AWARD WINNING

THE DIBBLER

FALL 2024

GARDEN STORIES
IN BLACK & WHITE

OHS | Ottawa Horticultural Society

OTTAWA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Ottawahort.org

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AWARD WINNING

The *OHS Dibbler* won the

Judge's Choice Award

in the Publications Competition
at the Ontario Horticultural Association's
2024 Convention.

The Book Nook

33 TITLES SUGGESTED BY THE OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR OHS MEMBERS

Ottawa Public Library / Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa

The Collection Development staff at the Ottawa Public Library have specially selected a list of materials related to gardening for OHS members. The list features titles in English and French recently added to the OPL's collections, and includes several downloadable audiobooks in case you are interested in listening to your books.

Among the titles for this issue are materials relating to:

- ✓ Quatre vents (La Malbaie, Québec)
- ✓ Public gardens, Quebec
- ✓ Social history of gardening
- ✓ Ecological aspects of gardening
- ✓ Botanical gardens around the world
- ✓ Native plant gardening
- ✓ Biodiversity in gardening
- ✓ Conservation and restoration of gardens
- ✓ Gardens in history
- ✓ Psychological aspects of gardens

Click on the link below to see the complete list from the Library. This also allows you to view availability and place a hold from the link.
https://ottawa.bibliocommons.com/list/share/354296247_collection_development/2606382739_ottawa_horticultural_society_fall_titles

Royal Botanical Gardens
Photo by Larry Chamney

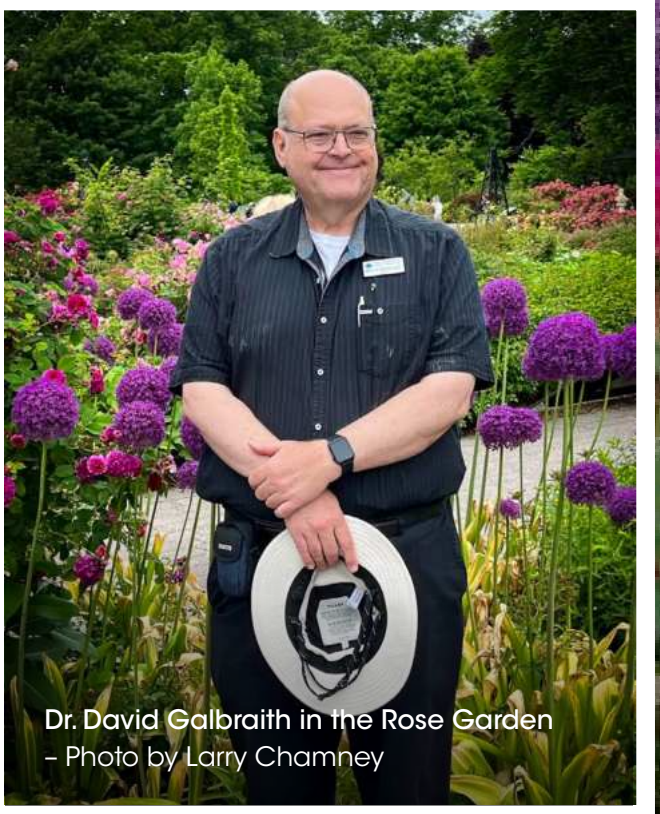
BEHIND THE SCENES AT RBG: PART 1

BY LARRY CHAMNEY

This past year, I was the successful silent auction bidder on an annual membership for two to the Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG), including a 'behind-the-scenes' day tour with senior RBG staff. RBG is Canada's largest botanical garden and is a horticultural and ecological treasure nestled within the Hamilton-Burlington urbanized area.

Spouse Deb and I made our way to Hamilton in June for our first visit to the RBG, where we were met by our hosts, Dr. David Galbraith (RBG Science Director) and senior RBG staffer Jan Graves. Our congenial hosts provided an excellent tour of several public and non-public areas of the Gardens and were a wealth of information as to the historical development of the Gardens and its programs and activities.

I could reflect at great length about my experiences at the Gardens. However, this article (Part 1 of a 2-part series) provides a brief overview of the Gardens and highlights a 'behind-the-scenes' visit to the RBG Herbarium, noting a historical botanical link to Ottawa.



Dr. David Galbraith in the Rose Garden – Photo by Larry Chamney

WHAT IS THE RBG?

The Royal Botanical Gardens was born 90-some years ago (1932) with the rehabilitation of an abandoned gravel pit to create the **Rock Garden**. Additional formal gardens were developed throughout the 1950s and 1960s, bringing a 20th-century approach to the design of botanical gardens. Many in-house horticultural and scientific staff were engaged by the RBG during that time, including the renowned botanist and taxonomist, Dr. James ('Jim') Pringle in 1963. At over 80 years of age, Dr. Pringle still maintains an office at the RBG Centre and we had the pleasure to meet him briefly during our tour while he was doing a walk-about in the Rose Garden.

RBG was designated as a National Historical Site of Canada in the mid-1990s, as well as being integrated into the Niagara Escarpment UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. This reflected

the horticultural, educational and environmental significance of RBG and its mandated responsibilities and programs. In addition to continued stewardship and renewal of nature sanctuaries within its boundaries, a focus on environmental sustainability in horticultural practices has gained emphasis in the past 10-15 years.

Today, at about 1,100 hectares (ha) in area (about 2,400 acres), the RBG is the largest botanical garden in Canada, comprising 120 ha of formal gardens and 980 ha of nature reserves (with 27 kilometres of lovely hiking trails). We were told that RBG collections contain just under 250,000 individual plants covering about 2,200 species.

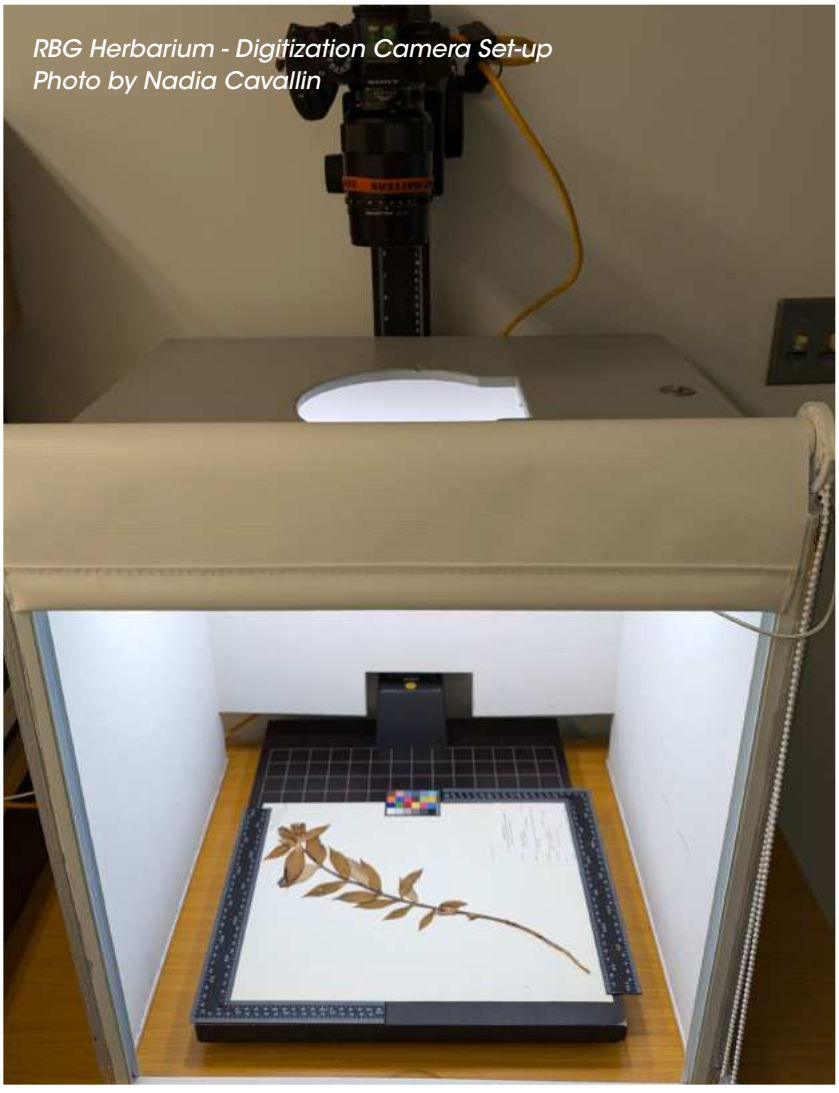
There are four distinct formal garden areas within RBG: **Hendrie Park Gardens** (containing twelve themed garden areas and highlighted by the Rose Garden); the **Rock Garden** (established within a rehabilitated gravel pit); **Laking Garden** (with extensive iris and peony collections); and the **Arboretum** (including one of the largest lilac collections in the world). In addition, the **RBG Centre** contains staff offices, event spaces, a shop and café, floral displays, a Mediterranean Garden indoor conservatory, and the Herbarium (not open to the public, but we were afforded a visit, as discussed below).

RBG programs are focussed on educating the public about the importance of plants and nature; developing display gardens to, *inter alia,* promote the transfer of best practices to backyard gardeners like us; protecting and restoring environmentally sensitive nature areas; and engaging in research projects and networks that promote horticultural and environmental sustainability.

THE HERBARIUM

Our tour included a 'behind-the-scenes' visit to the RBG Herbarium (designated internationally as 'HAM') which is open only to RBG staff and visiting researchers. Nadia Cavallin, HAM curator, warmly welcomed us and talked about the herbarium activities and its collection.

HAM was established in 1950 and today houses over 65,000 vascular plant specimens from about



RBG Herbarium - Digitization Camera Set-up
Photo by Nadia Cavallin

Royal Botanical Gardens
Photo by Larry Chamney

Larry with RBG Herbarium Curator Nadia Cavallin.
Photo by Deb Chamney

RBG Campanula specimen (1827)
Photo by Larry Chamney

230 families; over 350 specimens are being added annually. Nadia noted that HAM was somewhat unique in that the collection includes both cultivated and wild plants, many of the latter regarded as being 'at-risk' species. About half of all specimens at HAM come from the RBG and the surrounding nature reserves, with the rest mostly from Ontario, but with a few coming from other parts of Canada and internationally (all continents but Antarctica).

Nadia walked us through the process and the equipment used at the herbarium to prepare specimens for mounting and labelling. This includes a meticulous protocol for drying and freezing specimens over a total period of up to 3 weeks, to assure specimens are insect-free and well-preserved. Impressive, and far removed from my childhood days of pressing dandelions between newsprint and plywood!

She also talked about the program underway to digitize existing specimen labels and scan specimens, and proudly pointed out their state-of-the-art digitizing equipment. Over two-thirds of existing labels have been entered into a custom database to date, along with scanned JPEG files of the specimens themselves; all newly collected specimens are being digitized. Trained and knowledgeable volunteers and interns are assisting in the effort. Nadia noted that

RBG - Reflecting Pond
Photo by Larry Chamney

the digitization project is intended primarily to assist in making the collection more accessible for researchers and to reduce the future risk of damage to specimens from handling or transfers to researchers; digital records can never replace the physical herbarium.

Nadia was delighted to show us several examples of specimens contained in over 90 cabinets. The highlight was viewing the oldest specimen in the collection, a nearly 200-year-old *Campanula rotundifolia* (bluebell) with an Ottawa connection! The specimen was collected on 27 September 1827 at the Chaudière Falls by Christian Ramsay, Lady Dalhousie, wife of Governor General Lord Dalhousie (George Ramsay). Nadia noted that it was not uncommon in those times for wives of politicians to be interested and knowledgeable in botany and nature as a hobby. She also noted that Lady Dalhousie appeared to be an accomplished botanist, given the quality of the arrangement and mounting of the 1827 specimen in their collection.

Upon returning to Ottawa, I did some further research on this and turned up an excellent account of Lady Dalhousie and her botanical accomplishments by Daniel Brunton (*Reference 1*). According to that article, the specimen also may be the oldest known to have been collected from the Ottawa area. Subsequent to my visit, Nadia also provided me with an article written by Dr. Pringle on the historical significance of Lady Dalhousie's specimens (*Reference 2*); Dr. Pringle had curated and labelled many of her specimens at HAM.

Part 2 of the series highlighting the tour of the RBG (to appear in the next issue of *The Dibbler*) will highlight my visit to the Rose Garden and the Rock Garden, two garden areas within RBG that have recently undergone significant rejuvenation in response to the need for development of sustainable horticulture.

For those wishing to experience the Gardens, RBG has an excellent website to help plan your visit, including indicating what is currently in bloom (https://www.rbg.ca).

REFERENCES

1: Daniel F. Brunton (January 2023). "Early 19th Century Botanists and Their Discoveries in the Ottawa Area", Trail & Landscape, 57(1), January-March 2023.

2: James S. Pringle (1995). "Canadian Botanical Specimens Collected 1826-1828 by the Countess of Dalhousie, Acquired by the Royal Botanical Gardens"; Canadian Horticultural History 3(1): 1-21, 1995.

POSTSCRIPT – DR. JAMES ('JIM') S. PRINGLE

After the submission of Part 1 of my article on the Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG), my hosts informed me that Dr. 'Jim', as he was affectionately known

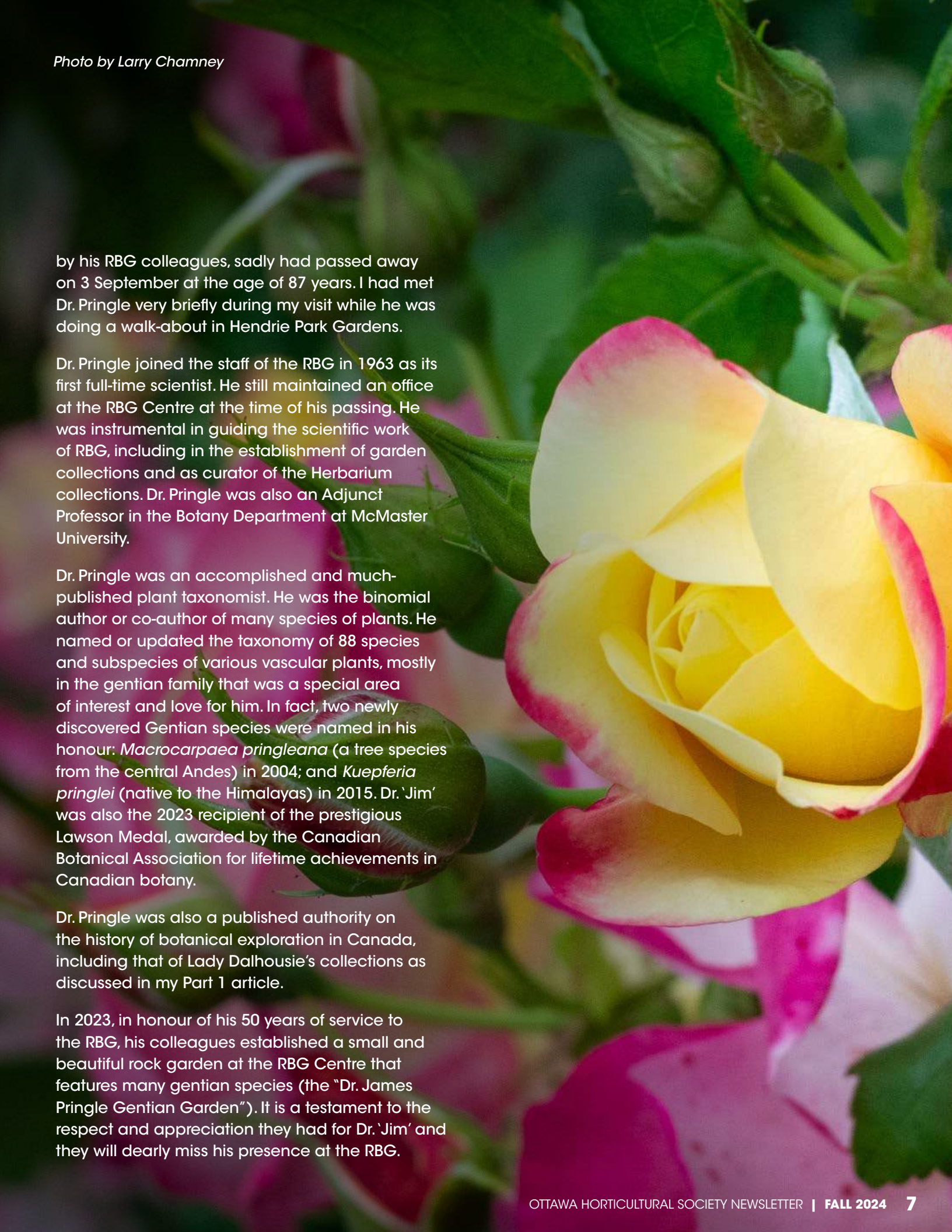


Photo by Larry Chamney

by his RBG colleagues, sadly had passed away on 3 September at the age of 87 years. I had met Dr. Pringle very briefly during my visit while he was doing a walk-about in Hendrie Park Gardens.

Dr. Pringle joined the staff of the RBG in 1963 as its first full-time scientist. He still maintained an office at the RBG Centre at the time of his passing. He was instrumental in guiding the scientific work of RBG, including in the establishment of garden collections and as curator of the Herbarium collections. Dr. Pringle was also an Adjunct Professor in the Botany Department at McMaster University.

Dr. Pringle was an accomplished and much-published plant taxonomist. He was the binomial author or co-author of many species of plants. He named or updated the taxonomy of 88 species and subspecies of various vascular plants, mostly in the gentian family that was a special area of interest and love for him. In fact, two newly discovered Gentian species were named in his honour: *Macrocarpaea pringleana* (a tree species from the central Andes) in 2004; and *Kuepferia pringlei* (native to the Himalayas) in 2015. Dr. 'Jim' was also the 2023 recipient of the prestigious Lawson Medal, awarded by the Canadian Botanical Association for lifetime achievements in Canadian botany.

Dr. Pringle was also a published authority on the history of botanical exploration in Canada, including that of Lady Dalhousie's collections as discussed in my Part 1 article.

In 2023, in honour of his 50 years of service to the RBG, his colleagues established a small and beautiful rock garden at the RBG Centre that features many gentian species (the "Dr. James Pringle Gentian Garden"). It is a testament to the respect and appreciation they had for Dr. 'Jim' and they will dearly miss his presence at the RBG.

BLACK &WHITE GARDENING

BY KAT BAUER
@THEBLACKMOONGARDEN

A monochromatic garden for the dramatically inclined.

Whatever season it is, take a walk through my home and garden and you will find a collection of plants that feature flowers, foliage, fruit, or vegetables in either white or black.

I've never been a fan of too much colour. But I thought that aesthetic was for my home or my wardrobe. I never considered bringing it into the garden until I moved into my new home.

As both a blessing and a curse, my new garden space was a blank slate - I could do anything with it! Hating seeing it so empty, I hastily filled it with all kinds of donated plants to help fill the space. However, once the plants grew and filled in, it felt chaotic, too much colour all over the place, nothing was well planned.

With a moon garden as my inspiration, I started digging up my current garden, donating the colourful plants and buying white-flowering plants. This new moon garden popped so beautifully in the twilight. By sourcing only white flowers I started to tame the chaos. After a few years I began challenging myself by adding in an even more dramatic theme: black.

In addition to weaving black into my various garden beds, I also extended it into my edible garden. I have a fruit, vegetable, and herb garden, which I start indoors under grow lights and in a little glass greenhouse cabinet. Here is where I can experiment with new black or white varieties each year.

In a way, limiting myself to a colour scheme has not only helped me to creatively express myself but also limits my spending at the garden centre! It gives me a goal to work towards, and direction when sourcing seeds. In my eyes, it is not only a beautiful experiment, but a tasty one as well!

Here are a few of my favourite dark plants:

- Black mondo grass, *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens'
- *Petunia sp.* 'Black Mamba'
- *Tulipa sp.* 'Queen of Night'
- Black and white *Hibiscus sp.* 'Cookies & Cream'
- *Sedum sp.* 'Back in Black'
- Black tomato *Solanum lycopersicum* 'Indigo Rose'
- Black peppers, *Capsicum annuum* 'Murasaki'
- Purple Thai basil, *Ocimum basilicum*
- Coral Bells, *Heuchera sp.* 'Black Pearl'
- *Helleborus sp.* 'New York Night'
- Snakeroot, *Actaea simplex* 'Hillside Black Beauty'
- Columbine, *Aquilegia vulgaris* var. *stellata* 'Black Barlow'


1.


2.


3.


4.


5.

1. Black and white planters with assorted edible plants and flowers. 2. Black hungarian peppers. 3. Black hungarian peppers with 'Black Beauty' tomatoes in background. 4. Black 'Indigo Rose' tomatoes. 5. Blackberries. Background image: *Heuchera sp.* 'Plum Pudding' Coral Bells

Here are a few of my favourite white/ silvery plants in the moon garden:

- *Artemisia schmidtiana* 'Silver Mound'
- *Phlox paniculata* Luminary™ 'Backlight'
- White annuals scattered around like *Jacobaea maritima* (dusty miller) and *Alyssum sp.*
- Lamb's ears *Stachys byzantina* 'Silver Carpet' as accents in planter pots
- White Oriental lily, *Lilium* 'Roselily luna'
- Foxglove, *Digitalis purpurea* 'Dalmation White'
- *Delphinium x elatum* 'Black Eyed Angels'
- *Cucurbita pepo,* white summer patty pan squash

1. Phlox paniculata LuminaryTM 'Backlight' 2. White Oriental lily, 'Roselily luna' 3. Carpathian Bellflower. 4. Petunias 'Black Mamba' & White.
Background Image: Lamb's ears 'Silver Carpet', Silver Mound Artemesia, & Dusty Miller.

Sharing my garden with the world has become an enjoyable hobby.

You can see more black and white varieties on my Instagram:

@theblackmoongarden

If you'd like to see other dark gardens, check out Chloe Hurst @theg0thgarden. She is also local to the Ottawa area and you may recognize her as the guest speaker from the September 24, 2024 OHS meeting.

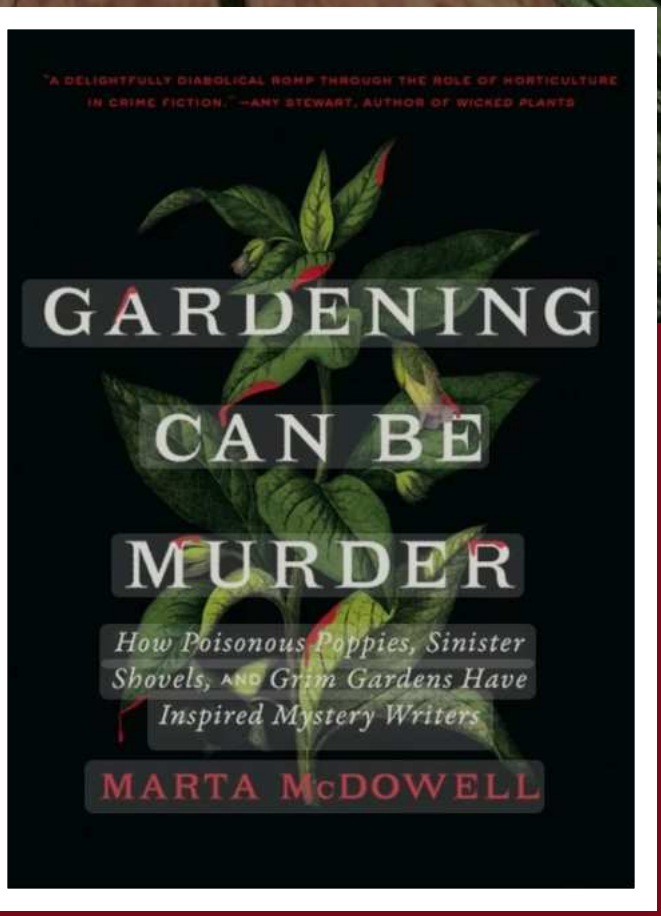
All-black salad with purple kale, purple Thai basil, black pansies, purple bok choy, black 'Zulu' peppers, black 'Murasaki' peppers, black 'Indigo Rose' tomatoes topped with black sea salt, fresh black pepper and dark balsamic dressing.

Photo of monkshood by Nancy McDonald

BOOK REVIEW

GARDENING CAN BE MURDER – HOW POISONOUS POPPIES, SINISTER SHOVELS AND GRIM GARDENS HAVE INSPIRED MYSTERY WRITERS BY MARTA McDOWELL

REVIEW BY NANCY McDONALD



If you are like me and mystery novels are a favourite, then this book will delight you as it explores the ways horticulture is front and centre in the mystery genre. I suppose my love of murder mysteries started early, reading *Nancy Drew* books. Marta mentions how these books were to be educational as well as entertaining and Nancy knew how to do everything. *The Password to Larkspur Lane* mystery involved gardening with larkspurs and bluebells as part of the story while providing clues. I read this book again as I had been oblivious to horticulture education in my youth!

Marta's book is a "survey of the mystery genre and its horticultural connections - the poisoned pen and the trowel…." She lets us know this survey is limited to English fiction and a preference for her favourite authors, and I share her preferences. Beginning with Edgar Allan Poe to current authors, the menacing aspects of horticulture are explored. If you are like me and always looking for new authors, her booklist will have you positively giddy with the discoveries.

Marta reminds us that "A gardener, like a detective, needs to be observant." We are constantly on the lookout for plant damage, pests and diseases and assessing the evidence for suspects. This book introduces us to gardening detectives, with Miss Jane Marple, Brother Cadfael, Nero Wolfe and a charming amateur chemist, Flavia de Luce, among the group. The book chapters follow a typical murder mystery format, setting, motive, means, clues and suspects. Interestingly, she points out that Louise Penny used a remote monastery setting in *The Beautiful Mystery* instead of Three Pines as the scene of the crime. Marta suggests "Garden settings can also shift a series out of the usual location or add descriptive layers. They offer series writers unfamiliar places to describe and give their perennial protagonists a new set of problems."

Could the obsession for a perfect garden noted in Ruth Rendell's Weeds be a motive for murder? Or money be a motive as in Susan Wittig's *The Darling Dahlias* and the *Cucumber Tree*? Might I add, bonus points if the book also includes recipes! *The Blue Rose* by Anthony Elgin is an excellent read for rose enthusiasts and the motive in this murder

mystery is ownership of the blue rose. Reginald Hill's *Deadheads* featuring detectives Dalziel and Pascoe was one where anyone who threatened the rose garden at Rosemont disappeared. I very much enjoyed this read, remembering detectives Dalziel and Pascoe from PBS.

Means abound in the horticultural world with murder sources such as weed killers, mulch, floral wire, hoe, shovel, scythe and pruner. Plant toxins are very much part of murder mysteries with authors such as Arthur Conan Doyle, who took botany as a required course, and Agatha Christie, who trained as a pharmacy technician, making her highly knowledgeable about toxins. Indeed, Marta points out that in more than half of Christie's stories, the victim succumbs to plant toxins. Opium, hemlock, foxglove, yew, castor bean, monkshood and datura are plants which abound in murder mysteries. We all needed a reminder of how green leaves in salads or stuffing are not what they seem and how readily Flavia de Luce could extract the toxic alkaloid from foxglove.

Marta reminds us that "clues are camouflaged, unremarkable until they emerge with the final solution. The writer is, if you pardon the expression, leading you up the garden path." She reminds us P.D James "knew the virtue of clues so mundane that they often go unnoticed by readers and characters alike." It is the thornless 'Zéphrine Drouhin' rose that leads Hercule Poirot to solve the murder in *Sad Cypress*. Suspects can range from the most likely to least likely as Marta points out.

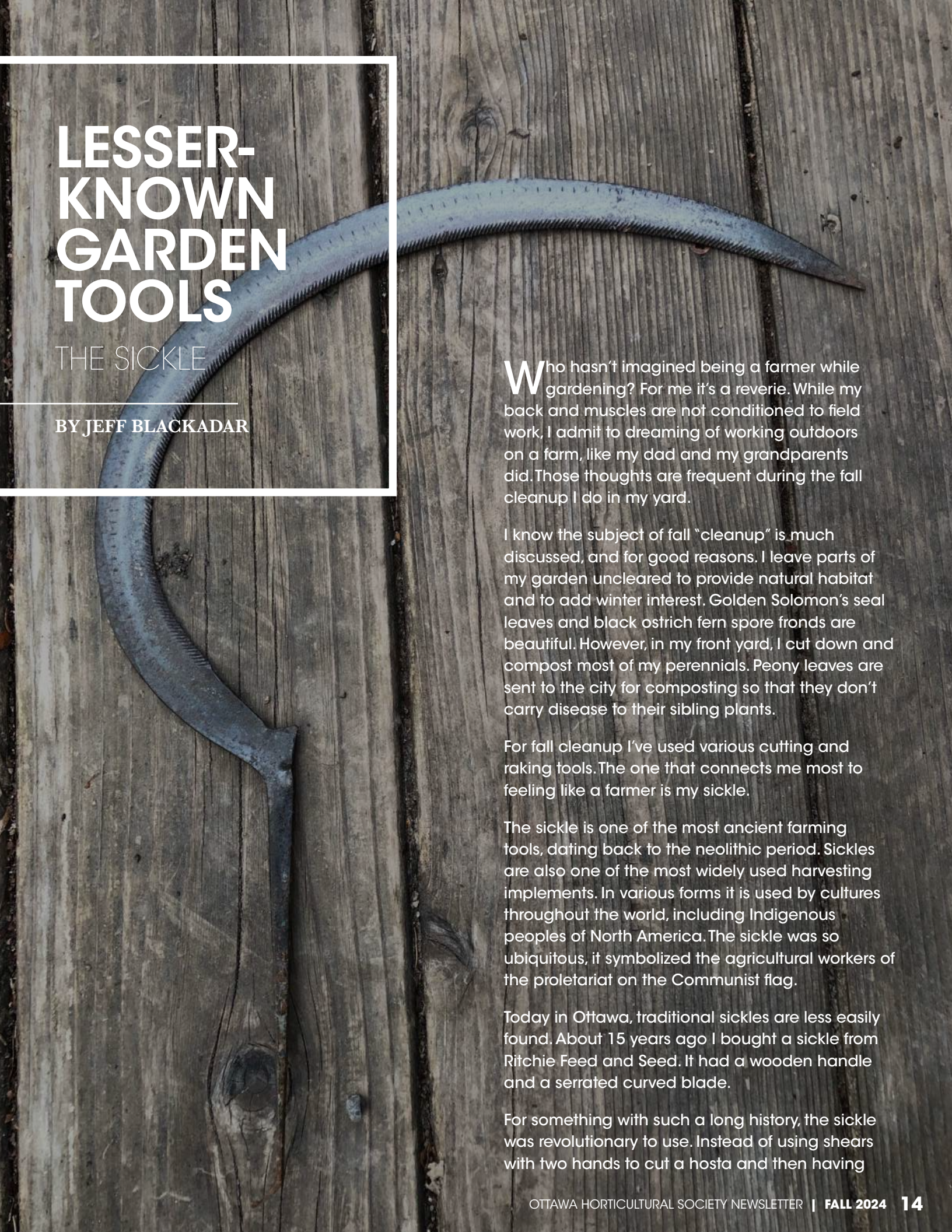
The last chapter looks at mystery writers and their gardens, starting with Nathaniel Hawthorne who was a lifelong gardener. Agatha Christie had an "admirable collection of rhododendrons, camellias and specimen trees" at her Greenway estate. I would have expected Rex Stout, the author of Nero Wolfe, to have been an orchid grower as they were an obsession in his detective's life. Indeed, he had approximately three hundred indoor plants, but his love was irises and he grew at one time "192 varieties of tall, bearded irises." His sister was the garden writer Ruth Stout, whom I first learned about from two local master gardeners who told me fifteen years ago when I joined Master Gardeners, that they followed her "No-Work" gardening approach.

Murder mystery author Vicki Lane describes this book as "…dangerous. A veritable cornucopia of crime fiction and gardening lore, it faces the reader with multiple temptations - books to read, plants to obtain, garden tours to book." I agree heartily with Vicki Lane and I thoroughly enjoyed this book. My pile of murder mystery books with horticultural connections is now stacked quite high. Next to read is Cynthia Riggs's *The Beebalm Murders*. How could I resist that title?

LESSER-KNOWN GARDEN TOOLS

THE SICKLE

BY JEFF BLACKADAR



Who hasn't imagined being a farmer while gardening? For me it's a reverie. While my back and muscles are not conditioned to field work, I admit to dreaming of working outdoors on a farm, like my dad and my grandparents did. Those thoughts are frequent during the fall cleanup I do in my yard.

I know the subject of fall "cleanup" is much discussed, and for good reasons. I leave parts of my garden uncleared to provide natural habitat and to add winter interest. Golden Solomon's seal leaves and black ostrich fern spore fronds are beautiful. However, in my front yard, I cut down and compost most of my perennials. Peony leaves are sent to the city for composting so that they don't carry disease to their sibling plants.

For fall cleanup I've used various cutting and raking tools. The one that connects me most to feeling like a farmer is my sickle.

The sickle is one of the most ancient farming tools, dating back to the neolithic period. Sickles are also one of the most widely used harvesting implements. In various forms it is used by cultures throughout the world, including Indigenous peoples of North America. The sickle was so ubiquitous, it symbolized the agricultural workers of the proletariat on the Communist flag.

Today in Ottawa, traditional sickles are less easily found. About 15 years ago I bought a sickle from Ritchie Feed and Seed. It had a wooden handle and a serrated curved blade.

For something with such a long history, the sickle was revolutionary to use. Instead of using shears with two hands to cut a hosta and then having

to put the shears down to gather the leaves, the sickle allowed me to work with a rhythm. I could bunch the leaves with one hand, slice with the other, put the leaves in a bucket and move to the next plant. Also, I could use the curved blade to gather the leaves of a plant, then bunch them and cut. The edge serrations improved the cutting.

With the serrated sickle, I could cut most of my perennials neatly, without ripping up roots. I am careful with peonies and sedums as they have a tendency to pull out below ground. I cut these plants with shears.

As you can see in the photo on the previous page, my now ancient sickle doesn't have a handle. I am reminding myself to repair the tool. When I tried to buy a replacement from Ritchie's, their staff said their supplier of sickles had gone out of business.

I located a facsimile replacement at the Tractor Supply Store in Ogdensburg, New York. This tool, pictured at left, was sold as a corn knife. There are many different types of tools called a corn knife and some of them have straight blades. This corn knife is curved just like my sickle is. The only significant difference is that the blade has a smooth edge, not a serrated one.

I've used my corn knife-sickle in the fall to clean up parts of my garden. The tool is simple and efficient to use. Of course, it is like a knife and one must keep an eye on where the edge is cutting at all times. The fact I am typing this with ten digits may be a relief. In truth, given that I keep my leaf bunching hand well away from the cutting edge, I find the tool safe to use.

Lee Valley sells a folding sickle, and it looks very nice. I will prefer getting my old sickle fixed so when I use it I can again daydream that I am cultivating crops like a farmer, not hastily harvesting hosta leaves before the sun goes down.

GREEN IN WINTER

In the middle of winter, when your green thumb starts itching and your meals could use some freshening up with local produce, why not try growing your own greens? With easy indoor options like microgreens, baby lettuce, and sprouts, you can have the freshest and most local produce imaginable even while your garden sleeps outside.

Two OHS members share their experiences and tips for how you can easily grow indoor salad greens and sprouts, for a fresh taste of summer during the cold months of the year. (For tips on growing microgreens, see the December 2021 OHS Newsletter for Nancy McDonald's informative piece "Growing and Enjoying Microgreens.")

KEEPING IT FRESH: GROWING WINTER LETTUCE

BY MARIA NICOLL
ALL PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

I never imagined we could grow our own leaf lettuce indoors with such success. The reward of having home-grown lettuce at our fingertips is both gratifying and delicious. Our first attempt in November 2022 exceeded our expectations. Previously, we had grown basil indoors for late spring planting, but we realized we could also grow basil, lettuce and other herbs like parsley and coriander during the winter months. And just like that, an idea blossomed into reality.

WHY GROW LETTUCE IN WINTER?

Harvesting your own produce is incredibly satisfying. The flavour of home-grown tomatoes, for example, is unmatched by store-bought varieties. Growing your own food brings a sense of pride and self-sufficiency. While it may not significantly reduce your grocery bill, the ability to have your own fresh produce with flavour and freshness is exceptional and rewarding. Plus, it helps avoid cabin fever during Ottawa's long winter.

SETTING UP YOUR INDOOR LETTUCE GARDEN:

Our set-up is tailored to our needs, materials and space. There are many ways to set up grow lights and plants, and you can find plenty of inspiration online. Here's what we use:

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

MUST-HAVES:

- Open shelving: metal, multi-shelf
- LED lights
- A timer
- Propagation trays with and without holes (2 of each), without compartments
- Small pots for herbs
- Seeds (lettuce, herbs, other)
- Growing medium (soil): Miracle Grow potting soil or your own compost

EXTRAS:

- All-purpose fertilizer
- Watering can
- Sticky strips for small flying insect pests
- Scissors

We set up our indoor garden in the basement, where good ventilation and cooler temperatures create an ideal environment for growing lettuce and herbs. Ensure you have access to a water source for easy watering and optional fertilizing.

Once your shelving unit is ready, install the lighting. Our 48" full-spectrum LED lights (44 watts) are suspended at the top of each shelf using plastic tie fasteners. With four shelves, we have one LED light per shelf which is connected via a

daisy chain extension. The last light plugs into a wall timer.

LED lights provide energy savings and optimal light spectrum. The timer allows you to control the light source; set it for 16-18 hours of daylight and 6-8 hours of dark time, which accelerates lettuce growth. The cool basement climate is ideal.

PLANTING AND CARE: Use any brand of potting soil or well-draining compost. Fill seedling trays with soil, sprinkle lettuce seeds, cover lightly with soil and press gently so that seeds make full contact with the soil. As for the trays for winter lettuce, we prefer those without compartments but with drainage holes, with a tray underneath for excess water.

Successful lettuce varieties, in our case, include "Black Seeded Simpson," "Buttercrunch," and "Ruby Red." We also grow herbs like basil, parsley and coriander. Coriander and basil need replanting, while parsley can be potted and moved outdoors in spring.

COMMON ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS: We've only encountered small flying bugs, easily managed with sticky strips, and some wilted greens because of a missed watering. But this was quickly remedied with water.

HARVESTING: Harvest lettuce by plucking leaves individually from the lowest part of the stem to encourage new growth. You can also take the whole plant but ensure you commence a new tray for succession planting. Typically, we get 5-6 harvests before the lettuce becomes woody and bitter. The new leaves typically appear within days of your harvest - it's so amazing! Discard old trays into compost and plant new ones for continuous supply.

After harvesting, soak lettuce in cold water for 30 minutes, spin dry, and store in plastic bags with a paper towel in the refrigerator. The harvest lasts over two weeks if not consumed or given away.

STEP BY STEP:

1. Find suitable space
2. Set up shelving, lighting and timer
3. Prepare seedling trays (early to mid-November)
4. Sow seeds
5. Allow about 14-21 days for germination
6. Harvest, wash and store when ready
7. Start again in about February-March
8. Enjoy your home-grown winter lettuce!

SUMMARY: Start your first winter lettuce garden in mid-November to carry through to about January. Start new trays in January for winter lettuce that will carry through from February to April.

Enjoy the fresh flavours of your harvest!
Bon appétit!

SPROUTING UP

BY TUULA TALVILA
ALL PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

For a couple of winters I really enjoyed growing microgreens. Having those super-fresh green shoots to add to salads, sandwiches, and pitas livened up my winter lunches. However, I found them a bit fussy: often, I didn't have soil when I needed it, and I didn't like having to use fresh soil for each round. Last winter I decided to try sprouts instead and was very pleased with the results.

Sprouts do not require any soil; they need only constant moisture and light (and the light is even somewhat optional). Sprouts are simply seeds that have just germinated and put out a little root, a stem, and a few first leaves. They are highly nutritious, grow quickly, and are easy to start and care for. With minimal equipment, you can have delicious, nutritious sprouts in a handful of days.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

The only equipment you'll need is a glass jar with a permeable cover. The set-up I used for my first try at growing sprouts wasn't ideal. I used a mason jar with a coffee filter attached as a permeable lid. However, I found that water didn't flow through the filter quickly enough so I had to take it off and rinse the seeds in a sieve. They got stuck to everything and were fussy to handle. Now, I can highly recommend special lids designed for sprouting; I bought mine from Lee Valley Tools.

These lids will fit any wide-mouthed jar and make the job so much easier.

You could make your own lid using a canning jar ring and some fine mesh. There also exist special sprouting set-ups with stackable trays, but I have not tried these and was happy with the results I got from the simple jar and lid set-up.

Choose seeds that are sold specifically for sprouting, as other seeds may have been treated with fungicides or hormones to induce germination; you may be eating some of the seed coats, although many will rinse off. Seeds come as single varieties, including alfalfa, mung beans, radish, and broccoli, or mixes such as "Sandwich Booster" and "Spring Salad Mix." I ordered my seeds from Veseys. I wasn't crazy about the mung beans. I also tried sunflower seeds that I had leftover from growing microgreens and I don't recommend them for sprouts. They were very slow to germinate, and the seed coats did not come off easily and had to be removed by hand, which resulted in damaged leaves. They make much nicer shoots as microgreens.

HOW TO GROW

DAY ONE:

Depending on the size of your jar, add 1 or 2 tablespoons of seeds to the jar and fill with water to a depth of an inch or two. Put the lid on, give the jar a swirl to rinse the seeds, then invert the jar to drain. Refill with another inch or two of water and leave to soak for 24 hours. The great thing about the lids I have is that once you put it on, on Day One, you don't have to take it off until your sprouts are ready.

Seeds soaking for the first 24 hours.

DAY TWO:

After the seeds have soaked for 24 hours, drain the water. Do not refill. Leave the jar inverted to drain for another 10 minutes or so. (The beauty of the special lids is that they have little feet so the jar can stand up on its lid and drain.) Excess water can be absorbed from the outer surface of the lid with a soft cloth or paper towel. Rotate the jar slowly to try to spread the wet seeds out along the inside surface of the jar. From now on, the jar will be sitting on its side so that air can get in. (The well-designed special lids are not actually circular, but instead are twelve-sided so the jar will not roll when laying on its side.)

Moist seeds on day 2, with the jar now kept on its side

DAY THREE TO HARVEST:

Each day, add water to the jar to rinse the seeds, then drain, and return the jar to its side. Very quickly you will see the seeds begin to sprout, first with the white root then the stem with cotyledons. Some growers put an opaque sleeve around the jar so the sprouts will grow tall towards the light. If left uncovered, as I did with mine, they will grow into a curly tangle of shoots. Leave the jar in a bright spot on a table or counter; it can even get some sunlight if you want more green leaves in your sprouts. Around 4-7 days, depending on the variety, you should see some tiny green leaves – your sprouts are ready to eat!

Day 4 of a "Spicy Lentil Crunch" mix containing lentils, radish, red clover, canola, and black mustard. The white sprouts are visible now.

HARVESTING YOUR SPROUTS

When your sprouts are ready, remove them from the jar and put them in a dish of water to rinse; this also helps separate the sprouts from all the empty seed coats, as those generally float. Gently dry the sprouts, then refrigerate. They will keep well for up to a week.

After washing the jar and lid, you can start your next batch so that it'll be ready when you finish eating the ones in your fridge. This way you'll have a continuous supply of fresh, home-grown goodness to add some zip and crunch to your meals, whether as a garnish or the star of the show in a salad, sandwich, or pita.

Harvests from three different sprout mixes

Photo: Aquaponic system with koi fish and growing flood table

JARDINS DOMAINE DECELLES

BY ALAIN DECELLES
PHOTOS BY ALAIN DECELLES

This piece originally appeared in both French and English in the June 2024 edition of "La Voix de Chez Nous, Journal communautaire de Lac-Sainte-Marie Community Newsletter." It is reprinted here in English with minor revisions, with permission from the author. The original can be found at https://lavoixdecheznous.com/images/editions/lvdcn49.pdf.

Jardins Domaine Decelles is a Resort Lac Ste-Marie sister organization that provides ecologically friendly landscaping and gardening services. We accommodate clients who, for example, are looking for a wedding venue with beautifully landscaped surroundings. We also share organic gardening practices such as planting by the moon calendar and making lasagna compost.

Clients at the Resort, which is about one hour north of Ottawa, have access to fresh fruit, vegetables, berries and herbs, all home-grown on the property. We use old fashioned techniques to save our seeds from the previous year, start the plants indoors with an aquaponic system and later transplant them into either cold frames or directly into the garden in the spring. Given that we have practised the process ourselves, we want to show others how easy and fun it is to have an organic garden.

One of our current experiments is the aquaponic system, which allows you to enjoy the beautiful fish in the aquarium. The water is filtered through a growing table, where we currently plant herbs and start our seedlings. These plants get their nutrients directly from the fish water and return the clean water to the aquarium so that both the plants and the aquarium are low maintenance. All you have to do is mimic Mother Nature, enjoy the beauty of the fish, and eat fresh, healthy food.

Preparing the garden beds with compost and wood chip mulch

There is nothing like trying firsthand to learn organic gardening. We use a platform called WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms), through which people from all over the world can join us for a few weeks to experiment with organic gardening. We thoroughly enjoy all of the organic gardening activities, especially harvesting the "fruits of our labour." In June, two individuals from the UK, one from France and one from China were participating with us here at Jardins Domaine Decelles.

Lasagna composting with layers of leaves and horse manure

This program has worked so well that we are thinking of expanding it so that future clients will have the opportunity of a "staycation" while learning about this gardening process of growing food, enjoying fresh produce, reducing the environmental impact and lowering food bills!

We are also thinking of opening within the community, involving children in learning important and fun skills from an early age. I recall my first experience with gardening. I was about 5 years old, in the garden with my Mom, and she said, "Do you see that yellow thing dangling down?" I said yes. She said, "Put it in your mouth!" That was my first yellow wax bean... I fell immediately in love with gardening!

Other potential projects will be on topics such as how to plant in a greenhouse, how to transfer the greenhouse plants into the garden, the best way to harvest tomatoes, how to store them and how to collect the seeds for next year. At the end of the season, you can learn about putting the garden to bed and how to compost effectively with what materials you have in your neighbourhood. At Resort Lac Ste-Marie, we have local, natural animal fertilizer and tree leaves in the fall. With the magic of layering both like a lasagna, which the earthworms love, you get the perfect digested compost. By doing this year after year, you'll get a garden that is rich with a dark, organic humus. This makes your plot of land very productive and naturally more resistant to diseases.

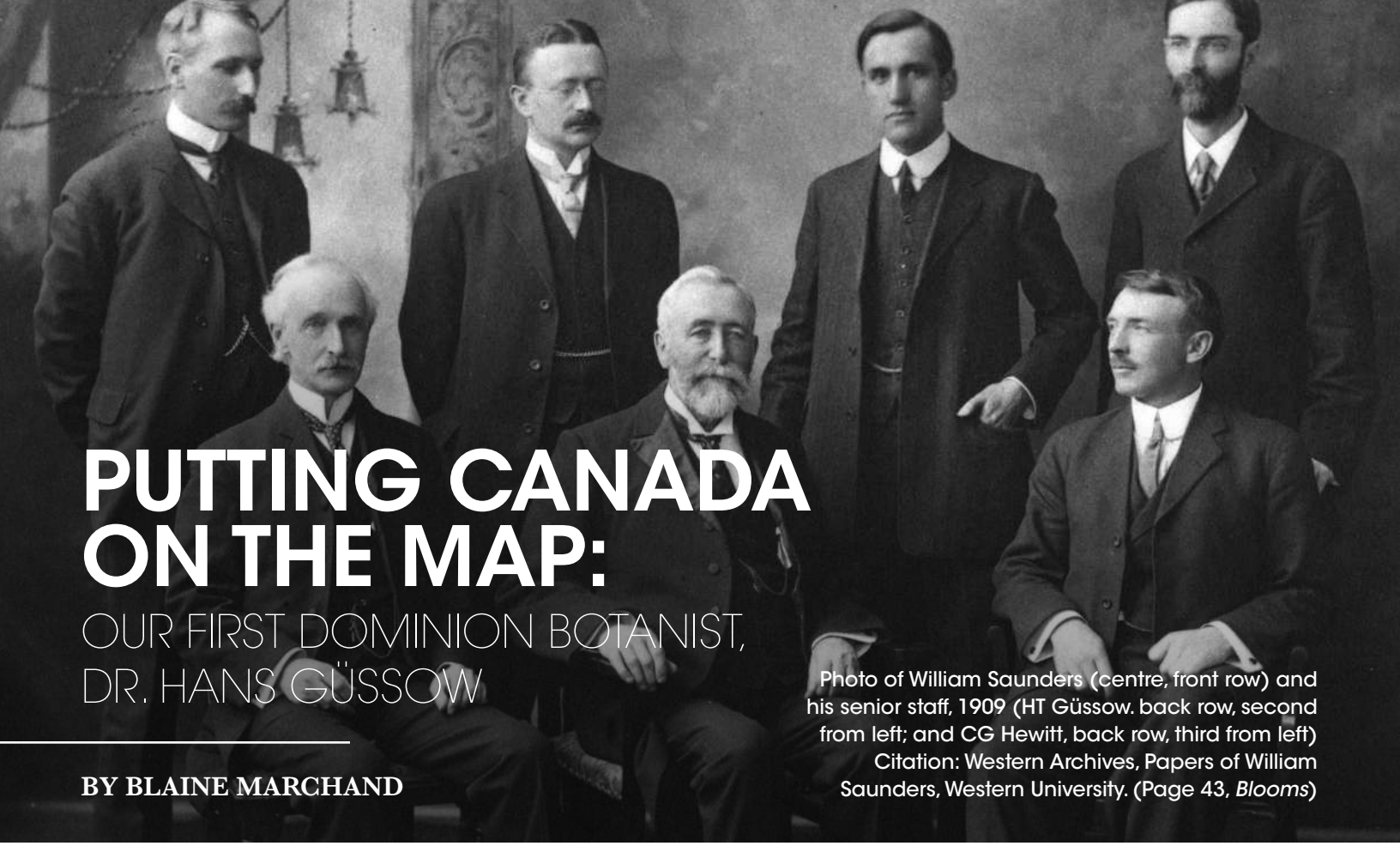
We are experimenting with many new gardening techniques and would like to share our knowledge. We would love to hear your suggestions so we can all learn, share and grow together!

We held an official launch this fall to coincide with the 10-year anniversary of Resort Lac Ste-Marie, and an Open House on the 29th of September. Please look for our future announcements. You can contact us at:

https://jardinsdomainedecelles.com/

https://www.instagram.com/jardins_domainedecelles_garden/

https://m.facebook.com/jardinsdomainedecelles



PUTTING CANADA ON THE MAP:

OUR FIRST DOMINION BOTANIST, DR. HANS GÜSSOW

Photo of William Saunders (centre, front row) and his senior staff, 1909 (HT Güssow. back row, second from left; and CG Hewitt, back row, third from left) Citation: Western Archives, Papers of William Saunders, Western University. (Page 43, *Blooms*)

BY BLAINE MARCHAND

Hans Theodor Güssow was born in Breslau, Germany (today Wrocław, Poland) in 1879. His father, Ernst Güssow, was the city's architect. His mother was Selma Johanna Helene (née Siegel). Her father was also an architect, which is how she and Ernst met. Sadly, she died when Hans was only 28 months old. Güssow family lore holds that Hans' father, concerned with his young son's health, insisted that he spend a good deal of time outdoors throughout his childhood, which they believe piqued his interest in the natural world. Hans went on to be educated at universities in Breslau, Leipzig and Berlin, focusing his studies on applied botany, plant pathology, and bacteriology.

In 1901 Hans moved to London, England, and in 1903 he began to work as an assistant to the renowned Scottish botanist Dr. William Carruthers in the Department of Botany in the British Museum. In 1881, the Museum had moved to a new facility on Cromwell Road and this provided the opportunity to expand and to develop a Cryptogamic Herbarium, as well as the special British Herbarium, which housed a valuable collection of original botanical drawings and manuscripts. The work Hans did under Dr. Carruthers would have a profound impact on his career in Ottawa.

In London, Hans researched the crop problems facing British landowners and farmers. Among his work was the cause of the destruction of larch forests, potato diseases, and the effects of poisonous weeds on crops. He was made a fellow of the Royal Microscopical Society and was an active member of the Royal Horticultural Society. He also joined the Association of Economic Biologists, the Association of Economic Botany, and the Société mycologique de France. His scientific articles often included his own drawings and photographs.

While in England, in 1907, Hans married Jenny Maria Hitzignam. She shared a similar background to Hans, having been born in Öynhausen, Höxter, Westphalia, Prussia, Germany. When the couple's first child was born in 1908, he was named after William Carruthers, as a tribute to Hans' mentor.

That same year, 1908, James Fletcher, the economic entomologist and applied botanist at Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm (CEF) died unexpectedly. William Saunders, the director of the CEF, realizing that the times demanded specialization, made a decision to split Fletcher's two portfolios. He reached out to Dr. Carruthers, who recommended that Saunders hire Hans as

Photo of HT Güssow
Citation: City of Ottawa Archives.
(page 60, *Blooms*),

the botanist and a Dr. C. Gordon Hewitt as the entomologist.

Thus, in 1909, Hans became Canada's first Dominion Botanist at the CEF. Hans took on his position with enthusiasm. Reflecting the mandate of the CEF and its goal of helping farmers improve their husbandry, he began a seed exchange, which allowed Canada to grow plants that were important to propagation and plant breeding research. He organized cross-country plant pathology diagnostic units, something largely unknown at the time. Twelve branch laboratories were opened. He also began a forestry pathology laboratory. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Botanical Herbarium and Library at the CEF. Today it holds over 350,000 fungal and fungal plant disease specimens. These specimens are critical for ongoing scientific research on both indigenous and invasive species (agents of disease as well as foreign disease-causing fungi).

Drawing on his knowledge of potato diseases in England, when a potato disease occurred in Newfoundland, he and Dr. Hewitt took immediate action, drafting a Destructive Insects and Pests Act, which came into effect in 1910, and became a model of plant protection legislation that exists today.

Upon William Saunders's retirement in 1911, he put Hans in charge of the Arboretum and a proposed Botanical Garden. The ornamental gardens were centred in front of the Saunders Residence (where the Saunders building is now), but Hans envisioned the Botanical Garden's role as one of research, scientific study and economic application; he believed it should be more than ornamentation in a landscape or a model for farming families to beautify their homesteads. The idea of a Botanical Garden at the CEF floundered over the years, initially due to the costs of World War I but then, post-war, to departmental changes. It was something Hans regretted and commented on throughout his career and in his retirement.

In 1914, Hans established a Certified Seed Inspection Service to train potato inspectors and to draw up inspection procedures and facilities to ensure that Canada had a disease-free stock. It had an impact not only nationally – it resulted in a threefold increase in disease-free potatoes in Canada – but also internationally.

World War I, however, had a significant impact on the career of Dr. Güssow. With the start of hostilities with Germany, suspicion of German-born persons became rife. Paranoia was at an all-time high, and Hans began to be referred to as "that German" in Ottawa. Rumours swirled that he, like other German-born people at the CEF, kept his German uniform and helmet hidden under his bed at his residence on the Farm. Even the pathologists, with whom he worked, urged the Ministry of Agriculture to appoint a new Dominion Botanist, one who would inspire greater confidence in his loyalty to the country.

Given Hans' impressive qualifications and the work he had accomplished since his appointment five years earlier, the Ministry's solution was to keep him on but to relieve him of his official duties and remove any reference to him in departmental official documents. He did, however, continue to work and earn a salary, which was necessary as his family had grown to three boys and two girls. Hans continued to be productive, as was his inclination. He published several books based on his research. Among them were *Potato Diseases Transmitted by the Use of Unsound Seed*

Potato, in 1914; *Canada's White Pine Possessions Threatened with Extermination: An Authoritative Discussion of White Pine Blister Rust*, in 1915; and in 1929, S*mut Diseases of Cultivated Plants: Their Cause and Control.*

After the war, his presentations at scientific conferences were also published, which brought him national and international recognition. He became the first president of the Canadian Phytopathological Society in 1929. An advocate for the need to establish biosecurity regulations to prevent the spread of plant pests and diseases, he was a speaker at international congresses in the Netherlands and New York in 1923 and 1926 respectively. This was followed in 1929 at the International Plant Protection Conference held in Rome, at which 26 countries signed a new International Convention for the Protection of Plants. He became a charter member of the Canadian Phytopathological Society and was its first president in 1929-30. Recognizing his significant contribution to Canadian agriculture, Queen's University bestowed on him an honorary Doctor of Laws (LL.D.) degree in 1931. That same year, he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. He was also a charter member of the American Phytopathological Society and served as president in 1935-36.

Hans retired from his position as Dominion Botanist in 1944 after 35 years of service. He and his wife moved to Victoria BC, where he was active in the Victoria Horticultural Society. He died on June 15, 1961, at age 87. Without a doubt, Hans Güssow's contributions to the Central Experimental Farm and to Canadian agriculture were significant. His vision was shaped by his early work with Dr. William Carruthers. His scientific knowledge and training, combined with his organizational skills, contributed greatly to the early development of botanical research in our country.

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With thanks as always to Richard Hinchcliff, an invaluable source of archival materials.

Photo of HT and Jenny Maria (née Hitzigrath) Güssow, Yousuf Karsh, Collection of David Güssow

OHS DIRECTORS COLUMN

A series of columns on gardens and gardening by members of the OHS Board of Directors. This is an opportunity to get to know more about the people on the Board who direct the affairs of the Ottawa Horticultural Society.

BY JANET SULLIVAN

Why I Garden

Why do I garden? Probably because my mother gardened, and she gardened, I think, because she grew up on a farm, the daughter and granddaughter of farmers. She gardened in a big way - with five children, she claimed digging in the dirt was what kept her sane. Growing up, the vegetable patch was a place we were to stay out of. Certainly, I didn't want to get roped into weeding anyway, though picking berries, digging potatoes, pulling carrots and harvesting in general was always great fun. All five of us must have unconsciously absorbed an interest because we all garden to varying degrees.

I try my utmost, but generally fail in my attempts. My mother made it look relatively easy, though she was heard to exclaim that it was just a war out there and one could only hope to win the occasional battle. (It must be said that she's the type to keep everything under strict control – a perfect example being the small and delightful mound of variegated leaves that occupied a spot under the kitchen window for fifty years. I now know that it was goutweed. Good thing I never took a cutting of that one!) My sister has the knack and I marvel at her lovely beds, overflowing pots, and vegetable output, yet she can sit serenely on her deck, reading a book, without the appearance of having to slave at it. (She does point out that she can't

keep an indoor plant alive, where I have more than my share of success with them, so I suppose it evens out.)

Not having my sister's knack or my mother's iron will, my garden is haphazard. Things that were meant to be tall end up short at the back of the border. Things expected to be short and tidy sprawl and flop at the front. Things that are vigorous in other gardens are pathetic in mine, with the exception of the unwanted, like the dreaded creeping bellflower. I'm certain all gardeners struggle with the same issues, but somehow other gardens seem to overcome them, while my garden appears to be a lesson in what not to do.

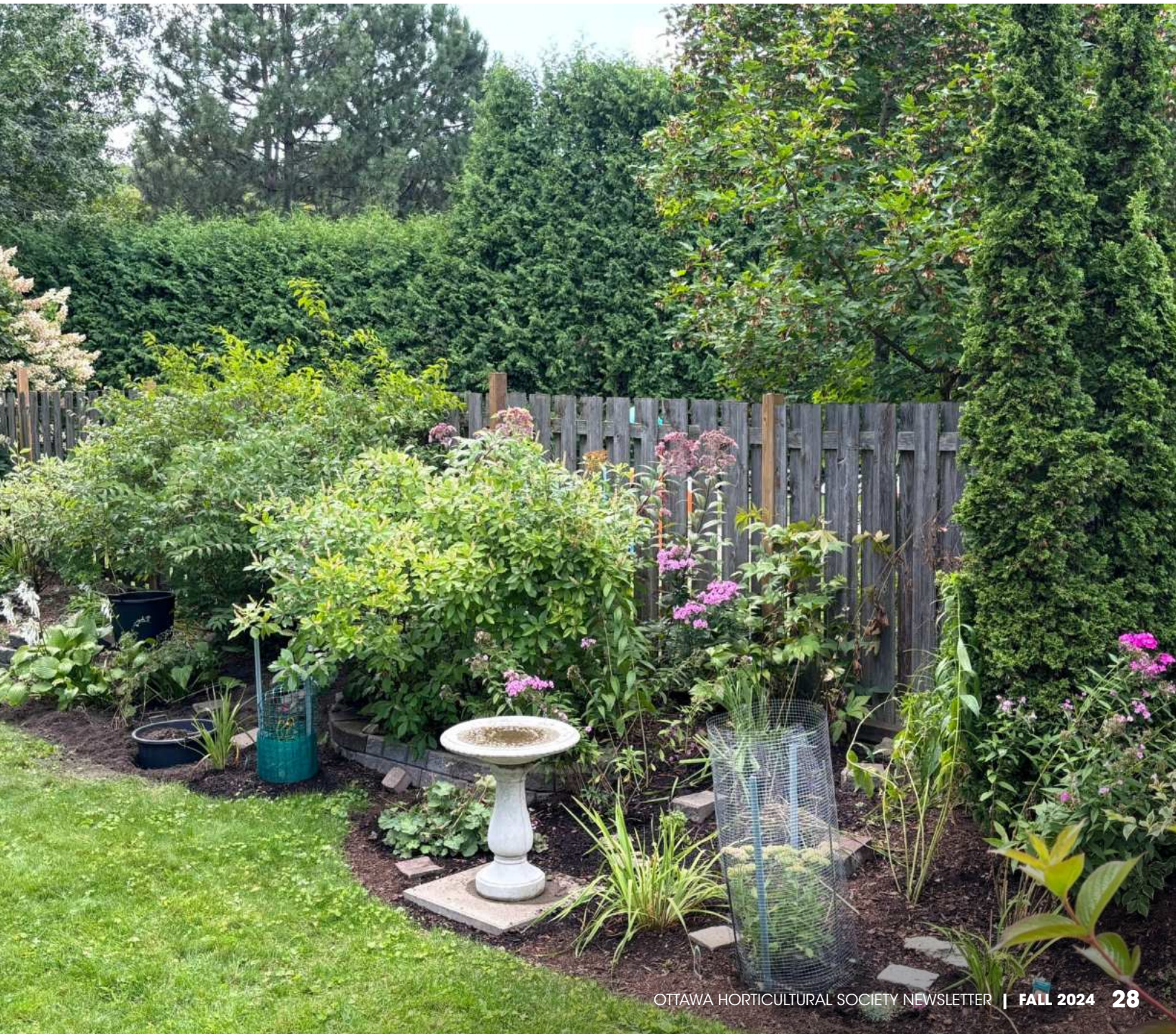
I've pretty much given up on vegetables, except for beans and tomatoes in pots by the house. I weary of trying to outwit the wildlife, though we take great delight in thinking our yard is a welcoming place for them. With a bird feeder and a bird bath, we perhaps roll out the welcome mat to more than feathered friends. This year, the beans were doing splendidly and then, overnight, were nibbled to stubs in the pots. Squirrels take every tulip bloom in the spring, dig up freshly installed plants and pots and use struggling young shrubs as playground equipment. 'Chubby,' our resident groundhog, has claimed a parcel of the garden for his home and will not be dissuaded; and the bunnies - don't get me started! I thought I was in the clear this spring when the giant phlox, usually eaten to the ground, emerged unscathed. But one of this year's babies (a dear little thing, who could be mean to it?) decided our shed was a perfect home. Though the phlox were spurned, the echinacea, the miniature hostas, the sedum and the pinks all fell victim. When every new plant I put in was in shreds the next morning, I got busy and arranged stakes and netting around the victims. I now wonder what the point is; it appears I'm growing grey blobs.

I'm new to the idea of plants for native pollinators, and have been pleased to discover that I have a few already in place; plants I was attracted to because the bumblebees seemed to enjoy them. As I carry on with the (endless) renovations, I'll be looking to include more of these in the mix. Until now, I've simply gone by what the bees enjoyed, but I have learned that isn't reliable. My beloved weigela was bowed over by its blooms this spring, and positively hummed with bees – but it is native to Asia?! Who knew – I didn't, but I am learning.

The project for the last couple of years has been taking down a two-brick-high retaining wall that makes a straight, raised bed along each side of the yard, to allow the beds to curve out into the lawn. I'm quite pleased with this summer's effort but, looking back at what I did last summer, I can see it already following the pattern of my garden catastrophes. Never mind, I carry on in the hope that each year will be the one that makes the difference. No matter the result, it gives me great pleasure to be outdoors, digging, planting, mulching, renovating beds, while enjoying the birds frolicking in the bath; the bunny munching nearby (he/she rolls an eye in my direction and pretty much laughs at me); the chipmunk being rude and the squirrels being ridiculous. The odd fox has stopped to soak up sun in the back corner; skunks and racoons appear at night to create their own mayhem; even the odd coyote has jumped the fence and bounded through of late (bunnies, beware!). All this in a suburb fifteen minutes from downtown – pretty good, I think, even if we grumble about the fallout.

I joined the OHS hoping for help, guidance, ideas…sympathy. I have been rewarded on all counts!

Photos by Janet Sullivan



THE DIBBLER

ABOUT US:
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We depend on our members for ideas, articles and information about what is going on in the gardening community. Unless otherwise stated, authors are members of the OHS.

PLEASE SEND YOUR SUBMISSIONS TO:
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The newsletter welcomes articles about all aspects of gardening. **A Submission and Style Guide has been prepared and is available on the OHS website: https://ottawahort.org/previous-ohs-newsletters/**

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