

# RICHMOND GARDEN CLUB

## Happy Valentine's Day/Preparing for Annual Plant Sale

### Mark your calendars

- ✦ **Saturday, February 8 - March 14, VanDusen Gardens Bird Walk, 10am.**  
For more info:  
[www.vandusengarden.org/events](http://www.vandusengarden.org/events)
- ✦ **February 14, 2020:**  
Happy Valentine's Day
- ✦ **February 26-March 1: Northwest Garden Show,**  
Washington State Convention Centre, 705 Pike Street, Seattle, Washington. For more information  
[www.gardenshow.com](http://www.gardenshow.com)
- ✦ **Wednesday, February 27:**  
RGC monthly meeting, Richmond Cultural Centre, 7700 Minoru Gate, 7pm-9pm, **Radina Jevdevic, Radina Flowers, How to Get Orchids to Bloom Again**



## President's message

While you are reading our February missive, hubby and I will be exploring flora and fauna in the bucolic country of Costa Rica.

Costa Rica's environmental commitment to protecting biodiversity keeps calling us back each winter. Costa Rica channels funds from a fuel tax, car stamp duty and energy fees to pay for nature reserve management and environmental services like clean air and fresh water.

Landowners are paid to preserve old-growth forests and to plant new trees. Forest cover has increased from 24% in 1985 to over 46% today! (BC has almost 64% forest cover in the province!)

It has established a national commission on biodiversity



### Fun facts about Valentine's Day

- ✦ After Roman Emperor Claudius II outlawed marriage, Saint Valentine continued to marry men and women in secret.
- ✦ It was traditional for men and women to exchange flowers on their wedding day as a sign of good luck and the start of a 'blooming' relationship
- ✦ We continue to celebrate love on the day Saint Valentine died, February 14.
- ✦ Approximately \$3.3 billion is spent on flowers in the US on Valentine's Day
- ✦ The only other day that beats Valentine's Day in floral sales is Mother' Day
- ✦ Most likely flower purchased - red roses
- ✦ When ordering a bouquet of flowers, have it tied in lace. The word 'lace' c comes from the Latin *lacques*, meaning to snare or net, as in to catch a person's heart.

consisting of scientists, civil servants and indigenous representatives who make recommendations to government and promote green education among the public.

This incredible mind-set is carried right to the local people on the street. This is why our **heart** calls us back year after year.

### Preparing for our annual plant sale

At this time of year we begin to prepare for our major fundraising sale that is held on Saturday before Mother's Day (this year, Saturday May 9th). Our members collectively supply plants they have grown from seed or from plant propagation to sell to the general public. The sale is held outside at the South Arm Church parking lot. We set up lots of tables and members drop off their plants that they have grown themselves.

The money raised from the sale goes to choosing high quality speakers for our monthly meetings. High quality speakers = more informed gardeners!

### *How do we prepare for our annual plant sale?*

Let's take the huge elephant in the room - how to get a few hundred plants ready for a plant sale by May 9th.

**Start collecting pots.** Any plants you purchase now and any pots you have stored from last season, keep them. Wash them up and store them, ready for planting.

**1. Seed germination** For those of us that have seed starter kits like the West Coast Seeds "Sunblaster Growlight Garden", a greenhouse or a great sunny location in your home, you could start growing asparagus, fennel, leeks, parsley, herbs such as bergamot, caraway, chives, cumin, horseradish, lavender, lemongrass, liquorice, lovage, marjoram, oregano, Mexican tarragon, rosemary, sage, thyme and flowers seeds such as agastache, alyssum,

asclepias, aurinia, columbine, cosmos, dianthus, digitalis, eryngium, eutrochium, gaillardia, guara (my favourite!), helenium, hollyhock and lupin.

- 2. Plant propagation** involves starting new plants from existing plants through methods such as stem, root and leaf cuttings, layering and dividing plants, bulbs and corms. We will provide instructions through our newsletter and at our meetings to provide "how to" information for our members who need some assistance.
- 3. Focus on types of plants we will sell at the plant sale** Avoid growing plants that will be invasive in people's gardens. We are looking for perennial plants **and annuals**, vegetables, herbs, dwarf shrubs and trees, dwarf fruit trees, flowering vines such as clematis, and houseplants such as african violets and succulents. Let's add more **houseplants** to our inventory this year!
- 4. Children's table!** We want to keep our customers coming back year and after year to see what the Richmond Garden Club is up to now. We had a **children's table** at the event last year where the little ones made flower containers for their Mother's, or purchased a small little succulent plant. It was a hit.

## Let's grow our own annuals!

Every year we usually purchase trays of annual flowers to sell at our plant sale. Bright coloured annuals are usually the first plants to be sold. We do not realize much of a margin on the sale of these plants.

This year we are throwing out the challenge to all of our members to start some annual seeds to contribute to our inventory.

February is a great time to start flowering seeds indoors. Make sure to choose a location in your home that will provide the **maximum amount of light** available. My hubby uses West Coast Seeds Sunblaster Growlight Garden and Lee Valley's Tabletop LED Grow Light for our seed germination. Some **annual seeds** we can start germinating right now are:

Alyssum, calendula (hardy annual), candytuft, celosia, cosmos (hardy annual), delphinium, gaillardia, guara, hollyhock (biennial).

## Small trees for small gardens

February is a great time to plant or move trees and shrubs. Some great advice on choosing small trees for small spaces comes from the Royal Horticultural Society monthly newsletter.

You want to make sure you choose a tree that has interest right into the autumn. Some suggestions:

- ✦ Ornamental crabapple (*malus*) - have beautiful white to brilliant pink flowers in the spring and colourful fruit in the fall. The Pacific Northwest has been challenging to grow crabapples but some varieties do better than others. Check with your local nursery to help you with your choice. Great for birds and wildlife in the fall.
- ✦ Coral bark maple (*acer palmatum* 'Sango kaku') - needs protection from the wind and loves moist, well-drained soil.
- ✦ Cotoneaster frigidus - there are some beautiful examples of the behaviour of this small tree in Queen Elizabeth Park up the trail to the Bloedel Conservatory. The trees are filled with flocks of towhees and robins eating the abundant red fruit this winter. This small tree is a well-behaved garden plant.
- ✦ Japanese mountain ash (*sorbus commixta* 'Olympic Flame')- incredible autumn interest. This is a great tree for small spaces as it is a very small, branching tree. A stiff columnar tree when young, leaves green, coppery in the spring with stunning orange and red hints in the fall.

Treat yourself this year by adding one of these delightful small trees. These trees will brighten up our landscape and some of them will help our wildlife through our winter months.



Coral bark maple



Cotoneaster frigidus



Japanese mountain ash

## February tree and shrub maintenance

Tie up splayed out branches of conifers that may have been damaged by heavy snow. We are dealing with this in Paulik Park. Check your tree ties and stakes. Replace, tighten or slacken where necessary.

Mulch and feed trees, shrubs and climbers with an organic general-purpose fertilizer after pruning to give them energy for the extra growth they will put on after cutting back. Add mulch after fertilizing to help suppress weeds, provide nutrients and retain moisture.

When pruning concentrate on removing overcrowded growth, crossing stems and dead, damaged or dying branches. Aim for an open centre through which air can circulate, reducing the risk of pests and diseases. If your trees are too large you may need a tree service to assist you.



Snow damaged conifer



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Check out our website for upcoming events at [www.richmondgardenclub.ca](http://www.richmondgardenclub.ca)