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Community gardens seeing increased demand

People must follow the new guidelines to ensure public health safety



Katherine Jones, Eastwood's community garden coordinator, says some food from the garden will be donated. | Stephen Strand

STEPHEN STRAND

This summer, people are keen to grow their own food and community gardens are seeing increased interest. But with COVID-19, gardeners must follow guidelines established by the City of Edmonton.

"I think folks are certainly looking for ways to avoid grocery stores and obtain optimum nutrients," explains Kiley Fithen, Grower's Dozen Garden Club chair at Parkdale-Cromdale Community League. "With the emergent pandemic we know that folks have lost their jobs, and food security has become a real issue. For this reason, we really do see the function of the garden imperative to our community."

Grower's Dozen Garden Club has 20 raised boxes for the community, with each gardener having access to two boxes. An additional three boxes are for the communal garden. Up until now, the communal garden provided the vegetables for the league's Fall Harvest Dinner,

but that isn't possible this year. Instead, vegetables will be donated to Edmonton's Food Bank. All the boxes are already taken for this year.

The Garden Club already had a sink for handwashing, but they made changes to accommodate the guidelines.

"Our garden club members will receive a detailed message and orientation about the policies and how we have modified our layout, method of access, and water supply to ensure a safe environment."

Elmwood Park Community League's community garden has 24 plots, with the possibility of welcoming a few more gardeners.

"I will be planting a row for the food bank; as for other gardeners, that is a personal choice for them to make for themselves," explains AudreyLynn Fluet, garden coordinator.

Alberta Avenue's community garden has 44 rentable plots with 30 gardeners. They also have a perennial bed for native plants, a pollinator garden, herbs, fruit bushes, a pear tree, and an apple tree.

With all the plots secured for this summer, people are being put on a waitlist.

But that doesn't mean people aren't continuing to garden elsewhere, whether that's in their backyard, on their balcony, indoors, or in a vertical or wall garden.

"The fact that our compost sale sold out in under two hours, that shows the interest in how people are planning to garden at home," explains Karen Mykietka, facility manager.

Alberta Ave is prepared. "We already had a garden sink. We have soap and hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes. We put out paper towels. We have a little station there."

Though they don't have a dedicated space for the Food Bank, they do pass along vegetables to community members.

Eastwood Community League is participating in the City's Community Gardens Pop-Up Pilot project. In addition to the league's nine raised beds, the City will loan 12 more beds. Currently, four raised beds are available, plus the 12 beds

from the City.

"We are shifting our focus in the garden to food security for Eastwood residents," explains Donna Yateman, league president. "We are not full! Our main focus is on bringing in new gardeners from Eastwood and surrounding communities," says Yateman.

Plots are free but require a \$25 deposit. The deadline to reserve a plot is June 8. For more information, contact: info@eastwoodhub.org

For more information, visit your league website or the City website: edmonton.ca/communitygardens

Stephen works in broadcasting and writes for fun. He can be seen walking through the neighbourhood.

OTHER GARDENING IDEAS
inhabitat.com/window-farms-an-experiment-in-urban-agriculture/
planetnatural.com/growing-indoors/

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Alberta Avenue

Community League

Re-imagining the future of community events

Adjusting to a new way of organizing or attending events will take time

VIRGINIA POTKINS

Our community hall in Alberta Avenue is still. Silent. What once was a bustling centre is closed, the parking lot empty.

It's May. If the pandemic hadn't happened, Alberta Avenue Community League would have soon hosted one of the community's biggest events of the year, The Bloomin' Garden Show & Art Sale. Across the street would have been Arts on the Ave's Ultimate Garage Sale, drawing hundreds of neighbours, volunteers, vendors, and shoppers to 118 Avenue. For a day they'd reunite, hug old friends, shake hands with neighbours not seen in some time, catch up over coffee, and watch the entertainment after a long winter.

These two events were the kickstart to our short summer. Due to COVID-19, these events, among others, that were to take place in our community have been cancelled or changed. "There will be ways to walk through this," says Christy Morin, executive director of Arts on the Avenue. But how? After many online discussions and brainstorming sessions, Arts on the Ave's Ultimate Garage Sale will be moved to an online event at the beginning of June. No, it will not be the same.

The future of events as we have become accustomed to will be forever changed. The things that were normal will be re-

evaluated. The shared sip of someone's drink because, "Hey, you have to try this!" The slow dance with a neighbour you

just met because he hasn't seen him in forever. All the close interactions that we once shared will change.

be a slow process, taking maybe even years. Those attending events will be cautious. Those planning those events will be

will be to have small boutique events or VIP events instead of large events in order to ensure everyone's safety. And it's going to cost. Extra expenses will include added PPE, extra insurance to cover cancellations or changes in event dates, staffing to take extra cleaning precautions, diligent check-in procedures like getting attendees to sign waivers declaring they are healthy before and on the event day.

Tad (not his real name), a 30-year career server in the hospitality industry, said it best. "I found that many friends are enjoying their homes more than ever. We're paying a mortgage and condo fees. Why am I not staying home more to enjoy my place that is costing me so much?"

From both a financial and a health perspective, I foresee a trend to revert back to the days when people hosted kitchen parties in their homes. If the decision is made to go out, it will be very occasionally. At least for a while.

Alberta born and raised, Virginia is self-employed and an Alberta Avenue resident.



Art on the Ave's Ultimate Garage Sale will be held online at the beginning of June. | Supplied

just met because the music being played in the alley during Kaleido Festival moved the both of you. Little Timmy running up to his long-time friend at one of the Neighbourhood Connect block parties and hug-

After being in isolation and limiting our interactions with friends, family, and neighbours, that desire to connect once we reopen will be even stronger. But getting back to normal or adjusting to a new normal will

even more cautious.

There are so many added factors to think about when planning an event now. According to corporate planner Jody Paulson, Certified Special Events Professional, the trend



Visit ratcreek.org to find our online collaboration called "Thinking outside the box this summer" to discover some different summer plans.



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ABOUT US

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Build Community, Encourage Communication, Increase Capacity.

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Our writers vary from trained journalists to community residents with varying backgrounds. We strive to be a place where individuals can learn new skills and acquire experience—whether in writing, editing, photography, or illustration. We welcome letters, unsolicited submissions, and story ideas.

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The paper is delivered by Canada Post to all houses, apartments, and businesses in the seven neighbourhoods listed above including those with no unaddressed mail notices. For the most part, delivery begins on the last Wednesday of the month.

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I ❤️ my
RCP

Local senior is a gem of Parkdale community

Josefine Singh is an active volunteer who values family

SARAH DOTIMAS

Longtime Parkdale resident and retiree Josefine Singh loves living in the community, particularly “the trees, the neighbourhood feeling, and getting to know people.” She adds, “When I walk down the streets, the kids say, ‘here comes grandma.’”

A mother of five and a grandmother of three, Singh has lived in Parkdale for over 30 years. All of her children attended kindergarten at the Norwood Centre and then went to St. Alphonsus School for elementary. In fact, along with some teachers from the school, Singh helped organize their 75-year anniversary celebrations even though her children were already in post-

secondary school.

Singh’s family is the most important thing to her. She reserves Sundays for talking to her children and grandchildren over the phone. Four of her children live outside of Edmonton and she divides her time travelling to see each of them. She has a son who recently moved to St. John’s, Newfoundland, and she is looking forward to visiting him soon since she has never been there before.

Environmental issues are also very dear to her. While she volunteers for several environmental organizations, her favourite one is Nature Conservation Canada. She shares that their purpose is “to get corridors for animals to live and...wild animals, you don’t want to lose them.”

She also contributes her time to Leftovers Foundation Edmonton, which rescues food from local restaurants, bakeries, and grocery stores and then delivers it to over 50 service agencies, into the hands of those who need it the most. At a recent volunteer appreciation dinner, Singh was recognized for her dedication, having delivered the most food in weight and also for stepping up when the organization needed help at the last minute.

Her grandfather was a forester who looked after the health of the trees and animals in the forest. She recalled that her family had a compost for food waste; they also used paper waste and wood for heat, cooking, and baking. Her mother had a plot in their community

garden and she described the empty lots-turned green space with plenty of grass, garden plots, apple trees, peach trees, and even a hut. She reminisced about harvesting berries for pancakes. It’s evident that her upbringing provided some early learning that created a foundation for her interests and a passion for fighting for a more sustainable world.

Additionally, she volunteers for other organizations such as Parkdale Cromdale Community League, where she works casinos and supervises the skating rink. She also helps out with a group called Grandmothers of Alberta for a New Generation.

The group also raises money to support grandmothers in Africa, their orphaned grand-

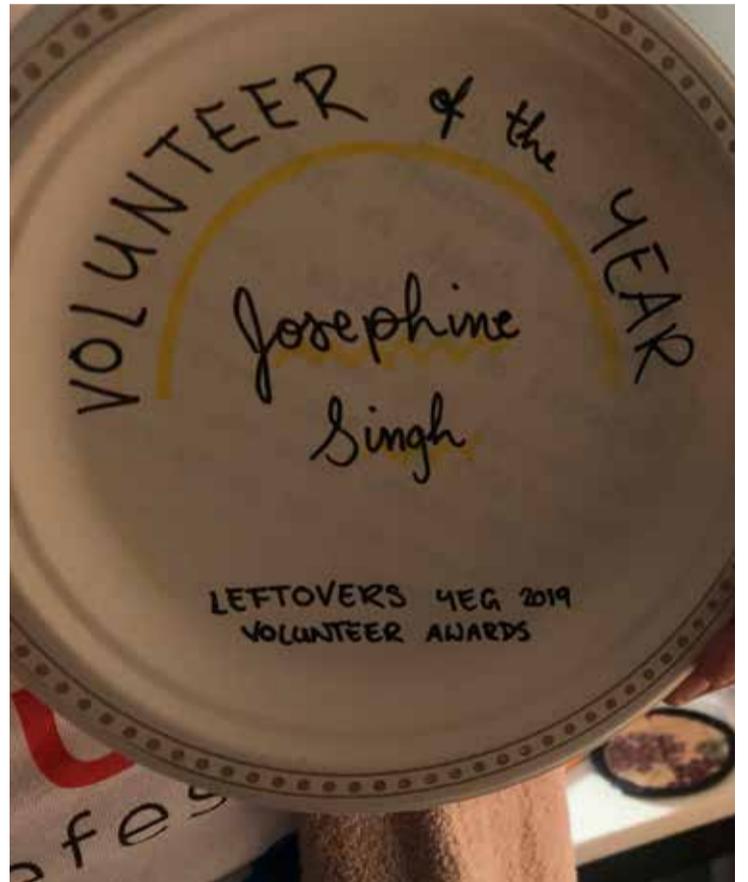
children, and their communities impacted by HIV and AIDS.

Even in her retirement, Singh has not slowed down and always keeps herself busy. She is definitely a gem in the Parkdale community and is appreciated by many of her neighbours, including Sabine Schmelz, who believes that Singh is “a strong-minded woman who fights for causes she believes in and willing to help others.”

Sarah D volunteers at the Parkdale Cromdale Community League. She is passionate about many things, including environmental issues and community wellness. Reach Sarah through Instagram @sarabdttheconscious-consumer.



Josefine Singh has lived in the Parkdale community for over 30 years. | Sarah Dotimas



Josefine was recently honoured for her volunteerism at Leftovers Foundation Edmonton. | Sarah Dotimas

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Parkdale Cromdale Community League

Why people are finding sleep elusive

Strategies to work your way back to a good night's rest

RUSTI L LEHAY

Maybe you have always slept like a baby (the non-colicky kind), but now sleep is elusive. Then there are those of you where irascible border guards night-after-night deny entry to the country of sleep, as written by the Canadian poet Anne Le Dressay in her book *Sleep is a Country*.

A decline in sleep quality may be directly related to COVID-19. Jon Jon Rivero, occupational therapist and certified trauma practitioner, says, "The disruption of regular consistent routines due to social isolation, working from home, and/or restrictions on outings all cause prolonged stress, leading to lost sleep and fatigue."

People are pushed to be productive. "I have to do it better from home, work more hours, deliver more..." Franki Harrogate, owner of Harrogate Psychological Services urges, "Have some compassion for yourself. If you don't get everything done while managing to do everything you regularly try to do such as parenting, living, paying bills, trying to not turn into a puddle of goo, you're still doing your best. Instead of more pressure, try to relax."

Some people relax while commuting. Deprived of your commute means you may miss drinking in that daily tonic of outside air and natural light which harmonizes circadian rhythms. Rivero says, "The skin receives signals from natural light that tells our brain, 'Wake up. Start the day.'"

Using tech like Zoom or your phone increases blue light exposure through screens. "The retina doesn't distinguish between that and natural light. This late night tech exposure

then affects melatonin production." People may also be wise to limit caffeine intake. Caffeine inhibits the secretion of melatonin and serotonin, in turn increasing cortisol. "Too much cortisol puts us in a state of

whammy of the pandemic and exhaustion further stresses the nervous system. The emergency response takes over, draining energy as the body is trying to fight, flee or freeze (FFF). People with unresolved trauma

encouraged intentional movement. Now top that off with sleep challenges. An inability to achieve quality rest increases cortisol levels.

"Cortisol is the enemy of weight loss." Dr. Michael Breus,

there are some simple hacks.

Try to wake up with the sun, even if briefly to get natural light to regulate circadian rhythm. Try to exercise, even for five minutes. A series of high knee stepping and/or gentle stretching will activate the major muscle groups circulating oxygenated blood. "Our muscles and brain regulate, telling us it's time to wake up." Rivero says, "I recommend this even if you had a crappy sleep. You'll get back into a routine eventually."

Rivero offers a few more hacks. "Limit caffeine intake to mornings if possible. Or find your limit [time of day] to restrain from coffee."

Breus suggests a media bedtime or "power-down hour with no media, dim the lights, a bath, conversations or meditation," giving your brain a break from blue light.

Rivero adds, "Two hours before bed, try to have a warm shower or bath followed by cold therapy. Your body temperature has to dip in order to have a quality sleep."

As an adult, no one tells you it's time to go to bed. Set up an alarm clock in your bedroom that physically reminds you to go to your bedroom. Make your bedroom space inviting. Once you are consistently well-rested, you may even wake up naturally.

A professional writer since 1999. Her favourite word activity is collaborative immersion editing with memoir and fantasy authors.



With all the stress of the pandemic, it's not surprising sleep may be hard to come by. | Pixabay

adrenal fatigue," akin to being in a state of fear.

Sleep signals the body that we're safe. COVID-19 does not inspire a sense of safety.

The pandemic creates feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, and fear, which may trigger past trauma. Rivero says, "Pre-existing, dormant, mental health challenges may surface. People may not realize they are dealing with unresolved issues."

He continues: "The double

are always in a FFF response. No one escapes the awareness of how the pandemic has completely and drastically changed our world." Rivero says, "There is only so much stress our bodies can handle."

Goal setting or learning new activities can replace lost routines. If weight loss is or was a goal, it was diabolical to simultaneously lose workouts, job routines, lunch time workout partners, or routine tasks that

known as the sleep doctor, says in a YouTube video. "When you become sleep deprived, cortisol rises. Your brain dislikes that. The brain says I need serotonin. An easy, instant fix is a Snickers, so we actually crave the things that are bad for us."

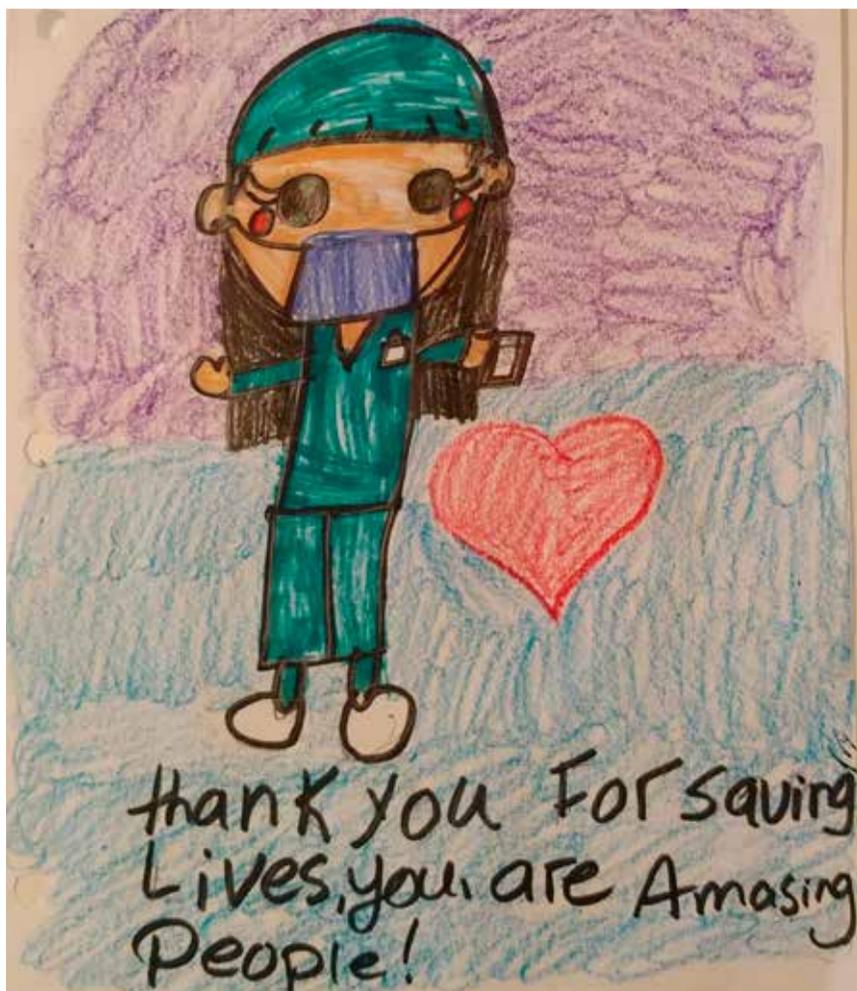
Sugar may be the quickest way to raise serotonin, but producing enough melatonin at night while you sleep is a much better method. Whatever the cause, if you struggle with sleep,

Students display their appreciation creations

Artwork by students at Norwood Elementary thanks essential workers.



Healthcare workers with masks were popular student drawings. | Norwood families & Norwood Newspaper Club.



Norwood Newspaper Club was formed by Ms. Rickards as a way to have members of her Grade 5 class at Norwood Elementary School learn about being journalists.



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How the words we use shape our world view

Language matters in how we interact and emotionally connect with others

VICTORIA STEVENS

Language: it's how we communicate with each other. This can be through verbal sounds strung together, moving our hands in specific ways, positioning our bodies, or creating symbols on paper or electronically. The origins of language in humans is hotly debated in academic circles.

The how, the when, and the who is constantly changing as we discover more about our distant past. Depending on the definition of language and the factors being studied, the origin of language can date as far back as 3.5 million years ago or as recent as 150,000 years ago. Regardless of how early in our history language developed, it cannot be disputed that it is crucial in shaping our evolution as a species, our current and past societies, and our everyday lives. And in today's world, where ideas can be spread in the blink of an eye, being aware of how the language we use can shape how we see our world is crucial.

Simple changes to the words we use to describe something

or someone can create huge shifts in the emotional reaction people have to what is being said. Take the words "house" and "home". House conjures

the same physical space, but each tells a very different story. "I wish I had used the word *home* more than the word *house*," says a woman in her

shaped how both she and her husband understood not only the structure they lived in, but also their life and relationship as a whole. She believes it may

swaths of the population regard others. Recent examples are the terms *menial* or *unskilled jobs*. These words are often used to describe a plethora of jobs, including grocery store cashier, janitor, child care worker, or restaurant dishwasher. Using *menial* or *unskilled* to describe these jobs extends to those who perform them. It creates the idea that these jobs aren't important (when, in fact, many of them are essential for our society to function), that these jobs require no skill or intelligence, and therefore that those who work them don't deserve a fair wage or respect. As a result, these jobs are often low paid, physically demanding, and sometimes emotionally abusive. As a society, we tend to ignore them or shrug them off.

Language has been the backbone of our society and species for a very long time, and it will be an integral part of our future. It is vitally important that, especially in a time where words—true or not—spread quickly and emotions run high, we pay close attention to the words we use.



The words we use are more important than we think. | Pixabay

up thoughts of a physical structure, how it looks, how many windows it has, how large it is. Home leads someone to think of family, love, comfort, safety. Both words can be referencing

40s while discussing her divorce with a friend. She is talking about the house she owns and which her husband moved into. She felt that her use of the word *house* instead of *our home*

have been an important factor in their decision to divorce.

Outside of personal interactions, the language of the media, politicians, and other influential people shapes the way that

Victoria is an entrepreneur, roller derby player, and basset hound lover living in the Delton area.

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OPINION

The pandemic changed the food supply chain

It's become vital to support local producers or grow your own food

MARK PARSONS

This morning, my wife and I ate brunch at home. Nothing fancy, just some bacon and eggs. Tonight, we'll have pork chops and salad. If you were to guess how far each of these items travelled to arrive at my plate, you would probably assume they all came from the same grocery store and that each of those ingredients came from a reasonably close source: hopefully Alberta, probably Canada, and definitely North America.

The food that ends up in supermarkets comes from locations with the cheapest production and shipping costs. If the store you visit is a large chain, it doesn't make financial sense to have different tomato suppliers for each timezone. They buy from an organization that can reliably produce ripe, red tomatoes cheaply and in large quantities. If an organization has this

kind of capacity, they aren't just selling to one supermarket. To complicate things even more, tomatoes don't grow in our winter.

In order to maximize cost effectiveness, supermarkets must balance shipping costs with production availability. For this reason, staying with the tomato example, Superstore will not say where their tomatoes come from. The official response is that due to the nature of tomatoes, "the country of origin can vary in order to maintain availability." The statement goes on to say that at any time, they may source from Belgium, Canada, Dominican Republic, Spain, Israel, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands, United States or Vietnam.

I was looking at buying a used car recently, and my father offered the following advice: "More moving parts means more things that can break."

It's true, and that's why we have warranties, but there are no warranties on supply and demand.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, demand for food has changed. Demand for products like flour and yeast have spiked. Other products faced a decrease in demand. For example, Canadian Dairy Farmers reportedly dumped tankers of milk due to oversupply. Like any producer of goods, companies aim to have supply roughly meet demand. However, a pandemic comes with drastic changes in consumer behaviour. Farmers were dumping milk primarily because of reduced demand resulting from restaurant closures. There are so many moving parts involved in production that dairy farmers can't just flip a switch and make less milk to meet the new demand levels. They have staff, suppliers, and cows to contend with.

They also have to deal with the companies they use to ship their products.

Making less milk is akin to turning off the garden hose, so that water continues to rush through the pipeline, wasted. But companies must turn off the proverbial hose. The longer the lockdowns continue, the more imperative it is that supply be adjusted to match demand.

There is also a very real possibility of a widespread food shortage later this year. Just like the supply generation that can't be switched off, it can't be switched on either. Plus there is the possibility that an early shortage of a product could spike demand and result in panic-buying. Remember, it took almost six weeks for stores to restock toilet paper after irrational panic-buying occurred in the early days of the pandemic. As of the writing of this article in mid-May, most stores still

don't have flour.

Returning to our meals of bacon and eggs and pork chops and salad, all of our meat came from a small family farm just outside the city, hand-delivered with a smile. Since her demand is small, she is able to pivot very quickly to raise or lower supply to meet demand. There are less moving parts, a shorter chain, a steadier supply. As for fruit and vegetables, we've only just planted our garden, so we'll have to wait before we can wander into our backyard and pluck a few tomatoes. Until then, we have to rely on supermarkets and farmers' markets. Supporting local food suppliers and buying directly from the farm ensures a steady food supply for my family.

Born and raised in Edmonton, Mark is a writer, artist, and entrepreneur.



The pandemic has changed demand for certain products. | Pixabay



Front Yards in Bloom

We are continuing with this beloved tradition for gardeners, yard enthusiasts and community members. Even though we must stay physically distant from each other at this time, Front Yards in Bloom allows communities to come together and stay connected. We encourage you to safely explore our neighbourhood and acknowledge the hard work that your neighbours put into their yards by submitting a nomination.

CONTACT ELKE: ELADSI@SHAW.CA BY JUNE 30, 2020



WESTWOOD COMMUNITY LEAGUE

SHARE YOUR IDEAS!

We want to hear from you about your ideas on events and activities the Community League can host for neighbours and families this summer!

EMAIL ENGAGE@WESTWOODCL.CA TO SHARE YOUR IDEAS OR BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

A healthy yard leads to a happier you

Use these tips to create an environmentally-friendly yard

GILLIAN KERR

Is everyone into gardening now? I keep hearing stories from first timers to seasoned gardeners that it is the “summer of the garden”. With that in mind, consider these healthy, environmentally-friendly ideas for your property that I gleaned from several friends and gardeners.

I was (safely) walking with a friend last week and we walked by her house. She and her husband have chosen to grow raspberries in their front yard right by the sidewalk as a way of giving something back to their neighbours. This neighbourly act got me thinking about how we can be more community-minded and create healthier, safer yards.

One thing many locals did this year was to buy compost from the Alberta Avenue Community League’s compost sale. The sale was a great way to buy local and support a healthy garden. Other ideas include swapping plants, bulbs, and shrubs with your neighbours. This allows you to connect, swap plants that

already grow well here, and save money.

Cherry Dodd, an active member of the Edmonton Native Plant Society, converted her yard into a beautiful garden.

that her garden became habitat for wildlife. She often sees butterflies, birds, bees, ladybugs, and other beneficial insects.

“Being environmentally friendly isn’t hard. Native flow-

ers are just as beautiful as regular perennials, and because they are adapted to our climate, they are very tough and resilient. They don’t need fertilizer; in fact, they prefer poor soil and they don’t need extra water once they are established,” says Dodd.

per, sea buckthorn, potentilla, genista, and hackberry. Some perennials include yarrow, day-lily, sea holly, hens and chicks, blanketflower, and snow-in-the-summer.

The City of Edmonton has some great advice on its website around environmentally-friendly practices and ideas. Did you know that 73 per cent of Edmontonians believe we need to take action on climate change? I will leave you with a few tips from various sources on some ideas to save a bit of money and lower your electricity usage.

- Close the blinds or drapes early on summer days to block the heat and keep your home cooler.
- Use a fan instead of air conditioning.
- Use no-power alternatives such as a clothesline and hand-powered tools.
- Get a rain barrel or two to capture water from your downspouts and use in your garden.
- Build or purchase a composter for free fertilizer.

Gillian has lived in Norwood since 2006 and loves the community. She worked for the Ministry of Environment for over a decade until she finished her PhD on environmental governance. She is currently researching, teaching, and consulting. She volunteers with a number of social society and environmental groups. If you have any comments or ideas for a future article, email gilliankerr@fastmail.fm.



Marilea and Phil treat walkers-by to free raspberries in their front yard. | Gillian Kerr

She has been featured by the City of Edmonton for her approach. Her house originally had a typical yard with a lawn, a shrub, a large tree, and a small flower bed. Dodd dug up the lawn and replaced it with native plants and garden perennials. An unanticipated benefit was

with one small area and focus on that. Native plants still need to be weeded, just like any other plants.”

As our climate changes, it is important to look for plants that work for our climate. Some trees and shrubs that work well here include pine, ash, juni-

ALBERTA AVENUE COMMUNITY LEAGUE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



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7PM

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ELMWOOD PARK COMMUNITY LEAGUE

Community Garden

Sign up for a plot in our large community garden! Our garden committee has big plans for the coming years and we need your input! Garden season normally starts May long weekend with a compost spread and tilling.

Contact garden coordinator Audrey-Lynn at epcl.info@shaw.ca





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Spruce Ave Connects is a new neighbour-helping-neighbour volunteer program we are running in Edmonton's Spruce Avenue neighbourhood during the global pandemic of COVID-19. Hello Spruce Ave! With growing concerns over COVID-19, we are launching a new program to be proactive should we face increasing challenges, where we will need to learn to support and care for our neighbours locally. While there are some groups offering assistance and support across Metro Edmonton, we want to encourage the power of local connection in Spruce Ave and be resilient in the face of changing times, where we may be forced to support each other by those within walking distance, who we live and work with on a daily basis. Rather than spreading fear or germs, we are building community in the face of crisis.



EASTWOOD GREENTHUMB GARDENERS



Eastwood Community League has community garden plots and raised beds for your vegetable growing season!!

Priority is for Eastwood residents, then outside our boundaries if plots are still available.

Garden spots are going fast.
Request yours by June 8.

The Garden is at 86 St. and 119 Ave.

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