



OHS NEWS

April 2015

Coming Events

Unless otherwise indicated the following events take place at 7:30 p.m. at the **Tom Brown Arena**, 141 Bayview Road. Consult the 2015 yearbook for a complete list of events for the year.

April 28

The peonies of AP Saunders, with Blaine Marchand, OHS member and Past President of the Canadian Peony Society

May 10

Friends of the Farm Rare and Unusual Plants Sale

May 26

OHS Auction (monthly meeting)

June 23

Summer show (monthly meeting)

September 22

Fall show (monthly meeting)

The mission of the OHS is to cultivate an interest in plants and gardening in order to create a beautiful community.

Spring Issue

Garden Decor: Steady Hand, Stunning Effects by Ailsa Francis

A skillfully-placed sculpture, a weathered piece of statuary, an elegant bird-bath, a beautiful pot or piece of furniture – all of these decorative elements can bring so much charm and dimension to a garden. But over time, I have learned that less is always more when it comes to incorporating decoration into a garden space.



It is very easy for enthusiastic collectors to become carried away with their treasures and end up placing a jumble of mementos, collectibles and cherished hand-me-downs amongst their plants. The result is never a good one and often ends up looking more like a yard sale or worse.

The secret is to be discerning and purchase only items that send you into raptures, not to make too fine a point of it! If its only appeal is a reduced price, don't buy it. If you collect hippos, and it's another hippo, don't buy it (unless, of course, it's an awesome hippo). If you love blue and it's blue, don't buy it unless it's the perfect blue, not to mention the perfect size and shape. If you've gone out to buy a pot that is 3' tall and 12" wide, and you find

one but it's ugly, don't buy it. Don't feel constrained by time or a deal; the right item will always find you, but often not in the way you imagine. It's important to be open in your quest.



The objective with garden decoration is how best to complement the space and the plants you have growing there.

If you want to accentuate movement – say in a planting of *Hakonechloa macra* (Japanese forest grass) or a mass of daylilies – then choose a sculpture that reinforces that physical movement. I'll always remember a plant and sculpture combination I saw in a photograph of flamboyant garden designer Ryan Gainey's garden in Decatur, Georgia: amidst a circular planting of liriopse was the figure of a prancing horse, high-stepping above the waving foliage. The horse's movement mimicked that of the lily turf and the overall effect was very satisfying. Or if you want to create tension amid swaying foliage, choose a static sculpture, statue, or something else. This kind of dichotomy is often just as interesting.



Sculpture in the garden is very personal and you can spend as much or as little money as you might have. Cast cement, bronze, copper, iron, stone – all of these materials will withstand the vagaries of the seasons and will spend years gracing your garden.



Pieces that are weathered and have some patina or age to them are perfect complements to wilder garden spaces; more refined sculptures, especially static ones, in my mind, seem to suit more formal or manicured spaces.



Look for artists who work in these media, and visit their studios or go to events where they might showcase their art.

I have been to many gardens where reclaimed or salvaged materials have been used to great effect – a vintage wheelbarrow, an antique metal gate, a wooden post or a copper tub can all find their place amongst the perennials and shrubs in a garden.



Furniture can also play an important role in the garden. Be aware when you purchase tables and chairs that these pieces will act as decorative elements in your space. If a clunky set obscures your view of the plants, then consider furniture that has a lighter presence. Pieces made with wire are essentially see-through, and so can be a good choice for a small garden or to ensure your view isn't obstructed.



Decorative furniture or any other kind of feature can actually define or create a view. Since your eye is taken directly to this design element, it will happily rest there. And because of this, you have to make sure that the plants surrounding it are well-grown and healthy in every season.

Whether a seat is meant to be predominantly ornamental or a destination for relaxation, the way it is integrated into your garden remains extremely

important.



So, choose both your decorations and your furniture wisely. Follow William Morris' advice when he said: "If you want a golden rule that will fit everything, this is it: Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful." I would add "in your gardens" too!

All photos courtesy Ailsa Francis.
UNCOMMON SOURCES FOR GARDEN ORNAMENT & DECORATION:

Kiwi Gardens "Art in the Garden", 20-21 June, 2015; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.: the work of 35 artists will be on display throughout this plant nursery's beautiful 10 acres. Stroll, view, eat and purchase art and perennials. Dogs on leash are welcome. Admission: \$5.00. Contact: 613-267-7384; www.kiwigardens.ca; 687 Harper Rd., 4 km west of Perth, off Hwy. 7.

Craft Shows and sources:

Go here for more info: www.festivalsandeventsontario.ca and www.craftontario.com.

Architectural antiques:

Many local dealers within the Ottawa region. For a listing, see www.antiquesincanada.com.

Or further afield:

Balleycanoe Antiques, near Mallo-rytown. See www.balleycanoe.co. Barrielfield Antiques, in Kingston. See www.antiqueskingston.com.

Or go across the border to the Brimfield Antique Show, in Brimfield, Massachusetts. Held in May, July and September, with over 6000 dealers, be prepared to spend several days and plan your trip accordingly. For more info, see www.brimfieldshow.com.

Remembering Virginia Peck
with contributions from Heidi Geraets,
Judy Shedden, D.J. Smith,
and Gloria Sola



When Virginia Peck died on March 15, 2015, at the age of 102, the OHS lost one of its most ardent and long-time members.

D.J. Smith, our membership convenor, tells us that Virginia joined the OHS in 1966, and her husband, Dr. Oswald Peck, joined her as a member in 1967. This would have been her 50th year as a member. Among her many activities in the Society, she served as Director in 1968, 1969, 1971, 1974, 1975, 1978, and 1979. She and Dr. Peck were involved with public planting in 1974, 1975, and 1978, and volunteered for the plant sales in 1979. Virginia and Oswald were made Honorary Life Members in 1995. Dr. Peck died in 1999.

Judy Shedden remembers her as "a gentle and kind person, and a very knowledgeable gardener. She was also a very keen flower arranger, and a big exhibitor in both the design and horticultural sections of the shows, in Ottawa and in the District. She was a founding member of the Floral Art Group of the National Capital Region, which, at the time of its formation in

1978, was affiliated with the OHS. Virginia incorporated wild flowers from their cottage into her garden, especially sweet woodruff, and her iris collection was a sight to behold. She encouraged neighbourhood children to enter the design classes of the shows and used to get them together just before the shows, supplying materials for their designs. It was great for the children, but good for the shows too."

Virginia ran classes for junior members in flower arranging on Saturday mornings. She would tell about a little boy in a class who would just throw flowers together, wouldn't listen, always jumping about - but he actually produced lovely arrangements.

Selling chrysanthemums as a fundraiser for the OHS was Virginia's initiative, and it's a tradition that we still continue. She did that for many years out of her basement, and Heidi Geraets has fond memories of helping her pot up the little seedlings.

Virginia was also a good cook and baker, and she and Heidi would have a good laugh when she baked her bread in a flower pot! (A technique that Heidi immediately had to imitate.) There were unforgettable teas in the garden, with fresh-baked cookies and never-ending enthusiastic garden talk.

The Pecks bought their home in the 1950's. It was a double lot, and they set about creating their garden from the soil up. Virginia said the soil was all sand piled up from building the canal. Heidi often visited Virginia in her beautiful garden, and believes that, as time went on, the garden helped to ground Virginia in her life. She describes Virginia's gardening approach as a kind of 'tough love'. "Start from seeds if you can; it makes for stronger plants. Don't coddle your plants too much! They have to learn to adapt, you know," she would say.

Her garden was a Trillium Award winner in 1982. She also introduced native plants into her garden, and in 2005 was the inaugural winner of the Mary Bryant Award. Her garden was featured in one of our members' garden tours. When she finally had to leave her home, she generously offered her plants to OHS members.

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Gloria Sola, walking her dog Swiffer past the Peck house on Mount Pleasant Ave., remembers often seeing Virginia later in her life, gardening in front of the house, puttering among the sedums and other plants in her rock garden.

As with so many of our members, Virginia was glad to share her knowledge and expertise with others, young and old. When we walk in our own gardens we remember advice, plant gifts and good times shared with our fellow gardeners. As Heidi puts it: "I learned so much from Virginia, and I will continue to experiment, explore, and enjoy my garden in her memory."

International Year of Soils: Humanity's Silent Ally—Healthy Soils for Life

by Kate Harrigan

Healthy soils are the foundation for food, fuel, fibre, shelter, clothing and even medicine, said the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization as it kicked off [2015 the International Year of Soils](#). Without healthy soils, life on Earth would not be sustainable. The goal is to raise awareness of the importance of healthy soils and advocate for sustainable soil management. "Soils are a living organism, a nearly forgotten resource," said José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO.



Here is a short list of soil's essential importance: stores and filters water, recycles nutrients, buffers against floods and erosion, sequesters carbon. It constitutes the largest pool of organic carbon for mitigating and adapting to climate change. With recent water scarcity, soils are fundamental for appropriate storage and distribution. Soils host fully one quarter of the planet's biodiversity. And it is essentially non-renewable: it takes up to

1,000 years to form 1 cm of topsoil. Their preservation and protection are vital to humanity's survival.

Many of the most widely used antibiotics have come from soil including Penicillin from *Penicillium*, a soil fungus, and *vancomycin*, from a soil bacterium. Evidence from soil of a recently discovered bacterium-targeting antibiotic kills even MRSA-species including *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.

But soils are in danger of being degraded and eroded, and are disappearing at an alarming rate due to expanding cities, pollution, deforestation, agricultural practices and over-grazing. "The multiple roles of soils often go unnoticed. They are our silent ally in food production. We need healthy soils to achieve our food security and nutrition goals, to fight climate change and to ensure overall sustainable development."

What can city residents do to ensure healthy garden and lawn soil? Go to [Compost Council of Canada](#). And don't miss the Friends' Master Gardener lecture series especially April 21 on [Earthly Delights or Do-it-Yourself Dirt](#) with Edythe Falconer, dirt lover and Master Gardener.

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President's Message

by Jamie Robertson

After our long, hard winter, spring will be more welcome than ever this year. We are all anxious to see what plants, trees and shrubs have made it through, and whether they sustained any winter damage or die-back. This is especially true as many of us can't avoid the temptation to push the envelope by planting tender perennials, or shrubs not reliably hardy to our zone. And yet there may also be some surprises – plants that we have forgotten about, or which have self-seeded. Spring is a time for rejuvenation – for re-doing parts of our gardens, expanding a flower bed, or trying new vegetables or ornamental plants, sometimes grown from seed. Besides the garden centres that spring up at most grocery stores, it is also the season when farmers' markets and nurseries are filled with tempting plants that simply can't be resisted.

Among the best places to acquire new plant material are the OHS plant sales and auction. The selection is awesome – everything from common garden plants to highly unusual and rare specimens. The advantage is that all of these have thrived in the Ottawa area – these are plants that fellow OHS members have grown and their survival has been proven. The choice is wide, and the size of the divisions is often very generous. It is a great way to start a new garden, or to add to an existing plot.

The OHS also provides an outlet for you to donate plants. Many of us are reluctant to throw out plants. April and May are great months to divide perennials, and to remove some plants that are in the wrong place or no longer fit into our plans. Donating them to the OHS ensures that they will be treasured by other gardeners, and that the sales will benefit OHS programs and activities.

The OHS sale at the Friends of the Farm Rare and Unusual Plant Sale, on May 10, and our own plant sale and auction at the May 26 monthly meet-

ing, are major fund-raisers for the Society. They are also great fun, so please consider volunteering to help out at one or both of them. And be sure to attend so that you can find some terrific treasures for your garden. These OHS events are not to be missed!

An Extravaganza of Peonies in Ottawa

by Blaine Marchand

Jean Pigott Place at Ottawa's City Hall will be ablaze with beauty on Saturday, June 6th, and Sunday, June 7th, when the Canadian Peony Society (CPS) holds its annual show. Jim Watson, Mayor of Ottawa and the Honorary Patron for the event, will open the show on Saturday at 1:00 pm. The event runs until 4:00 pm on Saturday, and re-opens Sunday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

The public is invited to come and see this free exhibit of hundreds of peony blooms in a magnificent range of colours. Gardeners in the National Capital regions are invited to enter some of their favourite garden peony flowers in the judged competition, which, being national, will draw exhibitors from across the country.

Did You Know?

Ever wanted to lie in a bed of roses? Well now you can. Check out this website to find some glorious, horticulturally-inspired bed linens. Thanks go to OHS member Rosemary Campbell who first spotted them.

And if roses aren't your floral cup of tea, keep exploring [floral bed linen](#) at www.beddinginn.com/ to find daisies, callas, and more.



In addition, members of horticultural societies of the Ontario Horticultural Association in Districts 1, 2, and 3 are invited to participate in a floral design competition, which will complement the show by including peonies in the arrangements. Placement of all entries begins Friday evening at 5:00 pm and continues Saturday morning until 10:00 am, when judging starts. For more information, contact Madeline Archer, Design Chair: lookformadeline@gmail.com.

On Saturday afternoon, two presentations will be given by OHS and CPS members, Marilyn Light and Nathalie Chaly. Visits to the peony garden at the Central Experimental Farm and the historical Maplelawn walled garden are planned. A silent auction of choice peony roots will also take place throughout the show.

For more information: www.peony.ca, canadianpeonysociety.blogspot.com, or contact Blaine Marchand at blainemarchand@hotmail.com.



Did You Know?

Alaska is the only place able to supply the world with cut peonies during July, August, and September, whereas florists depend on New Zealand and Chile to supply the peonies they need during the Northern Hemisphere's winter months.

Member to Member

Going Native by Jennifer Mix

The OHS has amongst its members gardeners who have a special interest in particular groups of plants, and the Editorial staff thought it would be useful to all members if we could tap into their collective expertise. We have asked these 'experts' to put together lists of their favourite varieties so that we can look for them when we go plant shopping. We'll publish one list per issue for as long as we can.

For this installment of the series, we've asked Jennifer Mix, a judge for the Mary Bryant Award, for her list of favourite native plants.

If you were offered the opportunity to grow beautiful plants that were hardy in our climate, would bloom, produce seed or self-seed every year, were guaranteed to be tough as nails – drought-tolerant, able to grow largely unfazed by insects and disease – and attractive to all kinds of pollinators, would you turn down that opportunity? Of course not!

Welcome to the world of Ontario native plants. Far from intimidating, once established, natives are easy to care for and long-lasting – just the kind of plant we all want in our gardens. Happily, native plants are now easier to obtain than ever before. (See the list of sources at the end of this article.)

For my list of favourites, I have chosen just a few of the many native plants available commercially now – some common, some less so – but all have won my heart over the years. Always try to plant natives in conditions as close to the wild as possible, where they will thrive more easily. Tend to them well for the first year while they become established, and then just enjoy them. Later perhaps, dig up a few and share them with other gardeners.

Sun Natives

If your native plants call for sun, let the location be really sunny! Those grasses and daisy-like plants thrive on in-

tense sunlight.

Butterfly milkweed [*Asclepias tuberosa*]

Show-stopping orange flowers in mid-summer attract butterflies to their nectar. It is the host plant where monarch butterflies lay eggs, and later it feeds the young caterpillars. It pairs well with native grasses.



Hairy beardtongue [*Penstemon hirsutus*]

Tubular pale-purple flowers nod on the ends of 1 foot- to 2 foot- long stems growing from clumping, low whorls of leaves in early summer. Good cut flowers in a wild bouquet.



Purple coneflower [*Echinacea purpurea*]

Another great butterfly attractor, the showy purple/pink flowers with orange-pink clustered centres stand sturdily on strong stems. Great cut flowers and the seeds feed the birds in winter. Plant in drifts if you have room.



Member to Member

Joe-Pye weed [*Eupatorium maculatum*]

A tall (3 to 7 feet), clump-forming perennial that likes moist feet, blooms with scented umbrella-shaped heads of purple flowers in late summer, attracts butterflies, and adds height and structure to a bed. Good cut flower as well. Not invasive.



Semi-shade Natives

Many native plants bloom and fruit in early spring, using the energy from the warming sun before the leaf canopy develops. Later, they are protected by the canopy during intense summer heat. Try to locate these plants in your garden in a spot that gets some early morning sun but is shaded in the afternoon, when the sun is hottest.

Dutchman's breeches [*Dicentra cucullaria*]

Creamy-white flowers like tiny inverted pantaloons appear in mid-May. Plants grow up to 1 foot tall and disappear after seeding, so mark their spot well. The foliage is a lacy green and complements botanical tulips.



Jack-in-the-pulpit [*Arisaema triphyllum*]

Growing 1 to 1 ½ feet tall, this mysterious native hides its preacher in a pulpit under a variable purple and cream-striped canopy. The set of three leaves resembles tall poison ivy, especially before and after flowering, but it's a benign and intriguing addition to the shade garden.



Lobelias:

In the fall, great blue lobelia [*Lobelia siphilitica*] puts up tall, 3 foot spikes of blue (and occasionally white) flowers that emerge from low clumps of bright green foliage. As a short-lived perennial, it seeds generously in moist soil. Cut back the spent stem parts to encourage re-blooming on new branches. Plant its relative, *L. cardinalis* (cardinal flower), in moist soil for brilliant red spikes in early summer. Both make attractive cut flowers; bees love them too.



Wild columbine [*Aquilegia canadensis*]

The red-and-yellow pendulous flowers charm with their spurred delicacy, and with their abundance once the plant is

established. Columbines like dappled shade and bloom in late spring, seeding prolifically but not invasively.



Wild cranesbill [*Geranium maculatum*]

Growing 1 to 2 feet tall and sporting delicate lavender flowers in May, this geranium keeps its leaves all summer. It is versatile, growing well in sun or shade, in dry or moist conditions.



Woodland phlox [*Phlox divaricata*]

Masses of powder-blue flowers top dark green and relatively low-growing foliage in spring. It spreads slowly by stolons but is not invasive; will tolerate quite a lot of sun but prefers a rich, moist soil.



Shade Natives

Moist shade is ideal for native shade plants. If you have dry shade, try piling on the mulch, leaf mould, and compost to simulate woodland tilth and water the area regularly.

Ferns:

Ostrich ferns [*Matteuccia struthiopteris*] are rampant growers, fill large spaces with lacy foliage, but die back unattractively in late summer. Other ferns, such as male fern [*Dryopteris filix-mas*], cinnamon fern [*Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*], and maidenhair fern [*Adiantum pedatum*], are more compact and do not deteriorate so noticeably with age. They all prefer a moist soil but ostrich ferns are the toughest.

Member to Member

Foamflower [*Tiarella cordifolia*]

A delicate shade native with masses of short spires of tiny white flowers 12 inches tall in spring above heart-shaped small green leaves. Spreads slowly and seeds well. Tolerant of a variety of soils.



Wild ginger [*Asarum canadense*]

The ultimate in shade ground cover, wild ginger spreads quickly once established. It has soft-green, heart-shaped leaves, and brown blooms at ground level which only a beetle could love or see. A perfect foil for taller and showier natives, it is a true woodland-er.



Sources of plants and seeds of Ontario natives

- OHS plant sales – many members grow natives and donate their extras for sale in May and September
- 'Old Field Garden' nursery – see them at the Friends of the Farm Rare and Unusual Plant Sale in May. Web-site not currently available
- Fletcher Wildlife Garden – plants are dug from their gardens; annual sale in June, http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher/index.php#.VOe6GPnF_HQ
- Loblaw garden centres – look for the Ontario Natives series (over 30 varieties) from Sipkens Nurseries, <http://www.sipkensnurseries.com/>
- Wildflower Farm – packaged, untreated flower seeds and Eco Lawn grass seed <http://www.wildflowerfarm.com/>
- Connaught Nursery in Cobden ON - <http://www.connaughtnursery.com/>
- Native Plant Nurseries in Zephyr ON - <http://www.nativeplantnurseries.ca/>

Creating bee-friendly gardens: beyond the basics

by Renée De Vry

Pollination is the transfer of the pollen grain from the male part of the plant (anther) to the female part of the plant (stigma). Under favourable conditions, fertilization will occur to produce seed. Some pollination happens almost by "accident" due to wind or mammals but insects are the essential partner in the "ménage à trois" for 70 percent of plant reproduction. In Canada, this includes approximately 3300 native plant species, as well as thousands of familiar exotics planted in gardens and for food production. Most of these plants would become extinct without bees.

Pollen comes in a fascinating variety of shapes, sizes, colours, and weights. Not all sorts can be collected by the same bees. There are generalist pollen-types, like the spiky ball shapes of roses, mallows and hollyhocks, that stick well to the furry bodies of almost all bees, but pollen grains with long filament tails and other oddities need special strategies to ball and carry. We need a diversity of native bee species for this.

What can we do to help?

First, do NOT participate in the Great Spring Pollinator Massacre, by accident or design. Every spring, often while there are still patches of snow on the ground, thousands of gardeners, suffering from winter withdrawal, proceed to rake and tidy madly, crushing and mangling still-hibernating queen bees, butterflies, woolly bears, and other beneficial insects in the leaf litter. The pollinators not killed outright are swept into huge paper bags and sent to City compost piles to be shredded and roasted. A butterfly or bee cannot fly until temperatures reach 16° Celsius. Do pull back leaves from bulbs and plant crowns but wait until you see sleepy bumble queens out and about before you tidy and step on your garden beds.

When selecting plants for the garden,

avoid big, showy modern hybrids and double flowers. While these are beautiful to look at, the only insects they attract are Japanese beetles and earwigs. Neither is on any list of endangered species.

Avoid building massive bee hotels. Encouraging bees to congregate in one location to become a Woodpecker Winter Buffet is counter-productive. Instead, buy or build several small bee houses and spread them around your garden. Place nesting areas away from paths and children but consider flyways. Most bees are stingless, gentle, and helpless. Keep piles of raspberry and/or rose canes for *Ceratina* bees (small carpenter bees) in a quiet, shady area. Natural habitat is best.



When designing a garden, plan for ground-nesting bees and the 40 percent of the garden that is underground. Get to know the roots of your favourite plants, shrubs and trees. Look at soil, rock layers and subsoil depth.

For ground-nesting bees, take advantage of allelopathic plants to create the perfect habitat for Andrenid bees (mining bees). This type of plant produces growth-inhibiting chemicals to guarantee personal space for the bees. Sparse lawns with white clover and plenty of dandelions make excellent nesting sites, and these flowers provide food nearby even on cool days. Mow on highest setting, at dusk or on cloudy days. Other allelopathic plants to work with include goldenrods, sumac, rhododendrons, forsythia, yarrow, elderberry, and native sunflowers. Colourful Agapostemon bees (sweat bees) are also ground-nesting but prefer wider open soil areas in the sun.

Member to Member



A combination of taproots or shrub roots with shallow, creeping-root plants like pussytoes (*Antennaria* sp.) or sundrops (*Oenothera* sp.) provide the perfect support for the deeper burrows of some species. Many ground-nesting bees prefer to create burrow entrances just under a shrub or large plant to protect from predators and heavy rain. Bumble bees will use a wide range of hollows, in low walls, tufts of grass or old rodent burrows. (When chipmunks and mice are driving you mad, consider that they are digging free bumble bee habitat!)

If you're feeling ambitious, dig up your lawn and put in a native meadow! Expect at least four years of steady labour before it becomes low maintenance. Add logs and rocks to give a natural feel or add attractive old split-rail fencing. All provide basking areas for bees and butterflies.

Try to spend more time looking at your garden than perpetually digging, weeding and moving plants. Learn to mediate between plants instead of weeding. For some of us, "constant improvement" can be obsessive and this will result in bee deaths. I struggle with this constantly.

The web abounds with basic instructions on how to design and plant Pollinator Gardens. Check out: <http://www.pollinatorgardens.net/home/links> or <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/food-and-our-planet/create-a-bee-friendly-garden/>. A good source for bee nests is <http://www.pollenbeenest.com/>

Gardening is a lifetime of skill develop-

ment. Take the time to support your native bees. Pay attention, Pause, Think, Learn. All else will follow.

Plants I Love to Hate

by Nathalie Chaly

My garden has lots of shady areas, and I soon learned that shade beds need lots of plants with interesting foliage for long-term interest. Variegated leaves and purple leaves contrast well with the regular green, but golden foliage is most effective at lighting up dim corners, pulling the eye to the charming but often low-key details of green-leaved neighbours. For instance, there are many gold-leaved hostas in nurseries, and now in my garden - small ones such as 'Lemon Lime', large ones, red-stemmed ones, crinkly-leaved ones, and teeny-tiny ones. And I love them all - until they start blooming!! Because, what I hate is gold-leaved plants with pink or pale violet flowers! To see the elegance of golden or chartreuse leaves topped by pallid pink or, perhaps even worse, vibrant pink, flowers is nothing less than horrifying! (The four '!' in this paragraph are only the beginning. Brace yourselves!)

A widespread offender is 'Gold Mound' spirea. The shrub itself is really rather nice, tolerates a wide variety of soils and exposures, and is quite disease- and pest-resistant. The leaves are also attractive, starting out bright gold in spring, fading to a gold-green in summer, and often showing interesting yellows, oranges and reds in the fall. But nothing can make up for the flat-topped clusters of lipstick-pink flowers that appear in early summer! And shearing them off only encourages re-blooming!



Please don't think it's the pink itself I dislike. There's surely nothing lovelier than a pale pink full-flowered peony, or a tender pink rosebud. It's the gold-pink combo I abhor. And now I've discovered that breeders are actually choosing to produce new varieties of plants that combine gold leaves with pink flowers. My personal 'hates' include the following:

Cotinus coggygria 'Golden Spirit' (Golden Spirit Smokebush)

This is a medium-sized shrub with beautiful, round, brilliant golden-yellow leaves throughout the summer.....and the usual plumes of **pale-pink** smoke-like flowers seen in other varieties of the species. Ugh!



Astilbe 'Colour Flash Lime'

The leaves are limy-green in spring but turn yellow as they mature, providing a vibrant hit of colour in semi-shade, together with **bluish-pink** flowers in early summer. Ugh also!



Member to Member

Lamium maculatum 'Aureum'

Lamiums are such useful plants, and the yellow foliage of *L. 'Aureum'* sure brightens up dark corners. But then along come those dratted **pale mauve** flowers and spoil it all! Why not grow *L. 'Beedham's White'* instead? The foliage is even brighter, with a white flash down the middle of each leaf, and each flower is pure white. Quite delightful!



And then there's *Phlox paniculata* 'Goldmine', which is positively garish. The leaves are variegated green with broad gold edges, and the stems are topped by clusters of **deep magenta** flowers. Good resistance to mildew simply doesn't make up for this gaudy combination.



And last, but certainly not least - *Dicentra spectabilis* 'Gold Heart'. This is perhaps the greatest travesty! I think one of the most graceful and serene plants in a shady spot is the white bleeding heart, *D. spectabilis* 'Alba'. The 'Gold Heart' variety is almost a parody of this beauty. To quote the



Lost Horizons catalogue - '...shocking gold foliage stands like a beacon in the lightly shaded garden. Arching **sprays of hot pink** are ... a strong contrast but at least they don't last too long.' Hmph.

Did You Know?

The High Line Park in New York City has been credited with transforming the nearby area. According to an article in the *New York Times* issue of February 11, 2015, the Park, situated on an abandoned elevated railway line, draws some five million visitors a year, ample reason for businesses located near it to thrive. The High Line is the topic for Rob Brandon's presentation at the OHS meeting on September 22.

Canada Blooms 2015

Text by Sheila Burvill and Janine Loring, photographs by Janine Loring

The two of us used to go to Canada Blooms quite frequently but we stopped attending the year that Canada Blooms became part of the National Home Show. However, some positive comments and good publicity lured us back for the 2015 show. Here's our report.

The first surprise was that, although both shows were in the Direct Energy Centre at Exhibition Place in Toronto, Canada Blooms was not in the high-ceilinged, spacious main room but in a separate space at the back. In fact, it was in the area used to hold and display animals for the Royal Winter Fair - a large space with a low industrial-style roof, and massive but rather drafty doors at the back. The doors make it much more convenient for delivering the enormous amounts of stone, soil, equipment, and plant material needed for Canada Blooms, but let's just say that the ambiance suffered a bit. Mind you, at the front, there was a beautiful corridor of huge Versailles boxes that let people walk directly into the garden show without having to view the hot tubs and kitchen mock-ups of the Home Show. In each Versailles box, a large palm tree was underplanted with some combination of smaller plants, and there was a different type of palm in each of the boxes.



Much has been made in the publicity and reports on Canada Blooms about the "dramatic lighting" installed at a cost of over \$250,000, but you couldn't prove it by us. During the early morning tour we took, it was easy to see everything in the 22 display gardens we viewed. However, when the doors opened to the public at 10:00 am, the lights were dimmed so that almost every area looked much darker, and it was more difficult to pick out details in the gardens. Given that the show's theme was "Play", this sort of subdued lighting seemed a curious choice.

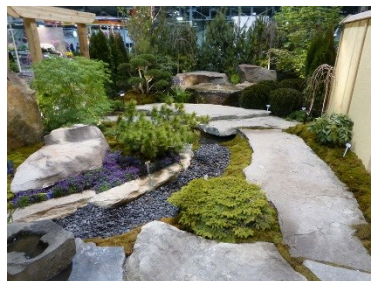
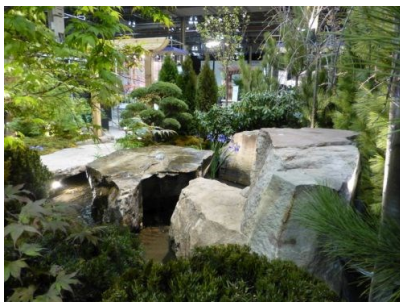
Member to Member

Still, that early morning tour was worth every penny we paid (as indeed it always is). Our small group of six or seven had its own Master Gardener guide, and we had ample time to view every detail. For us, the most interesting display garden was the Bienenstock Playforest, a huge space featuring a tall tree house built out of recycled wood, with a giant upside-down tree and huge stumps forming the foundations of the structure. An intricate covered slide allowed children to descend back to the ground quickly.



While there were lots of plants (mainly trees, shrubs and greenery) in the display, the focus was on creating places where kids could play - in sand pits, alongside the stream, over the rocks and humungous logs, and in the small playhouse tucked into a hidden corner of the garden. And boy, did the kids enjoy this one! Every time we passed by, we saw lots of children having fun in the garden. Too bad more of our playgrounds can't use natural materials the way this one does.

The other two stand-out gardens were the "Rain Game", where not a drop of water was wasted and storm water was captured for garden use through all sorts of ingenious ways, and "A Japanese Influence" which featured the use of rocks and water in a tranquil stroll-garden design.



The "Fairy Frolic" garden had its fans but, alas, we were not among them. The "Pollinator Playground" created by the Toronto Botanical Garden was also interesting, but more for its educational constructions and techniques than for its garden design. Many of the other display gardens may be grouped under the heading of "interesting use of stone". This is really not surprising, as businesses such as Unilock and other stone suppliers have become major financial supporters. The predominance of hardscaping throughout the show was somewhat balanced by the "Surf and Turf" garden, which made several good points about how turf grasses aid in preventing erosion, absorbing storm runoff, and filtering water. If you're wedded to the stone

look though, you'll be interested in a brand new product which can be pasted on supports to effectively mimic a stone wall. See if you can spot the fake wall in the photos.



We might have missed the display of new plants had the main feature (an orchid) not been placed so high and been of an arresting shade of blue. Frankly, it looked dyed although apparently it was not. An altogether disappointing display.



Although there were various talks offered between 11:00 am and 4:30 pm each day, they were a sad reflection of what they used to be. Furthermore, they were given in open spaces where the noise of the show competed with the speakers. Still, a couple we attended were very worthwhile. Sandra Pella from the Toronto Botanical Garden provided "Great Gardening Tips", and Stefan Weber gave a wonderful presentation on "Gardening with Native Plants for Biodiversity", in which he explained the absolute necessity of ensuring that all the native plants we use are grown from seed and sourced from reputable dealers. Weber works at the St. William Nursery and Ecology

Member to Member

Centre that is located on the shores of Lake Erie and specializes in the protection of the plants and trees of the Carolinian forest. The Centre also had a stall in the marketplace area where they sold seed and corms of Jack-in-the-Pulpit. Good thing they were there, too, because many of the usual vendors, such as Lee Valley Tools and even the Home Depot, were not.

Another delight we had was viewing the entries in the plant and flower shows. Some of the entries in the decorative classes were absolutely outstanding. We had much fun scuttling around just before the judges arrived, making our choices, and then going back to see how we fared in comparison to the real judges. Turns out we shouldn't give up our day jobs, although in a few categories there was good alignment of choices.

So – will we be back next year? Alas, no! Maybe once every five years will be enough. More pictures can be found at: <http://ottawahort.org/canada-blooms-photographs/>

OHS Matters

Ottawa Garden Council Developments by Lara Jimenez

On March 21, there was a forum to follow up on the Garden Symposium about which I wrote in the January 2015 newsletter. This smaller gathering was attended by representatives from a variety of community gardens, as well as representatives of the Community Gardening Network of Ottawa, Just Food, Landscape Ontario, Canadensis (the proposed botanical garden), a few horticultural societies, and Algonquin College. Rideau-Vanier Councillor Mathieu Fleury also attended part of the session. It was headed and facilitated by Michel Gauthier, executive director of the Canadian Garden Council and project director of Flora Canada 2017.

The Ottawa Garden Council Steering Committee was formed following the

Symposium, and includes OHS member Lynn Armstrong. This committee has been meeting every two weeks to determine what the mission of the garden council should be. At this juncture, the council has not been incorporated in any formal way, but the steering committee has put forward the following mandate for the proposed garden council:

- Facilitate communication and connection among the various groups and organizations that are committed to contributing to the quality of life and the beautification of Ottawa through the creation of, and care for, gardens and green spaces.
- Be a voice for the garden and landscape community in interactions with such entities as the municipal government, other groups and organizations, the private sector and Ottawa residents in general.
- Facilitate connection and collaboration between the garden community, and the garden and landscape industry.
- Encourage residents, businesses, associations, organizations and government to recognize the value and potential that green spaces in all their forms have to offer for our physical and mental health, our environment, and our community as a whole.

It may be that community gardens have the most to gain from the services of a garden council in facilitating and securing access to, and use of, city land, as well as raising the visibility of these gardens among the public. However, the website planned by the council could also act as a clearinghouse for all things related to gardening groups in Ottawa. Specifically, OHS members could benefit from a consolidated listing of gardening events, and the publicity could help Society efforts to increase and diversify membership. For more information see www.gardensottawa.org.

As with the introductory Symposium, this forum also dealt with Garden Days 2015 and Flora Canada 2017. The local success of Garden Days in particular will rely in large part on the par-

ticipation of the Ottawa gardening community. This leads me to believe that a significant driver behind the push to form a garden council is to marshal volunteer involvement.

The Garden Days theme for 2015 is "Discover your garden community." Ed Lawrence will be the municipal spokesperson, and nationally, Mark Cullen will be the anglophone, and Larry Hodgson the francophone, spokespersons. Garden events such as a Canada's Garden Street competition and a recognition ceremony are planned, and horticultural societies are encouraged to participate with their own "garden experience" offering. See www.gardendays.ca for more information.

Flora Canada 2017 is in the process of trying to confirm the funding necessary for this proposed four month-long Canadian horticultural exhibition. In addition to creating a trade platform for the horticultural industry, Flora Canada aims to be the catalyst for the creation of the Canadensis botanical garden. The planning for this event will be going public after Easter, and funding will need to be confirmed by June 2016 in order for the event to proceed. See www.floracanada.org for more information.

Members as of March 2015

Maija Adamsons
Anne Carlyle
Marta Cepek
Carolyn Frank and Carly Hoffmeister
Barry Hughes
Debbie Monk
Gordon Morrison and Marie O'Shea
Mira and Michael Mossop
Véronick Préseault

Did You Know?

Stefan Weber, from the St. William Nursery and Ecology Centre, tells us it takes at least seven years for a white trillium to flower from seed. The Centre is expecting its first flowers this year (fingers crossed). Growing native plants from seed may take time but it's much better for the long-term survival of the plant in the wild.

OHS Matters

Shows Corner

by Gillian Macdonnell

Are you a new member considering entering one of our Shows this year, or a member who has never participated in a Show because of not knowing how to begin? This article may help to get you started, as I will briefly outline the steps for entering your best specimens.

To start, go out into the garden to choose your winners. It makes sense to go out early in the morning when plants are at their freshest and blooms are not fully opened. Or take a tour around your garden the evening before to see what might be good. Take your Show Schedule with you as one doesn't always realize the potential of one's own flowers for a show. The Schedule will also tell you how many stems, blooms, leaves, etc. are required for your entries.

The next morning, with your scissors or secateurs in hand and a jar containing some water, cut your best examples - the ones that are not fully opened yet and have no insect damage. Put them in the jar and store them in the fridge until you leave for the meeting. This way, you are preserving your specimens and ensuring they will be at their best for the Show.

Have enough plain glass containers to put them in for showing. If you find flimsy stems won't stand up nicely in your container, you are allowed to use a little cedar to help them. The cedar should be as inconspicuous as possible as you don't want it to take away from your entry. The OHS has about a dozen glass containers for you to borrow for the evening if you fear you don't have the right ones; however, it is better to scrounge baby food containers, small plain vases, jam jars, etc. for yourself, as the OHS containers may not be the right size for your specimen, or they may have been taken already. Consignment shops are excellent places to find glass containers.

The evening of the Show, make things easy for yourself by packing your containers and the jar holding your specimens separately in a basket or box of the right size and fixing them up at the Show. There is water available in the kitchen should you need more. Remember to check in with the Show Convenor in order to get your Plant Bucks for spending at the auction or later plant sales, and to complete an entry tag for each of your specimens. Entry tags are readily available near the Show tables.

Much of the information you need is in your OHS Yearbook for 2015, pages 34 to 40. Another very good source of information is the Ontario Judging and Exhibiting Standards booklet, which you can purchase for \$6 at an OHS Show, or by emailing Gillian Macdonnell at gmak3@bell.net. This handy little booklet tells you all about how Shows are run and how exhibits are judged.

Good luck and may you win ribbons for all your entries.

2015 Shows

by Lyse Morisset

There will be two judged shows this year in a traditional format, but with no blockbuster theme like the 'hostas galore' last year.

The Summer Show on June 23rd will coincide with the regular June meeting, and will include indoor plants and the outdoor blooms of the season.

The Fall Show on September 22nd will coincide with the regular September meeting, and will include edibles in addition to horticultural specimens.

Both shows will include DESIGN CATEGORIES.

For both Shows, there will be an EXHIBITION TABLE for non-judged specimens that members may bring in for identification, or simply to share with other members.

There is no obligation to enter in every class but an exhibitor may enter more than one; in fact, each exhibitor may enter up to three specimens in a single class, provided the entries differ in the type of cultivar, variety, or species. For example, you may enter only the "Roses" section, if you wish, but could enter three different rose cultivars.

Should you grow a variety of flowers not named as a "section", there are also categories for "collections of foliage plants" or "collections of garden flowers".

BONUS PRESENTATION !!!

The schedule of speakers this year includes a presentation by a qualified and experienced judge. Her presentation will coincide with the Summer Show in June. Better than a booklet, Helen Halpenny will demonstrate in a hands-on presentation many elements that often stump both novice and experienced show participants. She will discuss how to select specimens, the optimal time to pick them, how to preserve them, and how to transport your prize specimens to the show.

Remember the plants bucks, one for every show entry, redeemable at both the May 26th OHS auction and the September 12th Fall plant sale.

Did You Know?

If you are interested in growing your own food, Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton have a web-page with monthly articles on growing vegetables, fruits, herbs, etc.. For more information, check out www.mgottawa.ca/The_Edible_Garden.php

OHS Matters

From the Archives – Trillium symbol by Sheila Burvill

In the OHS Archives is a pamphlet entitled *Trilliums of Ontario*, written by James S. Pringle and published by the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton. To be sure, the pamphlet looks as though it is from the collection of OHS member Shirley Beyer, now deceased, but overall, you'd expect it to be in a library, not part of an archive. Indeed, if we included publications in the archives solely because they once belonged to an OHS member, our archives boxes would be bursting at the seams. So why is this particular one in ours?

On page 4 of the pamphlet, all becomes clear. Here's what it says:

"The Ottawa Horticultural Society established a committee to promote the designation of a national flower. This committee made a presentation to the Ontario Horticultural Association in November, 1917, not only promoting the concept but bringing forth six plants, identified only at the generic level, for special consideration. In addition to the trillium, these included the columbine, perennial aster or Michaelmas daisy, wild iris, delphinium, and peony. Several others were also mentioned. Judged by the committee's own standards for a national flower, the trillium clearly met those of being native to Canada, attractive, and reasonably well known, although falling short in ease of cultivation in diverse situations and in the length of its blooming season. The provincial organization adopted the Ottawa group's report "as the basis of action to obtain for Canada a National Flower".

Well, as we all know, Canada never did adopt a national flower, and even our beloved maple leaf symbol has not received official recognition. However, in 1934, the Ontario Horticultural Association dusted off its previous efforts and refocused on the naming of an Ontario official flower. This time round,

it was the White Trillium that the OHA approved at its 1935 convention as the provincial flower for the province of Ontario, and the nomination received official Ontario legislative approval on March 25, 1937.

Isn't it interesting that while the country was still embroiled in the First World War, members of the OHS were looking towards the future and wanting to establish a national floral emblem? While their efforts didn't bear fruit at the national level, it's not too big a stretch to say that the OHS influenced the choice of the White Trillium for Ontario, ironically just a few years before the outbreak of the Second World War.



All Aboard for the May 30, 2015 OHS/OVRGHS Bus Tour by Gloria Sola

We have made plans for our annual bus tour in conjunction with the Ottawa Valley Rock Garden Horticultural Society. This year's tour will appeal especially to heritage and heirloom garden buffs. We will be going to historic Kingston to see Bellevue House, which was once the home of Sir John A. Macdonald. This national historical site with its 9 acres of land is run by Parks Canada, and we will have a guided tour of the exhibits, the house, and the gardens. The gardens have both ornamental and vegetable components. Not only do they have plants that would have been found in the mid-1800s, but they are tended (by people in period costumes) in the same fashion. For instance the lawn is still cut with a scythe!

Our next stop will be lunch in downtown Kingston. There are a number of places there that offer take-out as well as sit down lunches, but members may wish to bring their own food instead to eat in park areas. More food option information will be sent out via the OHS grapevine as it becomes available.

After lunch, we'll go on to the Sisters of Providence Heirloom Seed Sanctuary. The sisters and volunteers have been collecting and preserving heirloom seeds since 1934. Here, we will also have a guided tour of the gardens and of the seed collecting and storage facilities.

Our third and final stop will be the nursery, Rideau Woodland Ramble, in Burritt's Rapids, where we will be met by owners Dave Dunn and Rob Caron with their usual warm hospitality.

Our trip will be on Saturday, May 30th. We will travel by coach bus which will leave from 2 pick-up points: Walmart parking lot at Trainyards (Industrial Road) in the east end of the city, and the Eagleson Park and Ride in Kanata. Departure from Walmart will be at 7:15 am sharp, and 7:35 am from the Park and Ride. We should be back by 7:15 pm.

We run our trip on a cost-recovery basis as a benefit for our members and, therefore, it is open only to members of either the OHS or OVRGHS. If guests wish to accompany us they will have to join one of these societies. The price for the tour, similar to other years, will be \$55. The price includes transportation, entry fee, and driver tip, but not lunch. Full refunds will be granted if we are notified of a cancellation before May 9, which is 3 weeks before the trip.

If you are interested in joining this trip, please make out a cheque for **\$55.00** to the Ottawa Horticultural Society and send it to P.O. Box 8921, Ottawa ON K1G 3J2, **before May 1**. Your cheque will secure your priority; however, since space is limited, priority is on a first come first served basis.

The websites for the visits are:

www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/on/bellevue/index.aspx;

www.providence.ca/?cat=30;

www.rideauwoodlandramble.com.

Getting to Know Cynthia Rattle

How long have you been a member and what prompted you to join?

I joined the OHS about seven or eight years ago. A member of the club, Lynn Armstrong, invited me to join and I am very glad she did. Ottawa is a new environment for me to garden in, having come from southern Ontario. And I have always gardened based on trial and error, and what I could pick up from gardening books and magazines. So I appreciate the monthly talks, and the expertise and experience of our members.

Have you been gardening for a long time or are you a novice?

I gardened on the balconies of several apartments for many years and at my homes for 24 years. But there is always something new going on in the garden to make me feel like a novice!

How would you describe your garden?

My garden is in full sun, so I have sun-loving perennials, ornamental grasses, some native plants, bulbs, and shrubs, with some vegetables growing among the perennials, and a small herb garden. Although I started with a garden design, I am always attempting to find a new spot for a plant I couldn't resist purchasing at our May auction/ sale or at a garden centre. Some of the plants were transplanted from my garden in Newmarket – a bit of a feat since there was a year between selling my home and planting in Ottawa.

What do you like best about your garden? What do you like least? What things would you do differently?

Of the plants in the garden, I like the Siberian irises and peonies the best. I have several clumps of old-fashioned Siberian irises that can have more than 100 blooms at a time. The 'Sarah Bernhardt' peony is lovely as is a white peony (name unknown) with touches of crimson. Even though I had a design for my garden, the section adjacent to the deck, which is filled mostly with plants randomly selected from my first garden and planned over the first winter in the house, is my favourite. Some of the shrubs produce many suckers and I would rather not have to

deal with them. In particular, I wouldn't plant the false spireas again. And I wish there was more shade and am envious of all those with shade gardens!!! I am actively willing the trees and shrubs to grow faster!



Are you the main gardener or do you have help?

I am it! I have made and planted the gardens from scratch, and maintain them. That has included attaching wire grid to the base of more than 100 feet of fence in an attempt to keep rabbits out.

Do you have plans for your garden? Are there things you would do differently?

The original plan was to have the entire property in gardens, with no grass at all. I am still working on that. Last fall I began working on the front yard – it is waiting for some hardscaping (a dry stream and sitting area) and planting. So there will be no grass to care for in the front! This garden will be very different from the gardens in the back – much more open, with more ornamental grasses and dwarf conifers.

Is there a garden you have seen that is a favourite and has given you inspiration?

The garden that has inspired me over the years, although I have never visited it, is Larkwhistle in Bruce County. The gardener is a master in underplanting and achieving a full progression of colour through the growing season, and I love the lushness and fullness of Larkwhistle. Although my gardening sensibility has changed over the years and I am doing some-

thing different in the front yard, I am still drawn back to this garden. The gardens I have seen on the OHS garden tours are inspiring too!

When you are not in the garden, what activities and interests do you pursue?

When I am not gardening, I like to hike, snowshoe, cross-country ski and cycle.

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We depend on our members for ideas, articles and information about what is going on in the gardening community. Please send your submissions to:

Editor, OHS Newsletter
Ottawa Horticultural Society
P.O. Box 8921
Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3J2

or by email to: info@ottawahort.org
or in person at the regular meetings

Editor: Sheila Carey
Associate/Contributing Editors:
Sheila Burvill, Lara Jimenez
Contributors: Sheila Burvill,
Nathalie Chaly, Renee DeVry, Ailsa Francis, Heidi Geraets, Kate Harri-
gan, Lara Jimenez, Gillian Macdon-
nell, Blaine Marchand, Jennifer Mix,
Jamie Robertson, Margaret Scratch,
Judy Shedden, D.J. Smith, Gloria Sola.

Design & Layout: Sheila Carey
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