

Richmond Garden Club

Merry Christmas/Happy Hanukkah/Welcome Winter Solstice



President's message

"The garden season officially begins January 1st and ends December 31" ~Marie Huston

At the beginning of December, we received a phone call from the City of Richmond telling us that they dropped off tulip bulbs for us to plant in Paulik Park. Tools have been cleaned and tucked away. Gardening gloves are washed up ready for the spring season.

In most parts of our province, snow has blanketed the landscape leaving a clean white pallet. Our view consists of lots of brown amidst patches of green. The odd spot of colour from the last hurrah of our gardens teases us of what we left behind.

I find this a challenging time of year. With our sleeping plants looking so glum, it is hard not to feel gloomy also.

Thank goodness for our holiday season. Bright coloured lights add sparkle.



**Dec. 12: RGC
Xmas party,
6pm, Royal
Canadian Legion**



**Nov 30 -Jan.5:
Vandusen
Festival of Lights**



**Dec. 7-Jan.5:
Festivale
Tropicale,
Bloedel
Conservatory**

Vivid poinsettias pierce the dreariness with brilliant colours. Candles and the smell of sweet baking takes your mind off the bleakness of our outside world right now.

So I am donning my garden gloves, my santa hat and I am off to plant tulip bulbs. All the best of the holiday season to you!

Some cheery news!



Work has started in the two vacant lots City of Richmond purchased a couple of years ago in Paulik Park. The homeowners of the two lots planted straight line hedge rows and never maintained them. The result was three rows of cedar hedge gone rogue.

The City, in the meantime, has implemented an urban forest strategy with the intent to increase the number of trees in Richmond by limiting removal of trees and new plantings of more sustainable native trees. So there is a reluctance to remove all of the cedar trees in the two lots.

Construction crews are in the Park right now removing the dead and diseased cedar trees. New paths will be created and are already marked out in the area. There will be a new meadow garden consisting of native wild flowers and a new picnic area which will be surrounded by native fruit-bearing shrubs.

As an active volunteer in Paulik Park, it is so exciting to see the upgrades well underway.

As a reminder to our new members, Richmond Garden Club adopted the care and maintenance of 30+ perennial flower beds in 2008. The flower beds were developed by Mrs Paulik in the 1920s in the Arts and Crafts style, using long views throughout the 1.5 acre garden beds. Mrs Paulik loved rhododendrons and azaleas which is so evident early May when Paulik Park is ablaze with vibrant colour. We still need some volunteers to help us out in the gardens. No experience necessary. Email us at paulikpark@gmail.com.

Pacific Northwest garden tasks

When it stops raining or between raindrops, living on the west coast means we can continue to work in our gardens.

Keep compost going: Heavy winter rains can quickly drench compost, eliminating oxygen from the pile and making it stink. Slip a cover over your compost during the heavy rainfalls. An old blanket placed on top will be fine.

Keep an eye on water flow: During heavy rainfalls, observe water run-off patterns in your landscape. Address these issues with ditches or French drains. Or spend the winter with your favourite gardening magazines to learn about rain gardens and bioswales. Add one of these to your gardens next year.

Store tender roots: Before the end of December, examine roots, tubers and corms you dug during the fall. Compost any that are soft or moldy. On dahlias, cut out any bad spots and dust the wound with sulphur. Remove these tubers from the others and store separately.

Plant trees and shrubs: Look for bare-root trees at nurseries this month. They will establish quickly in cooler winter growing conditions.

If you plant balled-and-burlapped plants, don't use the trunk as a handle to move the plant. Every time you do this, you risk dislodging soil from around roots. It is best to handle the tree by the soil.

This is a great time to plant dormant trees and shrubs. Consider colourful bloomers like mock orange, hydrangea, spirea or flowering quince.

DECEMBER GARDENING

Dress up winter pots, empty vegetable gardens and flower beds with cheerful flowering annuals/perennials. Pansies, flowering cabbage, heuchera and hellebore will stage a pretty show all winter.

Tuck a dose of slow-release fertilizer beneath root balls as you plant these colourful beauties to ensure they are well-fed throughout the season.

Add a touch of green indoors by filling a sunny windowsill with potted herbs, especially the ones you cook with.



Beat the cold: Prepare for cold snaps. If a frost warning is issued, water plants before the temperature drops. Plants that are well-watered survive frost better. If the frost comes without warning, watering afterwards will help plants survive.

When covering your plants for the night, ensure your protective covering touches the ground. Protective coverings such as burlap, fabric covers or even bedsheets holds heat in around the plants. The protective cover captures radiant heat in the soil.

Frost and your lawn: Keep off frozen lawn as walking on lawns in this condition can actually damage turf crowns. Who knew?

A huge thank you to Bartlett Tree Experts for their continued support of Richmond Garden Club over the last three years!



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We wish you all very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and a wonderful holiday with family and friends!