

## TLC Abkhazi Garden May 2025 E-News

### Accessibility in a Heritage Garden



TLC has made some big improvements to Abkhazi Garden's accessibility.

This spring a new walkway that is more level and easier to walk on than the 1940's driveway it replaces, was installed. There are now more benches for guests to rest on. Our pathways have been widened and marked with signs to show wheelchair accessibility, and we have accessibility maps at the gate.

Recently, a mobility challenged guest wanted to profoundly thank the people who made it possible for her to enjoy our heritage garden.

### Abkhazi Garden Artifacts



We are very grateful to Christopher and Pamela Ball, former owners of the garden, for their donation of some very interesting artifacts that belonged to Prince Nicolas and Princess Peggy Abkhazi.

Christopher is seen here with an irrigation tractor. When all four tractors rolled across the Summerhouse lawn, Prince Nicolas would say, "There goes my fleet".

The irrigation tractors and other artifacts are being kept in the Summerhouse where they presided when the Abkhazis lived in the garden.

### The Coat of a Passionate Gardener



Christopher and Pamela Ball also donated Peggy Abkhazi's, garden coat along with her sitting stool, secateurs and trowels.

Peggy is pictured wearing her garden coat while at work in her garden. (photo - UVic Archives) Peggy liked to give tours of her garden and she let visitors know she was a hands-on gardener.

Peggy's coat now hangs in the Summerhouse Museum.

## Abkhazi Fashion and Hair Design



Princess Peggy Abkhazi enjoyed dressing for all occasions. Peggy is seen here with her hair done up wearing a beautiful evening gown at the Union Club in 1967. (photo—Fiona Hyslop)

George Molnar did Peggy's hair for 20 years at his shop 'The Hair Society' on Douglas St. He would also deliver hair pieces to Peggy's home.

His wife, Betty Molnar, visited the garden recently and remembers Peggy as a very charming, lovely lady who was very kind.

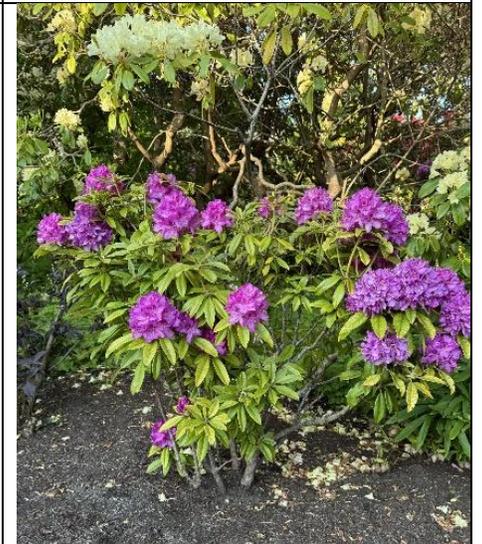
## Adding Rhododendrons to Abkhazi Garden



Abkhazi Garden has some new Rhododendrons thanks to a donation of Rhodos from our volunteer, Howard and his strata.

Our head gardener, Jacqui and volunteer Micah planted a Goldflimmer Rhodo with variegated leaves.

Jock, in red, planted a Brickdust Rhodo while Tara helped plant two Pink Porcelain Rhodos. We do not know the variety of the purple rhodo but we know it's a beauty.



## Deadheading the Rhodos after Beautiful Blooms



We have had a spectacular Rhododendron Season. Many people came back with family or friends for a second look.

But the beauty of Rhodos does not last forever. The bush that was stunningly purple will turn brown.

That's when garden volunteers like Kimie, on the left and Nancy on the right, get busy and deadhead the spent flowers.

Deadheading makes the bush more attractive, and it will prevent a heavy set of seeds.

## Spring Plant Sale 2025



Head gardener, Jacqui, was interviewed by Tess van Straaten from CHEK TV to promote our Spring Plant Sale on Saturday, April 26 and Sunday, April 27.

Many thanks to our volunteers who helped set the sale up. Special thanks to Penny on the far left who has helped enormously at many sales. She recently moved to Vancouver and we will really miss her.



We had 3 veteran volunteers. Ronnie, Lesley and Jhosseline handle the Saturday morning plant sale rush. Customers bought plants by the armful and wheelbarrow full.

We raised \$7,600 before taxes and before expenses, a big increase from \$5,750 in 2024 and \$4600 in 2023.

Many thanks to all our sales volunteers, gate greeters and docents who helped out.

## Vital People at Abkhazi Garden



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NEWS**



The Victoria Foundation sponsors a television news feature series called Vital People which airs each Sunday on CHEK News @ 5.

We are pleased to announce that our volunteers, Marg in blue and Jane in white seen here with CHEK reporter, Tess van Straaten, will be featured as vital people at Abkhazi Garden on CHEK News in June.

Jane and Marg have been vital to our garden for over 23 years. They became friends as gate greeters and have welcomed thousands of people from around the world and given many tours.

## New Gate Greeters and Docents



We are delighted to have new gate greeters this season: Diane, Gail, Jen, Janis, Bree, Maria and Shelley. We have new docents as well, Leslie, Arla and Barbara.

Gate greeters, Bree and Janis, are pictured here and they are ready to welcome a record number of visitors this season.

Our new docent, Leslie, is the granddaughter of Ray Parfitt who built the Summerhouse. Parfitt Bros built the Bay Street Armouries, the Christ Church Cathedral, and other notable buildings.

## A Busy Season for the Teahouse



Garden flowers add a beautiful touch to the High Tea desserts served in the Tea House.

The Teahouse is also having a busy season.

Thanh finds time to step out into the herb garden behind the Teahouse to find flower decor for the dessert plates.

A huge thank you to Thanh and the teahouse kitchen staff who prepare teas for volunteers no matter how busy the Teahouse is.

## Jim and Mark are Building a New Toolshed



Start with a good foundation.



Keep the walls straight.



Add windows for light.

## Design Victoria Tours at Abkhazi Garden



Over 30 people from Design Victoria came for a tour of Abkhazi Garden in peak rhododendron season..

Retired architect, Terry Williams spoke about John Wade who designed the Summerhouse and House.

Our head gardener, Jacqui talked about landscape design and sustainable practices.

## Coming up in June



In June we will begin our series of performances by musicians from the Victoria Conservatory of Music. The music starts on Friday, June 13 between 1 and 3 pm with a performance by two saxophone players.

On National Garden Day, Friday, June 13, we will be launching 'Bike to Abkhazi Garden'. Cyclists could win an Afternoon Tea for Two at the Teahouse.