

May 8, 2020

It's been a big week, with announcements coming from the province about the next phase of living with COVID-19 triggering perhaps more concern than relief for many. Not to mention, it's been both Emergency Preparedness Week and Mental Health Week – a somewhat ironic although apt coincidence in these times.

We continue to be called upon to inhabit a new state of uncertainty and to be as gracious and compassionate as we can be. And with Mother's Day this Sunday, and the weather looking beautiful, the desire to reconnect with friends and loved ones, and to get out, is strong.

It's important to acknowledge this. And to recognize the great efforts everyone has made over the past eight weeks to adapt to this strange situation and put aside our immediate individual desires for the collective benefit. Let's keep the big picture in mind – and, as Dr Henry says, not squander the sacrifices already made, no matter how impatient we might feel to see our loved ones and get out there or reclaim some semblance of what normal used to look like.

We all have a lot of pent-up energy, after being at home for so long... it can be tempting to want to surge forth and out into the world. But it's still time to be cautious, to avoid non-essential travel, to keep to our bubbles and gradually expand them over the coming weeks.

BC Parks has released details around which parks will be opening May 14, and Alice Lake is the only one in our region that will open for day use. This is a strong signal that our region's backcountry isn't the place to retreat to this weekend.

So how do we use up some of that energy? I think a great way would be to work in the garden and if you don't have one, to create a garden. It keeps us close to home, attunes us to how much happens even when we're not rushing about from task to task and place to place, and invites us into a deeper relationship with the few square feet right in front of us.

Did you know that because of the "Dig for Victory" campaign during WWII that encouraged Britons to dig up their lawns and plant potatoes, and the Land Girls who left the cities and worked on the farms, Britain was producing 75% of the food consumed by 1945? The fight against COVID-19 has been characterized as a war so let's have our own Victory gardens in 2020.

A great wave of new gardeners throughout our region can serve to boost our individual and collective food security, and bring a host of very real health and psychological benefits that come from working with the soil. It's a good healthy pastime that also increases real income. Plus, we can plant some flowers for the people we would most like to visit with right now, and hopefully, when it's time to spend time together again, they'll be blooming great gifts.



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