

Winter 2025 Newsletter



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President's Message



As the days get longer and the sun gets warmer, you may be thinking about what to grow in your garden plot this year! Every year of growing is a bit different – after all, there are a lot of variables at play from the type and timing of weather we get, how consistent we are at watering and weeding, how and when we plant, and the quality of our seeds or bedding plants.

As much as I would like to be the type of person that maintains detailed records of successes and learnings, I rely on memory, advice and intuition when it comes to gardening. Sometimes this works great and sometimes I remind myself – there's always next year! One of my favourite things about gardening at a community garden like CGGS is wandering around throughout the growing season to see what other folks are growing and what's working for them. It's also great chatting with fellow gardeners to share information and learn from one another.

So, what have I learned and what will I be trying this year? One thing that has consistently worked for me is planting radishes early. I'll plant them weeks before everything else, and I might be able to harvest them all by late June making space for something else. I've tried growing a second crop but it never works – by then it's too warm and the radishes are not good. Last year I had a lot of volunteer dill in my bed. I harvested a lot of it when it was young and tender. I'm still enjoying both dried and frozen dill. This year, if I have volunteer dill again, I will pull it all up after I get what I (and anyone else!) needs; to make sure it's not competing with my other plants. My goal with tomatoes this year – and although I tell myself this every year, this year I really mean it! – is to plant just two tomato plants but *really* take care of them (pruning, staking, and consistent watering). And for something new, I think I'll try growing Swiss chard after seeing how great it grows for some of our fellow gardeners. *(continued on next page)*

This is a time we can start fresh with our gardens. Be bold and ambitious and try something new or stick with the old standbys. Or do both! Just enjoy the process, continue to learn, and be part of this community we have created.

I plan on stepping down as president of CGGS this year. As with my garden, my role as president these last two years has given me an opportunity to learn from my fellow gardeners and contribute to our wonderful CGGS society. It's time for me to leave space to allow someone else to take root and grow into that role and I will continue to support CGGS in other ways.



Article and photograph courtesy of Lesley Peterson

Important Dates

Attend our AGM, Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

We are interested in hearing what you have to say and how you would like to see our garden grow! There are grants available and we would love to have a plan in place so that we can apply for these grants when they become available. We need your vision. Please come and share your ideas. Help us make our community garden the best it can be. What is its true potential? How could it be transformed?

Our President, Lesley Peterson, is stepping down this year. We thank Lesley for her dedication in this role for the past two years. If you would be interested in becoming more involved, our entire dedicated team would be here to help you. *(please see page 11 for the President job description)*

We also have current vacancies for our Weed and Litter Lead and Herb Garden Lead. If you are interested, we will help you and act as your guide. You will not be alone. *(please see page 12 and 13 for job descriptions)*

Meeting to Welcome New Gardeners and Plan Mulch and Compost Day

Plan on attending our open meeting on **Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom**. Learn about our garden and help us plan our Mulch and Compost Day, scheduled for Saturday, April 26, 2025.

Mulch & Compost Day - Saturday, April 26, 2025

For those of you who are new to our garden, we will be offering a garden orientation from 9:45 to 10:00 a.m.

At 10:00 a.m. we will begin adding new mulch to our pathways and spreading compost on our beds in preparation for planting. New mulch will have better drainage and will help prevent weeds and grass infiltration.

It will be a bulk delivery (4-hour delivery window) and we will need many helpers, buckets, wheelbarrows, rakes, and shovels. If you are not able to make it or are unable to do the work, any family/friends to fill in would be appreciated. The compost is to be spread ½” so each full size bed will get 2 full 5-gallon pails.



*Many hands make
light work!*



2025 Garden Calendar

- March 11 *AGM via Zoom at 7:00 p.m.*
- April 5 *Make Every Drop Count, 1:00 p.m., Library Meeting Room*
- April 8 *Open Zoom meeting to welcome new gardeners at 7:00 pm*
- April 26 *Orientation 9:45-10:00 a.m.*
Compost & Mulch Day 10:00 a.m.
- May 24 *Planting Day 10:00 a.m.*
- October 4 *Garden Cleanup Day 10:00 a.m.*
- October 15 *Final Garden Cleanup Deadline*
- November 1 *Early Garden Registration Begins*
- November 15 *Early Garden Registration Ends*

Common Ground Garden Society (CGGS) History

- Our garden was built in 2012 entirely by neighbours and garden volunteers.
- A staff member at Southwood Library came up with the idea to utilize the existing empty lawn west of the building.
- Our garden was a community project created to celebrate the Calgary Public Library's 100th anniversary. (See original 2012 photos on Pages 4 and 5.)
- Initial seed money was gifted by ENCANA along with annual funding for our first 10 years.
- The local community were invited to meetings at the library to discuss, and over the course of about a year, came up with a name "Common Ground," and a viable design. (At the bottom of Page 5 is a photo of our garden today.)
- Our Mission Statement is, "*To grow a sustainable and ecologically friendly community garden for now, and for the future.*" This means that the CGGS does not use pesticides, herbicides, or inorganic fertilizers in its practices. (In our shed there is currently an organic fertilizer for all gardeners to use.)





Make Every Drop Count with Deborah VanDeventer

Saturday, April 5, 2025, at 1:00 p.m., Library Meeting Room

We are seeing reminders all around us of the undeniable fact that our water resources are limited. For us gardeners, that means that just turning a sprinkler or garden hose on to refresh or irrigate our landscapes is no longer a reasonable option. Last year's watering restrictions were a somber reminder of what may become a standard in the near future. How many of us found that it took the joy out of our gardening, and replaced it with dread and a heavy sense of responsibility for our community? As our winters get milder and drier and our summers get hotter, we as sustainable gardeners must adapt to the changing watering practices in thoughtful ways.

Making Every Drop Count discusses various ways we can continue to grow bountiful gardens while using growing and watering practices that put the water where it is needed with less evaporation and water usage. This time of year we are making plans for our 2025 garden plans, so this is the ideal time to make soil preparation and planting choices that will put water mitigation front and centre.

Such principles as soil amendments, planting considerations, watering techniques and tools, mulching, ground covers, and protective coverings will be offered as options to reduce our water consumption without compromising the vitality and productivity of our gardens. These ideas can be applied to our landscapes as a whole.

It's time to step away from our traditional gardening practices and look at our gardens with new eyes, putting into practice new ideas that can be an example of responsible gardening in these changing times.

Debbie is kindly offering this course free of charge. If you are interested in attending, please email hellocggs@gmail.com as space is limited. Thank you.

First Year Gardening at Common Grounds Garden Society Garden

2024 was our first year at the Common Grounds Garden Society (CGGS) garden. As the year kicked off, my now wife Tatiiana had grand aspirations to not only grow some of our own produce for the summer, but to also grow a portion of the florals for our upcoming wedding. I will be the first to admit that I had reservations.

Tatiiana took no time to register us on waitlists for local community gardens. We were both thrilled (one of us more hesitantly than the other) to hear that we had been approved for a plot at the CGGS garden.

As we geared up to begin the growing season, my reservations began to subside. We were first time gardeners with many questions but found that the garden community was always there to support us. We were pleasantly surprised to find that a lot of this support was built into the very foundation of CGGS. From Debbie's Garden Basic Tips class that taught us how to prep our plot for success, to our first time gardener mentor Sharon providing critical weed or sprout advice throughout the season.

Caring for our plot at the garden provided us so much more than fancy flowers and fresh veggies. I was unsure if we had what it took to care for a garden plot while we worked full time and prepared for a summer wedding, but the quality time we shared outside together amongst friends was truly a blessing. Gardening really does grow on you.

We look forward to our second year with the garden, and even more to meet new friends who too discover the vibrant community that is the CGGS garden.

Christa Konkin

President Vacancy

Our President helps where they can or wants to in other areas such as social functions, events, communications, maintenance, registration, etc. ***Being President, they are able to make the role suit their strengths and be involved in the future of the garden.***

In order to maintain charity organization status, the garden has a five-member Executive.

Positions for President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Members-at-Large will be open for yearly election at our AGM on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. A Zoom link will be emailed to gardeners on Sunday. *This year, we will have a vacancy for the role of President.*

The executive and team leads meet approximately four times a year for planning. Each meeting runs about 90 minutes.

No previous experience is needed. Past executives are generally available to help you transition into your new role.

Co-positions are possible if you would prefer to share duties.

Executive duties include liaison with all teams and Library staff, preparation of financial reports and correspondence, and coordination of the entire organizational structure of the garden.

The Vice President position is ideally filled by the past or the future president.

Presidential duties include:

- Formal head of the society
- Works with the other executive to ensure the society is operating as per its bylaws and Service Alberta
- Chairs meetings including the AGM - usually via Zoom
- Creates the agenda with other executive
- Liaison with all teams, Library staff, the City, and community in general

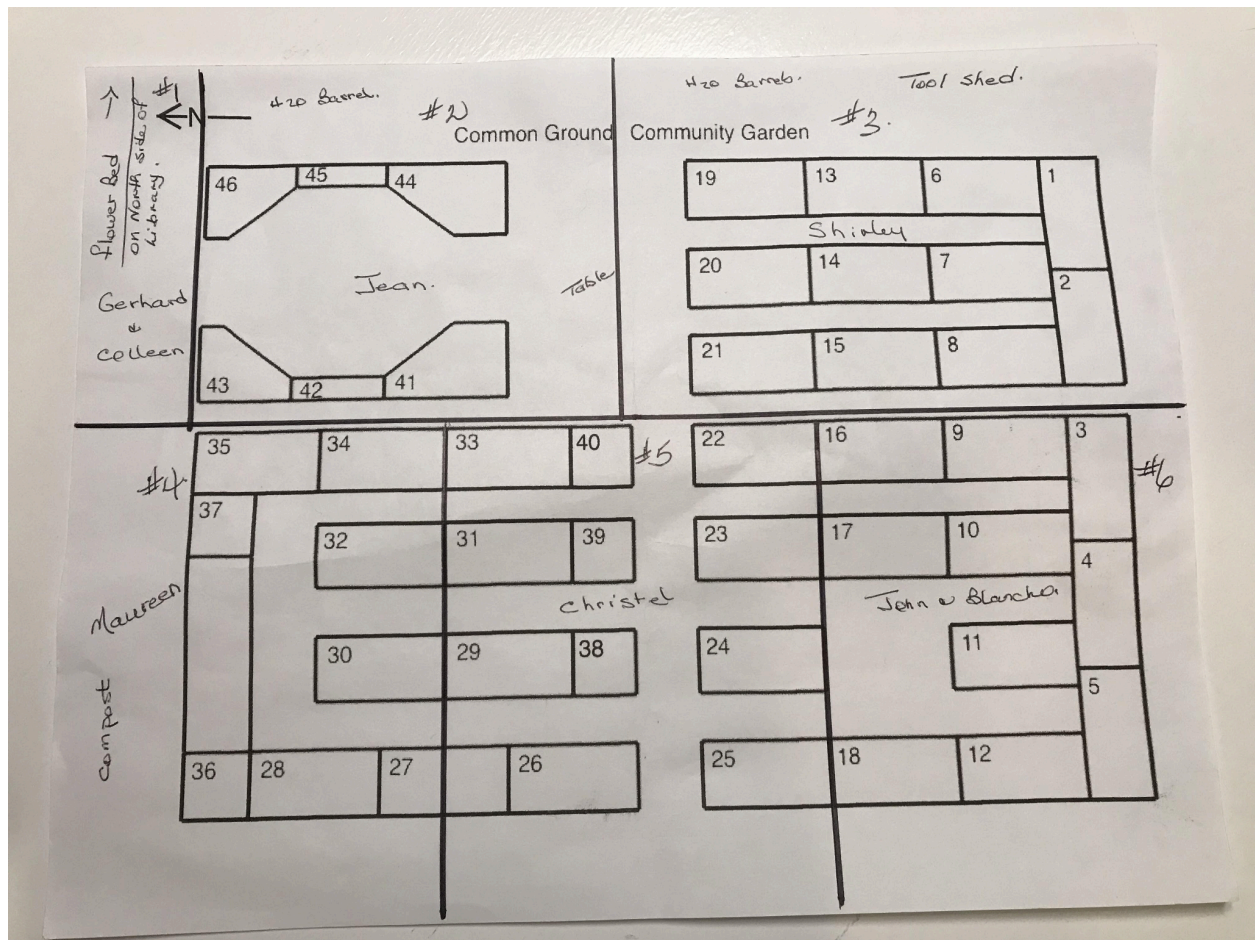
If you would be interested or have any questions, please email hellocggs@gmail.com.

Weed and Litter Lead and Herb Garden Lead Vacancies

Unfortunately, we now have vacancies for two of our volunteer Lead roles.

Weed and Litter Lead (to oversee pulling weeds on pathways)

When Shirley Tomochko took over this role three seasons ago, she totally revamped it by copying the garden bed map and assigning specific areas.



So, should you accept this role, your work has basically been done for you. Pencil in the names of your volunteers and orient them to their assigned spaces. It will be easy for you to follow up to ensure they have been working their areas and they in turn will feel a sense of accomplishment. This would also be a perfect fit if you have a bad back because now you could just coordinate and oversee the work.

Herb Garden Lead (planting and monitoring two herb beds)

Communal herb beds are planted with a variety of herbs for use by bed renters. This allows members to try new varieties of herbs, while at the same time, freeing up space in their own rental beds for other types of produce.

As our Herb Garden Lead, you would map out the two herb gardens and decide which herbs to grow where.

We will reimburse you for up to \$50.00 for the purchase of herbs.



You will have Herb Garden helpers and will oversee the seeding and planting of seedlings, weeding, and deadheading in the herb gardens.

As our Herb Garden Lead you can also monitor the progress of the herbs and let the garden know when and what herbs are ready to pick. This information could even be recorded on the whiteboard inside the shed. There are a few perennial herbs. The Herb Garden Lead and helpers are also responsible for cleaning the beds at the end season. The perennials can be cut back or tidied.

If you would be interested in being our Weed and Litter Lead or Herb Garden Lead, please email hellocggs@gmail.com.

Enviro-Diana's Corner “What goes around comes around...”

When a recent batch of my kombucha developed mold and had to be thrown out, the benefit of our local garden food system became evident. Our secretary, Jayne, was able to share some of her SCOBY (symbiotic community of bacteria and yeast) allowing me to start fermenting again; fitting since years ago, Jayne took home part of my original “mother” to start making her own batch. Sometimes, “What goes around, comes around.”

At Common Ground, we are fortunate to have garden members who can share Kombucha starters or teach us how to prepare healthy soil, make trellises, identify weeds and harmful insects, grow climate hardy vegetables and share tips about how to make the most of our beds even in dry conditions. Knowledge and practical experience build our awareness, expertise and confidence.

Recently, with tariff threats and trade upheavals, Canadians are developing a new appreciation for self-sufficiency and MADE IN CANADA foods, products and services, especially those produced close to home in Alberta. By growing vegetables in a community garden, we are agents of change for a positive, empowered future. One seed at a time, we help build a sustainable food security network here in Calgary, resistant to global ups and downs.



Article and photographs courtesy of Diana Badenduck

Putting the “Community” back in Community Garden

Those fortunate enough to have a backyard are also able to have gardens and grow vegetables. But do you know what they are missing? Community! For those of you who gardened with us last year, how much fun was it when we all came together for our Compost Day, our Planting Day, and our Cleanup Day? Many hands make light work.

Even though this will be my fifth year at the garden, I still consider myself a novice gardener. How wonderful it is to be able to bend someone's ear when you are not quite sure what is growing in your bed. I was able to get help in finding out that the straight row, which I thought were weeds, were beets another kind gardener had planted for me, and that the other two plants I thought were weeds were actually sunflowers. Who knew? I certainly didn't.

That is what community is all about. We are all here to help one another. Similar to a commune we all share in the chores to help make our garden a beautiful attribute for the library and surrounding community. We do not want it to be an eyesore but something in which we each take pride. Bring your friends and neighbours over to stroll through the garden or take a break on our bench under the welcome shade of our oak tree. That is how I was first introduced to our garden and encouraged to rent a bed.

Yes, you could have a backyard garden, and some of you do as well. But isn't it wonderful to be able to see what other gardeners are growing and to share tips and tricks? Being part of a community garden is special. The more you get involved the more you and your garden will grow.

Jayne Martin

Don't know?

Ask questions and send photos to hellocggs@gmail.com.

Communication

Members wishing to send information for list-wide distribution can send an email to hellocggs@gmail.com which will be forwarded to all members.

Safety

Common Ground is a public space. We occasionally have vandalism in our garden. If you see vandalism, please take photos and report it to hellocggs@gmail.com.

If you find drug paraphernalia in the garden please contact the police non-emergency line (403-266-1234) or DOAP Needle Response Team (403-796-5334). The DOAP Needle Response Team has a trained crew that will come to collect used needles and other items on public and private property.

Your Garden Executive and Team Leads

President	<i>Lesley Peterson (will be stepping down at AGM)</i>
Vice President	<i>Diana Badenduck</i>
Secretary	<i>Jayne Martin</i>
Treasurer	<i>Jennifer Hamilton</i>
Member at Large	<i>Penny Young</i>
Member at Large	<i>Carolyn Reicher</i>
Garden Angel Coordinator	<i>Sharon Wozniak</i>
Compost Lead	<i>Lesley Peterson</i>
Donation Bed Lead	<i>Diana Badenduck</i>
Communications Lead	<i>Jayne Martin</i>
Maintenance Lead	<i>Jennifer Hamilton</i>
Social Crew Lead	<i>Carolyn Reicher</i>
Pollinator Garden Lead	<i>Deborah VanDeventer</i>
Registration Lead	<i>Catherine Scully</i>
Pruning Caraganas Lead	<i>Scott Burbank</i>
Herb Bed Lead	<i>Vacant</i>
Weed and Litter Lead	<i>Vacant</i>