

Grow with DIGA



Fall 2007

Plants grow high with a little help from my friends

Volunteers have been ensuring that members' gardens are growing to new levels.

The Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA) makes gardening accessible, whatever and wherever that may be: window boxes, balconies, containers, backyards and community gardens.

Much of this is inspirational – but sometimes a little perspiration is required. Call in the volunteers!

Melissa Rahme, of West Vancouver, was facing the prospect of giving up her seriously overgrown Ambleside community plot. So DIGA teamed her with volunteer – and member – Meredith Maxwell.

“We are working on an almost blank canvas as I lost most of my plants to weeds during these last two years of my convalescence,” said Rahme.

“I definitely needed a lot of help with the planting this year, and Meredith has been great. And because I have her help I am enjoying my garden again, it's not just this huge, overwhelming burden that it had become when I could no longer keep it up on my own. I feel like I'm rediscovering the pleasure of my garden again.”

Husband and wife volunteer team Mary Jo & Peter Dawe, of New Westminster, helped two separate clients. In May, they lent a hand in Christina Ohlsson's garden at her Steveston wheelchair accessible apartment. “Mary Jo and Peter's help was wonderful, my backyard and garden look amazing!” said a delighted Ohlsson.

A month later, the Dawes visited Barb Baker in Vancouver, transforming three planters to make her balcony beautiful. The project included turning an old sewing machine into an unusual planter.



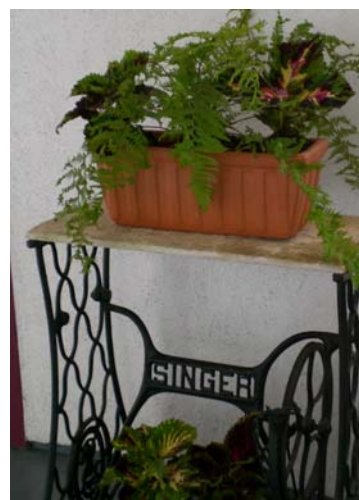
GROWING FRIENDSHIP: Betty Cheung, Meredith Maxwell and Melissa Rahme together on a sunny August day.



FLOWERS: Melissa Rahme.



BLOOMS: Christina Ohlsson's plants.



SEW GOOD: Barb Baker's planter.

Betty Cheung's workshop reviews – from the soil to the stovetop

DIGA members learned about all aspects of culinary herbs during the August workshop.

Presenter Emily Budinski showed how to grow basil, parsley, chive, oregano and arugula in containers, how to harvest, store and cook with the herbs – and the health benefits of eating them.

Participants at the Cameron Recreation Centre, Burnaby, workshop were given handouts to enable them to get the best from their newly started planters.



WORKSHOP: Debbie Finlay, Susanne Lukas and Anne-Marie Davison.

Need help? Ask DIGA!

The summer newsletter featured Terry LeBlanc's raised-bed garden in the Maple Community Garden, Vancouver. DIGA would like to assist those who have no suitable balcony or backyard growing areas to find space in an accessible community garden.

Also, if you need gardening tools adapted or a gardening chair made, DIGA can connect you with Tetra Society. Call Betty: 604-688-6464 ext 106.

Plant sales & garden shows

VanDusen Garden, 5251 Oak St., Vancouver:

Sept. 29, 10 am – 3 pm: VanDusen Annual Compost & Spring Bulb Sale.

Sept. 30, 10 am – 4 pm: Local Harvest Celebration & Farmers' Market.

Oct. 6-7, Oct. 27-28 & Nov. 17-18, 10 am – 4 pm: Dried Flower Sales.

Dec. 8 & 9, 10 am – 4 pm: Holiday Wreath & Centerpiece Sale.

Info: www.vandusengarden.org

UBC Botanical Garden, 6804 SW Marine Drive, Vancouver:

Oct. 13 & 14, 11 am – 4 pm: Apple Festival.

Info: www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org

Workshops: forthcoming attractions

Tuesday, October 2, noon – 3:30pm: Judy Newton's winter planter lecture, followed by tour of the UBC Botanical Garden gardens to view apple species. Meet at the Botanical Garden reception centre, 6804 SW Marine Drive, Vancouver. Cost \$5. Free parking.

Saturday, November 24, noon – 1:30pm: Holiday Poinsettia Baskets. At RoundHouse Community Centre (181 Roundhouse Mews, Vancouver – intersection of Davie & Pacific). Cost \$10, which includes materials. Underground parking (access off Drake Street) \$1/hour. Followed by Afternoon Tea get together (details below).

January 2008: Lecture on Cyclamen. Details next issue.

February 2008: Gardening 101: Session II. TBC.

Info/reservations: contact Betty at 604-688-6464 ext 106; email bcheung@disabilityfoundation.org.

Join DIGA for afternoon tea

DIGA's year-end gathering is Nov 24, after the RoundHouse poinsettia workshop. Join us 2pm to 3:30pm for tea and coffee, to socialize and review achievements. Please RSVP.

Bulbs after spring – continued . . .

In mid-November, clean up the old foliage and roots, leaving plump, healthy roots intact

Then re-pot the bulb in fresh soil and place the pot in a bright, warm spot. Water it regularly, and you will see flowers within two months.

Special thanks



BC Rehab Foundation has provided a second grant to DIGA. Thank you!