Companies Compete for Right to Sell Cannabis on UEL, Steps from UBC

You won’t find screens or associates glued to iPads. Instead, you’ll receive personalized service and thoughtful information regarding cannabis, in a retail environment that will leave you feeling calm and confident.

• The BC Government has deemed cannabis retail an essential service. In response, we will be operating all locations under the health and safety guidelines outlined by the Public Health Agency of Canada. It is our top priority to provide a safe environment for our staff and customers and we are taking every possible precaution.

Information given by the UEL Community Advisory Council at a public meeting in May provided the BURB name. More information about the companies is expected to be made public at another meeting June 21.

A second company has applied for the right to sell cannabis from a vacant store on the University Endowment Lands, and like the first store, the second lies steps from UBC.

The new applicant is Atheneum Cannabis, which lists its head office at 2431 West 41st Avenue—in the heart of Kerrisdale. The first applicant was BURB Cannabis, managed in the suburbs of Port Moody and Port Coquitlam.

Advertising at the Atheneum website offers the following:
• Taking the time to understand the cultivation methodology and processing techniques of our core suppliers to ensure our quality standards are met and that products are appropriately priced.
• Doing our part to ‘Break through the cannabis Stigma’ by staying informed of the latest advancements and breakthroughs in the industry, as we continue to learn more about the holistic nature of this incredibly misunderstood plant.
• Listening to our customers. We are always listening to our customers requests and experiences to ensure that we maintain relevant and tailored offerings for our local community.

In comparison, advertising at the BURB website reads as follows:
• Our stores are designed with the customer in mind. We’ve purposely chosen to “de-tech” in favour of an authentic experience.

You won’t find screens or associates glued to iPads. Instead, you’ll receive personalized service and thoughtful information regarding cannabis, in a retail environment that will leave you feeling calm and confident.

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COMPETE continued on Page 3

Another change of land use application on the University Endowment Lands, at the former Bubble Waffle Cafe location.
Canada Day, July 1, 2021 draws near, and as it does, people pause to reflect on what a magnificent country this is. Many of those who do this come from the Far East. Ying Zhou came to Canada from China, and she has found here a joy in living. A resident of the University of British Columbia (Chancellor Place) and an assistant to Joyce Murray, Member of Parliament for Vancover-Quadra and Minister of Digital Government, Ying agreed to talk to The Campus Resident about her experiences in Canada.

What do you enjoy most about living in Canada?

Ying Zhou enjoys the multicultural lifestyle—to balance my family life, career and hobbies.

For the past 12 years, my daughters and I have spent as much time as possible growing up together. My elder daughter went to UBC at the age of 15, and graduated from the UBC Sauder School of Business last year. My younger one will go to U-hill Secondary School in September, after four years at the Multi-age cluster class. I really appreciate Canada’s educational system; it can provide a variety of programs for children with different needs.

I have been working at MP Joyce Murray’s office for one and half years. It is totally a different experience compared to the Canadian Ski Instructors’ Alliance. It was a much more interesting license for me compared to the Canadian Finance Service’s certification awarded several years ago.

Canada in a magical place for enjoying a colorful life, especially living on the UBC campus. I can play badminton several days a week, go swimming occasionally, run at the running track and go hiking. My next plan is to learn how to sail this summer.

How would you describe what sort of Canada is as a country?

To me, Canada is a country full of possibilities. You have many options at any age with any backgrounds. I immigrated to Canada middle-aged, then I continued to pursue my career as an Investment Advisor at RBC Royal Bank. On a separate occasion, I changed my professional direction to run for a seat on the UNA Board when I realized that the board needed a voice who can make the voices of others heard, and this bridged the culture gap. Also, I can appreciate Canada’s educational system; it can provide a variety of programs for children with different needs.

I have been working at MP Joyce Murray’s office for one and half years. It is totally a new experience and challenge for me, especially during the recent COVID-19 times. I have worked at the office the majority of the time, and quickly learned how to deal with difficult situations and complicated issues. Our office has supported many residents facing immigrant & visa related issues, as well as Canada Revenue Agency and Service Canada. We have tried our best to support the Quadra constituency, and provide updated information regarding federal policies & programs.

I enjoy sports and pursue an athletic dream. This year, I received a Ski Instructor' license from the Canadian Ski Instructors’ Alliance. It was a much more interesting license for me compared to the Canadian Finance Service’s certification awarded several years ago.

Canada in a magical place for enjoying a colorful life, especially living on the UBC campus. I can play badminton several days a week, go swimming occasionally, run at the running track and go hiking. My next plan is to learn how to sail this summer.

What do you hope your children will see 30 years from now?

I hope that Canada can be safer for immigrants and newcomers. With the increase of anti-Asian racism, Asian children and parents are feeling more and more insecure. Even though English is the first language of my younger daughter, I still need to remind her to keep away from strangers when she goes to school on a bus or walking by herself on campus.

I hope that Canada can provide more equal opportunities for youth, young professionals, university graduates, all of diverse backgrounds, giving equal job opportunities to all, regardless of their family name.

What has been your most productive experience since you came to Canada in 2009?

The most productive experience has been the opportunity to get involved into elections and understand more about democracy. When I ran for election of the UNA Board before I became a Canadian citizen, I was deeply impressed by the open mindedness of our community. My life was enriched and changed after serving on the UNA Board. I feel so lucky that I met with so many outstanding mentors, who spent lots of time and energy on coaching me to overcome the learning curve. It will be hard for me to list all the names, so I just want to mention one name, Jim Taylor, the founding chair of the UNA Board, who gave me tremendous support at the beginning, and gave me advice on the board issues even up to the month before he passed away.

For these six years on the UNA Board, I learned how to combine my personal skills together with my previous work & life experience, working with board members, to strengthen the relationships among the Board, UNA staff, residents and UBC. It was great to witness to the fast growth of the UNA, with the first strategic plan in 2018, and the implemented bylaws in 2020.

Short Biography

I immigrated to Canada 12 years ago with my family from Mainland China. My work experience includes more than a decade in major financial institutions in China and with RBC Wealth Management in Vancouver. Before I started working for Minister Murray as a Constituency Assistant, I served the UNA Board as elected Resident Director from 2013 to 2019, including three years as Treasurer and two years as Board Chair. I was Co-chair of the Parent Advisory Council of the University Transition Program from 2013 to 2015. I was awarded the Hidden Hero award from MP Joyce Murray’s office in 2019.
Canadian Multiculturalism Day is celebrated every year on June 27. This national holiday was created in 2002 to acknowledge the wealth of diversity and enriching cultures which make up the country. This year, the UNA is hosting a series of events from June 28 – July 2 to celebrate the diversity of Canada and our local community.

Canadian Multicultural Day Art Show
Submission dates: June 6 to June 27
Submission ages: 10 – 18
Show: July 1 (11 am – 4 pm) | All Ages

Youth are invited to submit an original piece of artwork based on the prompt, “What does Canada mean to you?” Two winners will each be awarded a prize of $100 to Opus Art Supplies and will have their work featured on the back cover of the next UNA recreation program guide. Submissions are open from June 6 to June 27. All works will be displayed in a gallery outside the Wesbrook Community Centre on July 1. Registration is not required for this show. If you have any questions, please contact claire.shepansky@myuna.ca.

How to enter: Create an original piece of work in any medium that can be submitted physically (painting, photography prints, mixed media etc.).

Bring your piece to the Wesbrook Community Centre on a non-refundable entry fee of $2. Clearly list your name, age, contact information and a 50-word summary of your piece.

Colouring Contest: Indigenous Peoples Day
Submissions: Open until June 18, 2021.
Ages: 0-9
Display: Starting June 23 at Wesbrook Community Centre

To celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day, the UNA is running a colouring contest with colouring pages provided by Native Northwest. Four lucky winners will receive a prize pack of books and games created by indigenous artists.

Community of Caring Cookbook Launch
Date: June 28 from 5 – 6 pm
Ages: 16+

The Community of Caring Cookbook has arrived, and we are joining together to launch this exciting community project! In response to COVID-19, the Youth Leadership Program has curated various recipes and stories from our community members in UNA neighbourhoods. Join us for this launch event to hear stories from your neighbours, watch demonstrations from contributors and celebrate multiculturalism in the UNA community! Participants will also have a chance to share their own stories, food, pictures, and anything related to food and culture.

COMPETE continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, the CAC is encouraging UEL residents—renters as well as owners—to submit their views on whether a pot shop in that store will be over very soon (the deadline for the first rezoning process is June 9). As mentioned, even if your content is the same for both Cannabis retail stores, it is ok, as long as you submit them separately, addressing the two stores separately.

2. Please ensure you email the following people together:
To: PlanUEL@gov.bc.ca
CC: areaajen@gmail.com; uelcac@gmail.com; Jonn.Braman@uel.ca

3. Please be aware the comments period will be over very soon (the deadline for the first Cannabis Store, Burb, rezoning by the Vancouver Regional District to the B.C. Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB).

Some examples of reasons may include but are not limited to:
- I am worried about the wellbeing and safety of my children.
- This neighbourhood is surrounded by a huge student population and the opening of a cannabis store may negatively affect the health and safety of these young individuals.
- There is an easily accessible cannabis store that is located on W 10th avenue that is less than 30m away from UBC campus.

People who want to purchase cannabis can shop in that store.
BC’s Restart: A Plan to Bring Us Back Together

With more than 76% of adults vaccinated with their first dose and COVID-19 case counts and hospitalizations steadily declining, British Columbia is moving forward with the cautious first step of a four-step plan for a careful and safe restart.

“British Columbians have sacrificed so much over the last 15 months to help keep people and businesses safe,” said Premier John Horgan. “We have made tremendous strides with our vaccination program, and we are now in a position where we can move forward with a plan to slowly bring us back together. As we have done throughout this pandemic, we will be closely following the guidance of public health and supporting people and businesses as we take the next steps in putting this pandemic behind us.”

BC’s Restart – a four-step plan to bring B.C. back together – will be a slow and gradual return to a more normal life, with safety and health protocols such as mask wearing and physical distancing remaining in place and mandatory during the initial two steps of the plan.

The four-step plan was designed based on data and guidance from the B.C. Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.’s provincial health officer (PHO). Progressing through the steps will be measured by the number of adults vaccinated, COVID-19 case counts and hospitalizations and deaths, taking into account clusters and outbreaks. While there are approximate dates, the plan will be guided by data, not dates, and will not proceed to the next step until it is safe to do so based on guidance from public health and the latest available data.

“We have been on a long and tiring journey, and now we can start to chart our path forward to brighter days ahead,” Henry said. “To be successful in this next phase of the pandemic, we need to keep COVID-19 low and slow. To do that, we need to be slow and measured in our approach, gradually tuning up the dial on how we spend time together – whether that is socializing with family, going to work or visiting friends.”

The step-by-step plan will follow approximate timelines and will ease people and businesses slowly out of the pandemic.

The four steps are:

**Step 1: May 25 – (milestone reached)**

- 60% of adult population with Dose 1
- COVID-19 cases stable, hospitalizations stable
- Maximum of five visitors or one household allowed for indoor personal gatherings
- Maximum of 10 people for outdoor personal gatherings
- Maximum of 10 people for seated indoor organized gatherings with safety protocols
- Maximum of 50 people for seated outdoor organized gatherings with safety protocols
- Recreational travel only within travel region (travel restrictions extended)
- Indoor and outdoor dining for up to six people with safety protocols
- Resume outdoor sports (games) with no spectators, low-intensity fitness with safety protocols
- Start gradual return to workplaces
- Provincial mask mandate, business safety protocols and physical distancing measures remain in place
- Return of indoor in-person faith-based gatherings (reduced capacity) based on consultation with public health

**Step 2: Mid-June (June 15 – earliest date - milestone reached)**

- 65% of adult population with Dose 1
- Cases declining, COVID-19 hospitalizations declining
- Maximum of 50 people for outdoor social gatherings
- Maximum of 50 people for seated indoor organized gatherings (banquet halls, movie theatres, live theatre) with safety protocols
- Consultation process to prepare for larger indoor and outdoor gatherings with safety protocols
- No B.C. travel restrictions – check local travel advisories
- Indoor sports (games) and high-intensity fitness with safety protocols
- Spectators for outdoor sports (50 maximum)
- Provincial mask mandate, business safety protocols and physical distancing measures remain in place

**Step 3: Early July (July 1 – earliest date)**

- 70% of adult population with Dose 1
- Cases low, COVID-19 hospitalizations declining
- Provincial state of emergency and public health emergency lifted
- Returning to usual for indoor and outdoor personal gatherings
- Increased capacity for indoor and outdoor organized gatherings, with safety plans
- Nightclubs and casinos reopen with capacity limits and safety plans
- New public health and workplace guidance around personal protective equipment, physical distancing and business protocols

**Step 4: Early September (Sept. 7 – earliest date)**

- More than 70% of adult population with Dose 1
- Cases low and stable (combined clusters), COVID-19 hospitalizations low
- Returning to normal social contact
- Increased capacity at larger organized gatherings
- No limits on indoor and outdoor spectators at sports
- Business opening with new safety plans
- In-class K-12 education will continue to operate under existing safety protocols for steps 1 and 2. In preparation for the return to classes in the fall, the COVID-19 education steering committee will work with public health officials to update safety guidelines.

The government is formally extending the provincial state of emergency through the end of the day on June 22, 2021, allowing health and emergency management officials to continue to use extraordinary powers under the Emergency Program Act to support the Province’s COVID-19 pandemic response. The original declaration was made on March 18, 2020, the day after Henry declared a public health emergency, and can be extended for periods of up to 14 days at a time.

Although BC-wide recreational travel is now allowed, Canada-wide recreational travel restrictions will continue to be enforced until Step 3 of the four-step plan.

(Last updated June 18, 2021.)

Men’s Community Network
GET OUT! GET MOVING!

Any time is a good time to get fit. But following the terrible 18-month Covid doldrums it is even more important to get out and enjoy the freedom while getting in shape.

MCN is again beginning the walking, hiking, and biking that it initiated last year. With Covid restrictions lifting we intend to schedule these activities starting early to mid July. For updates on our activities please check the following.

MCN Facebook:
Men’s Community Network Engagement (friend/friend request)

Email: menscommunity@yahoo.com (get on our mailing list)

The aim of the Men’s Community Network is to encourage and engage men in common activities. While this is predominantly for the benefit of men we do include and encourage women and others to join some of our group activities.

Hiking:
Open to men, & women of all ages. Seniors and teens are welcome.

Hiking will be on trails in the Greater Vancouver Area and North Shore mountains. Led by Mohsen Naseri, an experienced hiker who is intimately familiar with local trails. Participants will be informed beforehand of the hike date, length, and difficulty of the route. The hikes will be held on the first and third weekend of each month. We will try to accommodate persons requiring transportation. Visit our Facebook page for details of the Norvan Falls hike on July 3.

Biking:
Open to men, & women of all ages. Seniors and teens are welcome.

Biking will be strictly local within the immediate UBC area and will accommodate all levels of skill. This is Casual Biking only. Most rides will be 40 to 60 minutes, late afternoon, weather permitting. Nils Bradley leads this group and will take place each week starting 6pm, July 7th.

Walking:
Men only - all ages. Seniors welcome.

Walking will be mostly through the Pacific Park area and will be held every week. Day and time TBA.

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All activities will be in accordance with current Covid precautions and weather permitting.

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Earlier this month, we celebrated Spring Graduation. As was the case last year, the event took place online. Nonetheless, it was a joyous occasion, not only for the graduates and their families, but for all of us.

Thinking of our graduating students and their proud families always fills me with joy. Graduation is a time of celebration and a time to come together as a community, whether in person or online.

I am hoping that the Fall graduation ceremony will once again be in person. Last month, the provincial government unveiled its BC’s Restart plan, a four-step plan to get the province back to normal. The plan, which is contingent on favourable vaccination rates, case counts and hospitalizations, calls for normal social contact, fully reopened workplaces and increased capacity at organized gatherings by as soon as September 7, just in time for the start of the 2022 academic year.

But in order to achieve this, as many of us need to be vaccinated as possible. We are now seeing significant reductions in COVID-19 case counts, declining COVID-19 hospitalizations, and increased vaccinations. It looks like everyone in the province will have the chance to be fully vaccinated by the end of August. If you haven’t registered for vaccination yet, I urge you to do so as soon as possible. It’s quick, simple, and easy, and it will help us all get back to normal.

At UBC, we have been watching the course of the COVID-19 pandemic carefully and continue to work closely on our plans with public health officials at the provincial and regional levels. We feel optimistic that UBC will be able to safely welcome our students, faculty and staff back to campus in the Fall.

We appreciate that many members of our community will have questions, and some may be uneasy about a potential return to campus. It is important to reiterate that the health, safety and wellbeing of our students, faculty and staff remain our first priority. As we continue to take guidance from the provincial government and public health officials, we are also prepared to update our approach as required.

Federally are currently finalizing the fall course schedules, assuming primarily on-campus instruction, with selected flexible options for continuity of learning where feasible.

We are developing guidance for heads and directors, supervisors, and managers to help identify and support those faculty and staff who will transition back to campus over the summer months to prepare for the arrival of students and the start of classes in September — supporting in-person instruction and other key activities and services. UBC’s research activity will also continue to increase.

Key to our approach for returning to campus is a robust safety planning process — in order to ensure the health and safety of our community. We anticipate that the following measures will remain in place:

- Completing a daily COVID-19 self-assessment and not attending work or school when ill;
- Following handwashing and hygiene protocols;
- Continuing daily cleaning protocols in indoor settings and on high touch surfaces;
- Requiring non-medical masks in indoor common areas, depending on the rate of COVID-19 transmission.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported the university over the last year. Many have continued to study and work on campus and others have studied and worked remotely. Wherever we have been located, we have all been enormously challenged.

We are seeing a brighter road ahead, and I am confident that together we will successfully, and safely, transition back to campus for the fall academic term.

I hope to see you on campus this fall.

Santa J. Ono
President and Vice-Chancellor
The University of British Columbia
New Subway Stations Speak of ‘Things to Come’

John Tompkins
Editor

A heap of dirt tells the story, and this heap—not too big—lies just inside the wire fencing which since June 2 has sealed off two vacant blocks of Arbutus Street at Broadway. Major construction will commence on these blocks shortly, and two to three years from now as gravel becomes concrete, commuters will likely consider the rapid transit station here a work of infrastructural art.

The organizers of the Broadway Subway Project—the Federal Government, Provincial Government and Municipal Government—will spend 3.8 billion dollars laying the groundwork of a new Broadway Subway Station project that consists of six stations and a line across 5.7 km, and while this is a huge amount of money, an even larger amount will need to be spent on a second rapid transit project.

This second project is also in the billions of dollars category—ambitiously conceived in fetching rapid transit further—from the same point in Vancouver (Arbutus) all the way to UBC.

The organizers of the Broadway Subway Project have involved the public in planning the site preparation and construction signage. Two Open Houses were held during the planning stage of the six stations. The purpose of the Station Design Open House #2 was to summarize the feedback received from the first Open House and to present proposed final station designs, including additional details about landscaping, available information on station art, next steps for construction, and information on how to stay involved.

Feedback which has been received will be provided as input to the City of Vancouver’s design advisory process to contribute towards the urban integration of the stations and will be considered by the Project in finalizing the station designs.

The Broadway Subway Project is funded by TransLink.

Artistic rendering of Arbutus Station street level. Photo credit Government of BC.

Project and construction signage.

New rapid transit line along Broadway is scheduled for launch 2025; major construction is underway

UNA UNIVERSITY NEIGHBOURHOODS ASSOCIATION

Apply to be part of the new UNA Land Use Advisory Committee

The UNA Board of Directors is establishing a Land Use Advisory Committee to serve as an advisory committee to the Board regarding land use planning and development on the UBC (Arbutus) area as well as to act as a forum to facilitate discussions on land use planning and development with residents.

You are encouraged to apply if you are a UNA resident member motivated to help build community and have specific knowledge in one or more of the following areas:

- Accessibility
- Active Transportation
- Agriculture
- Architectural design
- Children and youth
- Community planning
- Construction/development
- Education
- Environmental matters
- Land development/construction
- Landscape design
- Recreation
- Sustainability
- Urban Planning

The committee will serve with an appointed chair from the Board and will have support from UNA staff. There are seven spots to fill in this committee and the term of appointment is two years. This is a volunteer committee that will serve without compensation.

For the Land Use Advisory Committee’s Terms of Reference, please visit: myuna.ca/una-committees.

All interested parties are asked to please submit a resume and cover letter addressed to the UNA Board of Directors to communications@myuna.ca before September 3, 2021.

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Project and construction signage.
Hammered by COVID-19, Restaurants and Bars Rejoice at Reopening

After months of unease, looser restrictions may allow businesses to breathe a sigh of relief at last

Nicole Duane
Grade 11 student, Lord Byng Secondary School

Indoor dining is finally an option after 57 days of to-go bags, delivery fees, and trying to prevent flyaway napkins while eating on patios. We’re one step closer to a state of post-pandemic normalcy, and our eaters are eager to welcome customers back inside.

The pandemic has taken a drastic toll on the restaurant industry, from laying off workers to shutting down entire establishments. It has been a struggle for these businesses to stay afloat the past year, with the majority suffering devastating losses. A Canadian survey from early 2021 announced that over a quarter of all restaurants are expecting to operate for 12 more months before making changes. In addition, there is no evidence to predict when these businesses will return to normalcy. It’s a reality that many are struggling to stay afloat.

Fortunately, pent-up demand for the restaurant experience is high. After the restriction was instated back in late March, many of us have glanced longingly into restaurant windows and made mental notes to revisit our favourite spots since they reopened. As of June 8th, 62% of Canadians have received their first doses, allowing many businesses to welcome back customers.

https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410022001

Chef Hung Taiwanese Beef Noodle in Wesbrook Village.

https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/daily-quotidien/210318/d210318e-eng.htm

Our World in Data (2021).
www.ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccination#country=CA

World Health Organization (2020).

Spinographers (2021)."
The title of the artist project Fireweed Fields fairly bursts with the promise of an eventful spring. And as the first shoots were emerging, and places,” Schmidt said in an interview through building relationships with people.” My projects tend to emerge slowly during the summer. Ideally, you’ll feel invested in your patience and close attention over the presentation. It’s a long hauler that asks for fireweed’s grand, but brief, late-life prelude. The old gravel quarry used for the construction of the region’s Cleveland Dam back in the 1950s. Fireweed was among them. It’s being-witching in late summer as it transforms into waving poles clustered with light-catching gossamer curlicues and a riot of light pink fluff. Those visuals are rooted deeply in my memory.

But perhaps an introduction is in order for those who grew up knowing only manicured suburban lawns. Fireweed is a meadow plant, a member of the evening primrose family, and it likes to populate freshly disturbed areas such as roads, construction sites and forest burns. Great natural stands can be found a stone’s throw away from UBC on Northwest Marine Drive and along the paths of Pacific Spirit Park.

Schmidt’s project is not focused only on fireweed’s grand, but brief, late-life presentation. It’s a long hauler that asks for your patience and close attention over time, letting you delight as the lawn of the Belkin is transformed into a full-fledged meadow. Ideally, you’ll feel invested enough to keep coming back throughout the summer.

“My projects tend to emerge slowly through building relationships with people and places,” Schmidt said in an interview just as the first shoots were emerging. “There are many distinct botanical sites and situations at UBC, and all of them have layered and complex histories. The most foundational of which is that the campus is on the unceded, traditional and ancestral territory of the Musqueam Nation.”

Of all the meadow plants, why fireweed? Schmidt says she is interested in its capacity to adapt.

“It’s the first plant to grow after a forest fire, or major disturbance, and it provides sustenance and habitat for other species. It brings to mind notions of healing, care and the resurgence of life, all of which take on heightened importance in the midst of the climate emergency and the need for climate justice.”

As well, fireweed is important to First Nations’ cultural practices. It’s used to make twine and in the weaving of blankets. The project was partly inspired by the ideas of ethnobotanist Robin Wall Kimmerer of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation in Oklahoma.

Schmidt cites Kimmerer’s renowned collection of essays, Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants, as a key influence on her thinking around the deep learning to be had through strengthening human relationships with plants.

“There’s also potential here for cross-cultural exchange and learning around the gifts this plant has to offer and how those gifts can be reciprocated,” says Schmidt. “Plants are teachers.”

But the question remains: What will you actually see once you’ve made the trek out to UBC? Well, timing is key. And it will require a repeat visit or two to witness seasonal and successional changes in the meadow from a new cedar boardwalk in a design inspired by fireweed’s delicate, snaking rhizomes.

“Fireweed Fields is intended to provide contrast to the linear arrangement of UBC Main Mall’s vast expanses of grass,” says Schmidt. “These formal landscapes are rooted in colonial histories and values, so by planting fireweed, I’m hoping to initiate a conversation about regeneration.”

While the work stands in clear opposition to the tyranny of the lawn, I wonder if it will break the bounds of the gallery and spread, especially given the proximity of flower beds and landscaping features. Can fireweed even be contained?

“One plant can produce up to 80,000 seeds,” says Schmidt. “And they can travel far and wide on wind currents, which is part of its resilience, but also why it causes concern for those trying to maintain those landscapes. But the seeds will be collected and shared in ways that are culturally appropriate and the plants will be cut and composted.”

Ideally, Fireweed Fields will help people imagine spaces around them with less imposed order and with an openness to the flow of the great unkempt garden of life. It seems to me to echo the rewilding movement, which calls for a wholesale return to the natural “wild” states of our environment, wherever possible. But Schmidt rejects that notion. “I appreciate aspects of rewilding, but there can be a tendency to romanticize the idea of nature without humans, suggesting that human relationships with nature can only taint or damage. I think it’s important to look to relationships of respect and reciprocity.”

At a time when people are battling to save British Columbia’s last stands of old-growth forest amidst the quickening pace of global ecological destruction, Schmidt’s message is potent.

“There’s a need to shift from an extractive mindset to one of interdependence and to increase biodiversity,” she says. “I also want to create opportunities for people to slow down and think of a different kind of relationship with the natural world.”

Fireweed Fields essentially asks people to ponder more deeply the complex web of life and our place in it. In a way, this is a perfectly timed intervention. The pandemic has thrust people outdoors and many are taking an interest in local flora. Furthering our understanding of plant life and renewing a relationship that’s been left fallow too long — is one way to avoid returning to “normal” after the pandemic.