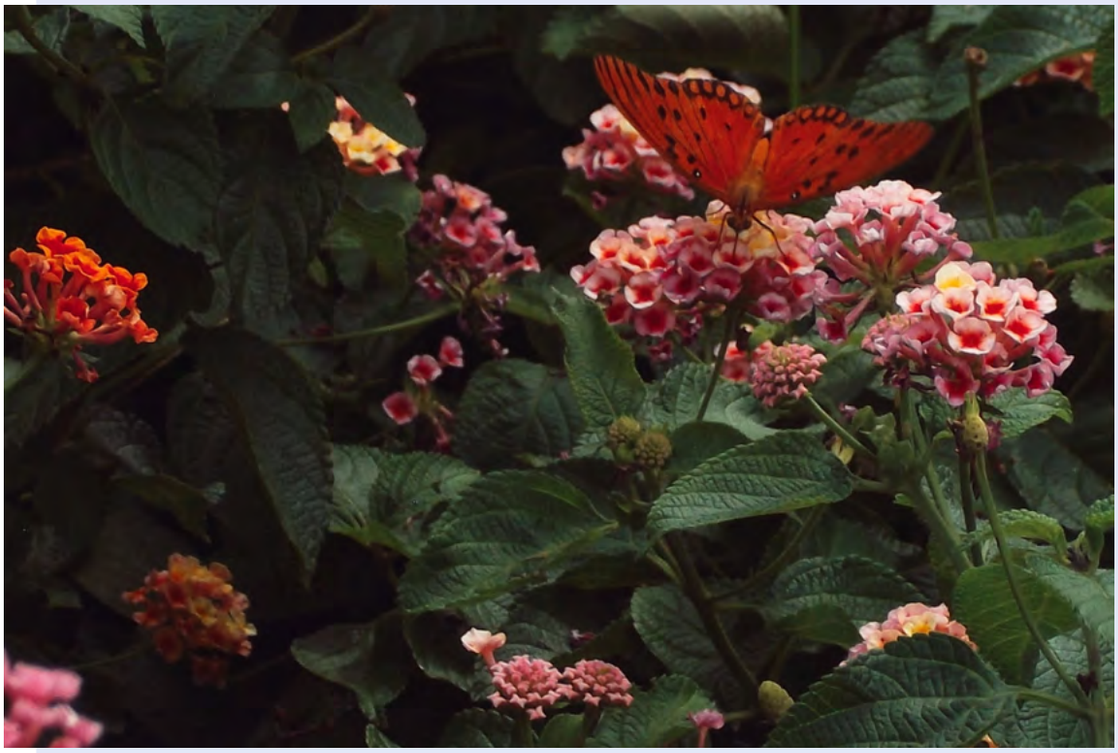
If you don't have a garden patch of your own and are looking for a place to get your hands in the warm earth and get gardening - come join us at some of our projects. You can meet people, get your hands dirty and learn some gardening skills in a beautiful space. Contact us for suggestions at *richmondgardenclub@gmail.com.*

The Complete RGC Committees /Project List

Below is the complete list of projects and committees currently active. We don't have the space to include detail for all of them here but, if any of these projects pique your interest and you might like to get involved, reach out to the lead contact listed below, to learn more c/o *richmondgardenclub@gmail.com*. Where you see 'vacant' there is something that needs help right away and you can contact Lynda Pasacreta for more information.

- Speakers Coordinator - Vidyut Aklujkar
- Paulik Park Committee - Jill Wright
- Parlour Show - Pat Walach
- Rooftop Garden - Ruth Henderson
- Annual Plant Sale - Kate Herring
- Communications - Gary Lake
- Members' Garden Tour Tea - Joyce Novick
- Advertising Sales - Vacant
- Membership Committee - Judy Matheson
- Photography Committee - Thora Gislason
- Raffle Prize Draw - Joyce Novick
- Steveston Boardwalk Planters - Karen Hakansson
- Richmond Hospital Thrift Store Planters - Kate Herring
- Refreshments - Maria Silva

Grow Your Garden Savvy



Garden Giggles
What do rabbits say before they eat?

Answer:
"Lettuce pray.""

Planet Friendly Garden

By Lynda Pasacreta

A worthy theme for RGC this year..

One of my favourite gardening websites I follow is Royal Horticultural Society (www.rhs.org.uk). Quite often I feel like 'changing the world' when I read some of their articles. The most recent article I fell in love with was "10 Ways to Be More Sustainable in Your Garden" with a theme of 'planet-friendly gardening' (https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardening-for-the-environment/planet-friendly-gardening-tips).

With spring in the air and our plant sale only a month and a bit away, let's adopt this theme of planting a 'planet-friendly garden' for our gardening season this year. A couple of ways we can start now, while we are dividing our plants and planting seeds for our plant sale May 6, are:

Choose pollinator-friendly plants
With the loss of habitat, especially in urban centres, our pollinators need our help! When choosing plants make sure to include native, non-native and exotic plants that attract pollinators. Growing pollinator-friendly plants amongst your fruits and vegetable gardening helps your yield in your garden! Plant borage, marigolds, nasturtiums, alyssum in amongst your vegetable seeds.

ASK THE GARDEN GURU

Have a gardening question? Many others probably have the same one – we guarantee. Send those questions in to our Garden Guru at richmondgardenclub.com and we will track down answers to publish in the newsletter each month, so we all learn together. (Watch out Master Gardeners and other local experts, we might be calling for help!)

Q: Almost all the tulips we planted last year have been damaged or eaten by rats who tunneled into our garden over the winter. How can we prevent this from happening next year?

A: Rats (as well as mice, squirrels, voles, skunks, rabbits) do love to eat those tulips! A little observation and detective work will help you confirm which of the

usual suspects is likely the real culprit in your garden.

If you do have a mice or rat infestation to blame, you may have seen them occasionally during the day or will likely at least see their droppings, or evidence of chewed wood or wires in the area, and maybe a rat hole, in addition to the no-show of your anticipated tulips.

In the absence of those signs, it could be other rodents or critters to blame. For example:

- Yellowed leaves on the tulips, or no growth at all in spring could be indicative of voles chewing the bulbs and roots from underground, preventing nutrients from reaching the leaves, or eating the bulbs altogether.

- If squirrels are to blame, they can often be seen during the day up to no good in the tulip patch. They like to both steal or eat the bulbs in the fall when they are caching nuts, or they also are known to clip off and eat the actual flowers in the spring! (The other rodents don't eat the flowers).

- And those cute rabbits don't eat the bulbs or flowers but are known to munch on the leaves of your spring tulips night or day.

Some links in the Sources section below can help you learn more of the tell-tale signs of different common pests around your tulips.

Some plants to choose: yarrow, hollyhock, Columbine, borage, masterwort, Canterbury bells, cosmos, dahlia, sweet William, heliotrope, and so much more. For an extensive list, visit the website. Most nurseries will identify pollinator-friendly plants. Now excuse me, while I go outside and pot up my bee-friendly, butterfly-friendly Doronicum orientale, leopard's bane plants to sell at our annual plant sale, May 6.

Companion planting
Continuing with our theme of planet-friendly gardening, West Coast Seeds has a brochure (in store or online), Guide to Companion Planting. Companion planting in edible gardens (fruits and vegetables, herbs) can help repel 'bad bugs' and attract pollinators. With companion planting, it increases your odds of a higher yield. Planet-friendly gardening includes eating home-grown or locally grown food to lower the amount of greenhouse gas emissions, plus the ability to not use pesticides on your produce - another plus for our planet!

The Guide to Companion Planting is easy to follow and a very valuable addendum to planning your edible garden this year. For example, planting echinacea in amongst your edible plants attracts hoverflies and parasitoid wasps, which are useful for pest control in your garden!

Another method of companion planting is plant vegetables that help each other in the garden. Turnips benefit from a mint and pea companions, They work really well with beans, other Brassicas, garlic, onions, and squash.
When visiting West Coast Seeds, 4930A Elliott Street, Delta (Ladner), pick up a copy of Guide to Companion Planting or download a copy from https://www.westcoastseeds.com.

In terms of prevention, that is a big topic, but here are a few all-round, non-chemical, suggested steps you might try. None are foolproof but cumulatively they may help you win a few battles!

1. **Dig your bulbs deep** enough (at least 3 x the height of the bulb). Be sure to clean up afterwards, including the bulb casings so you don't leave a scented trail. And hold off laying mulch in that area until the ground is cold, in case voles try to burrow in during the warmer fall weather.

2. **Create rodent proof barriers** by laying and staking down some chicken wire or wire mesh on top of the soil and your pots until removing in spring. Or, to address underground tunnellers, you can also try planting the bulbs inside chicken wire 'cages' or balls. (This latter may be a little less practical depending on how many bulbs you have). Planting bulbs in raised beds or containers can also better evade the tunneling critters.

3. **Inter-plant tulips with companion plants** that emit scents, taste or toxins that these pests like to avoid. These include:

- daffodils (*Narcissus* spp.),
- painted arum (*Arum italicum*),
- camass (Camassia leichtlinii),
- glory-of-the-snow (*Chinodoxa forbesii*),
- autumn crocus (*Colchicum* spp.),
- crown imperial (*Fritillaria imperialis*),
- persian fritillaria (*Fritillaria persica*),
- snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*), and

Photo of Apple Harvest (Credit: Urban Bounty)

Discover Richmond's Local Treasure: 'Urban Bounty'

By Paige Leslie, Urban Bounty

Urban Bounty is a local registered charity in Richmond working to engage a resilient local food system through education, advocacy, and community-building initiatives. If you are new to gardening and/or want to learn more and get involved in your community then you have come to the right place. Keep reading for more information on our programming, workshops and ways you can get involved.

Urban Bounty Programing:
Community Gardens Program
https://www.urbanbounty.ca/programs/welcome-to-the-community-gardens/
Community gardens are shared green spaces maintained by community members to grow food, flowers, and other plants. In addition, they provide opportunities for people to meet their neighbours, share knowledge, and build social connectedness. In partnership with the City of Richmond, Urban Bounty looks after 15 garden sites across Richmond with over 730 members. Want to become a community gardener? Sign up for our waitlist by clicking HERE - https://www.urbanbounty.ca/programs/welcome-to-the-

- grape hyacinth (*Muscari armeniacum*) bulbs.
- lavender - apparently the skunks and rabbits really don't like this one!

4. **Reduce food sources** that might attract a mice and rat infestation to the area. Use rodent proof bird feeders, never leave pet food out overnight, clean up pet droppings, clean up fallen fruit and nuts.

5. **Reduce hiding places for rodent nests**. De-clutter outdoor spaces and storage areas to reduce hiding and nesting places.

Best of luck for next year - let us know how it goes!

Sources:

RHS website *Mice and voles / RHS Gardening*

Washington State University Master Gardeners Manual (2010)

10 Tips for Protecting Tulip Bulbs for the Best Spring Bloom (bhg.com)

Relative Resistance of Ornamental Flowering Bulbs to Feeding Damage by Voles by Paul D. Curtis, Gwen B. Curtis, and William B. Miller in: HortTechnology Volume 19 Issue 3 (2009) (ashs.org)

WSU Extension Publications| What is Tunneling in My Yard? (Home Garden Series)

pestsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu/SearchMainMenuWithFactSheet.aspxCategoryId=2&ProblemId=794

https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/what-do-about-squirrels

community-gardens/waitlistsignup/

Seed Security Program
https://www.urbanbounty.ca/programs/seed-library/
The practice of seed saving increases food access and security by establishing a locally adapted and diverse seed supply. Through initiatives like our:

- Seed Library (https://www.urbanbounty.ca/programs/seed-library/),
- two Cover Crop Programs (https://www.urbanbounty.ca/spring-and-fall-cover-crops/), and
- Seedy Saturday event,

we support local gardeners and community organizations to share and maintain the knowledge and skills of this ancient practice.

Fruit Gleaning Program
https://www.urbanbounty.ca/programs/richmond-fruit-recovery-program/
The process of recovering untended seasonal fresh fruit from Richmond backyards and redistributing it to the community. We reduce food waste by coordinating fruit picks with volunteers and then sharing the bounty with community partners and local residents.

Looking to get involved?

There are many ways you can support the work we do and get involved in your local food system and community:

1. Volunteer with us by filling out our form HERE (https://www.urbanbounty.ca/get-involved/volunteer-2/) and we will reach out with specific opportunities as they become available.
2. Become a member (https://www.urbanbounty.ca/who-we-are/become-a-member/) We have 4 different packages available, Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme, with amazing benefits like discounts on workshops, Urban Bounty products, access to our seed library and more!
3. Sign up for our monthly newsletter (https://www.urbanbounty.ca/connect-with-us/) to receive updates, gardening tips and more!
4. Take one of our workshops (https://www.urbanbounty.ca/events/workshops/) Topics include crop planning, composting, beekeeping, food skills and more!
5. Come join us for our Spring Fling (https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/urban-bounty-spring-fling-and-compost-fundraiser-tickets-560781471477?aff=ebdsoporgprofile) on Saturday, April 29 from 10am-2pm at our office located at 7611 Ash St., Richmond! We will have our compost pick-up, seed library, information table, kids activities, Paulik Park tours run by the Richmond Garden Club and more!
6. Make a donation (https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/richmond-food-security-society/) and help us continue to run all of our amazing programs and support our community.
7. Check out our online store (https://www.urbanbounty.ca/shop/) to purchase local made products from hats and aprons to lip balm and candles.

Green Inspirations

For Beauty's Sake

By L. Colby

All gardens are pretty. But some are just drop-dead gorgeous. They have that kind of beauty that makes us pause, catch our breath and surrender to its spell. Growing a garden for food or biodiversity and climate resilience is important and gratifying enough for some folk. But for others, achieving that extra layer of fabulous beauty is our real jam. We garden for beauty's sake! It feeds our soul and lifts our spirits. It is what got us started in gardening in the first place and so we never tire of trying to create it.

The great news is that all the conversations of late that focus on increasing our understanding and comfort with more sustainable gardening methods, in no way conflict with our dreams of gorgeous home-gardens. Au contraire! If anything, the expanded palettes that come from adding more native or pollinator friendly plants to our gardens or using more sustainable methods, end up being more fun, less work, less costly, more resilient, and exquisitely beautiful to boot.

Neither does having a very small garden space need to diminish your enthusiasm. Small yards, balconies or decks can be easier to transform than larger spaces. Artistry and good design principles work beautifully in context of all the above.

The Richmond Garden Club is delighted to be hosting local horticulturist, garden beauty expert, nursery owner and author, Thomas Hobbs, as a feature guest speaker at our next regular meeting April 26, 2023. He will share his own ideas on beauty and garden design in a presentation entitled, “My 20 Acre Canvas - Creating a New Garden in Langley, BC”. Mr. Hobbs and his partner have created a spectacular garden in South Langley called Bell’Occhio (Beautiful Eye). It should be a fascinating talk (and please remember to RSVP to richmondgardenclub@gmail.com if you plan to attend so we can monitor numbers and ensure enough chairs).

Meanwhile, in anticipation of his visit, we also thought it would be fun to delve into some of his writings on the subject of inspiration and beauty.

In his book, *Shocking Beauty (2006)*, Hobbs proposes that the real goal of great garden-making is ‘breaking stride’ or stopping the garden visitor in their tracks as they experience the garden. He adds that the degree of success in creating a truly enchanting garden depends upon a method of weaving together three elements: great beauty, floral fragrance, and a sense of surprise followed by mystery.

Hobbs also shares a few thoughts on how to find inspiration. He calls it, “...the invisible force or energy that allows one to make things more beautiful ...”, and he likens it to, “... a fine mist of energy that can also reveal beauty around us, but only when we become appreciative of details.“ Learning to see this beautiful detail is the secret to success and it needs to be the priority of creative gardeners.

His book shares examples of learning to observe things that pass by most people unseen, such as the huge water droplets way-up inside the orange nodding bells of fritillaria. We are told this openness to seeing, noticing, and absorbing beauty, particularly from Nature itself, in turn leads to inspiration and inspired choices in the garden.

Shocking Beauty also provides practical tips and photographic illustrations on how Hobbs introduces that additional layer of magic. A woefully brief summary of highlights include:

- Blurring: the use of scrims of see-through or fine filigree flowering plants such as plums or cherries, or plants with umbel flowers like dill or Queen Anne's Lace, to partially obscure or soften garden scenes, playing on people's desire to escape reality.

- Good Neighbour planting: creating full plant tapestries (leaving no bare earth) of plants that have both the cultural requirements to succeed in the space, but that complement each other through 'colour echoing' (similar colour but different shades) and occasional repetition, to create harmonious combinations.

- Introducing 'High Tension' colours (e.g., lime green) and leaf shapes for bold contrast vignettes, but keeping extra powerful plants planted alone or in blocks of themselves, rather than weakening them in mixed plantings. He encourages boldness and risk-taking, advising that "No risk means no art."

- Colour Cause and effect: Curating colour in the garden, and remembering that colour comes from more than plants (other sources include houses, garages, furniture etc.), and that green is also a colour, and so to rely more on foliage rather than overdoing the variety of colours to chaotic effect.

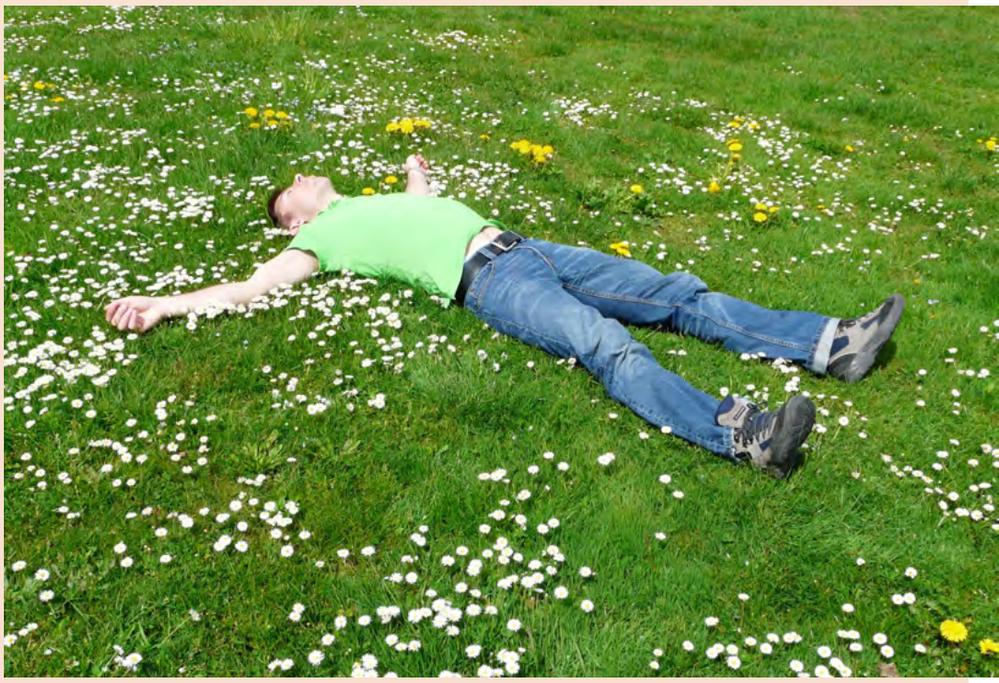
- Staging Incidents: Adding witty or beautiful elements (nothing store-bought) like a deliberately placed floating flower or a tapestry of arranged autumn leaves, can provide surprise – like “spark plugs creating a burst of pleasure”, before we turn a corner to the next discovery.

- Portable Drama: Careful selection of pots as artistic elements in themselves, and then artful placement of them, “like jewelry around the garden.” Grouping them into families can create more impact or interesting vignettes where needed. Colour palette in any one pot should be restrained – no more than three colours other than shades of green.

- Coordinating the Home and Garden: Work with the style of your house by coordinating plant palette to complement the colour of the house for a more cohesive look. Also always remember to create privacy, and always have a path around the whole garden.

That all sounds like great green inspiration to help fine-tune our garden efforts this spring!

If that has piqued your interest for more detail on his unique approach to gardening, consider borrowing *Shocking Beauty (2006)* or his earlier book, *The Jewel Box Garden (2004)*, from your library and enjoy the glorious accompanying photography for inspiration. Or ask him your questions in person on April 26.



Happy Easter Everyone!

Newsletter prepared by L.J. Colby, Richmond Garden Club
Contact at: *richmondgardenclub@gmail.com*