

feature plants

What's looking great in the street garden this month?



Iberis sempervirens

Candytuft is a great groundcover that puts out a profusion of flowers in early spring that last for a number of weeks. It's glossy, evergreen foliage forms a nice clump. Once Candytuft is established it's drought tolerant which makes it the perfect candidate for the street garden. Plant in full sun or part shade. Prune lightly right after blooming.



Erysimum 'Bowles' Mauve'

Wallflower is an evergreen, shrub-like perennial with lovely grey-green foliage. It starts blooming in early spring and will continue to do so through to fall. Sheer lightly when blooming slows or when stems become too long to promote rebloom and to maintain good form. Plant in full sun. Drought tolerant once established.

gardening tasks

- Finish pruning your spring-flowering shrubs. Cut out dead, diseased or damaged wood.
- Deadhead spring flowers as they fade.
- Remove the spent flowers of bulbs but do not cut back the foliage. The dieback is what creates next year's bulb.
- Divide mature perennials and transplant. Best to do this on an overcast day.
- Prune back spring-flowering perennials. Pruning encourages vigour. Plants may even bloom a second time.
- Don't worry too much about your perennial herbs – they don't require much TLC to keep them happy.
- Plant hardy annuals at the beginning of May. Tender annuals and summer bulbs can be planted once any threat of frost has passed.
- It's still a good time to plant new shrubs, perennials and grasses in the garden. Water new plants thoroughly to help them get established.
- Remember, a layer of mulch or compost will help suppress weeds, reduce evaporation and maintain soil moisture.
- Enjoy spring! It's finally here.

Thanks for another great Green Streets Plant Swap!

Thanks to everyone who attended the plant swap last month. It was a windy, chilly day but the sun was out. Lots of swapping occurred and it was great to see everyone heading home with some new treasures for their gardens.

A big thanks to the students in Tupper's Leadership and Sustainability Program and the TINGA volunteers for helping with the event. Thanks to Alan with his Fasttrac Fusion food cart and as always, thanks to RazzMajazz for their lovely music. Finally, a big thanks to the Master Gardeners. Can't wait to do it all again next year!



gardener profile

Garden: Traffic Circle at Jervis & Comox

Gardeners: Michael Mizera

Joined Green Streets: 2003

For the past 8 years, Michael Mizera has been caring for the circle at the busy intersection of Jervis and Comox in the West End. It's one of the most urban neighbourhoods where Green Streets gardens can be found, surrounded by a vibrant, diverse community and tall residential buildings that characterize the beautiful West End, which is the neighbourhood Michael has called home for the past 20 years. He takes a great deal of pride in his City and enjoys helping to keep it clean and beautiful.

"The garden is really rewarding. It's for me but it's also for everybody else in the community and it's my way of contributing to making Vancouver the city I think it should be."

The garden you see there today looks nothing like it did when Michael first started. The only plant that remains from 8 years ago is the large, leafy Maple tree in the center of the circle. What surrounded the tree before was a monotonous mass of juniper shrubs. One by one, Michael dug out each shrub by hand. It was a lot of work, but the satisfaction of creating something more interesting and beautiful made the labour well worth it.

"I've always loved gardening and I've always liked being in nature. It relaxes me. I forget about my worries." Michael enjoys the challenge of gardening. He likes observing what Mother Nature does with the garden and the plants that he gives her.

Last summer, Mother Nature graced the garden with a family of birds who took up



Michael perched among the bulbs from QE Park.



The circle in summer bloom.



Two of the birdhouses hang from the big Maple tree.

residence in one of Michael's three birdhouses. The birdhouses are quite a charming sight, dangling above the garden in white, red and yellow. The white birdhouse was the first to appear a few years ago. Michael hung it up himself but decided one lonely birdhouse wasn't enough.

The red birdhouse came from Bowen Island where Michael has worked for the past 10 years at a summer camp for children with vision impairments. A couple years ago, the camp did an activity with the children to assemble and decorate birdhouses. When one of the houses was left behind, Michael knew exactly what to do with it.

The latest addition was a yellow birdhouse that was left in the circle anonymously by someone in the neighbourhood. Michael was happy to add it to the tree canopy, creating the perfect combination of bird housing in his traffic circle.

So from all of us who enjoy the beautiful, vibrant streets of West End and from the little birds that call Jervis and Comox home, thanks Michael!

Garden: Bulge at Birch and 15th

Gardeners: The neighbours at Birch & 15th

Joined Green Streets: May 2011

On Saturday April 30th, a new street garden was inducted into the Green Streets Program with the completion of an enormous renovation. Local neighbours gathered on Saturday afternoon for a community planting day, transforming what was an overgrown heap of weedy plants into a beautiful garden. Thanks to everyone who helped!



Before. April 2011.



April 30th planting day.



After. May 2011.

may events

Guided walking tours of VanDusen Gardens, every day at 2pm
Free for members or with garden admission. Meet at the Information Desk on the Deck.

Free Compost & Disposal at Landfill, May 1 - 31

It's spring cleaning time and the Vancouver Landfill is offering free compost and disposal for Vancouver residents. Info: vancouver.ca/landfill.

Keep Vancouver Spectacular, May 1 - 31

Every May, thousands of Vancouverites take to the streets as part of the City's annual city-wide cleanup campaign "Keep Vancouver Spectacular". Sign up to be a block captain and organize a neighbourhood cleanup or join an existing neighbourhood team. Visit vancouver.ca/kvs for more information or to find a cleanup team.

VanDusen Plant Sale

Sun May 1. 10am-4pm. VanDusen Gardens

THE sale of the year. More than 40,000 plants for sale. Catalogues available in advance at the Garden Cashier for \$2 starting April 1st. Master Gardeners on site to give advice. Visa, Mastercard, personal cheques or cash.

A Growing Affair: Plant Sale, Workshops and Demonstrations

Sat May 7. 10am-4pm. UBC Botanical Garden. 6804 SW Marine Dr.

A fun, hands-on event and sale featuring workshops, demonstrations and plant sale including edibles, natives, perennials and rare and unusual plants. Info: fogs@interchange.ubc.ca or call 604-822-4529.

Seventh Annual Sunflower Seedling Sale

Sat May 7. 10am-3pm. 2133 East 7th Ave

Growing Hope for Africa: over 30 varieties of locally grown sunflower seedlings. All proceeds to support grassroots HIV/AIDS programs in sub-Saharan Africa via the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Info: www.turntothesun.org or call Suzy @ 778-330-6770.

Garden Sale for the Vancouver Orphan Kitten Rescue Assoc.
Sat May 7 & Sun May 8. 9am-5pm. 2586 W 12th Ave

The main feature of the sale will be blueberry bushes. Compost and other plants for sale as well. Master Gardeners will be there to answer questions. Info: gardencare@shaw.ca.
Canadian Geranium & Pelargonium Society Annual Show & Sale
Sat & Sun May 7 & 8. 10am-4pm. VanDusen Floral Hall.
Free. Info: Barbara Puchala @ 604-327-3937 or info@cdngeraniums.com. Visit the website at www.cdngeraniums.com.

Cedar Series Lecture: For the Love of Trees

Thu May 12. 7:30pm. VanDusen Floral Hall

Talk by Roy Forster, retired curator at VanDusen Gardens. Members \$10. Non-members \$15. In advance at Admin Office (Mon-Fri) or at the door, subject to availability.

Bird Walk through VanDusen Gardens

Sat May 14. 10am. VanDusen Garden Entrance

Join Jeremy Gordon for a birding exploration. Free with garden admission.

HSBC VanDusen Family Program: Splash! It's pond season

Sat May 14. 10am. VanDusen Garden

For families with children ages 5 to 10. This hands-on look at pond life includes pond dipping with nets, identifying critters and educational games. Member Family \$10. Non-Member Family \$20. Includes admission to the conservatory. Pre-registration required: 604-718-5898 or familyprograms@vandusen.org.

Vancouver Japanese-Canadian Sumi Bonsai Club Annual Show

Sat & Sun May 21 & 22. 10:30am-4:00pm.

Admission by donation. Info: Tony Nasu 604-432-6160.