

Community builds a butterfly garden at Totem Lodge - Coast Reporter article April 22, 2022



The Sechelt Rotary Club, Sechelt Garden Club and Totem Lodge have teamed up to create a multi-sensory garden to attract birds and butterflies.

The Sechelt Rotary Club wanted to recognize Earth Day 2022 and found an ideal project by working with volunteers in the Sechelt Garden Club on a joint project with Totem Lodge. The activities coordinator, Maryanne Brabander of Totem Lodge, wanted to turn the bland backyard lawn of the lodge into a vibrant multi-sensory garden to attract birds and butterflies for the residents and their families as well staff of Totem Lodge to watch and admire. They also wanted to encourage all residents to get out into the garden and to enjoy the view and de-stress amid the birds and butterflies.

This garden will be used to provide a wide variety of horticulture therapy and walking programs, something that will be highly beneficial to all the residents there. Maryanne is also hoping to invite a variety of community groups to be part of these nature-based programs.

The Garden Club prepared drawings for a major renovation that would include a pathway and gazebo suitable for folks using “four wheelers” like walkers and wheelchairs! The new garden beds would be planted with flowers and bushes to attract the birds, bees and butterflies. In this regard, several members of both the Sechelt Garden and Rotary Clubs had taken online

courses to become rangers under the David Suzuki Foundation's "Butterflyway Program." This project definitely falls within the [objectives of the foundation's program!](#)

Funding for the garden project was jointly provided by Totem Lodge and the Rotary Club of Sechelt. We wish to acknowledge Salish Soils and Sunshine Coast Rental Equip Sechelt, both of whom gave us discounts. The labour was all by volunteers!

The undertaking was a big one and initially involved renting an excavator to remove all the old lawn and then carry in and spread new topsoil. Path edging and a meandering pathway were constructed. Many volunteers were needed to speed up the planting process. The final task is the erection of a large, covered gazebo on a pad in one corner of the new garden. The wooden gazebo was designed and built by the Garden Club.

Totem Lodge staff also plan on planting vegetable beds for the residents to tend and/or admire.

While the newly renovated garden is not open to the public, the benefits to the residents, visitors and staff of Totem Lodge will be immeasurable in terms of lowering stress, getting fresh air and enjoying mother nature. The garden will last for years supporting the birds, bees and butterflies.