

## feature plants

These little bulbs are the classic tell-tale sign of spring and as they pop up in the garden we are filled with excitement for the beautiful season ahead.



### Crocus tommasinianus

*greatplantpics.org* says this is one of the best crocuses - beautiful, easy to grow and long-lived. Flower colour ranges from pale lavender to dark purple and is stunning in drifts. Plant in a location that has full sun in early spring and like other bulbs, allow the foliage to wither. Additional noteworthy crocuses include *C. chrysanthus* and *C. vernus*.



### Galanthus nivalis

Clusters of Snowdrops are one of the very first indicators of spring's arrival and as such, this reliable little bulb is a garden favourite. Plant where they will get at least half a day's sunlight. Unlike many bulbs they need summer watering and are not drought tolerant. Large clumps can be divided after flowering but before the foliage dies back.

### Carex oshimensis 'Evergold'

This sedge was the unidentified plant from last month's issue. Thanks for all your guesses!



Sedges are a staple in the street garden. This variegated Japanese sedge grows into a graceful, 1 foot high evergreen mound, requiring very little care once established. It's very adaptable, growing in sun or shade and in a range of soil conditions. At most, cut back in spring if it looks untidy, but typically no trimming is needed. *Carex 'Ice Dance'* is another tough, evergreen sedge that will thrive in most street gardens.

## Mark Your Calendar for Saturday April 16th

The **Green Streets Plant Swap** will take place Saturday April 16th from 1pm-4pm at Tupper Greenway on E 23rd Ave between Main & Fraser. Stay tuned for details. It's going to be a blast with tons of plants, food, music, compost and much more. See you then!

## gardening tasks

- Remove winter mulch from emerging bulbs and perennials.
- As bulbs begin to appear so do slugs and snails. Start eliminating these pests now to save time down the road.
- Keep on top of weeds and don't let them go to seed. This will reduce work later on.
- Plant shrubs, perennials and hardy annuals. Wait until the threat of frost has passed to plant tender annuals.
- Divide clumps of emerging perennials that bloom in summer or fall. Dividing helps keep plants healthy and flush with flowers. Replant immediately or save them for the Green Streets plant swap on Saturday April 16th!
- Remember, spring-flowering perennials should not be divided until late summer or fall.
- Ornamental grasses that flower in summer can be cut to the ground. Cool-season varieties can get a haircut. Evergreen varieties may not require any cutting.
- When planting/replanting, water plants well. You can also add small amounts of nutrients.
- Once early-spring blooming shrubs are done flowering, prune them back.
- When temperatures will no longer drop below zero, you can lightly trim lavender. Avoid cutting more than 25% of the stems. If the center has become scraggly, providing regular, light trimming will help it eventually fill in. A light pruning every year is the key lush lavender.
- Prune evergreens any time from now until late summer.
- Prune roses if you haven't already done so. Ideally, prune in February before too much leafy growth occurs, but if you didn't get to it then, it's not too late now.
- Add a layer of compost to improve soil quality and reduce moisture loss. Check dates for free compost pick up from the Green Streets Program.

## gardener profile

Garden: Traffic Circle at Ontario & 14th

Gardener: Jolene Cumming

Joined Green Streets: 1998

If you've ever been to the Green Streets website then you know Jolene's traffic circle. Her beautiful garden welcomes visitors to the homepage and is an excellent example of everything Green Streets encourages – it's impeccably maintained, it's green all year round, it's flush with colour from the first moment of spring to the onset of winter and Jolene has truly made it her own with the help of neighbours and friends. The garden has been a classic example of a successful traffic circle for a number of years. In fact, in 2000 when Green Streets had an award ceremony at the annual party, Ontario and 14th won first place for best year-round garden.

Yet, having a perfectly planned garden is not Jolene's main objective or her source of inspiration. For her, it's all about the stories. "I know every single plant in the circle and every one of them has a story" says Jolene. Now, imagine a circle with more than 60 different types of flowers – that's quite a concentration of stories, all belonging to the neighbourhood and Jolene works to cultivate and share the story of her community through the plants that live there.

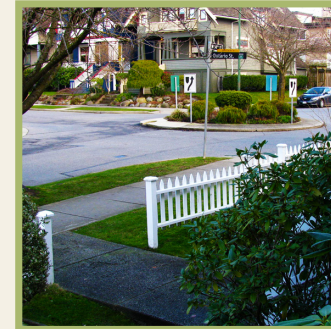
The idea of the garden as a place of stories seems quite fitting for Jolene who works as a historical interpreter. One of the ways she explores and shares Vancouver's past is through the stories of its inhabitants and as the co-founder and co-coordinator of Herstory Café, she focuses in particular on the stories of Vancouver's women through a series of history events in Vancouver. Jolene also sits on the board for the Friends of the City of Vancouver Archives and for the past 8 years she's conducted history walking tours for the Stanley Park Ecology Society.

Jolene is clearly fascinated by her City's past but she is also dedicated to its present and its future. Her traffic circle is one of ways she fosters a sense of community in her neighbourhood which is something she truly values. She is also the Block-Watch captain the Keep Vancouver Spectacular representative for her neighbourhood. As a fourth generation Vancouverite, Jolene has developed an incredible affection for her City.

"I really want to do as much as I can to beautify [Vancouver], make it safe and a nice place to live. To get a sense of community wherever you live whether it's Downtown or Mount Pleasant - to



*Ontario and 14th is a splendid display of colour from spring through to fall.*



*A view of from Jolene's front door. The evergreen shrubs ensure a lush garden even in late February.*



*Jolene sits among the emerging crocuses holding her award for "Best Year Round Garden".*

nurture that sense of community because there is nowhere in the world like Vancouver. I see a lot people who appreciate Vancouver, but they're not that active in keeping Vancouver the wonderful city that it is. They are spectators – which is fine – but it just makes the whole experience of living here better if you participate and are part of making the city beautiful and interesting and diverse."

Jolene began writing the story of her community into the circle shortly after she moved to the area in 1997 along with her neighbour Leslie. Leslie has since left the neighbourhood but Jolene has diligently continued to care for the circle on her own. It has been a powerful way for her to connect with her neighbours. She often finds thank-you notes and other surprises in the circle – one of the many welcomed joys of street gardening. One of the most delightful moments of appreciation for Jolene was discovering a helium balloon that said "Thank You" bobbing in the air. For Jolene, discoveries like this make the challenging moments of missing plants, vanishing flowers or dumped garbage worth the effort.

On behalf of everyone that has ever experienced the beautiful circle at Ontario and 14th, thanks Jolene!

## march events

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

**Community Potluck: Celebrating International Women's Day**  
**Wed Mar 2. 6pm-8pm. Kits Neighbourhood House. 2305 W 7th Ave**  
A night not only for women but for everyone! Join to celebrate women's achievements. Amazing guest speakers. Bring a vegetarian dish. Info: [patricia@kitshouse.org](mailto:patricia@kitshouse.org)

**BC Home + Garden Show**  
**Mar 2-6. Vancouver Convention Center**  
Free for Green Streets gardeners thanks to Marketplace Events! Check out great exhibits, talks, displays, celebrity guests and more. Info: [www.vancouverhomeshow.com/ME2/Sites/](http://www.vancouverhomeshow.com/ME2/Sites/).

**Flora of the White Lake Basin, Okanagan Valley**  
**Thu Mar 3. 7pm. VanDusen Cedar Room**  
Presented by the Native Plant Society of BC. Dr. Terry McIntosh will discuss the myriad of plants found in the White Lake Basin (with lots of photos). This area is dominated by sagebrush and grasslands with numerous rare species. The focus is on plants with some discussion of the ecological dilemma facing this land. \$2. Info: [npsbc@telus.net](mailto:npsbc@telus.net).

**Annual Manure Sale**  
**Sat Mar 5. 10am-3pm. VanDusen Parking Lot**  
Give your garden a spring tonic! \$5 for a 20kg bag. First come, first served.

**Spring Garden Tips Course**  
**Sat Mar 5. 10am-Noon. UBC Botanical Garden Pavilion**  
Plan your spring garden activities with Ingrid Hoff, horticultural educator and author for *Gardens West Magazine*. Topics include: spring clean-up, soil improvement, planting and much more! Bring a soil sample for a general assessment. \$40. Info: [www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org](http://www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org).

**Bird Walk through VanDusen Gardens**  
**Sat Mar 5. 10am. VanDusen Garden Entrance**  
Join Jeremy Gordon for a birding exploration. Free with garden admission.

**Film Screening: The Man Who Planted Trees**  
**Mon Mar 7. 7pm. VanDusen Floral Hall**  
Oscar award winning animated film by Canadian Frederic Back and post-show talk with horticulturalist, Douglas Justice, Associate Director and Curator of Collections at UBC Botanical Garden. \$6 includes popcorn. Reserve seats: [info@vcbf.ca](mailto:info@vcbf.ca).

**Cedar Series Lecture: From Here to 100: the next 6 yrs in the garden that John Davidson built**  
**Thu Mar 10. 7:30pm. VanDusen Floral Hall**  
Learn about the UBC Garden as it approaches 100. Members \$10. Non-members \$15. In advance at Admin Office (Mon-Fri) or at the door.

**Master Gardeners Spring Seminar: On the Cutting Edge**  
**Sun Mar 13. 9am-3:30pm. Michael J. Fox Theatre**  
7373 MacPherson Ave, Burnaby. Speakers: Dan Hinkley, Christine Allen, Rosalind Creasy, Christine George and Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott. \$50 (\$60 at the door). Registration and info: [www.bcmastergardeners.org](http://www.bcmastergardeners.org).

**Wild Plants of China**  
**Mon Mar 14. Noon-1pm. UBC Botanical Garden**  
A talk about the search for wild plants in the remote forests of western Sichuan. \$5. Bring your lunch. Coffee/tea supplied. Info: 604-822-3928.

**Walk in the Tropics, an intro to the Flora of Bloedel with Gillian Drake & Agnes Romses**  
**Tue Mar 15. 10:30am-Noon. Bloedel Conservatory**  
Join this educational walk at Bloedel exploring palms, cycads, bromeliads and more! Members \$10. Non-Members \$15. Includes admission to Bloedel. Pre-registration required. Call 604.257.8332.

**GS Compost Delivery**  
**Fri Mar 25. In the afternoon. Various Locations**  
See Green Streets website or flyer for details.

**HSBC VanDusen Family Program at Bloedel**  
**Sat Mar 26. 10:30am-12:30pm or 1:30pm-3:30pm**  
For families with children 5 - 11. Discover diverse tropical plant life and learn about amazing birds. Member Family \$10. Non-Member Family \$20. Includes admission to the conservatory. Pre-registration required: 604.718.5898 or [familyprograms@vandusen.org](mailto:familyprograms@vandusen.org).

**Alpine Garden Club of B.C. Spring Show**  
**Sat Mar 26. Noon-4pm. Sun Mar 27. 10am-4pm. VanDusen Floral Hall**  
Free. Info: Linda Verbeek 604.526.6656 or [beekbos@vcn.bc.ca](mailto:beekbos@vcn.bc.ca)