

Grow with DIGA



Fall 2008

Green space in the heart of the city: DIGA plot in community garden grows from strength to strength

DIGA members celebrated the success of their Vancouver community garden plot by looking ahead to another year's growth.

They produced peas, tomatoes, zucchinis, salad greens, leeks, kales, herbs and flowers at the Pacific & Seymour Community Garden. Those that made this all possible were thanked at a harvest festival celebration late September.

"Our big thank-yous are to Onni Developments, who provided the garden and built the raised-bed plots to make it accessible, and to volunteers Eva Machalek and Chris Cairo, who have been so helpful and keep our plots well-watered," said DIGA program coordinator Betty Cheung.

"Everyone involved in this has enjoyed it a great deal. People have learnt from each other. One of our participants, Ava Caldwell, is a master gardener and has been sharing her knowledge."

Onni, a Vancouver-based real estate developer, opted to create the community garden last summer while it goes through the lengthy planning process to put luxury condos on the site. It decided to arrange the temporary community garden rather than leave the area derelict.

Call Betty Cheung if you want to join us in the garden next year, at 604-688-6464 ext. 106.



Community garden: Volunteer Eva Machalek (right) at work on the DIGA garden.



End result: Peas in a pod.



Produce: Tomatoes ripening.

Looking ahead: workshops range from bonsai to poinsettia planters

Upcoming workshops for Fall include a lecture on the fascinating art of bonsai and a hands-on festive poinsettia planter event – you will need to pre-book places with program coordinator Betty Cheung.

Sandy Knoll from Taguchi Bonsai Club will give a lecture and demonstration on bonsai & topiary at the Roundhouse Arts and Recreation Centre (181 Roundhouse Mews, Vancouver) from 1:30pm on **Thursday, Oct. 23**. Cost: \$5.

Knoll will talk about plant picks and demonstrate how to turn a few standard plants into bonsai or topiary. You'll also learn how to maintain and train these plants as well.

And horticultural consultant Amanda Jarrett will lead an event showing how to make a festive poinsettia planter at the Cameron Recreation Centre (9523 Cameron Street, Burnaby) from 1pm on **Saturday, Nov. 29**. Cost \$10, includes plants and materials.



April: Organic gardening demonstration by Sharon Slack.



May: Gary Lewis showing 'weird and wonderful' plants.



July: Beauty in the rain during the spring bulbs guided tour.



August: Cydney Wong seen here starting a holiday wreath.

Workshop reviews: adaptive gardening get-togethers

DIGA workshops over the past few months have enabled members get to grips with topics ranging from organic gardening to getting a head start on a holiday wreath.

Back in April, head City Farmer gardener Sharon Slack dug the dirt on compost, organic gardening and companion-succession planting. She also considered a range of natural pest controls, looking at ways to keep house pets and wild mammals at bay, and how to create a habitat for bees.

Gary Lewis, owner of Phoenix Perennials Nursery, gave a presentation, in May, on "weird and wonderful plants for your garden," which highlighted a series of eye-catching plants from around the world. He talked about their characteristics and the best growing locations for each.

"There were quite a few weird ones, but they all looked wonderful," said DIGA program coordinator Betty Cheung.

An unseasonably wet July day did not dampen the enthusiasm of participants at UBC Botanical Gardens looking at "spectacular spring bulbs." Guest speaker Roy Jonsson talked about planting, growing and caring for various bulb types. The group also enjoyed a guided tour of the botanical gardens.

The most recent workshop, held at Queen's Park, New Westminster, in August, was looking ahead to the year's end. It showed participants how to start holiday wreaths with baby succulent plants – creating projects to grow over the coming months, ready for seasonal display.

Nellie Wong, for daughter Cydney, said: "Thank you for the great workshop where Cydney made a moss wreath. It will have decorations for Thanksgiving, Hallowe'en and Christmas, as the occasion arises. It looks great on the front door. It takes such little care."

Tips and reminders

Houseplants keep air fresh and are living furniture. Tropical and sub-tropical plants help scrub volatile organic chemicals out of the air and bring colour and life to a stale room. Also, a simple herb garden in the kitchen is a chef's dream in the winter months.

Adapted Tools from Tetra: Tetra Society volunteer engineers can create adapted gardening tools. Ask Betty.

Thanks and acknowledgements

DIGA thanks the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation, the B.C. Rehab Foundation, the Rick Hansen Foundation and the B.C. Gaming Branch for their ongoing funding of our gardening programs.

Also, thank you to the garden volunteers and the Tetra volunteers that enable DIGA to exist.

Plant sales and garden events

VanDusen Botanical Garden (5251 Oak Street, Vancouver – info: www.vandusengarden.org).
Pt Grey Chrysanthemum Assoc. Sale of Late Varieties: Nov. 8 & 9, noon - 4 pm. Admission by donation.

UBC Botanical Gardens (6804 SW Marine Drive, Vancouver – info: www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org).
Apple Festival: Oct. 18 & 19, 11 am - 4 pm; Admission \$2. Event located in the Botanical Garden grounds.

Looking ahead to 2009 workshops

DIGA is already looking forward to the New Year, with two lectures outlined for the first quarter of 2009.

January Bromeliads as House Plants
February Travels of a Modern Plant Hunter

More info: Betty Cheung at 604-688-6464 ext. 106, or email bcheung@disabilityfoundation.org