



## City of Victoria supports community orchards

By Victoria News

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A small, sloping portion of Stevenson Park could soon be planted with fruit-bearing trees, thanks to support from the City of Victoria.

"Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group is very excited to be working in partnership with the city on such a progressive initiative," executive director Lee Herrin said.

He launched the Fruit Tree Project with friends in 1998 and is preparing an orchard design to be submitted for approval this fall.

"It will probably be a mix of things that do well here," said Herrin, listing apples, plums and pears.

The City has selected both Fernwood and Vic West to participate in the pilot orchard project. Once a licence agreement is signed, the city will purchase the fruit and nut trees, as well as irrigate and mow the lawn around the trees. The neighbourhood organizations will be responsible for planting the trees and keeping them healthy, as well as harvesting and distributing the fruit and nuts.

The project will make better use of existing city land, said Roy Brooke, Victoria's director of sustainability, noting "opportunity abounds" for such projects.

The Fernwood group plans to use the harvest for its programs at the Fernwood Community Centre.

"We're hoping the children in the child care program can help out a little bit," Herrin said.

As well as the orchard project, the centre will also take over the garden beds maintained by city staff. Instead of decorative plants, it will grow edible plants whose harvest will also be used in the centre's programs.

To help store all the bounty, the United Way has jumped on board. Fernwood NRG has received a \$2,500 grant to build a cold room to help store onions, potatoes and other vegetables.

rholmen@vicnews.com

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