
RICHMOND GARDEN CLUB

Spring pruning | Win a garden consultation! | Paulik Park

Mark your calendars

- ◆ **Saturday, March 6:** RGC seed share/soil pick up. for May plant sale, 10am to noon: Paulik Park, 7600 Heather Street
- ◆ **Friday, March 12, 10am:** **Creating a Healthy Garden, via Zoom, TALK,** Lynda Pasacreta, guest speaker, to register: www.kpu.ca/talk
- ◆ **Monday, March 22. 7pm:** **Canadian Federation of University Women via Zoom, Gardening, our connection to Mother Earth through a tour of Paulik Park,** Lynda Pasacreta, guest speaker
- ◆ **Wednesday, March 24, 7pm:** **RGC Monthly Meeting via Zoom, Plant Communications,** guest speaker Daniel Mosquin



Cutting back perennials

Only on the West Coast can we say that we were working in the gardens in Paulik Park in February. We have been diligently removing aggressive weeds such as creeping buttercup, bittercress, invasive plants such as blackberry, holly and laurel. Sometimes we are not sure who is winning the battle.

We have switched gears and are now cutting back perennials that died back to the soil level through the winter. We left them in the gardens to add winter interest, in the form of height and structure. The seed heads and stems offered food and habitat sources for our Paulik Park wildlife.

Some selective cutting in the autumn was done to plants where signs of decay or fungal growth appeared.

More tender plants with woody stems like **penstemons** are



More March events!

- ◆ **Saturday, March 27: BC Council of Garden Clubs AGM via Zoom, 9am to noon**, guest speaker, Winnie Hwo, Senior Public Engagement Specialist, David Suzuki Foundation, Butterflyway Ranger project
- ◆ **Saturday, March 27: Footprints Youth Group, City Centre Community Centre, via Zoom, 2pm 3pm**, Lynda Pasacreta, guest speaker, How Young People can Help the Environment
- ◆ **Saturday, Sunday, March 27 & 28: Vancouver Master Gardeners 'Spring Back' event via Zoom, 9am to 1pm**, for tickets and speaker line-up (incredible speakers!) Dr. Noel Kingsley, Jonathon Jones, Egan Davis, Fergus Garrett, Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott, Lorene Edwards Forkner, Andrea Bellamy visit www.mgabc.org

left to protect the crown from frost. These should be pruned in April or May.

Evergreen perennials like **Kniphofia (red hot poker)** and **Carex grasses (ornamental sedges)** are not cut back but tidied up during spring and summer.

Cutting back in the spring

With our tools at the ready - pruning knives, shears and secateurs some of the dead plants in Paulik Park are getting a haircut. We have to be very careful not to damage new shoots and the many bulbs well on their way to spring blooms. It is best to avoid being in the garden when the soil is too wet, making the soil too compact. The spring winds are right on time to dry the soil.

- ◆ Using knives, shears or secateurs, cut stems close to the crown or dormant top of the plant. Be careful not to remove new shoots.
- ◆ Many of the plants in Paulik Park are already showing new growth at the ground level such as **sedums, grasses, asters, heleniums, goldenrod**. We have to be very careful not to remove these new shoots. Sometimes we can just pull out the dead stems.
- ◆ The tall dormant plants we are cutting back now, are cut into small bits and spread around the garden beds. We then top with nutritious leaf mulch. Types of **sunflowers, goldenrod, helenium (sneeze weed)** and other tall plants that were left for their seed heads for the birds are getting a haircut.
- ◆ Cut back perennials that produce leaves and flowers such as **crocasmia** right to soil level

Pruning roses

With one of the mildest climates in Canada, Richmond is a prime location for gardening. Our roses are already leafing out making it hard not to get outside and do some pruning. We are in gardening zone 7/8 so we can prune in March. A great way to know that it is time to prune is right after **forsythia** finishes blooming. Pruning roses feels a bit intimidating but with some simple fundamentals to follow, you will have healthy and beautiful rose bushes.

What you will need:

- ◆ Good gloves
- ◆ Bypass shears, not anvil. The overlapping blades of the bypass shears make a clean cut.
- ◆ Heavy long sleeves to protect arms from thorns

Basic pruning steps:

1. Remove all remaining leaves so you can clearly see the canes. This will also remove any pests or diseases that may have been hiding in the foliage over winter.
2. Start with the dead wood. If it is brown after cutting, it is dead. Cut dead wood back to the base.
3. Open up the centre of the plant. Take out crossing branches with can rub, causing damage and encouraging disease. The goal is to have upward-reaching branches with an open, vase-like structure.
4. Remove any thin, weak growth. Remove anything thinner than a pencil.
5. Prune the remaining canes by cutting 1/4' to 1/2' above and outward-facing bud eye (a small bump where a leaf would meet the stem). New stems grow in the direction of the bud. The goal is to encourage them to grow outward, not inward. Make cuts at a 45-degree angle sloping away from the bud, allowing water to run off.
6. Clean up. After pruning, make sure to clean up the surrounding area underneath. All leaves and cut branches should be disposed of in your green bin as diseases and pests could be lurking.



Pruning climbing and rambling roses

The first step is to check out Amanda Jarrett's garden blog on her website www.thegardenwebsite.com. She offers some simple advice on dealing with climbers and ramblers.

Early spring is the time of year to prune repeat blooming climbing roses. They can also be pruned after flowering and a bit in the fall.

Amanda offers tips on proper pruning techniques of climbers for this time of year.

- ✦ Remove dead, diseased, weak and spindly, rubbing canes and canes that cross each other,
- ✦ She recommends cutting back all side shoots by 1/3 just above an outward facing node, but keep the main branches. Also cut back each lateral stem whether it has flowered or not, to 3 to 6 inches just above an outward facing bud or leaf.
- ✦ Check on your ties securing the canes to continue to protect them from cold blustery winds.

Source: www.thegardenwebsite.com



Welcome to spring contest!

Refer a friend to become a member of the Richmond Garden Club. Once your friend has paid membership you will be entered into a draw to win a garden consultation from Jill Wright, landscape designer and Richmond Garden Club member.

You can choose either a consultation for a garden bed or a container. Jill will present you with a drawn-to-scale design to help you create your garden of your dreams!

Enter as often as you like - email your referral to richmondgardenclub@gmail.com with all of the contact information. Contest closes Wednesday, March 31, 2021.



Jill demonstrating creating a spring container for our YouTube "Gardening with Richmond Garden Club" series March 2020

Happenings in Paulik Park

Jill Wright continues to keep Paulik Park volunteers informed on interesting plants currently in bloom. Recently she noted a beautiful, sometimes forgotten, plant showing its' bright flowers at this time of year.

Heather can be found throughout the park. Erica with the common names of both heath and heather belongs to the *Ericaceae* family along with rhododendrons and blueberries. The pictured plant is *Erica x Darleyensis* (Darley Dale Heath) which is a cross between *Erica carnea* (Spring Heath/ Winter Heath) and *Erica erigena* (Irish Heath/Spring Heath). Another point about the common name Heather, it is also used when talking about *Calluna* which is the summer blooming 'cousin' but a totally different genus.

Back to our plant in Paulik, it makes a lovely ground cover and once established is very drought tolerant. It can be sheared after blooming to keep it nice and neat



as it can get a bit scraggly if left alone. It usually does not grow back if pruned hard so best to trim a bit every year. It also looks lovely with a group of them planted together like they have at Van Dusen Botanical Gardens.



Heather/heath in VanDusen Botanical
Gardens, February 2021 - Photo Lynda
Pasacreta

For those new members and our Green Ambassadors from Richmond schools, we are looking for volunteers to help out in Paulik Park. Paulik Park, an 8 acre park was adopted by Richmond Garden Club in 2008. There are over 30 perennial garden beds designed by the Paulik family when they lived on the property from as early as the 1930s. Paulik Park boasts, not only the most beautiful gardens in Richmond, but lovely accessible trails throughout the property, a playground, an urban forest, new addition of native trees and shrubs underplanted with native wildflowers.

Paulik Park is well-known for the abundance of migratory birds, butterflies and other pollinator species. We are expecting birds returning north around mid-March with the arrival of the Rufus hummingbirds as our first migratory bird.

To volunteer: email paulikpark@gmail.com. No experience necessary!

Thank you to Team Valentines!

Unbeknownst to some of our lucky members, Linda Reeve, Marion Bellis and Elizabeth Waroway created gift bags filled with homemade cookies, a colourful pot of tete a tete daffodils, chocolates and a homemade Valentines Day card made with love by Jasmine Chou's preschoolers. It is so important to connect with each other during this time of feeling isolated. So many other stories are going on in people's lives outside of Covid. We are thinking of you all!





Preventing boxwood blight (article from Bartlett Tree Experts)

Boxwood blight is caused by the non-native fungus *Calonectria pseudonaviculata*. American and English boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*) are most susceptible to this disease whereas many Asian species of boxwood, and hybrids with Asian parents, are generally more resistant, but can still become infected. The disease causes black spots to form on leaves, along with elongated black lesions on twigs and stems. Rapid defoliation (in a matter of weeks) soon follows the initial symptoms of infection.

Boxwood blight is often introduced into landscapes on infested nursery stock. Spores of pathogen can easily stick to shoes, clothing, and shearing/pruning tools, so the disease can be easily introduced during routine maintenance. New outbreaks commonly occur following shearing plants in summer.

Moisture on leaves and twigs provides ideal conditions for infection by this fungus so years with high rainfall and extended summer temperatures result in greater disease incidence and severity. There are several ways to prevent boxwood blight.

Planting

- Plant tolerant species such as hybrids like *Buxus microphylla* var. *koreana* and *B. sempervirens*.
- Do not install infected plants. If adding boxwood to the landscape, "heal-in" the new plants in an area of the property remote from existing boxwood plantings. Observe them for a growing season to ensure they are disease free before planting near established boxwood.

- Plant boxwood in full sun and prune any over story plants to minimize moisture accumulation on leaves and twigs.

Maintenance

- Do not shear plants, especially during the growing season. Prune (not shear) boxwoods for managing size and shape during the dormant season. If boxwood must be pruned during the growing season, disinfect tools between plants. Boxwood blight spores are easily spread by sprinkler irrigation, so drip irrigation or hand watering is recommended.
- Mulch existing plantings, especially in areas that previously contained infected plants
- If boxwood blight develops on a landscape, remove severely diseased plants.
- Avoid working with healthy boxwoods after working with infected ones. The boxwood blight pathogen can spread via pruning tools, clothing, and other equipment that may come in contact with the sticky spores.

Treatments

- Fungicide treatments are available to protect new infections on remaining plants. Once introduced into a landscape, the causal fungus can survive in the soil for years so fungicide treatments must be applied on an ongoing basis to protect plants from infection.

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