

Flower count returns to Greater Victoria

Nicole Crescenzi
News Staff

Flower enthusiasts best start tallying: the 45th annual Flower Count is back.

The Greater Victoria tradition welcomes communities to count their blooms this week as part of a friendly competition to discover the “bloomingest” community in the region.

Last year the City of Victoria won with a striking 44 billion blooms, dethroning the longtime champion of Colwood.

“It is about the community coming together, as well as tradition in Greater Victoria. We certainly aren’t shy about sharing our climactic advantage with our friends around Canada,” said Paul Nurse, CEO of Destination Greater Victoria. “It gives us a chance to, shall we say, poke them a little bit, expressing how much we enjoy living here and perhaps not living there.”

From March 4 to 11 communities are asked to tally flowers in their neighbourhoods and submit the counts online. To make things a bit easier, a small tree full of blossoms equals 250,000 blossoms, a mid-sized heather bush as 1,000 blossoms and trees fully in bloom count for 750,000 blossoms.

School kids are also encouraged to get involved, with Grade 4 and 5 students asked to submit entries for



Acting Victoria Mayor Jeremy Loveday (left), horticulturalist Valerie Murray; Laura Dohan, online marketing specialist with the Butchart Gardens; Paul Nurse, CEO of Destination Greater Victoria; Thandi Williams, director of operations and deputy private secretary to the Lieutenant Governor; Catherine Holt, CEO of the Victoria Chamber of Commerce and Patty Grant, president of Friends of Government House Volunteers are excited about the launch of the 2020 Flower Count. (Nicole Crescenzi/News Staff)

a chance for the winning class to get a trip by L.A. Limousines to the Butchart Gardens. Last year’s winner was Cordova Bay Elementary with a count of 13 billion blooms.

“Flowers are iconic to the City of Victoria and to our region,” said acting Victoria Mayor Jere-

my Loveday. “I think the Victoria flower count is a fun way to celebrate that.”

This year people can also participate on Instagram by tagging garden and floral posts with #FlowerCount to get a chance to win admission for two to the Butchart

Gardens, as well as an assortment of flower seeds and afternoon tea for two.

The contest runs from 8 a.m. on March 4 to March 11 at 5 p.m. Submissions can be made online at flowercount.com.

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School names to be unveiled at open house

The opportunity to weigh what to name the two new schools in Langford has created quite a buzz within the community.

Ravi Parmar, chair of Sooke School District Board of Education, said thousands of people responded with suggestions for what to name the new elementary and middle schools.

“It’s the largest public participation process the board has ever been involved in,” Parmar said.

The final names will be made official at an open house on Thursday, March 12.

“People can come in and get an opportunity to see the design for the new schools and join us in celebrating the announcement of the new names,” Parmar said. “It’s also the first information session for staff to walk people through the catchment boundary review process as well.

That will provide the public with an opportunity to share key principles they would like the board to consider when reviewing the boundaries, Parmar said.

“It will be a fun night and the place to be for everyone to celebrate, learn and engage,” he added.

The open house at Belmont Secondary School runs from 6 to 8 p.m., with the program scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m.

Federal funds help open doors to affordable housing in Langford

Aaron Guillen
News Staff

A new apartment building brings 120 new homes to Langford’s downtown core this spring.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) said they will provide \$31.5 million as a low interest insured loan to help build Orono Place Apartments, a five-storey building at 854 Orono Ave.

One-bedroom suites will start at \$1,260 per month, and two-bedroom apartments at \$1,554 – 10 per cent below market rate.

“Every community across this country has the right to safe and

affordable roof over their heads,” said Maryam Monsef, Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister for Women and Gender Equality, during the announcement Monday. “We leave it up to municipalities to come forward to the federal government to apply for funds and build affordable, accessible and energy efficient units like the ones we are celebrating today.”

Orono Place is designed to be 26.2 per cent more energy efficient and reduce greenhouse gas emissions of 21 per cent compared to the 2015 building codes.

As part of the RCFi, a national Housing Strategy initiative by the CMHC, at least 35 homes will stay at or below 30 per cent

of the median income level of the area for at least 11 years.

Since its launch in April 2017, the RCFi has encouraged the construction of 42,500 new rental housing units across Canada.

Orono developer Danny Jadresko, president of Woodsmere Holdings Corp., reiterated how excited he was to help reduce the shortage of affordable rental homes in Langford.

“This is the city where families go for affordable housing and we’re building it from the ground up,” said Mayor Stew Young said during the announcement.

Units at Orono are currently 70 per cent full and will begin moving residents in by April. aaron.guillen@goldstreamgazette.com



Maryam Monsef, Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister for Women and Gender Equality, announced that the federal government would support Orono Place Apartments to build 120 affordable homes Monday morning. (Aaron Guillen/News Staff)

Employee dies at Langford business

A 25-year-old man died at a Langford workplace Monday morning.

West Shore RCMP were called to Sysco, 2881 Amy Rd. in Langford, around 4 a.m. where police say the man was hit by a semi tractor trailer.

In a statement, Sysco confirmed that the workplace incident took place involving two employees, resulting in the death of one employee.

“Our deepest sympathies are with the individuals involved in the accident, as well as their families. The safety of our associates is of utmost importance to Sysco,” the company said. According to the company’s statement, the names of those involved will not be disclosed out of respect for the families.

The West Shore RCMP continues to investigate alongside WorkSafe BC and the BC Coroners Service.



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