

# Divine Gardens: Ava's Confluence of Church and Nature

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## 1 Eden Mennonite Church

After Ava's journey with her Eden garden brought her peace and a deep connection with her community, she found another path to extend this connection through her faith. Ava began attending the Eden Mennonite Church in Chilliwack<sup>1</sup>, drawn by its commitment to faith, community, and stewardship of God's creation.

At the church, Ava found a welcoming community that shared her values. Inspired by the historical knitting circles, where people gathered to create and converse, Ava proposed an idea: a gardening circle. This circle would not only be about gardening but also about fostering a sense of community and improving food security.

The idea was met with enthusiasm. Members of the church, along with Ava, began organizing regular meetups where they would work together in each other's yards, creating small Edens. These gatherings were more than just gardening sessions; they became a platform for sharing faith, stories, and support.

Ava's vision was to see every yard in the community turned into a thriving food forest, similar to the one she had nurtured. The gardening circle

started with a few members, but it soon grew as more people became interested in the idea of growing their own food and being part of a supportive community.

The circle's activities extended beyond just planting and tending to gardens. They organized workshops on sustainable gardening practices, food preservation, and even cooking sessions using the produce from their gardens. These gatherings became a staple in the community, bringing together people of all ages.

Under Ava's guidance, the group also reached out to local farmers, offering help and learning from their vast experience. The mountains and fields around Chilliwack provided a beautiful backdrop for their activities, and soon, small patches of food forests began appearing in unexpected places.

The impact of the gardening circle was profound. It not only improved food security in the community but also strengthened the bond among its members. Ava's vision of little Edens was becoming a reality, and with each passing day, the community grew closer, bound by their love for gardening, faith, and each other.

Ava's influence and the gardening circle became integral parts of the Eden Mennonite Church. They embodied the church's mission of nurturing community, caring for creation, and living faithfully. The little Edens spread across the community stood as testaments to Ava's faith, her love for God's creation, and her belief in the power of community.

<sup>1</sup><https://edenchurch.ca> 46551 Chilliwack Central Road, Chilliwack, BC

## 2 Chilliwack Community Garden

Incorporating the vibrant community and natural beauty of Chilliwack, British Columbia, the parable of Ava finds new roots. As Ava embraced the congregation at Eden Mennonite Church, her vision of interconnectedness through gardening blossomed. She became a catalyst for a movement that would weave together the threads of faith, stewardship, and community.

Ava, with the support of her church family, reached out to the keepers of the Chilliwack Community Forest. Together, they initiated a program that would allow the gardening circle to incorporate native plants into their food forests. The project was dual-purposed: it would enrich the ecological diversity of their yards and provide a habitat for local wildlife, echoing the balance of nature.

The forest became a classroom where Ava and her friends learned about indigenous plant species and their roles in the local ecosystem. They gathered seeds and cuttings with the guidance of ecologists, ensuring they supported the forest's health while also enhancing their gardens.

The little Edens across Chilliwack flourished, becoming a testament to the community's dedication to sustainability and reverence for the local environment. The church's land, once simple grass and shrubbery, was transformed into a vibrant food forest, a patchwork of native and edible plants that served as a living library for the entire community.

The Chilliwack Community Forest also benefited from this collaboration. With increased public interest and community involvement, more volunteers and resources were channeled towards preserving and expanding the forest. Ava's gardening circle had sparked a symbiotic relationship between the community and the natural world, strengthening the bond with the land that sustained them.

Through Ava's guidance, the gardeners of Chilliwack not only raised their food security but also deepened their spiritual roots, growing together in faith and fellowship. The community forests, both cultivated and wild, stood as a legacy of Ava's dream, where faith and nature coalesced to create a heaven on Earth, a true Eden for all.