

# RICHMOND GARDEN CLUB

Merry Christmas/Happy Hanukkah/Welcome Winter Solstice



## Hanukkah

December 18-26



## Winter Solstice

December 21



## Christmas

December 25

**Time to relax, to chill, to put your feet up!**

Doesn't Jill's photo of her larch all loaded with snow make you want to

just grab a warm cup of cocoa, slide under a cozy blanket and pull out your favourite book, or garden magazine?

We have a busy year ahead of us in 2023. Our focus will be on what we as gardeners can do to contribute to improving our environment. We are already huge contributors to helping Mother Nature in our own backyards by growing pollinator plants, native plants, growing our own food, and helping provide habitats for our wildlife.

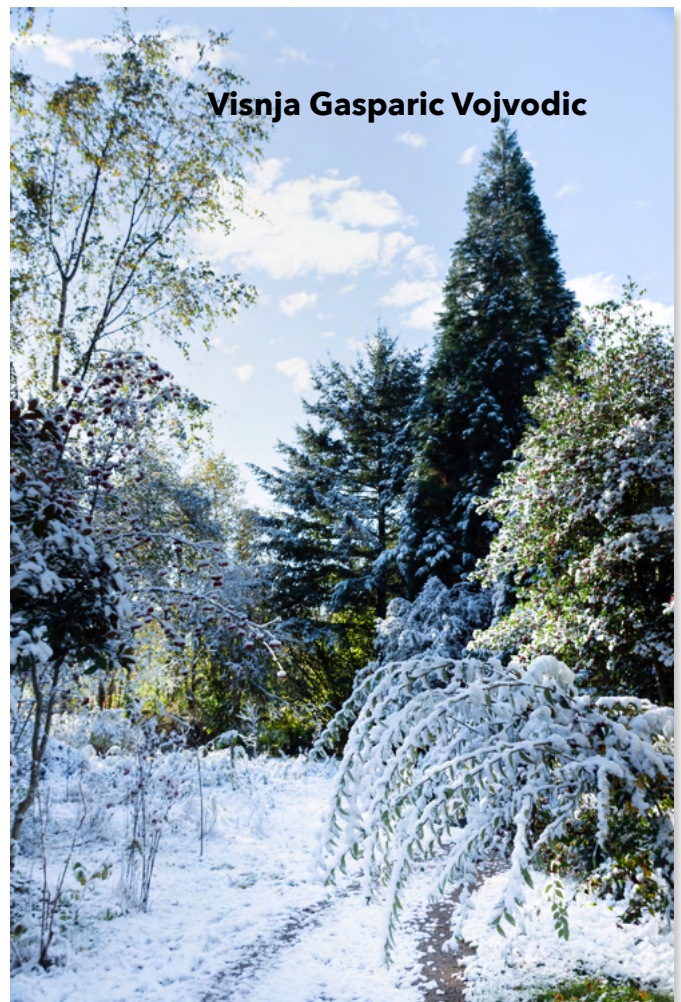
Richmond Garden Club members not only save nature where we live, but we also work very hard to save nature where nature may not even exist in a typical urban environment. Our passionate work in the community where nature did not exist includes the Richmond Cultural Centre rooftop top garden - filled to the brim with edible plants, pollinator plants, fruit trees all tucked into a tiny space on the second floor of the Cultural Centre.

Richmond Hospital Auxiliary Thrift Store is new project for Richmond Garden Club. There is a lot of work on removing invasive plants, improving the soil and planting for wildlife, all in a small space right on a busy street.

The dozen Steveston Harbour Authority containers filled with colour and drought-resistant plants year-round brings nature to the boardwalk area of Steveston, a place where nature did not exist before Richmond Garden Club members got busy.

Paulik Park is a planned area where nature exists but Richmond Garden Club and community volunteers have extended the "nice place to visit" to a place where wildlife has found an incredible habitat. Because of the work we do in the park garden area, we have attracted migrating birds, owls, coyotes (in a good way), butterflies and a large variety of bees, bumblebees, wasps all contributing to a healthy ecological and biodiverse environment.

Brian Minter, Minter Nurseries, sent us a message about our focus on helping Mother Nature and making sure we continue to take care of the environment beyond our own backyards. Brian's comments to us about our work "*Great to know you are focusing on a vision for the future.*" So hang on to your hats, your garden gloves, your love of gardening. We are in for a great ride in 2023!

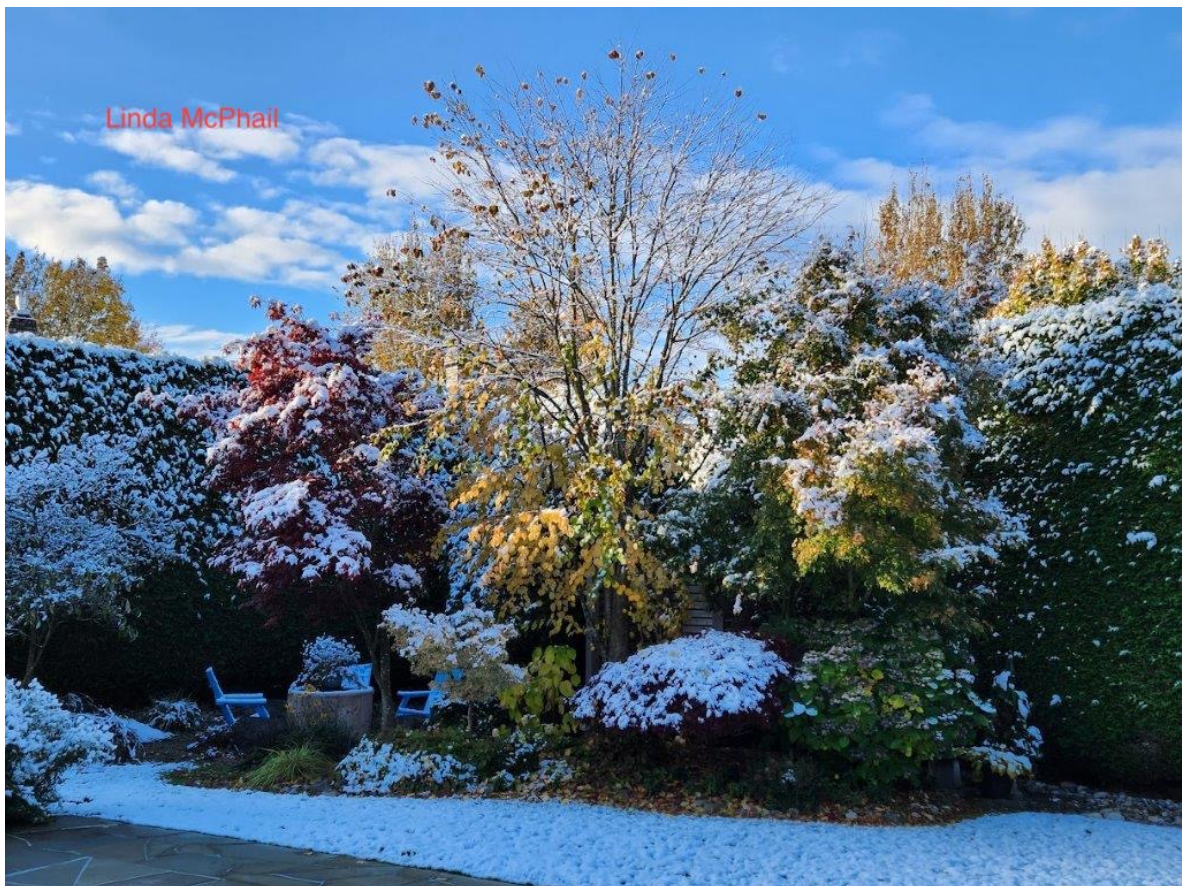




## Okay, we have a little bit of work to do this month!

Living on the West Coast creates a unique opportunity for gardeners. We can continue to garden all year round (which we do in Paulik Park). Some wee chores to do this month include:

- **Keep compost moving:** Heavy winter rains can quickly drench compost, eliminating oxygen from the pile and making it stink. Slip a cover over your compost during 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. Check out your favourite garden magazine or gardening book to learn about proper drainage. Water run-off is a huge issue in our community. It is important to look at ways we can conserve water to help our environment and contribute to our land conversancy.
- **Plant trees and shrubs:** Look for bare-root trees at nurseries this month. They will establish quickly in cooler weather. If you plant balled-and-burlapped plants, don't use the trunk of the tree as a handle (a great lesson learned from Jill Wright). Every time you do this, you risk dislodging soil from around the roots. It is best to handle the trees by the soil.



## Dreaming of a green Christmas

### Continuing with our theme of planet-friendly choices

Christmas is synonymous with baubles, mountains of wrapping paper, leftover packaging, full bellies, and bit too much bubbly.

As gardeners, I know most of us are concerned with our carbon footprint. Here are some ways we can celebrate the season in a more environmentally-friendly way.

Stay local when buying food or use from your own garden. Living on the West Coast we can source food locally, even in the winter.

Deck the halls can be sourced right in our own backyards with boughs of favourite conifers, sprigs of holly and ivy, some of our dried flowers still in the garden. Dried hydrangea, spiky seed heads of echinacea, sprigs of rose hips, cotoneaster, pyracantha berries, pods of honesty and poppy seed heads. You can even tie some sprigs together and use them as part of your gift wrapping.

To create Christmas tree decorations use willow, dogwood, bamboo stems to make little stars which can be composted at the end of the season!



Elsie Chan

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***“If we had no winter, spring would not be so pleasant.”*** - Anne Bradstreet

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## General maintenance of trees and shrubs

With the threat of snow in the forecast, remember to watch for heavy snowfall on trees and shrubs as it can splay branches, break branches, and spoil the shape of the tree. Make sure to brush the snow off of conifers, climbers and light-limbed shrubs and trees.

Check your tree ties and stakes. You may have to tighten, slacken, or remove as necessary. Remove weeds from around the base of the tree.

Add straw or arborist's wood chips around the base of tender deciduous trees to protect the roots from winter cold, keep in moisture and add nutrients.





**Ruth Henderson's little Westie**

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## **Helleborus (Christmas Rose)**

Oh my gosh, this gorgeous winter-blooming flower is already starting to push flowers seemingly right out of the ground. Wander through Paulik Park and see if you can spot all the different varieties of this incredible plant. The Corsican hellebore (see photo from Jill Wright) is already starting to bloom with its' dripping yellow-white flowers.

The flowers run the gamut from white, green, pink, purple, cream, and sometimes spotted. It can tolerate all types of soils and exposures - from sun to part shade.

It is good to know that it is fairly resistant to rabbits with our current bunny problem prevalent in Paulik Park.





## Preparing fruit trees for winter ~ Dwight Young (RGC advertiser)

Step 1: before dressing up your fruit trees for winter, it's always best to give them one last drink and food. Add approximately 300 grams of Growers Delight Soil Activator to each plant along with approximately 20-30 pounds of black soil and roughly 5-10 pounds of leaf compost (depending on size).

Step 2: using chicken wire mesh to build a foundation to hold the leafy material. Add the leaf and secure so it will hold throughout the winter.

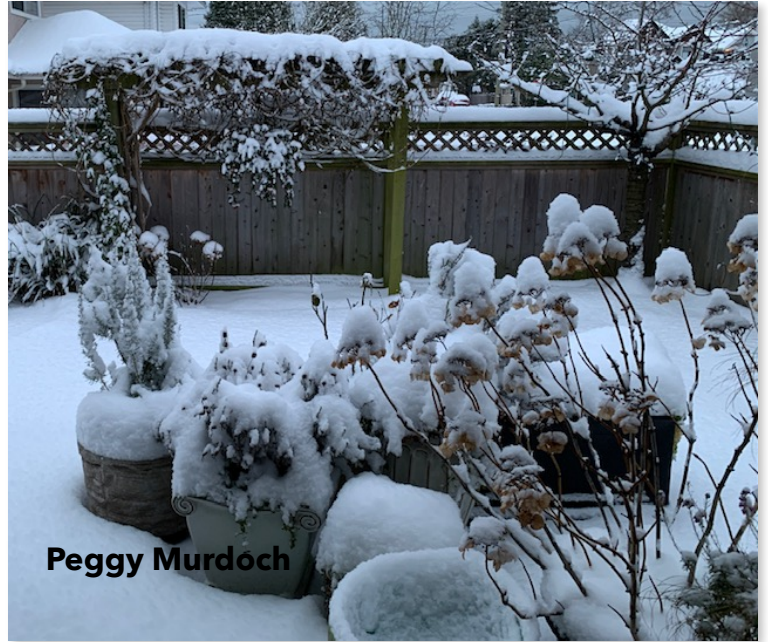
Step 3: wrap with light plastic to hold in moisture and heat retention.

Step 4: go on a nice warm vacation and let Mother Nature and Growers Delight start next spring with a healthy base to grow incredible fruits.  
<https://organicdirtsupplements.ca/>. Use code BCCG12 for special discounts. (Photos: Dwight Young)





## More snowy photos





## Mark your calendars!

### December:

Thursday, December 8, 7:00pm - Christmas party/Paulik Park presentation via Zoom

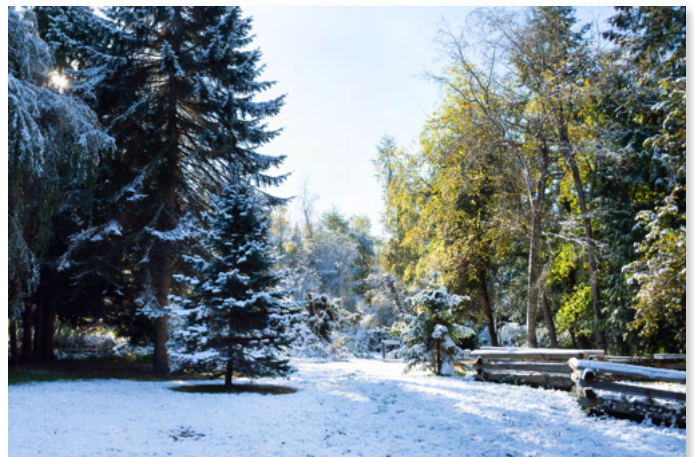
### January 2023:

Wednesday, January 25, 6:30pm - RGC Meeting - Theo Barber, Spectrum Gardening, guest speaker - Growing Perfect Tomatoes in our Coastal Weather; (after break) learn how to sharpen and care for garden tools - Gary Lake

### February 2023:

Wednesday, February 22, 6:30pm - RGC Meeting - Gary Lewis, Phoenix Perennials - Growing Groundcovers; (after break) learn about Miyawaki pocket forest planted at Richmond Secondary School - Sharon MacGougan, Garden City Conservation Society

Our Lisa Colby will be chairing the January and February 2023 meetings while Lynda and Dan Pasacreta play in the surf in Costa Rica!



Photos by Visnja Gasparic Vojvodic

Merry Christmas, Happy  
Hanukkah, Seasons  
Greetings to you all!