

June 4, 2009

The Green Garden – Award for Working with Nature to Create a Sense of Place

The Communities in Bloom committee has added a new twist to this year's Campbell River Garden competition. In addition to evaluating the best garden in each of the four standard categories, all of the gardens will have a chance to win the Green Garden Award. These additional criteria will showcase efforts to create healthier, conservation-oriented living spaces in our community.

"The five categories that will be used to determine the best Green Garden Award closely align with Campbell River's Green City strategies and principal environmental initiatives," affirms Acting Mayor Mary Storry. *"The committee has included items that will apply to the less traditional gardens and we hope to learn some of the creative ideas people are using to 'go green',"* she adds.

The Backyard Habitat category recognizes how gardens contribute to biodiversity conservation through the use of native plants, remnant vegetation retention and wildlife trees and berry-producing shrubs. If there are specialized butterfly or bird gardens, we'd like to hear about them.

The Pesticide Free category recognizes the integration of a pest management plan to eliminate or at least reduce the use of chemical substances. Steps may include preventive maintenance to create healthy soil and a willingness to accept some damage. Manual pest control and the least toxic options should be considered as the first line of treatment.

For the Zero Mile Diet category, the judges will be looking for food grown and harvested for household consumption. *"Backyard food production is at the heart of a sustainable, local economy,"* Storry emphasizes. *"If you don't have a traditional vegetable garden, don't forget the rhubarb patch, and fruit and nut trees. Even potted herbs count."*

Water Conservation measures form the fourth category. Show the judges how you conserve this precious resource by planting drought tolerant plants or mulching, by using a rain barrel or other collection device, or by hand watering or drip irrigation.

"The last category Rethink, Reduce, Reuse & Recycle is the gardener's chance to get very creative," notes City environmental coordinator Terri Martin. *"Tell us if your garden is part of a stewardship or conservation project, or if you share the food you grow with your neighbours. Show us any interesting materials that you've given a new life, your strategies to reduce noise pollution and fossil fuel use during gardening maintenance. And be proud of your compost!"*

Entry forms are due by June 12. To view the Green Garden checklist and find our more information about the City Garden Competition, visit the What's New section of the City's website at www.campbellriver.ca or contact the City of Campbell River Parks Office at 250-286-7275.

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