

the blooming news
autumn equinox 2023



Our gardens here at PG are for me a defining aspect of our culture and life. Sustainability, sharing with neighbours, being in touch with the cycles of Mother Earth and with the earth itself are all parts of a quality of life here.

I remember being at Buddhist meditation retreats where the teacher would advise us before every meal to thank all the beings who contributed to the presence of the food at our table. The sun, the rain, earth, the air. The person who grew the plants, the person who harvested them, the person who shipped them, sold them, cooked them. The ethereal forces that are said to exist beyond our five senses. The list is quite extensive.

It was a reminder to be grateful and also that there is a beautiful interconnectedness between all beings in this world and of us here in PG. What would life be like if it weren't for these beings. We are interdependent upon each other.

A First Nations elder also advised that we express our gratitude directly to the plants when we pick the fruits and vegetables which they so freely offer to us. She also advised that we actually asked permission to reap these offerings. These are amazing practices, again reinforcing a deep sense of gratitude and respect for life and for the interdependency that is always around us and with which we are a part.

So, thanks a lot to all beings who give this body and mind life, who sustain and contribute so much.

And also a big thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter: Anne, Glen, and Karen, K.J. Marianne, Mia, James, Jim and Judy, and Sinjin,



Hemingway said that Paris is a moveable feast. The same can be said for Montreal - and for life, as friends venture forth on their next adventure.

Amanda and Wes, Teddy and Alex, may the breezes be aromatic, the waters nourishing, and the further shore an open door to delicacies of which you have dreamt and not yet dreamt .

The summer that was.

As a committed gardener I always look forward to the summer growing season. The miracle of putting a seed in the soil and watching it mature into a flower or a vegetable never ceases to amaze me.

This summer I challenged myself to a few new ideas. It has been a theme in gardening circles to promote pollination with certain flowers that the insects are attracted to so keeping that in mind I planted flowers in my vegetable plots. Everyday I saw those benefits and was surprised by the number and varieties of insects that came to visit. I also had the incredible pleasure of having a hummingbird spend many hours one day in my plot gathering the nectar from my nasturtiums.

In past summers I was always disappointed to see one particular insect invade my carrot crop. Because carrots are one of my favorite vegies, I was determined to outsmart this tiny creature. I'm happy to report that my strategy worked. By covering the crop all summer those little carrot rust flies had no access and I am and will be happily crunching for a few months going forward.

I was also pleased that a few of the perennials that went into the new perennials plots on either side of the patio were grown from seeds. As perennials come back year after year most gardeners find buying the mature plant from the nursery tends to be more effective. Again, I had the delight of seeing these plants in their glory having started them from seed.

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This was the first year that PG gardeners experimented with a thick covering of mulch to both reduce the necessity for weeding and, most importantly, to reduce the amount of water required to keep plants healthy and growing. This strategy was very effective and we have already purchased mulch for continuing this practice. Going forward with the likelihood that we will experience more drought conditions it will be an essential part of our gardening practices.

Lastly, I would like to report that I have enjoyed growing plants for uses other than food. I was able to make calendula oil from the multitudes of calendula flowers that self-seed themselves every year. Calendula oil has many healing properties. I planted Spilanthes which is often referred to as the toothache plant and have made a tincture from it. And three of us from the community had the enjoyment of dyeing some scarves with the dye from the indigo plant that was in my garden. I intend to experiment more in the future with plants that have some of these properties.

And now it is time to finish the harvest and have some rest. Though my brain is already busy with next year's garden plans. I just can't help it.

~ from Marianne



This summer was an exciting family-filled adventure for me. Anthony was here for July for a visit from Alberta and enjoyed connecting with friends here at PG. As usual, the trampoline was a highlight for him. We went camping on Saysatshun Island with his auntie Rachel and uncle Reid - and their dog Tippy on July long weekend, returning to PG for his belated Minecraft birthday party on July 3. Anthony's friends and relatives attended and he went to his Nana Shannon's that night for a sleep-over. This turned out to be very fortunate as I got the call after midnight that my daughter had gone into labour - 6 weeks early. I was able to drive down and be with her and Reid for the labour and delivery at 11:15 am July 4th - fireworks indeed! Other than being early and needing to grow a bit, Felix was healthy at 5 lbs 3 oz and spent 3 weeks in the NICU getting stronger and learning to feed. I have enjoyed spending a couple of days a week in Victoria with my new grandson ever since! Anthony returned to Alberta at the end of July, but will be back the week of November 11 for another visit! Felix is now 10 weeks (4 weeks corrected) and has doubled his birthweight! Between grandkids, I have also spent time at my cabin on my little bit of paradise on Ruxton Island. Life is Good

~ from Anne





A hi-lite this summer was the wedding of our surrogate granddaughter Christina. (Judy was her nanny). Judy officiated at the wedding and I teamed up with an old pal to play some tunes at the reception.

A hi-lite this summer was a visit to the Raptor Center in Duncan. It was amazing and

~ rom Jim and Judy



We really enjoyed our trip back up to the Bulkley Valley area. I reunited with my old band (Chicken Creek) to play at the Kispiox Music Festival. We connected with a few of our old friends (I counted about 90).



I was happy to staycation six different Nanaimo River places together with Louise's enthusiasm. We bounced from one boulder to the next big boulder to get down to the different spots at the river side. A cool water plunge cooled us enough to clamber back up. Incredible natural quiet places of beauty we visit.

~ from Mia



Dan's the Man

When Dan Parker asked me to sing back-up on some Leonard Cohen songs for his concert fundraiser Sept. 9th, I immediately said yes.

I'd sung just about everything from musicals, opera and classical to folk and chants. How hard could it be? I had visions of me and my songster sisters dressed in black outfits with matching Leonard Cohen-style fedoras, cooing into a microphone. Easy-peasy!

Was I ever wrong. Singing back-up is hard. And organizing a concert is hard, especially when two of your singers and one of your guitarists have to back out at the last minute.

Fortunately, our wonderful Jayce volunteered, and in a week or so, learned all the harmonies as well as solos, and revealed themselves to be an extraordinarily talented vocalist. But there were still hours of rehearsals as well as individual practice, learning how our new equipment worked, checking sound levels, and integrating the different voices and instruments.

This was all down to Dan. He was the driving force, the cheerleader, the organizer, the scheduler, the improviser, the instrumentalist, the vocalist, and the guy who came up with the idea for the concert in the first place. Dan's concerts here have raised the profile of Pacific Gardens in the wider community and brought in pots of money for our projects and also for local charities.

So, to Mr. Parker, I say Hallelujah, and thank you for all that you do for this cohousing community. It has been nothing short of extraordinary!

~ from K.J.



If music be the food of love,
play on.
~ William Youknowwho



birthdays are nature's way
of telling us to eat more
cake
~ anonymous



"the people who give you their food, give you their heart." Cesar Chavez



"food is an important part of a balanced diet." Fran Lebowitz



"laughter is the brightest in the place where food is." Irish proverb



"never eat more than you can lift". Miss Piggy



"first enlightenment, then the dishes." no one in particular"

sated heart

this morning
seeking food
what was found was
a nourishment of Love

this morning
seeking knowledge
what was found was
an opening of Being

this morning
seeking nothing
what was found was
a Sky full of Stars