

# Richmond Garden Club

## 'Stick it to the virus' immunity boosters/Virtual 'Bring and Brag'

### Virtual 'Bring and Brag'

Traditionally in September, we hold our fall 'Bring and Brag'.

Members are encouraged to bring in their prized plants, flowers, veggies and fruit to showcase successes to fellow members.

We always enjoy learning something new about some of the entries.

Since we cannot meet **'face to face'**, please send in photos of your harvest, flowers, potted plants and decorative displays.

**You will be entered into a draw to win a \$20 gift certificate to Phoenix Perennials!**

**Email your photos to [richmondgardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:richmondgardenclub@gmail.com) before Sunday, September 20th.**



## President's message

As gardeners, we have been blessed to spend a good deal of our time through the pandemic outdoors. Plenty of fresh air, open spaces while digging in our garden has been so healthy for us, both physically and mentally.

With fall approaching, thoughts of spending more time indoors looms ahead of us. I have been thinking about how to approach this season while maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

My decision is to put some energy into **boosting my immune system**. In general, our immune system does a great job of defending us against disease-causing microorganisms. Sometimes it fails: A germ invades successfully, making us sick. With the annual flu season soon upon us and the ever-present threat of Covid19, why not evaluate our current lifestyle and see what changes we can



## Broccoli lemon chicken with cashews

### Ingredients:

1 tbsp sunflower oil

Chicken breast fillets

2 garlic cloves, sliced

Broccoli with stems chopped

200ml chicken stock

1 tsp cornstarch

1 tbsp liquid honey

Zest of a half lemon and juice of a whole lemon

Large handful of cashews

Heat oil in a large frying pan or wok. Add chicken and fry 3-4 minutes. Remove from pan, add garlic and broccoli. Stir fry for a minute then cover and cook for 2 minutes more.

Mix stock, cornstarch and honey well. Pour into the pan and stir until thickened. Add the chicken back into the pan, heat through. Add lemon zest, juice and cashews.

Serve with rice or noodles!

make to boost our immunity. There is no scientific proven link that lifestyle can enhance your immunity. But what the heck!

So my plan involves keeping up with regular exercise through our community centre outdoor exercise programs, walking and gardening as long as I can (thank you Paulik Park). Exercise helps both our mental and physical well-being. Here are some other healthy-living strategies to help us keep away those nasty bugs:

- ✦ Eat a diet high in fruits and vegetables
- ✦ Maintain a healthy weight (be gone Covid19 weight gain!)
- ✦ Wash your hands frequently and cook meats thoroughly.

Healthy immune systems need good, regular nourishment. People who are malnourished are more vulnerable to infectious diseases.

So continue to eat locally-sourced fruits and vegetables, exercise and stay socially connected with friends and family.

Add a dose of sun, drink plenty of water and a 'positive attitude' and you are on your way!



## Some foods that may help boost immunity

Again, there is still no proof that certain foods can boost your immunity but the following list includes very healthy life choices so it won't hurt to add these to your diet:

Blueberries	Sweet potatoes	Miso soup
Acai berries	Broccoli	Pomegranate juice
Mushrooms	Garlic cloves	Ginger
Spinach	Homemade chicken soup	Green tea

## September gardening chores

I am sure most of you are begging neighbours to take loads of tomatoes off your hands and passing around the giant zucchinis. It looks as though we will be enjoying the warm dry days of August well into September.

Green beans, zucchini, cucumbers will continue to produce well through this month. We need to **keep harvesting** our bountiful produce.

This month is the last chance to sow the last of the **fall and winter crops**. Mustard greens, spinach, arugula, radishes, garlic, beets (for the greens), kale and chard (for the baby greens) A great tip is to plant a fall cover crop blend that includes at least one nitrogen fixing plant right now.

**Weed** - get the annual weeds out before they seed. Water until the fall rain returns. Watch for powdery mildew. Finish all summer pruning ASAP. Mulch to protect and improve soil.

This is a great time of year to **repair the lawn**. We are planning on adding some top soil and reseeding. It is important to water daily until the seed has sprouted and established.

Tie up mature plants that are flopping. Deadhead spent perennial blooms to encourage new flowers. **Add fall colour** to your garden with variegated sages, euphorbias, winter pansies, ornamental kales and cabbages.

**Stop fertilizing** roses and perennials. It will only encourage tender new growth that will get zapped in the winter.

Thank you to Kate Herring for reminding us to leave our gardens messy for the fall!

## Richmond Food Security fruit recovery program

Just a reminder that if you have some fruit trees full to the brim with fruit that you just don't have the time to pick this year, Richmond Food Security can help you out! Volunteers will come and collect unused fruit from residential fruit trees and bushes and donate the harvest to Richmond Food Bank and other community partners.

Last year they collected almost 6800 pounds of fruit that otherwise might have gone to waste. To take advantage of this program contact Richmond Food Security at [www.richmondfoodsecurity.org](http://www.richmondfoodsecurity.org) or phone 604.244.7377.

## The Garden [website.com](http://www.thegardenwebsite.com)

A few years ago, we had Amanda Jarrett, Amanda's Garden Consulting, as one of our guest speakers. She has years of horticultural experience, a renowned garden writer and blogger and self-described 'plant nut'.

I love following her blog - The Garden [website.com](http://www.thegardenwebsite.com). One topic caught my eye - "**Speeding up Tomato Harvests**". It seems timely for all of us folks who have unripened tomatoes still on the vine. She recommends a few things to speed up your harvesting:

- ◆ Remove existing flowers and buds, allowing the plant to concentrate its energy on ripening existing fruit instead of growing new fruit.
- ◆ Remove lower leaves, especially the ones that touch the ground.
- ◆ Remove small fruit to allow bigger tomatoes to mature.
- ◆ Remove excess fruit on overloaded plants.



- ◆ Remove small and new suckers

Source: The Garden [website.com/Speeding up Tomato Harvests](https://www.thegarden.com/Speeding-up-Tomato-Harvests/)". For more information on this topic and many other relevant topics visit her blog.

## September chores for trees and shrubs

When our weather becomes more autumnal, it will be a great time to move and plant shrubs and trees.

Thoroughly soak drought-stressed plants and shrubs, especially newly planted ones. As the weather becomes cooler, the soil will absorb and hold any water you give it.

Clear dead leaves as they begin to fall, as rotting leaves can be a source of disease in the garden. They are, however, useful on the compost heap and can be shredded first with a shredder or mulching mower to help them break down quicker.

Give evergreen hedges a final trim to make sure they are in shape for winter. This is particularly useful for fast-growing hedges such as leylandii (x *Cuprocyparis leylandii*, Leyland cypress). Remember to cut hedges

slightly narrower at the top than the bottom - this makes them less liable to snow damage in the winter and stops the hedge from hating itself out at the base, which can lead to dead patches.

Take semi-ripe cutting of evergreen shrubs such as *Cistus* (rockrose), *Ceanothus* (california lilacs) and *Viburnum*.

## Semi-ripe cuttings

Select the cuttings from this season's growth and remove them using sharp secateurs.

Place the cuttings in a plastic bag immediately. Keep the bag in the shade or, in hot weather, the fridge until you are ready to prepare the cuttings. However, aim to pot the cuttings within 12 hours.

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Prepare the cuttings by trimming them to 10-15cm (4-6in) in length, cutting just below a leaf node. Next, remove the lowest leaves and the soft tips. There will usually be about four leaves remaining.

Dip the bottom of the cutting in fresh hormone rooting powder, ensuring that the cut is well covered. Tap gently to remove the excess.

On large-leaved shrubs, cut the leaf in half to reduce water loss.

For difficult-to-root shrubs, such as *Magnolia grandiflora*, try 'wounding'. This is the removal of a sliver of bark 2.5cm (1in) long on one side of the stem at the base.

Insert the cuttings into suitably-sized containers filled with cuttings compost - use 50 per cent free-draining potting compost mixed with 50 per cent sharp sand or perlite. Water well and allow to drain.

Place the container of cuttings in a greenhouse. Alternatively, cover pots with a plastic bag and put in a warm, light position, out of direct sunlight. Remember to remove excess moisture, but keep compost damp. Cuttings taken in summer seldom need bottom heat but by autumn cuttings root more quickly in a heated propagator.

Hardy shrubs can also be rooted directly in the soil, ideally enriched with plenty of organic matter, in cold frames or low tunnels of polythene sheeting, but may not root fully until late spring the following year.

Source: Royal Horticultural Society [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)

