



UVic Campus Community Garden 2023-2024 Annual Report

Created: May 2024

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Territory Acknowledgement

The UVic Campus Community Garden (CCG) sits on the unceded, stolen lands of the Ləkʷəŋən Peoples - the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations - and recognizes that being a part of an institution in this capacity is continuation of colonial violence and occupation of land. This recognition should and does bring up discomfort - that discomfort is asking to be acknowledged. How one chooses to acknowledge that discomfort is unique and deeply personal; we encourage you to take some time to consider how you will. We at the CCG embrace this discomfort and acknowledge it by helping reconnect people to the earth, respecting local Indigenous practices, and by seeking ways to decolonize and anti-capitalize our space. We believe in promoting not only the life of our plants, but the life of our community, and the ideas brought forth by our community so that we can all flourish mutually.

Campus Community Garden Team

There were some staff refreshes during the year:

Coordinator: Syd (resigned summer 2023) → Lyndsay

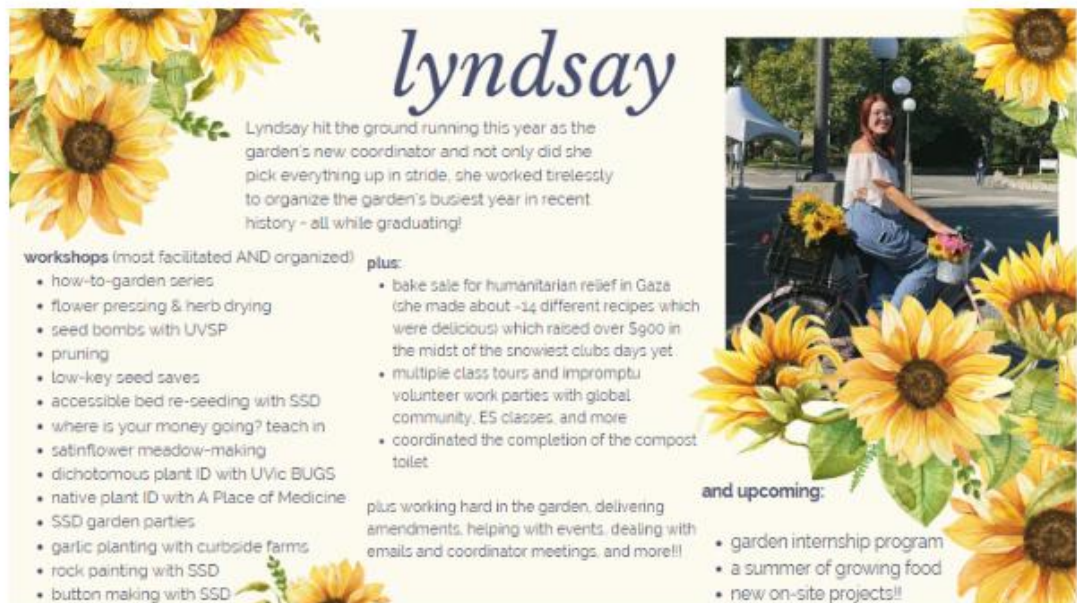
Assistant Coordinator: Jen (resigned winter 2023) → Juls

Site Officers: Kate (hired May 2023), Jack (returned fall 2023)

Outreach Officer: Juls → Jessi (hired January 2024)

Work Study Students: Em-J, Anuinder, and Caitlin

Presentation slides taken from our Year-in-Review presentation:



Lyndsay

Lyndsay hit the ground running this year as the garden's new coordinator and not only did she pick everything up in stride, she worked tirelessly to organize the garden's busiest year in recent history - all while graduating!

workshops (most facilitated AND organized)

- how-to-garden series
- flower pressing & herb drying
- seed bombs with UVSP
- pruning
- low-key seed saves
- accessible bed re-seeding with SSD
- where is your money going? teach in
- safflower meadow-making
- dichotomous plant ID with UVic BUGS
- native plant ID with A Place of Medicine
- SSD garden parties
- garlic planting with curbside farms
- rock painting with SSD
- button making with SSD

plus:

- bake sale for humanitarian relief in Gaza (she made about ~14 different recipes which were delicious) which raised over \$900 in the midst of the snowiest clubs days yet
- multiple class tours and impromptu volunteer work parties with global community, ES classes, and more
- coordinated the completion of the compost toilet

plus working hard in the garden, delivering amendments, helping with events, dealing with emails and coordinator meetings, and more!!

and upcoming:

- garden internship program
- a summer of growing food
- new on-site projects!!



juls

Juls spent the summer and fall semester continuing work as the garden's outreach officer, and returned from winter break as assistant coordinator! She'd already been doing some assistant coordinator work regarding plot renewals and some administrative duties, so it was a pretty easy transition but still came with an increased workload - if anything it let him get more done!

workshops (organized, not facilitated)

- mushroom bed planting, with regrowth
- winterizing workshop, with Syd
- hops winterizing party, with wizards of beer club and Acom
- special collections tour
- journal making, with book arts
- yard-free composting, with vic compost ed
- container gardening, with vic compost ed

events:

- garden live music fest, august, with live music club
- harvest party, october
- spring social, april, with live music club
- inspirational art walk
- 12 days of giving december giveaway series



plus:

- instagram maintenance
- launching sundew, the new garden journal
- plot renter renewal & checkup
- class tours, work parties, and impromptu volunteer parties!

and upcoming:

- summer poetry picnics
- more sundew
- communal tea/herb bed!



kate

Kate was hired as a summer site officer in May 2023 and we're so happy they stayed on going into the fall! Kate's hard work in the garden all summer and fall is the biggest reason we can boast "over 900lbs of food donated to the UVSS foodbank last year," and their planning this spring is already setting us up for even more incredible season of growing food.

Kate has spearheaded an up-and-coming program evaluation for CCG and the UVSS food bank that will help inform what, and in what quantities, the garden grows in an effort to provide more culturally appropriate and diverse food, as well as a more comprehensive understanding of how the food bank is accessed and how we could improve our offerings.



jack

Jack was originally hired as a site officer back in fall, 2022, and though he was away the summer of '23, his preparation and early planting helped the garden have some early harvests last spring!

Jack's also been working in the garden since last fall and also started an ambitious and successful program growing microgreens in the garden office, including hosting a workshop on how to start! We're so happy he'll be sticking around this summer, albeit with lower hours, as he goes on to do a placement with his social work program at the Snelbourne Community Kitchen (where we hope to rebuild a connection with the CCG!)



jessi

Jessi was hired as the garden's new Outreach Officer in January 2024 after being on the garden board since fall 2023! She got started right away with our incredible new blog, picked up the newsletters again, and helped organize, plan, and run our amazing Spring Social! She also reached out to Habit Coffee and coordinated our selling of Sundew's first issue outside their beautiful Pandora St. location, and helped with collaging. She's off for the summer and we miss her already!



Summary & Highlights

2023/2024 was a year of big change and excitement! Staff hit the ground running in May by **hiring a summer site officer, Kate**. Using some set-up and pre-planning done by site officer Jack (who went abroad for the summer), garden staff continued and increased food production from our giving gardens and staff greenhouse. A lot of it was learning by doing for Lyndsay, Kate, and Juls, but by the end of the season **over 900lbs of food** had been donated to the UVSS food bank! This included kale, swiss chard, leaf lettuce, carrots, edible flowers, grapes, plums, apples, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, eggplants, cucumelons, squash, beans, peas, and more!

The CCG board had a major overhaul as well, as many graduated in the spring of 2023. We held a successful by-election in September 2023 to gain new board members, one of whom was Jessi, who became our outreach officer. Board members **Allen and Clare** routinely volunteer at work parties and in other capacities, such as Sundew and workshops, and Justine rents a plot at the garden. Eve has been the longest-standing director on the CCG board!

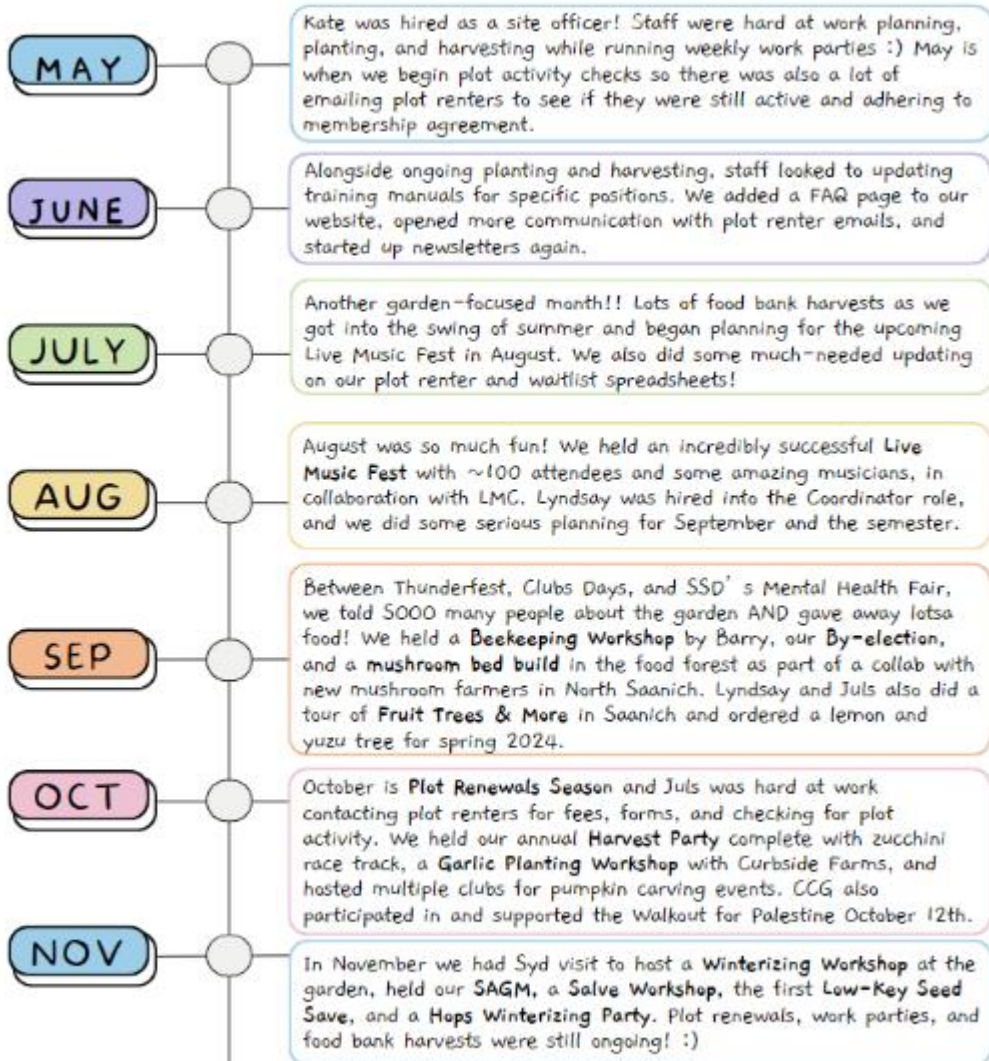
Board: Allen Keefe, Priyanka Lopez, Em Creasy, Susie Robin, Clare Downie, Sasha W, Kenna Jones
Associate: Eve Kenny, Justine Keefer

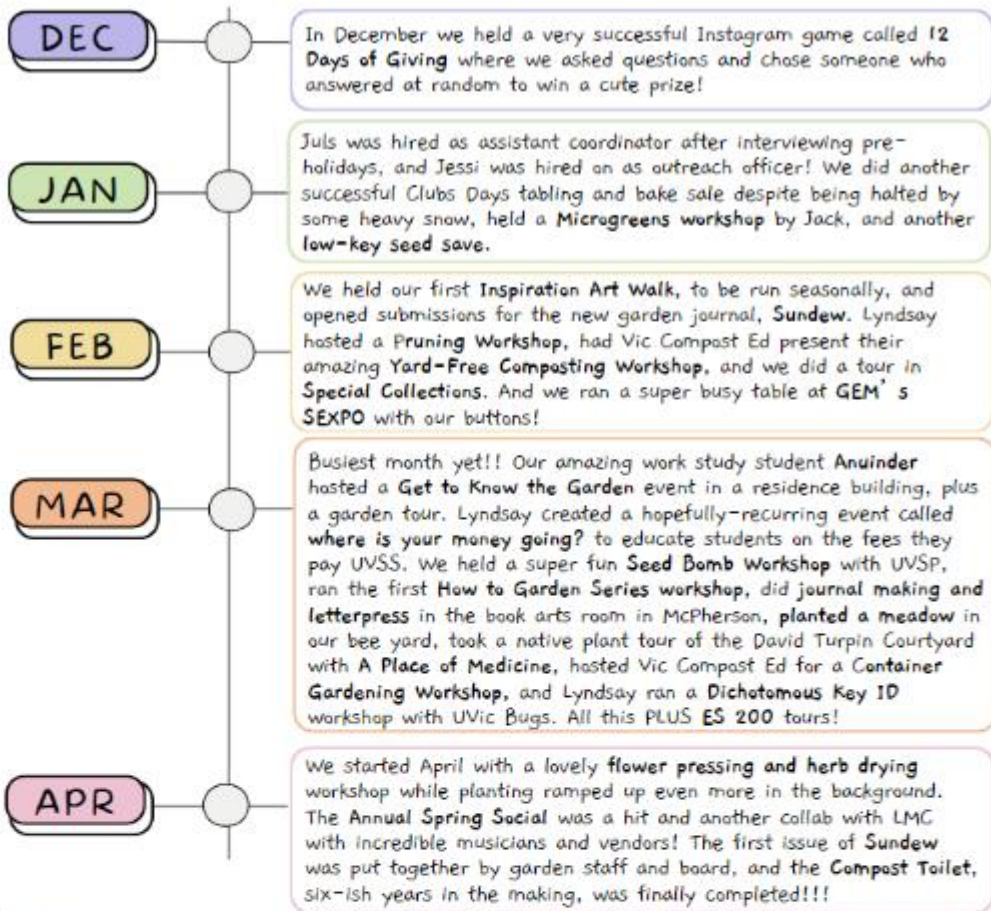
Staff were excited to create more student engagement. Spurred by the success of the **August 2023 Live Music Fest**, which had ~100 come-and-go attendees, the garden truly saw the positives of frequent and fun collaboration with other student groups and clubs, as many attendees had never been to the garden before and some returned for work parties or workshops. There were a **minimum of 2 workshops per month** for the remainder of the school year, alongside our regularly scheduled volunteer work parties.

We also turned our attention to **supporting the UVSS food bank** and working more closely with them in order to provide more culturally appropriate food, and diversify both the plants we grow and the quantities we grow them in. Garden staff and board, spearheaded by Kate, are looking into **evaluating opportunities for our relationship with the food bank and what food we donate** (and in what quantity). Food security and sovereignty remains an issue that doesn't look like it's going away anytime soon, and with UVic still not having its own community garden or food bank, we're brainstorming for future ideas for raised beds around residence buildings or more foraging options for students on campus and working with appropriate UVic facilities/departments to engage with.



YEAR AT A GLANCE





Campus Community Garden



Student Engagement via Collaboration

Raising awareness for the existence of the UVic Campus Community Garden is an ongoing battle. Environmental Students make up a bulk of our participating students and staff, thanks to twice-yearly ES 200 garden tours. While the CCG is particularly relevant to ES students, food and growing food is a common denominator for everyone, and so we were happy to collaborate with multiple different groups this year in order to raise awareness in places where students might be less likely to find us.

Some of the student clubs we worked with during the year are:

- **Ecological Restoration Club**
The ERC maintains a plot at the garden and regularly holds work parties there!
- **Horticulture Club**
The Horticulture Club refreshed their garden plot this year and also held a pumpkin carving event at the garden in the fall.
- **Multifaith Centre**
We donated some food to Multifaith for one of their dinners and ended up giving them a plot in the early spring. There have been several work parties since and it's ready to grow big for the summer!
- **African Caribbean Students Association**
ACSA held their fall meet & greet at the garden.
- **Curbside Farms**
Curbside got a plot at the garden, co-hosted our Garlic Planting workshop. We're hoping to do "build days" with them in the future for building raised beds and other structures!
- **SOFAR**
Students' Open Forum Against Racism held an event in collaboration with The Abundance Collective at the garden: BIPOC pumpkin carving!
- **Live Music Club**
The LMC and the Garden have had a relationship for a while thanks to its old president, Dilly, playing music at garden events in the past. We collaborated with them to do an open mic in spring 2023, and with that as our inspiration, the new president Charis helped collaborate with the Summer Live Music Fest in August 2023 and the Spring Social 2024, both of which had incredible turnout and were a ton of fun!

We also worked with our fellow advocacy and affiliate groups:

- **Society for Students with a Disability**
We held a rock painting party with SSD, a collage button maker party, and began bi-weekly accessible garden work parties in the spring to continue through the summer.
- **Gender Empowerment Centre**
We tabled at GEM's yearly SEXPO event with a busy table and collage buttonmaking.

- **UVic Sustainability Project**

We tabled at UVSP's yearly Environmental Roundtable, and host monthly work parties with them and their collective! Maintaining a relationship with our long-time friends and office pals is really important to us :)

And we worked with some non-UVic groups as well:

- **Oceanwise Youth**

They came for a volunteer work party and tour of the garden.

- **Various Elementary, Middle School, and Kindergarten Tours**

- **Victoria Compost Education Centre**

Kayla has hosted many workshops for us and this year was no different! She facilitated both Yard-Free Composting and Container Gardening. Clare, who also works at Vic Compost Ed, has been a contact and support with the building and completion of our Compost Toilet.

Workshops

This year, CCG ran regular workshops about various gardening activities, with about two workshops occurring each month and sometimes more. These workshops were free for anyone to attend and primarily took place inside the garden. These workshops were facilitated by CCG staff, volunteers, and externally hired experts, depending on the topic at hand. We saw the highest engagement at our **Mushroom Bed Build** and **How to Garden** series.



Food Production

Thanks to Jack's hard work in spring 2023, we had food harvests as early as April. We were already in the swing of harvests in May 2023, whether for radishes and turnips or leafy greens! Throughout the summer, we harvested beans, peas, edible flowers, strawberries, plums, grapes, blueberries, raspberries, cucumbers, lettuce, chard, kale, carrots, cucumelons, tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, zucchini, squash, and more. Our copious sunflower seeds ended up being used for microgreens which Jack started in the garden office and continued to donate to the foodbank throughout the winter. Lettuce and leafy greens were also grown throughout the winter in the staff greenhouse and under poly tunnels in the garden. Through lots of hard work, planning, and gardening, CCG donated over 900lbs of food to the UVSS food bank over the last year. **We plan on beating that for 2024** and are already on track to do so!

We've also taken a look at planting and providing **more culturally diverse and appropriate food**.

This is an ongoing educational journey involving a lot of collaboration, research, an independent study for Kate, a program evaluation with the UVSS foodbank, and chatting with community members, and will come more into fruition in 2024/2025.



Campana Community Garden

Community Relationships

CCG deeply values its relationships with other individuals and student groups. Here's a list with [detail](#) of groups or individuals we have ties with. Some of this was taken from "Collaboration" up above.

- **Ecological Restoration Club**

The ERC maintains a plot at the garden and regularly holds work parties there.

- **Live Music Club**

The LMC and the Garden have had a relationship for a while thanks to its old president, Dilly, playing music at garden events in the past. We collaborated with them to do an open mic in spring 2023, and with that as our inspiration, the new president Charis helped collaborate with the Summer Live Music Fest in August 2023 and the Spring Social 2024, both of which had incredible turnout and were a ton of fun!



- **Environmental Sciences Classes & Professors**

The ES 200 classes regularly bring tours to the garden in the beginning of fall and winter semesters. Some classes also come separately for their own tours or work parties, like Nick Montgomery's class this last year, and Shannon (an old board member) the semester prior.

- **Wizards of Beer Club**

The Campus Community Garden has been growing hops for the Wizards for over 20 years. This year, we got to try some of their pickle beer with hops dated from the CCG back in 2000, which means they were from our old location. This full-circle feeling is really cool and shows a unique way in which clubs can collaborate with CCG!

- **UVic BUGS**

The biology club has co-hosted some events with us and we hope to do more in the future!

- **Horticulture Club**

The Horticulture Club maintains a plot at the garden, and also held a pumpkin carving event at the garden in the fall.

- **Multifaith Centre**

We donated some food to Multifaith for one of their dinners and ended up giving them a plot in the early spring. There have been several work parties since and it's ready to grow big for the summer. Our main contact for Multifaith is Min-Goo.

- **Curbside Farms**

Curbside maintains a plot at the garden and co-hosted our Garlic Planting workshop. We're hoping to do "build days" with them in the future for building raised beds and other structures!

- **Society for Students with a Disability**

We held a rock painting party with SSD, a collage button maker party, and began bi-weekly

accessible garden work parties in the spring to continue through the summer. We're also collaborating with one of their collective members, Acorn, for our new wheelchair accessible bed.

- **Gender Empowerment Centre**

We table at GEM's yearly SEXPO event. They're also co-hosting Beehive Collective's mural installation with us on May 12th.

- **UVic Sustainability Project**

UVSP are our lovely office buddies!! They host regular garden parties and often collaborate with us on events, like the Seed Bomb workshop.

- **Oceanwise Youth**

They came for a volunteer work party and tour of the garden last fall and are hoping to return.

- **Victoria Compost Education Centre**

Kayla has hosted many workshops for us and this year was no different! She facilitated both Yard-Free Composting and Container Gardening. Clare, who also works at Vic Compost Ed, has been a contact and support with the building and completion of our Compost Toilet.

By The Numbers

Although from what we can tell, engagement has generally gone down since pre-COVID, it's gone noticeably up for the 23/24 year thanks to staff work versus the 22/23 year. We had a **75%** increase in workshops held this year, with a whopping **20** workshops held between September 2023 and May 2024. Over all of them, 112 attendees or volunteers joined educational and/or interactive workshops of varying topics, resulting in approximately 286 hours of learning over 42 distinct activities or topics.

Our **events** also saw an increase in engagement. The Summer Live Music Fest had about 100 attendees, the Harvest Party about 50, and the Spring Social around 70-100. These events, while not workshop or education based, serve as a great way for introducing new students to the garden and raising awareness of our space.

Overall our **work parties** this year received more attendees as well. On average, we had 2-3 attendees per work party, with some having as many as 7-10 (or up to 20, in the case of a visiting class or volunteer group like Global Community), with over 300 volunteer hours over the fall and winter semesters. As usual, some lovely familiar faces show up time and time again!



Demographics

For **garden plots**, the allotment plots remain split 33% staff, 33% graduates, and 33% undergraduates. Staff have the longest waitlist (of about 3-4 years) due to low turnover, but also join the waitlist at a slower rate. Graduates join the waitlist at a similarly low rate, but have slightly better turnover, and so the graduate waitlist maintains around 1-2 months. Undergraduates have the highest turnover and also are the most frequently added to the waitlist; their wait is about 6 months.

For **work parties**, almost all of our volunteers are undergraduates. We frequently see students from Environmental Sciences thanks to our regular ES 200 tours, but we also have some regular faces from Computer Sciences, Astronomy, and others.

For **workshops and events**, our demographic is more varied.

Social Media

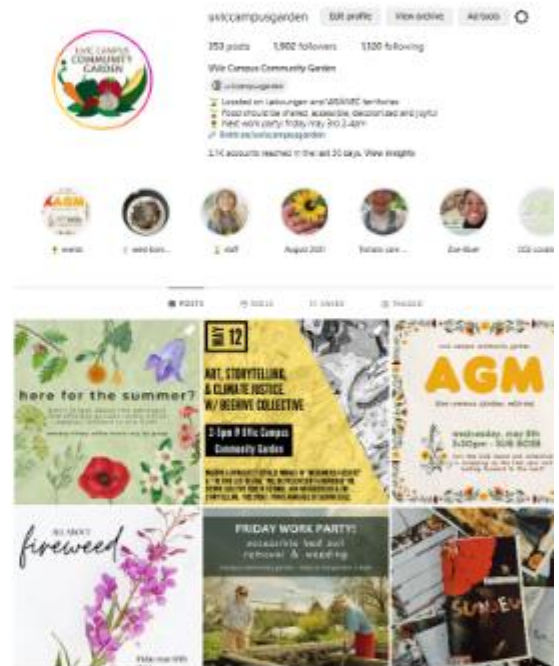
After posting Palestine solidarity stories and posts in the fall, our **Facebook** page was taken down/suspended. Engagement there was already at a minimal (with approximately 2 likes/reacts to any one post) and management was difficult due to Facebook's logistics. As Facebook is used less and less by the general population, we're happy to cut it from our social media platform in general.

Meanwhile, **Instagram** interaction went way up. Thanks to its new "collaborator" feature, we're able to more obviously link up with collab-based events. We found that by interacting with UVic Year One on Instagram we received 20 new followers in a day; Clubs Days always results in more follows; and sharing stories from around town, finding new accounts to follow and boost, always helps as well. We ended the 2024 fiscal year with 1900 followers, a 7.3% increase from February (Instagram shows you stats for the last 90 days). We had 71 unfollows and 201 new followers, giving us an overall increase of 130 over 3 months.

Our **Mailchimp** newsletter also saw an increase in interaction after Jessi picked it up again when she was hired. Coupled with "The Dirt" plot renter emails, the garden has noticed feeling more involved and interconnected with both its collective, plot renters, and the larger Victoria community.

Year-to-Year

This year marked an **increase in engagement from last year across the board**. Our tabling events were packed as we had a table full of food and sunflowers to give away, we had a crowded table at



SEXPO thanks to the funny collage button craft, and we held a table at UVSP's annual Environmental Roundtable this year thanks to increased staff capacity.

Our **work parties** also got a small noticeable increase in attendance. Workshop attendance remained generally the same, with a few outliers, like the How To Garden series and our Mushroom Bed building. Events were generally an increase in attendance, especially our Harvest Party, which was without any club collaboration and yet still had 50-70 in attendance over the course of the event.

Challenges

Engagement remains a challenge for the garden. Some events, like our Journal Making event, had about 130 likes on Instagram, many shares and comments, and yet only about 6 attendees besides staff arrived. In March alone we held 7 of our 20 workshops, and it's possible that as a result, they didn't get the love and energy required to hype them up appropriately (eg. posters, presentation to classes, etc). In the same vein, students might have felt spread thin and only able to attend one event rather than all of them, if they were busy with schoolwork in the last full month of the semester.

Budget came to be an issue in the later part of the fiscal year, as we realised that our surplus post-COVID will be running out as the result of increased staffing hours and investments in large on-site projects, like the Compost Toilet, incoming fruit trees, repairs for our Farm Stand, a new accessible garden bed, and more. While our budget is currently "healthy" and we have money remaining in our trust fund, continuing at the rate we are will have us running through it by the end of the 2024/2025 fiscal year.

The CCG collective also struggled in the fall and then throughout the semester due to what the UN labels as a genocide occurring in Palestine, and reconciling our values of decolonization and anti-oppression with operating within and on a colonial institution, whether the UVSS or UVic. Navigating social media nuances while trying to do what we can to help and participate in awareness for our collective was stressful, logistically complicated, and drew a lot of energy and time away from what would once have been considered a basic and expected form of activism from CCG board, staff, and larger collective. CCG is hopeful that the UVSS BoD for 2024/2025 will be actively aligned with an actually anti-oppressive and decolonization-based framework, putting students and their wellbeing first as opposed to bureaucratic, colonial restrictions in the form of policy.



Looking Forward

For **engagement**, while we love saying yes to everything, for the 2024/2025 year we want to be more proactive in planning workshops and events further out, appropriately advertising for them (posters, CFUV, better social media campaigns), and being more realistic about both student and staff capacity. This might mean planning a semester's events the semester before as much as possible, creating a set schedule for advertising (post on X date, put up posters on X date, contact CFUV about an advertisement on X day, etc). This also means saying **no** to events we want to do but might not be able to enact with proper diligence. These practices should also help our budget and make each workshop more attended and therefore more financially efficient.

One thing we noticed was that our **How to Garden** series and events in the fall were the most attended. Focusing a lot of energy on Clubs Days and September programming is probably more rewarding than focusing in March, for example, when students are getting ready for exams and getting ready to leave school rather than settling in.

Budget-wise, we are planning on running a referenda for an increase of \$1 per semester per undergraduate in March, 2025. This extra funding will mostly cover staff hours, as that's the main reason for our sudden burning through of trust-funds from COVID, along with the Compost Toilet (which, now that it's completed, will be saving is ~\$250 per month due to no longer needing the porta-potty maintenance). Along with the referenda, we will be taking a closer look at our budget to see where we might be able to cut back. Reusing what we have and cutting back on consumption as much as possible is not only good for our finances but good for the earth, and in alignment with CCG principles. One tangible way we're already looking at saving money is by starting a comprehensive **seed saving** program so that we don't need to buy as many seeds!

For **decolonization and global activism**, the CCG will continue learning and sharing Indigenous knowledge as part of acknowledgment of the unceded territories we occupy and work on in an effort to be part of creating a sustainable anti-oppressive community. As much as is possible within guidelines, CCG will align itself with decolonization, anticapitalism, anti-oppression, and sustainability. Whenever possible, we will support students on campus in their efforts for local and global justice, land rights, and food security and sovereignty. We hope to continue to work closely with student groups in order to enact small but mighty change on campus and in the community, and encourage the UVSS and BoD by sharing perspectives, student voices, and knowledge wherever possible, for any that it might increase UVSS and UVic's capacity to appropriately support its students.