

Armstrong & District Garden Club



Welcome! While we are staying close to home and reducing the spread of COVID—19, we will not be holding meetings in person until further notice. This newsletter shows that we can still share our stories and love of gardening! And enjoy gardening in our own yards!

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Membership:
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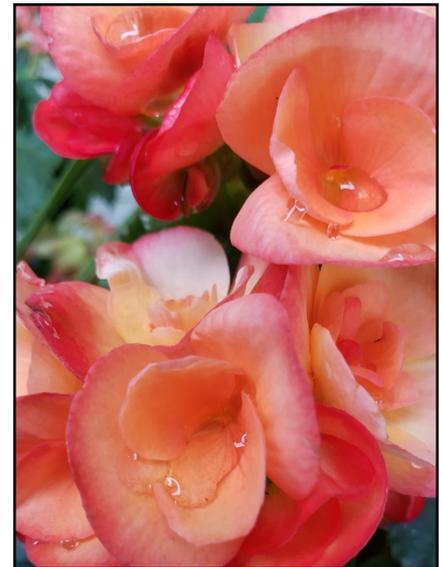
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There will be no newsletters in July or August. Continue to send in your news and it will be featured in September’s issue.

Learn more about the bright lavender viewed on Heather’s nursery tour—page 7.



ADGC Work Parties:

Planters Along Pleasant Valley Boulevard

ADGC continued the tradition of planting the concrete planters along Pleasant Valley Boulevard in Armstrong. On May 20th, fifteen members descended on the railway planters after a quick lesson on petunia pruning by Judi C. About 210 plants were pruned and planted in less than two hours. They're looking great! Thanks to all who helped out.



The Annual Marigold Mile

On the morning of May 26, Sue W., Heather F., Connie L., Don C., Glenn and Colleen helped the Chamber of Commerce plant 736 Marigolds along Pleasant Valley Boulevard. We split up into different tasks; there were hole diggers, pot removers, plant placers, and dirt tampers. Very efficient and fun, again all 736 plants placed in under 2 hours.

Rea S. supplied us all with fantastic gingerbread and chocolate chip cookies afterwards, I will be back next year for sure if she brings the cookies again.

Glenn

ADGC Volunteers Needed:

Maintaining the Planters Along Pleasant Valley Boulevard

In order to ensure that the petunias on PV Boulevard are thriving, ADGC would like volunteers to check on them in two week intervals. Each week, will require one visit of about one hour in total.

The task involves weeding the planters, ensuring that the sprinklers are working and not blocked and removing any Virginia creeper on the concrete planter that may be inhibiting the plants from growing.

If there are any concerns, the volunteer would then contact President Glenn (250 546-9891) who would then follow-up with our City contacts.

If you are able to provide maintenance for a two week period, email President Glenn (gcgardenedge@telus.net) with your first and second choice of dates. See highlighted areas below:

Here's the schedule:

June 1—15	Brenda
June 16—31	Judi C.
July 1—15	Judy and Betty
July 16—31	Paul P.
August 1—15	Volunteer Needed
August 16—31	Mary P.
Sept. 1—15	Volunteer Needed
Sept. 16—30	Volunteer Needed
Oct. 1—15	Volunteer Needed
Oct. 16—31	Volunteer Needed



Another Volunteer Opportunity:

The garden club needs to replace our sunshine or goodwill person to send out thank you cards, get well cards, sympathy notes, and the like, to members, along with businesses that support our club. Our last sunshine person, Dianne R., has moved to Salmon Arm. Contact Glenn if you are interested.

Garden Tasks for June:

- Prune flowering shrubs, such as rhododendrons, lilacs, and azaleas, after they bloom.
- Fertilize your vegetable plants 1 month after they emerge by side dressing.
- Be sure to continuously harvest your vegetables and fruit to keep the crops thinned out.
- Ensure that raised beds are getting enough water. Once the soil surface dries out, water deeply in the early morning.
- Make trellises or supports for tomatoes, cucumbers, and pole beans.
- Remember to water your lawn. It is better to water it deeply and less frequently than shallow and more frequently.
- Keep checking your plants for any diseases or insects, and treat when necessary. (See our Pest pages.)
- Stay on top of garden weeds.
- Move your houseplants outside for some sunlight. You can also clean and repot your plants.
- Mow your lawn regularly to a height of 2 to 3 inches. Leave clippings on lawn as natural fertilizer.
- Make sure your lawn is getting 1 inch of water per week. (Measure rainfall by putting out an empty tin can.)
- Sharpen your mower blades to prevent disease and keep the lawn greener.
- Plant more flowers, such as petunias, marigolds, zinnias, asters, nasturtiums, and impatiens.
- Remove the dead flowers from perennials and annuals. Pinching back the stems will also help to keep your plants healthy.
- Fertilize annuals with a balanced fertilizer. High nitrogen content is important until the plants are fully grown; once they fully grown, switch to a high-phosphorus fertilizer.
- Check your trees and shrubs; ensure that each has a few inches of mulch (or add more).
- If your apple and pear trees drop, thin the remainder for more productive harvest.
- Spray fruit trees to avoid pests. Horticulture oil sprays handle many pests in an environmentally friendly yet effective way.
- Keep your compost pile moist. Mix and moisten dry materials and cover with plastic if it's dry out.

The Best Tasting Tomatoes To Grow (Courtesy of Mary Jane D.)

Armstrong Garden Club member, Mary Jane, writes about gardening in her blog *Home for the Harvest*. To contact her: maryjane@homefortheharvest.com.

The best tasting tomatoes are the ones picked straight from the vine and eaten in the garden while they're still warm from the sun. There is nothing quite like the flavour of a homegrown tomato. Its nature's perfect blend of sweet and tart.

The best tasting tomatoes have a true old-fashioned flavor with an excellent balance of sugar and acidity. While everyone has their own favorite tomato variety to eat, **here are three of the most popular tomatoes grown for superb flavor:**

Brandywine Heirloom Tomatoes, Cherokee Purple Heirloom Tomatoes and Sun Gold Hybrid Cherry Tomatoes

There is a broad range and depth of flavor available in tomato cultivars. Below is a list of 20+ of the best-tasting tomato varieties. **Which ones will make it onto your top-ten taste list?**

Finding The Best Tasting Tomatoes: What To Look For

There are a few general things to look for when searching out the yummiest tomatoes. The best tasting tomatoes are marketed as "slicing" or good for "fresh eating". They're often advertised as being good in salads or fresh on sandwiches. These tomatoes have been bred for flavor instead of other characteristics (like being good for canning or making cooked sauces).

"Getting great flavor out of a tomato is part nature, part nurture. The genetics of the seed you start with – the breeding lines behind the variety, plus where that actual packet of seed you're using was produced – and the way you grow it both factor in."

The best tasting tomatoes generally have a complementary balance of acidity and sugar. These varieties generally have lots of sweet AND lots of sour. A fresh tomato will also give off organic compounds that enhance its flavor and bring us that "fresh garden tomato" aroma.

"There is honestly nothing that can compare to the taste of a fresh, vine-ripened tomato, plucked at the perfect peak of sweetness and eaten warm and sugary, tart and juicy, right there in the garden as you make a big mess all over your shirt."

Some tomatoes are very sweet while others are downright tart. This has to do not only with the genetics of the variety of tomato, but also with the weather, soil conditions, ripeness of the tomato, and other environmental factors. In general, these plants grow best with lots of sun, some compost, and deep watering.

There are some patterns in the tastes of tomatoes, but as usual, all rules are made to be broken. Yellow and white tomatoes are generally delicate in taste and are low in acid. Dark red tomatoes can have an intense balanced taste. Many green tomatoes are tart (even zesty). But there will always be a tomato to surprise you.

"Tasting a variety of different homegrown tomatoes is much like tasting a range of distinctly different beers, wines, or chocolates. There are dominant flavour notes and a whole host of nuances and subtleties. The sampling of a tomato becomes a thought-provoking exercise in adjective seeking."

Epic Tomatoes: How to Select & Grow the Best Varieties of All Time, by Craig LeHoullier

The Best Tasting Tomatoes To Grow contd. (Mary Jane D.)

The Best Tasting Tomato Varieties

Here are **21 of the best tasting tomato varieties**, in alphabetical order. Look for these in seed catalogues, online, at local nurseries, or ready-to-eat at the farmers market. You'll have your own top-ten tasting must-try tomato list before you know it!

For more details and photos, visit: <https://www.homefortheharvest.com/best-tasting-tomatoes/>

- ▶ 1. Aunt Ruby's German Green Tomato
2. Black Krim Tomato
3. Brandywine Tomato
4. Cherokee Purple Tomato
5. Ferris Wheel Tomato
6. German Red Strawberry Tomato
7. Georgia Streak Tomato
8. Glamour Tomato
9. Great White Tomato
10. Green Zebra Tomato
11. Hillbilly Tomato
12. Kellogg's Breakfast Tomato
13. Lillian's Yellow Tomato
14. Lucky Cross Tomato
15. Magnus Tomato
16. Mortgage Lifter Tomato
17. Nepal Tomato
18. Pineapple Tomato
19. Red Snapper Tomato
20. Sun Gold Tomato
21. Yellow Oxheart Tomato

Tips for Growing the Best Tasting Tomatoes

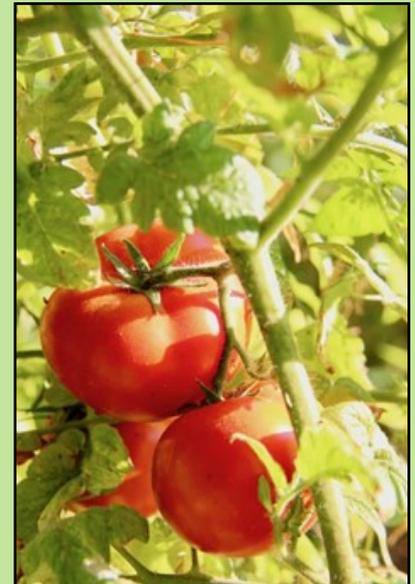
A lot of leaves can capture a lot of sunlight, so a plant with dense, healthy foliage can convert more sunlight into sugars and other flavorful components. Heirloom varieties have a greater percentage of leaf than do market-ready hybrids, which may partially explain their flavorful. Do all you can to keep leaves healthy.

Lastly, remember that the most delicious tomatoes seem to come right off the vine, eaten fresh in the garden. Soft, ripe, and fragrant...**there is truly nothing like a homegrown tomato.**

For more information on the cultivars described above and other tomato varieties, visit the [Rutgers Database of Tomato Varieties](#).



Welcome! I'm MJ. I've built a handful of gardens over the last few years and have totally fallen in love with gardening. My gardening blog, Home for the Harvest, has grown alongside my indoor and outdoor gardens. Click around my site and have a look :) Welcome!



Visiting Desert Hills Garden Centre: (Courtesy of Heather F.)

When I noticed the gum boot rings on my calves from all the time spent in my garden, I realized it was time for a break – and a visit to a nursery that I had heard so much about: Desert Hills Garden Centre [250 Elm Street, Ashcroft].

Although Ashcroft is a two and a half hour drive from Armstrong, a visit to Desert Hills is a wonderful way to spend a few hours or even a whole day for the avid gardener. Even those not so keen on plants will probably be entertained, as there really is 'something for everyone'!

Now if one is directionally challenged as I am, on the first approach to the farm we ended up in a field where we admired sturdy tomato seedlings and the deep green of the onions in their precise rows. However, on our second swing up to the gate I turned left and voila! There was a wonderful assortment of old farm machinery and other paraphernalia used decades ago to our left and the Garden Centre on our right, complete with goats doing their skyscraper antics on elevated platforms 5 m above the parking lot!

We moved quickly into the garden centre where it was evident that a wagon would be necessary for our purchases as soon as we saw the long tables of plants – many varieties and colours of flowers both annuals and perennials; vegetables – a staggering number of tomato and squash varieties along with any other variety one can think of; scrubs and trees – both deciduous and evergreen. And, if we couldn't find what we were looking for, the staff were most diligent in trying to find the item.

As we made our way to the exit, there were fresh vegetables and apples for sale along with a vast seed selection. Staff were very friendly answering any questions and helping us get our purchases out to the car.

Although our visit lasted a couple of hours it was so enjoyable that it seemed like we spent but an hour browsing.

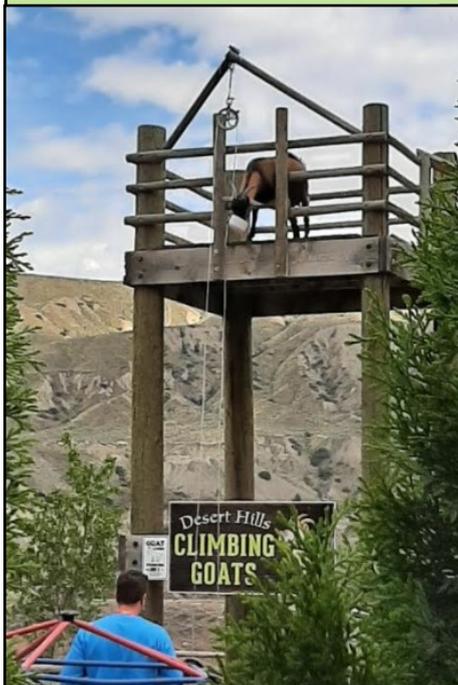


Photo Left: athletic goat
Photo Above: abundant pepper plants.
Photo Right Top: old machinery
Photo Right Bottom: horse with nursery

Plant of the Month: Zinnias by Heather H.

One of the easiest annuals to grow, zinnia flowers bring an explosion of color wherever they go. The show lasts from late spring until the first frost in fall. Butterflies and hummingbirds are attracted to the cheery flowers that bloom in nearly every bright color imaginable. They grow quickly and reliably, making them a great choice for first-time flower growers. Add in their low maintenance requirements and the variety of sizes and shapes, and you can't lose. www.gardendesign.com

Zones: Annual. Zinnias are appropriate for seasonal use in all zones.

Height/Spread: Varies by type. There are dwarf varieties 6 to 12 inches tall and wide, and others grow up to 4 feet tall and 1 to 2 feet wide.

Exposure: Full sun

Bloom Time: Late spring until first frost, but may show a slow-down in blooming at the peak of heat in summer.

Color: Flowers bloom in shades of orange, pink, purple, red, white and yellow and there are also bi-color and tri-color varieties. Leaves are pale to mid-green.

Characteristics: Zinnias come in a wide variety of flower shapes with stars, daisies, dahlias, spiders, buttons, domes, and quill-leaf cactus shapes. Within those shapes, there are also singles, semi-doubles and doubles.

Toxicity: Zinnias are safe to plant around animals because they are non-toxic to dogs, cats and horses.

PLANTING ZINNIA SEEDS**When to plant:**

As long as there is no further threat of frost, zinnias can be planted any time through the end of June. In fact, it's a great idea to plant multiple rounds at 2- to 3-week intervals up until the end of June for non-stop blooming into fall.

Where to plant:

Locate your zinnias in an area that will get at least 6 hours of sun each day and where there is well-draining soil.

How to plant:

Zinnias are best started from seed and can be sown directly in the garden after the threat of frost has passed. If you'd like to get a jump on them and start earlier indoors, try peat pots or other containers that can be planted directly in the ground, as zinnias can be a bit finicky when transplanted. Sow seeds ¼-inch deep and follow spacing directions on seed package. Give them sunshine and water and you'll have seedlings popping up in 4 to 7 days. Thin the seedlings to spacing of 6 to 18 inches (depending on variety) by snipping at the soil line with scissors. (Tip: Pulling out seedlings can disturb the roots of those left behind.) Zinnias grow quickly and you'll have beautiful bright blooms in about 60 days

Note: Zinnias are deer resistant and may even help protect other plants located next to them.



"I think zinnias are the best all 'around annual for my yard! "

Cheers, Heather H., Co-Editor

Plant of the Month Contd.:



Assorted gorgeous zinnias



"Queeny Lime Orange"



"Double Hot Cherry"



"Zahara starlight rose".



"Dreamland series coral".



"Soledo"



"Periosa White".



"Perfusion Lemon".



"Magellan Salmon"

Common Garden Weeds and How to Treat them: (Source: almanac.com by Catherine Boeckmann)

The best control strategy for weeds is always prevention. **Never let 'em seed!** This is the #1 rule with weeds. Some varieties produce tens of thousands of seeds from a single plant, multiplying your weed control problems for years to come. So remove weeds around your home before they flower and produce seeds.

1. Weed early, when the weeds are young. Inspect your garden daily. Just pull them up or cut them off below the soil line. Be careful to keep your digging shallow to you don't bring new weeds seeds to the surface. Do not leave pulled weeds on the surface; discard! Weeds are easily to remove when the ground is moist, such as the day after a rainfall.
2. Clean tools when you move from one area of the garden to another to avoid spreading weed seeds.
3. Mow lawn regularly to keep lawn weeds from producing seed. Mow off these green leaves!
4. Be careful when buying materials from garden centers. Ask for weed-free mulch, manure, compost, and soil. Read grass seed labels to make sure they don't contain other crop seed.
5. In the spring or fall when it's not gardening season, you could break up the top 4 to 8 inches of soil, rake it flat, and cover the soil in plastic sheeting for 6 to 8 weeks before seeding. Then, avoid cultivating the soil to a depth greater than 2 inches.
6. But once you've seeded, do not till a garden area if it's filled with perennial weeds; you'll only break up the underground tubers and spread weeds around.
7. Apply a layer of mulch! Weeds seeds have a harder time pushing through mulch, and mulch blocks sunlight
8. Water right around your plants; do not sprinkle your entire garden or you're watering your weeds.
9. In lawns, be careful not to over-fertilize or under-fertilize or you're promoting weed growth.
10. Establish a perimeter. Pay special attention to the area adjoining your flower bed, garden, natural area or lawn and establish a weed-free perimeter. Mow or mulch the area or pull or dig up weeds as they emerge. You'll help to reduce the number of new weed seeds in the area you want to protect. Also, a good trimmer can make it easier to reach weeds along garden beds, posts, and tight spots.

Pay special attention to **perennial weeds** as they are more difficult to control. You need dig up any roots, underground tubers and rhizomes without leaving fragments behind. New weeds can grow from any pieces that break off and remain in the soil.

1. Cut off the emerged green part of the weed with your hoe or mower—repeating the process quickly each time it re-grows. Without leaves needed for photosynthesis, the underground plant parts will become weakened and may eventually die.
2. If you dig out the weed, try to remove the taproot or as much as you can. You may be need to repeat several times.
3. When pulling out these weeds, wait until the soil is moist, and grasp low on the stem to avoid breaking it off. With these techniques, you'll soon find that you won't spend much time weeding the following years!

Learn more about the specific techniques to manage these weeds in the following sites. The first reference describes the difference between weeds, noxious weeds and invasive weeds.

<https://www.almanac.com/content/common-garden-weeds>

<https://blog.nutrilawn.com/a-list-of-common-spring-weeds>

<https://www.cbc.ca/life/home/the-ultimate-guide-to-weeds-what-to-yank-what-to-leave-and-what-you-should-never-ever-touch-1.5250554>

<https://bcinvasives.ca/>

Do you know our common garden weeds ?



Lambquarters



Shepherd's Purse



Pigweed



Broadleaf Plantain



Bindweed/Creeping Jenny/Wild Morning Glory



Quackgrass



Ground Ivy aka Creeping Charlie



Canadian Thistle



White Clover

Chickweed



Purslane



Crabgrass



Dandelion

Recipe of the Month: Strawberry Pie (Courtesy of Sue L.)

Strawberry Pie

Pastry(enough for 2 crust pie) (your own or a mix)

Fresh strawberries, halved (or quartered if large) 4 cups (1 Litre)

Granulated sugar 1 cup (250 ml)

Minute tapioca 3 Tbsp (50 ml)

Granulated sugar 1/4-1/2 tsp (1-2 ml)

Roll out pastry on lightly floured surface. Fit into ungreased 9 inch pie plate. Roll out top crust.

Place strawberries, first amount of sugar and tapioca in large bowl. Mix. Let stand for 15 minutes. Stir. Pour into pie shell. Dampen edge of pastry. Cover with top crust. Trim and crimp to seal. Cut vents in top.

Sprinkle with 2nd amount of sugar. Bake on bottom rack in 350 degree oven for about 45 minutes until cooked. Cuts into 8 wedges.

Enjoy!!



ADGC FACEBOOK PAGE: Have you visited or "liked" our club's Facebook page? Special thanks to Ken Barr who regularly adds interesting information and events to the page!
 Visit: <https://www.facebook.com/ArmstrongandDistrictGardenClub/>

Pretty in Pink and Armstrong Flower Beds:



Upcoming Events:

There are no scheduled Garden Club meetings until further notice.

For gardening books, visit the Armstrong Museum Book Sale from Tuesday to Saturdays, 10 am to 4 pm.

There will be no newsletters in July or August. Continue to send in your news and it will be featured in September's issue.

In the meantime, be kind, be calm and be safe!

ADGC members are now eligible to receive 10% off regularly priced garden centre plants. Show your ADGC membership badge to the cashiers.



THANK YOU!

Thank you to this month's newsletter contributors— Heather F., Sue L., Glenn, Mary Jane D., and co-editors Heather H. and Mary J.

About ADGC:

The Armstrong and District Garden Club was established in 1927 and is an active, fun group with over 60 members. The club supports the community through donations, student bursaries, planting along PV Boulevard, and supporting initiatives such as Communities in Bloom.

