



OHS NEWS

Spring 2016

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 2016 yearbook for a complete list of events for the year.

April 26

Creating Pollinator Friendly
Neighbourhoods
Marilyn Light

May 23

Annual Plant Auction and Sale

June 28

Child-Friendly Gardening:
Fairy Gardens and more
Judith Cox

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

Spring Newsletter

Gardening in a Condominium

by Roberta Woods

The word "gardening" brings to mind all those activities gardeners indulge in as they strive to achieve their vision of an ideal garden. Very often, the features of these gardens include lush foliage, aesthetically pleasing groupings of flowers, shrubs, and trees, and all complemented with a plot of herbs and vegetables. In contrast, the word "condominium" conjures up images of concrete, steel, and reflective glass - the very antithesis of what many gardeners think of as a garden. That these two seemingly disparate elements can, and do, come together is, of course, well known. When they do, the first beneficiary is the stark cityscape; the second, the gardener who has had to recognize that the time has come to give up a no-longer-manageable traditional garden and opt for a condominium balcony instead.

I speak from experience, having moved from a large corner lot in Aylmer QC to a tenth-story condominium unit in Toronto just a few years ago.

Although I knew that gardening on a balcony would require some adjustment on my part, I decided to proceed as I had done with earlier gardens: that is, I would work within the parameters of the local climate and the orientation of my new gardening space. The balcony, which faces south and is open to the west, is enclosed on these two sides by a safety barrier of clear glass panels, while a frosted glass privacy panel separates it from the neighbour on the east. Although this south-western orientation fosters max-

imum plant growth, it does have an inherent drawback. At the height of Toronto's hot, humid summers, the glass panels, in conjunction with the heat-retaining nature of the surrounding concrete, intensify the heat to the detriment of the plants. The remedy, of course, is to keep the pots well-watered. Last year, at the height of the summer, I watered the pots up to four times a day. One caveat regarding water use on a balcony is to ensure that the dishes or saucers underneath the pots are of sufficient capacity to prevent any excess from overflowing onto the balcony below.

A second aspect of the local climate that requires a response on the part of a balcony-gardener is the wind. High-rise buildings are notorious for being subjected to frequent, high and blustery winds. But unlike dealing with excessive heat, a windy location demands a level of care beyond that of looking after the plants. Because these winds can be sufficiently powerful to dislodge, or even lift off, items from a balcony, there is the potential to cause injury or damage to people or property in the vicinity. In order to lessen the likelihood of such an accident occurring, I take certain precautions. Fortunately, the garden furniture brought from the previous garden - a table, two chairs, and a greenhouse bench - are all made of metal and can be collapsed easily. Only once over two seasons has it been deemed prudent to do so. And, I may be overly cautious with regard to safety, but I do not intend to use the types of planters which straddle the handrail or hang inside the glass. That leaves those most likely of potential missiles to deal with - the plant pots.

President's Message

by Jamie Robertson

The recent death of Felicitas Svejda, who led the rose breeding program at the Central Experimental Farm (CEF) for nearly 25 years, was a reminder of the important contributions to horticulture that have been made here in Ottawa.

The CEF was the first research station to be established by an Act of Parliament, in 1886. The original purpose of the CEF and its sister locations across Canada was to help facilitate farm production, including the development of new cereal grains adapted to Canadian conditions and soils. The Marquis Wheat and other crops led to the expansion of agriculture, particularly on the prairies, during the 20th century.

From early on, however, the CEF also devoted resources to research and development in horticultural and ornamental plants. People such as William Saunders, the founding director of the Dominion Experimental Farms system, and W.T. Macoun, the Dominion Horticulturist, encouraged scientists to work on plants and trees for the home gardener as well as for agriculture. Isabella Preston, who worked at the CEF from 1921 to 1946, is renowned for her lilies, crab apples, Siberian irises, roses, as well as the Preston lilacs that are named after her. Other plant breeders working at, or associated with, the CEF also developed trees and plants designed for Canadian soils and climatic conditions. Many varieties of apples, tomatoes and other trees, flowers, and vegetables were developed right here in Ottawa, although, sadly, many of these are increasingly rare and hard to find.

In recent years, government funding has moved away from plant breeding programs, especially in Ottawa. Research into horticultural and ornamental plants, in particular, seems to have been privatized for the most part.

The obvious choice for a balcony would be clay, but I decided in favour of plastic on the grounds of ease of handling and on the well-known property of plastic pots of preserving moisture in the soil. Most of my pots are recycled florists' flower containers. The increase in height appears to foster root growth but the tapered shape makes them more vulnerable to the wind. In order to increase their weight and, thereby, their stability, I first line them with newspaper and then put heavy stones in the bottom. The advantage of this arrangement is that a combination of plastic pot, absorbent newspaper, and moist soil deals with the balcony's two main problems (heat and wind) at the same time. A second well-known strategy for dealing with the wind is the use of stakes. Rather than tying individual stems to a bamboo cane, I have found that encircling the rim of the pot with canes and then tying string around all the canes to support the entire plant gives better protection from the wind.

The balcony measures only 10 feet by 4.5 feet, but the use of the greenhouse bench, which fits perfectly alongside the eastern glass panel, has opened up possibilities that I hadn't at first envisaged. The upper work surface of the bench receives diffused eastern light at one end and housed a Coleus and a Norfolk Pine in this shady space, whereas two pots of blue Salvia flourished at the other end in the sun. The shelf below with more subdued light proved to be ideal for seedlings and cuttings. Underneath, at floor level, there is enough space for two storage bins - one for soil, the other for small items such as trowels and secateurs. On the south and west sides of the balcony I grew calendula, chives, rosemary, two types of basil, two tomato plants, and a Pelargonium which couldn't stop flowering. I did relax my rule on plastic pots for two house leeks which appreciated their special treat of shallow but heavy clay pots. All in all, I had a very successful season, one highlighted with several sightings of bumble bees. By the end of the summer, these successes had generated questions numerous and varied enough to carry me through the winter to the coming spring.

Until I began to think about how I would write this article, I had assumed that gardening on a balcony would be little more than a variation on my previous gardening experiences. And, in many ways this perception proved to be true inasmuch as I had worked within the boundaries of the environment and had achieved satisfying results. But the more I thought about the balcony itself, and its location on the side of a high building at the level of the tenth floor, the more I became convinced that balcony gardens are in a category of their own. Then, and quite unexpectedly, I visualised the concrete and glass as the equivalent of an inhospitable ledge on the side of a cliff, baked by the sun and assailed by the wind. The plastic pots took on the role of those pockets of soil hidden beneath the stones and boulders of rocky landscapes but able to hold sufficient moisture to sustain growth. For my part, I saw my role as that of a custodian of the plants I had selected to live on the balcony, for without me they could not have survived.



Did You Know?

The Fletcher Wildlife Garden honours naturalist James Fletcher in its name. Fletcher, a self-trained scientist, served as Dominion Entomologist and Botanist from 1887 to 1908 and had the happy ability to combine rigorous scientific study with pertinent communication of its results to farmers, gardeners and orchard owners. His many accomplishments are too numerous to be listed here; more information can be found online at http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher/about/james_fletcher.php

Whatever the role of governments in plant breeding, there is nothing to stop home gardeners from growing and developing their own varieties. For centuries, gardeners have collected and saved their own seeds, retaining those which performed best or which best met their needs. The OHS's February meeting consisted of a panel of speakers who spoke about starting seeds. One of the speakers, Kelly Noel, focused on daylilies, and explained her experiences with crossing varieties, collecting and growing out seeds, and the excitement of seeing the progeny bloom.

The February meeting was well attended, particularly by many new and younger people. Under the auspices of Karen Moore, we also organized a seed swap. Its popularity exceeded our expectations. Obviously, there is a good deal of interest.

So even if the Department of Agriculture is no longer developing and breeding plants, individual gardeners can still play a part. An interesting project for our Society in the coming season would be to see if our members can come up with a new variety of tomato, daylily, peony or other plant. While some may approach this very scientifically, the rest of us, ordinary gardeners, can also take a stab at it. After all, we will just be continuing and building on the long tradition of plant breeding in the national capital region. And you could even name the new variety after yourself, a loved one, or the OHS!

The Ground Rules on Groundcovers

by Bob Duff, Retired Master Gardener

Reprinted with permission from Trowel Talk, Newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton. Edited to conform with the OHS newsletter format.

Ever thought of using groundcovers to replace poorly growing grass, to plant near cedar hedges and under trees, or to prevent erosion on slopes? The term "groundcover" refers to spreading perennial plants that may grow close

to the ground or to a height of 60 to 90cm. Nurseries usually have separate sections devoted to groundcovers and there are many reasons for considering these versatile plants.

Ground covers display a variety of textures, shapes, and colours of leaf and blossom. Most are drought-tolerant and need watering only during dry spells. Some, like wintergreen, bearberry and dianthus, keep their green foliage through winter. They are a refreshing sight each spring. Groundcovers like yarrow, creeping jenny, and certain sedums, withstand light foot traffic. Others, such as Irish moss and creeping thyme, can actually be walked on, once established.



Photo: Mary Ann Van Berlo

Creeping thyme loves hot dry conditions and does well in this pool-side garden.

Your choices will depend on the site you are working on.

Ajuga, lily-of the valley and Japanese spurge all prefer partial shade. The last two are my shady-site favourites -- one for its scent and one for its great vigour. They do well near hedges and under trees.



Photo: Mary Ann Van Berlo

Pachysandra (or Japanese spurge) tolerates shady conditions.

Although Japanese spurge is slow to get established, it is worth the wait. It does its own weed control - as do most groundcovers - because it is just as hardy and vigorous as most weeds, or even more so.

Some groundcovers may even become weeds themselves. A common one is goutweed. It propagates both by seed and by underground stems. If you insist on having aggressive plants such as this, they must be contained by a walkway or some other in-ground barrier that should be installed at least 30cm deep. I like the green and white variegated foliage of goutweed, and grow it on the mostly shaded, north side of my house, but I control it.

Other groundcovers that can become invasive are creeping jenny, lily-of-the-valley and ribbon grass. These plants are easy to grow and can be dug out of the ground with little effort, but even the smallest amount of root left in the ground may sprout a new plant.

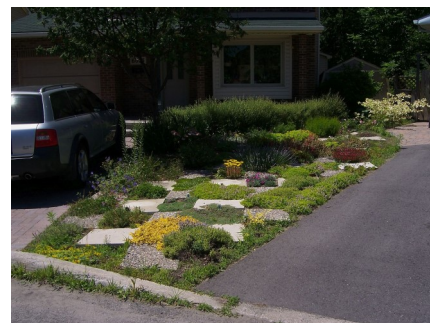


Photo: Mary Ann Van Berlo

A variety of groundcovers and patio stones in a checker-board pattern.

Groundcovers that thrive in the sun include woolly lamb's ear, sedum, campanula, cranesbill, and creeping phlox. On my sunny sites, I am especially fond of lamb's ear and yellow-flowered sedum, one for the texture of its leaves and the other for its truly ground-hugging habit.

My all-time favourites are the many types of sedum. They are drought-, disease- and insect-resistant. All produce long-lasting flowers, transplant easily in spring and fall, and spread quickly in sunny areas.

There is a trend developing that sees groundcovers being planted along highways and in parks where traditional grasses are not easy to grow, as

well as on slopes to prevent erosion. These low growing plants help to reduce maintenance costs.

Browse through a book or two on groundcovers and you will find out for yourself which plants fit your location, style and budget. You can cover a lot of ground right in your armchair!

Did You Know?

The renovations at the Museum of Nature, started in 2004, are finally nearing completion with redevelopment of the green spaces around the Museum. The new parkland has been designed as something very special, '*(a) living outdoor botanical exhibit*'. The 'Landscapes of Canada Gardens' consist of four areas, each representing one of the main Canadian eco-zones: boreal forest, prairie, Arctic tundra and steppe grassland. All plants are native to Canada, and each area will be planted with species characteristic of that type of eco-zone.

The designs look splendid, combining authenticity of planting with creative design and all the trimmings we expect in public parks - paths, benches, etc. And yes, the woolly mammoths will be back! The Gardens are scheduled to open to the public in June, 2016.

For further information, see <http://nature.ca/en/about-us/museum-news/news/press-releases/landscapes-canada-gardens-set-take-root-canadian-museum-nat>

<https://hortus2.wordpress.com/2016/02/19/the-landscapes-of-canada-gardens-at-the-museum-of-nature-in-ottawa/>

Native Grasses for the Modern Landscape

by Ken Parker

Editor's Note: Long-term members will surely recall a talk given to us in 2003 by Ken Parker who, at the time, was the owner of Sweetgrass Gardens on the Six Nations Reserve close to Brantford, Ontario. He generously gave the newsletter permission to reprint this article. It may be at least 13 years old but the information it contains is just as pertinent today. We've slightly edited it to conform with the OHS newsletter format.

The use of grasses as home landscape specimens is a recent phenomenon. When I started propagating North American plants almost twelve years ago, I never considered growing our local native grasses. I did not understand their role, and it was therefore difficult for me to market their values. It is ironic that we are surrounded by grasses everywhere in the landscape, yet the majority of us can name but a few. Grasses satisfy many landscaping needs, providing focal points, texture and colour.

An equally important and vital reason for growing native grasses is the fact that less than one per cent of original Ontario tall grass prairie exists today.

For design purposes, perennial grasses generally have four main growing characteristics:

- "Spreaders": These are grasses that spread using underground roots.
- "Clumpers": Most gardeners are happy with the clumping grasses, as they stay in one spot when planted and do not invade the rest of the garden.
- Cool-season: Your lawn or turf is a cool-season grass that actively begins to grow as soon as temperatures are above freezing. The downside of a cool-season grass is that it tends to go dormant or turn brown during periods of drought and heat (typically mid-July to mid-August in Ontario).
- Warm-season: A warm-season grass begins its growth much later

in the growing season, anywhere from late spring to early summer. In Ontario, warm-season grasses usually begin their season mid-May to mid-June, when soil temperatures reach 16-21°C (60-70°F). Their biggest benefit is that they are lush and green during those hot late-summer days.

Prairie grasses have extensive root systems. The heart and soul of a native grass is below the ground, with the proportion of grass to roots at nearly one-third top foliage and two-thirds root. A typical prairie grass such as little bluestem grows about one-half to one metre tall, but its roots can stretch into the ground to a depth of as much as three metres. Ontario prairie grasses are extremely drought-tolerant once established. Generally, native prairie grasses only require average soil nutrients and the average local rainfall.

TIPS

- Cool-season grasses give immediate height (early summer).
- Warm-season grasses reach mature heights over the duration of the growing season - usually by mid to late August in an Ontario garden.
- If a plant tag lists the height of a grass as one-half to one metre tall (two to three feet), this generally means the foliage averages 0.3 to 0.6 metres (one to two feet). The seed or flower gives it that extra foot when in bloom.
- Grasses that spread are appropriate for embankments, erosion control, natural ponds and prairie/meadow gardens.
- All grasses provide food, cover and nesting material for our birds and other wildlife.
- It is a good idea to have a combination of cool- and warm-season grasses for natural diversity.
- Maintenance: Grasses only require an annual haircut in early spring-time (April). Leave two-and-a-half to five centimetres at the base. Use the tops as mulch or spread them around the base of the planting area.

Easy to Grow Ontario Native Grasses

BIG BLUESTEM

GRASS (*Andropogon gerardii*)
The “king” of native warm-season grasses. This long-lived clumping grass has nourished millions of bison. Its height and interesting, three-prong seed heads that resemble turkey feet make it a stunning attraction in the garden. Average soil and tolerates clay. Full sun. Height: 1.2–1.8 metres (4–6 feet).

LITTLE BLUESTEM

GRASS (*Andropogon scoparium*)
This beautiful warm-season prairie grass is clump-forming and offers bluish-green foliage. The spectacular reddish-brown to copper fall colour provides interest in the garden amidst our long, cold winters and snowfalls. This to-die-for native grass is the most sought after ornamental grass for the home landscape. Average to dry soil. Full sun to part shade. Height: 0.6–0.9 metres (2–3 feet).

CANADA WILD RYE (*Elymus canadensis*)

A cool-season clumping grass. The attractive arching seed heads make a great addition to fresh and dried floral arrangements. While outstanding in the prairie garden among the wildflowers, it is not suited to be presented by itself or as a focal point, as this wild rye tends to “flop down” after a hard rain or high winds. Medium to average soil. Full sun to part shade. Height: 0.6–1.2 metres (2–4 feet).

VIRGINIA WILD RYE (*Elymus virginicus*)

This cool-season native is widely adapted throughout Canada and the United States. The straight, stiff and bristly seed heads are attractive in floral arrangements. Blooms in early summer and is often found in flood plains, thickets and prairie. Average to moist soil. Full sun to part shade. Height: 0.3–0.9 metres (1–3 feet).

SWEETGRASS (*Hierochloa odorata*)

Aboriginals of the Great Plains believe this was the first plant to cover Mother Earth. It is a reminder to us to respect the earth and all the things it provides. The Odawa and Ojibwa Anishinaabe

believe it was a purifier and burned sweet grass before all ceremonies to enable them to communicate more clearly with the Great Spirit. Traditional aboriginals of the Six Nations use sweet grass in various crafts and basketry. It is extremely fragrant in its dried form. Moist, rich loam. Full sun. Height: 0.6–0.9 metres (2–3 feet).

EASTERN BOTTLEBRUSH

GRASS (*Hystrix patula*)
A unique clump-forming woodland native that offers a rather wide-bladed, dark green foliage. The very attractive seed heads resemble bottlebrushes and normally bloom during our Ontario summers. Seed heads are excellent specimens for dried arrangements. Medium to loam soil. Part to full shade. Height: 0.6–1.2 metres (2–4 feet).

PANIC/SWITCH GRASS (*Panicum virgatum*)

This hardy, drought-tolerant, warm-season grass with its tiny, open seed heads is proving to be a favourite of the finches. The large, clumping foliage provides a full fountain appearance. Attracts birds and offers a beautiful fall show with its tan/copper blades. Average soil. Full sun to part shade. Height: 1.2–1.5 metres (4–5 feet).

INDIAN GRASS (*Sorghastrum nutans*)

A handsome, robust, tall prairie grass that produces glossy, copper-coloured, plume-like seed heads in late summer. While highly nutritious for cattle, the striking prairie native and state grass of Oklahoma is also sure to attract many birds to the garden. Medium to dry soil. Full sun. Height: 1.2–1.8 metres (4–6 feet).

CORD GRASS (*Spartina pectinata*)

Long ago, this cool-season prairie grass dominated the bottomlands of the Missouri River in pure stands. It is highly recommended for stabilizing embankments, and for low, wet sites. Cord grass is only for the large garden as it spreads rather quickly, and competes well with tall prairie wildflowers and native sunflowers. The large, showy seed heads attract many birds. Good and interesting fall colour. Aboriginals made cordage from the tough grassy blades. Average to moist soil. Full sun to part shade. Height: 1.2–2.7

metres (4–9 feet).

PLANTAIN-LEAVED SEDGE (*Carex plantaginea*)

The uncommonly wide leaves form impressive clumps in shaded or woodland settings. Naturally occurs in shady forested areas near oak stands. Once established, it can tolerate dry, shady locations. Seeds feed a variety of wildlife. Rich loam soil. Part shade to shade. Height: 0.3–0.9 metres (1–3 feet).



Prof. Dr. Otto Wilhelm Thomé from the *Flora von Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz*, 1885, Gera, Germany (Image in Public Domain)

Did You Know?

Tallgrass Ontario has information on identifying a grassland and how to establish and maintain your own grassland.

http://tallgrassontario.org/science_resources.html

Member to Member

Rugosa Roses: Fragrance and Repeat Blooming

by Blaine Marchand

Here is another installment in our series designed to tap into the particular expertise of OHS members. For this issue of the OHS newsletter, we've asked Blaine Marchand which are his favourite roses. For many years, as a volunteer on behalf of the National Capital Commission, Blaine checked on the health and maintenance of roses in the Canadian Heritage Rose Garden at Rideau Hall, and he is a longstanding member of Roses-Canada. He and Jamie Robertson had Canadian rose gardens at their property in Osceola for a long time, until their peony collection starting demanding more space. Though the peonies are slowly taking over the rose gardens, roses can still be found throughout their perennial borders.

Among my favourite roses are rugosa roses. Some may groan that they are invasive, thorny, and have coarse leaves, but they are absolutely winter-hardy, carry beautifully fragrant blooms of red, pink or white that repeat, and are salt resistant – a plus for those with urban gardens curbside.

Rugosa rosebushes create dense thickets, have yellow fall foliage, and form orange-red rose hips. They are highly valued by hybridizers for cross-breeding. Resistant to diseases, including black spot and rust, they make excellent landscape plants on their own or in borders. Secateurs easily control invasiveness. In fact, most rugosa roses benefit from regular pruning.

Blanc Double de Courbet (Cochet-Cochet, 1892). Immaculate, double, white blooms give a lovely perfume in June and July, with intermittent flowering throughout the season; grows to 2m in height; attracts birds and bees; may attract aphids and Japanese beetles, but a spray from the hose controls the former, hand-picking the latter.



Roseaie de l'Hay (Gravereaux, 1901). Double, large, crimson-purple flowers with contrasting stamens; a repeat bloomer; a strong, lovely perfume from a vigorous, dense shrub of 1.2m to 1.8m in height; resistant to black spot, mildew, and rust; ideal for poor soil.



Hansa (Schaum-Van Tol, 1905). Fragrant; clove scent from semi-double/double, deep pink to red blooms that repeat throughout the season; excellent rose hips; grows 1.0m to 1.5m high and wide; six to eight hours of direct sunlight best; resistant to black spot, mildew, and rust; one that does not like pruning.



Svejda, who recently passed away here in Ottawa. She is world renowned for the Explorer Roses she bred. Among those that I love are:

Jens Munk (Svejda, 1974). Fragrant, double, pink blooms, 6 cm to 7cm in diameter, June through August, followed by rosehips; 1.5m to 2m in height; resistant to blackspot and powdery mildew.



Henry Hudson (Svejda, 1976). A small rugosa (0.5m to 0.7m in height; 1.0m in width) with fragrant blooms of white suffused with pink tinge that repeat freely; resistant to blackspot and powdery mildew.



John Cabot (Svejda, 1978). Brought Ms Svejda the Certificate of Merit from the British Royal National Rose Society in 1985. A climbing rose rather than a rugosa; arching canes of 2.5m to 3.0m laden with lightly-scented blooms that begin red and fade to pink; peak flowering in June and July, followed by repeat flowers in August and September; prune deadwood or to contain as a shrub requires; disease resistant.



I cannot mention rugosa roses without tipping my hat to the late Felicitas

Member to Member

David Thompson (*Svejda, 1979*). A beautiful compact shrub flush with fragrant magenta pink flowers described as red, 7cm in diameter; repeats through to September; does not produce rosehips; grows 0.6m to 1.2m high and wide; nearly thornless; the dark green foliage is resistant to black-spot and mildew.



And finally, I cannot resist adding another rugosa with an Ottawa connection.

Carmenetta (*Preston, 1923*). Starry, pink to purple flowers with grey-white centres and a light fragrance; flowers contrast beautifully with gray-green leaves and arched, red canes of up to 2.5m in length; blooms only in June; rosehips in autumn; vigorous grower that is disease-resistant and hardy. By the way, this rose is a cross between *R. glauca* x *R. rugosa*. 'Carmenetta' inherited its grey-green leaves from *R. glauca*. I bet you can guess – *R. glauca* is also one of my favourites.



In Memoriam

If you have Explorer roses in your garden, you have Dr. Felicitas J. Svejda to thank for them. This remarkable woman died at Ottawa General Hospital on January 18, 2016. She was born in Vienna in 1920, where she obtained

a Doctorate in Genetics. She moved to Ottawa in the 1950s to breed cereals for Agriculture Canada, but her greatest contribution was in the hybridization of roses that could stand the extremes of Canadian weather. She led the rose breeding program at the Experimental Farm until she retired in the mid-1980s. She named the roses after our early explorers; thus she is known as the mother of the Canadian Explorer Roses. She and her roses are known around the world. Here in Ottawa, you can visit the Explorer Rose Garden opened in 2005, with Dr. Svejda attending the opening ceremony.

For more information about Dr. Svejda, see the following:

<http://www.friendsofthefarm.ca/explorers.htm>

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/felicitas-svejda-geneticist-created-roses-that-could-survive-canada/article28805457/>

Gardening on Ontario Today with Ed Lawrence

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/programs/ontariotoday/gardening-remembering-a-canadian-rose-breeder-1.3450306>

Did You Know?

Sharon Saunders, Lead Hand at the Central Experimental Farm who so ably designed and oversaw the plantings in the Ornamental Gardens for many years, retired in January 2016. She had worked on the Farm for 35 years in all. Memorable among her designs were the commemorative, Olympic-themed large circular beds in front of the (now largely razed) Sir John Carling building; one was for the Athens Olympics in 2004 and another for the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

No word yet on who will be her successor.

The War Against the Scillas

by Sheila Burvill

It's April and it's time to plot this year's battle in the perennial war against the scillas.

How the War Began

I like blue flowers. So when spring arrived in 1983, which was just after we bought our house, I was thrilled to see some little blue flowers pop up close to the front of the house almost as soon as the snow disappeared. And at various points in the back garden too, I noted. My neighbour informed me that these were scillas or squill, but she preferred to call them the "blue devils". I couldn't understand why.



Five years down the line, I was still in love with these charming blue flowers and delighted to see how they were growing in number. After ten years, they'd begun to naturalize into the lawn and still thrilled the heart. But in about 1995, I began to understand my neighbour's dislike of them. Yes, the flowers were lovely but the foliage remaining after the flowers died grew to twice its initial size, flopped over, and looked horrible as it turned yellow and died.

Around the turn of the millennium, events became critical. Not only did I have dying scilla foliage everywhere, the plants - hundreds and hundreds of them - had become so numerous that they obscured many other spring ephemerals. Clearly something had to be done.

Member to Member

First Campaign Strategy

I studied the enemy. Scillas are a bulb plant and reproduce in two ways: underground, daughters form around the mother bulb, producing their own plants, whereas on top of the ground, the flowers produce seeds that self-sow. Clearly a two-pronged attack would be necessary.

Scillas are a lovely cut flower. Reasoning that if the flowers are cut they could not self-sow, I began to cull the blossoms and bring them indoors. In order that the bulbs not produce bulblets, I tried to mark and dig out the most vigorous of the plants. It was a troublesome two to three week campaign but I persisted. The next year, I had even more scillas.

A slight change in tactics was made. For the next couple of years, I continued my two-pronged attack but concentrated it in selected areas only, with vicious thoroughness, somewhat like Sherman's march through Georgia. Days were spent on hands and knees digging out every little bulb and bulblet I could find. The next year, you could not tell the difference.

A Major Assault

The front lawn, even though it was in deep shade all summer and fall, got enough spring sunlight to foster scillas quite well even though the actual grass always looked shabby and thin.

Deciding to eliminate the grass along with the scillas, I was able to hire fellow OHS member Lyn Taylor to help me. The two of us, stubborn Scots-women both, did it the tedious but thorough way by removing squares of turf and then sifting the soil by rubbing it through hardy screens. As we went along, we used 'search and destroy' tactics to capture as many scilla bulbs as we could find. We also turned over the remaining tangles of grass and used them as on-site compost. The results were much better the following year: though there were still some clumps of scillas, they were scattered

and easily dug out.

However, the back yard remained a nightmare in terms of encroachment by the enemy. A separate campaign would have to be waged there.

Second Campaign Strategy

It's well-known that an army lives on its stomach, and so, in a way, do scillas. Since bulb plants require nourishment to prosper, nourishment provided through their leaves, the next campaign centred on starving the little beggars! Remove the leaves, I thought, and I'll remove their ability to live on.

And so began the annual battles. Somewhat selfishly and illogically, I still want to enjoy the blue flowers. So I let the scillas bloom on until they just begin to start to fade in colour. Then I'm out there, grabbing all the spent blossoms I can find to eliminate both them and the just forming seed cases. If surrounding foliage comes out along with the flower stalks, that's a bonus. It takes a long time to work my way through the back beds but it does get done eventually. Inevitably, the remaining foliage grows on so that, a week later, there's another foray into the beds, this time to pull out all the scilla foliage I can possibly lay my hands on – an attack that takes two to three days.

As for the scillas naturalized into the back lawn, steady and constant mowing keeps the foliage short and unable to sustain the bulb. I just have to keep nagging my husband to do the mowing even though he thinks the grass doesn't need it.

Over time, this starvation tactic has had some success. I don't say the war has been won but the intrusions of the enemy have been kept in check.

It's not a perfect system though. Timing, as they say, is everything. Should the scillas bloom while I'm away, or should I catch a cold just then or other events interfere, then that year's effort is a failure. Also my wholesale grab-

bing of handfuls of scilla foliage sometimes results in other plants losing their foliage too. (The U.S. Army calls this collateral damage, I hear.)

Still the fight goes on and I'll be enjoining battle again this year. If only I could persuade those darn scillas to sign a peace treaty!

Canadian Garden Visits

By Gloria Sola

Given the sad state of the Canadian dollar, members might be thinking of spending more time in Canada visiting our lovely country.

Here are some "gardens to visit" and website suggestions from our members. Contributions by: Sheila Burvill, Michel Gauthier, Jamie Robertson, Elaine Routledge, Tuula Talvila, and Mary Ann Van Berlo.

Canada-wide:

Canada's Garden Route:

- This website offers a compendium of gardens across Canada which are open to the public, including those from Parks Canada.
www.canadagardenroute.ca <http://www.routedesjardinsducanada.ca>

Arboretums, Public and Botanical Gardens

- <http://www.landscapeandgardentoday.com/Garden/ArboretumsPublicBotanicalGardens/CanadaArboretumsPublicBotanicalGardens.php#Ontario>

Canadian Botanical Conservation Network

- http://www.rbg.ca/archive/cbcn/en/information/gardens/g_text.html
- <http://www.butterflywebsite.com/GARDENS/butterfly-gardens-exhibits-displays-houses-canada.cfm>

Member to Member

Ontario:

Ottawa and area:

- The Ottawa Garden Council web site has an interactive map of over 140 gardens in Eastern Ontario:
<http://www.gardensottawa.org/index.html>
- Fletcher Wildlife Garden's backyard native plant garden (Ottawa):
<http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher/habitats/backyard.php>
- Maplelawn historic garden (Ottawa):
<http://www.maplelawn.ca/>

Toronto:

- The Music Garden: on the harbourfront, an ingenious collaboration between modern planting and music, designed by Julie Moir Messervy in consultation with cellist Yo Yo Ma:
<http://www.harbourfrontcentre.com/venues/torontomusicgarden/>
- Humber Bay Park butterfly/native plant habitat (Etobicoke, Toronto lakeshore):
<http://www1.toronto.ca/parks/prd/facilities/complex/1073/>
- Allan Gardens conservatory (downtown Toronto):
<http://torontobotanicalgarden.ca/get-gardening/public-gardens/allan-gardens>
- James Gardens (Humber River, Etobicoke, Toronto):
<http://www1.toronto.ca/parks/prd/facilities/complex/3/>
- Etobicoke greenhouse (Toronto):
<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=a7b9dada600f0410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>
- Humber Arboretum (northwest To-

ronto):

<http://www.humberarboretum.on.ca/sites/pages/index1.html>

- Parkwood Estate (Oshawa):
<http://www.parkwoodestate.com/>
Historically interesting house and gardens, and some parts of 'Murdoch Mysteries' (CBC TV series) have been filmed here.
- Amherstburg: along the banks of the Detroit River, this small town boasts several public gardens, including a waterfront walk with a lovely hosta garden having over 200 cultivars.
<http://www.amherstburg.ca/parkspicnicking>
- Rural Gardens of Bruce and Grey Counties
<http://ruralgardens.ca/gardens/>
- Lanark county tour
A full day's outing including:
- Rockwall Gardens: nursery and demonstration gardens specializing in alpine and rock garden plants.
<http://www.rockwallgardens.com/>
- Kiwi Gardens: nursery, gardens, woodlands and garden art.
<http://www.kiwigardens.ca/welcome.htm>
- Lunch in Balderson at the Cheese Factory
- Stoneridge: nursery and exhibition gardens.
<http://www.stoneridgegardens.com/Stoneridge-Gardens--Nursery-Homepage.html>
- Whitehouse Perennials: nursery, gardens and growing fields. <http://www.whitehouseperennials.com/>
- 1000 Islands & Rideau Canal Garden Trail:
- See the website for a description of the various gardens. There may be a small fee to see some of them.

<http://uclg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?ap-uid=7107818ba486489486488791f1813116>

This year the following gardens have been added:

- June & Peer Norgaard -- 2384 Clothier St. W., Kemptville
- A Labour of Love Garden -- Kay & John Love -- 3002 Porter Road, Oxford Station
- Diane & Keith Haskins, Portland
- Jean Pilutti, 559 County Road 2, Gananoque
- The Ivy Restaurant, Ivy Lea.

Alberta:

- Devonian Gardens, just west of Edmonton:
<http://www.devonian.ualberta.ca/>

British Columbia:

- Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden (downtown Vancouver):
<http://vancouverchinesegarden.com/>
- Van Dusen Botanical Garden, 5251 Oak Street, Vancouver BC (<http://vandusengarden.org/>) - No matter how many times you visit, there is always something new to see and admire there, including a collection of native Canadian apple trees.
- Abkhazi Garden, 1964 Fairfield Road, Victoria BC (<http://blog.conservancy.bc.ca/properties/vancouver-island-region/abkhazi-garden/>)

A beautifully designed garden with a romantic past, Abkhazi is maintained by volunteers and owned by the Land Conservancy of BC. However, recent money problems have put its future in jeopardy - best see this garden gem soon in case it disappears.

Member to Member

Plants We Hate

by Lyn Taylor

My list of plants to hate is mainly made up of plants which I don't really dislike. I just don't like them in my garden or any garden which I have to maintain. I avoid them for reasons such as: they are aggressive, invasive spreaders; they are just too fussy and require constant maintenance; their foliage is floppy or unsightly once the flowers are done; they are highly susceptible to diseases; pruning them is an on-going challenge.

Here's my list:

- **Asiatic Lilies:** Beautiful when healthy and lily beetle-free, but not so attractive when they become infested.
- **Day Lilies:** Apologies to all the day lily fans out there but I agree with Tracy DiSabato-Aoust's description of these plants in her book "The Well-Tended Perennial Garden". She points out that "Hemerocallis" means "beautiful for a day" but this could also be understood to mean "not beautiful for more than a day". I consider them to be a maintenance nightmare. Their flowers turn into "slimy wet globs of tissue paper", and they also require constant 'deadleafing' to keep them looking tidy.
- **Goutweed:** A very aggressive runner which insinuates itself into every nook and cranny, chokes out everything it grows near, comes up in the lawn, and is very difficult to get rid of. Its white and green variegated leaves are quite attractive and it can be a useful groundcover, but it needs constant vigilance to keep it under control.
- **Iris:** A beautiful plant when in bloom but a maintenance nightmare. Leaves are often marred with different foliar diseases after flowering, and I don't think the short-lived blooms are enough to compensate for the unsightly foliage that follows.
- **Lawns:** Not a plant *per se*, but

they require constant upkeep. I prefer larger, lower-maintenance beds and smaller lawns.

- **Lily-of-the-valley:** I agree that this is a very pretty plant and looks great when in bloom. However, although it is extremely valuable in spots where nothing else wants to grow, if planted in a perennial bed along with other plants, it spreads rapidly and chokes out everything around it.
- **Ninebark (e.g. Diablo):** Maybe I have just been unlucky, but I have found this plant to be very susceptible to powdery mildew. Its foliage becomes quite unsightly when the disease strikes.
- **Ornamental willow trees and shrubs (e.g. 'Hakuro-nishiki'):** The more you prune these, the more they want to grow. They sprout branches and shoots from every growing point, including suckers around the base. They are attractive, but can get very unruly if you don't stay on top of the pruning.
- **Potentilla:** Without proper pruning, these shrubs can become unattractive, overgrown and woody specimens.
- **Thin-leaved, slug-prone Hostas:** I do like hostas, but only the ones with heavier or thicker foliage as they are usually not as badly damaged by slugs.
- **Tulips:** Great when in bloom, but I don't like looking at the spent foliage while waiting until it can be removed. I prefer to enjoy these plants in other people's gardens or on NCC property.
- **Violets:** A pretty plant in the right spot, but it will pop up everywhere and it's a pain to keep out of the lawn.

Movie Review: A Little Chaos. Directed by Alan Rickman, starring Kate Winslet, Alan Rickman, and Matthias Schoenaerts

by Sheila Burvill

It's 1665 or thereabouts, and King Louis XIV is having the grounds of his palace at Versailles landscaped – by André Le Nôtre, of course, the leading landscape designer of the day. Somehow the notion of an outdoor ballroom is proposed and Le Nôtre (Matthias Schoenaerts) sets out to find someone who can undertake the design and building of this small part of the gardens. Le Nôtre's strength is his love of formalism and order, but he seems to understand that he should be more open to installing "a little chaos" into his creations. How else to explain his unlikely hiring of a woman who runs a landscaping business to carry out the project?

You'd think this film would be an amateur gardener's dream movie; it is, after all, a costume drama centred on innovative horticultural design in one of the most famous gardens in the world. Indeed, we see how the low bowl destined to hold the terraced ballroom is blasted out of the ground, how the problems of insufficient water are overcome, and how shells and other marine objects are installed. Unfortunately, there's precious little about plants and planting with the exception of one great scene. Our female landscaper, Sabine De Barra (Kate Winslet) encounters King Louis (Alan Rickman) in the enclosure used to store plants until they are needed. Sabine mistakes him for the head gardener, as the King has taken off his wig and looks quite ordinary. They do exchange a bit of chit-chat about a particular pear tree and a rose called 'Four Seasons', but the King is quickly unmasked and matters turn away from the horticultural.

In fact, the movie is a bit of a stinker. It is historically inaccurate, as Le Nôtre was quite a bit older than the 30 to 40 year-old toothsome hero portrayed

Member to Member

here, and there was certainly no 'Sabine De Barre' at all. It is also floridly melodramatic, with Le Nôtre's wife leading a complicated love and public life, as well as quite unrealistic - just how does Sabine retain her smooth porcelain skin while spending days toiling in the sun? Add a disjointed plot to all this and there's not much to recommend the movie other than the following:

- Stanley Tucci's turn as the King's brother, the Duc d'Orléans

- the fun of spotting all the actors famous from various Masterpiece Theatre productions on PBS

- trying to identify plants on the fly (I think there's an *Aquilegia canadensis* in one scene)

- the wonderful wigs (Le Nôtre evidently has grown his own hair and eschews wigs; I think it's supposed to indicate character)

- Kate Winslet's right eyebrow

Conclusion: Not really recommended.



Guided Tours of Trees in the Dominion Arboretum in 2016 by Eric Jones

Last year, the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm organized a series of 'tree tours' in the Dominion Arboretum on the Farm, each of which had a different theme. OHS members who attended the special tour arranged for us last May will testify how enjoyable and informative it was, even though

the weather was very cold indeed and the rain pounded down unrelentingly. Our tour had over 25 people in attendance even in such rough weather. The other tours, open to the public at large, were even more popular with up to 60 people clustering around the tour leaders to learn about specific trees.

The Friends have organized another set of Sunday tours for the spring, summer, and fall of 2016. Here's a list of them:

April 24 - Flowering trees: blossoms and pollination (Note: The date may change slightly depending on flower timing.) Leaders: Robert Glendinning and Eric Jones. Starting time: 2:00 pm

May 22 - Birds and the urban forest: the roles trees play in the environment. Leaders: Owen Clarkin and Arthur Goldsmith. Starting time: 2:00 pm

June 26 - How trees get started: seeds, grafts and other propagation techniques. Leaders: Robert Glendinning and Eric Jones

July 17 - Oaks and conifers - universally fascinating. Leaders: Owen Clarkin and Eric Jones

August 21 - Selecting trees for different sites and purposes. Leaders: Eric Jones and Roman Popadiouk

September 21 (National Tree Day. Note this is a Wednesday) - What you need to know about planting and caring for trees (including a tree-planting ceremony on the Farm). Leaders: Jacob Sheppard and Robert Glendinning

October 16 - From trees to us: what trees offer, historically and in modern times. Leaders: Jacob Sheppard and Mike Rosen (Note: Tree Canada is co-sponsoring this tour)

November 20 - Tree forms and shapes, selection and identification: tour of trees and hedges on the Farm grounds. Leaders: Roman Popadiouk and Owen Clarkin.

Please note that it's useful if you can register in advance for a tour on which you'd like to go. To do so, please send a message to info@friendsofthefarm.ca, or call 613-230-3276. Starting times and other details will be announced on the Friends website at <http://www.friendsofthefarm.ca/events.htm>.



Did You Know?

Carolyn Dabrus, who spoke on pruning ornamental shrubs at our March 2016 meeting, is the head of volunteers in the Ornamental Gardens at the Central Experimental Farm. She has warned the volunteers to be careful around gas plants (*Dictamnus albus*) because sensitive people can get severe skin irritations if they touch the plants. She noted that all plants in the genus *Euphorbia* may also have irritant properties.

Another good reason to wear gardening gloves.

OHS Matters

Ottawa Garden Council Update

by Rob Brandon

On February 6, 2016, the Ottawa Garden Council held a consultation meeting at the Sandy Hill Community Centre. Rob Brandon attended on behalf of the OHS Board. Other attendees represented a wide range of gardening, landscaping and horticultural interests.

The purpose of the meeting was to report on the Council's actions and planning activities in general and, in particular, to explain the progress of plans for the Garden Days to be held in 2016 from June 17 through June 19. As explained by Michel Gauthier, the driving force behind the Council, the vision for creating the Council was the perceived need for a unified voice to represent Ottawa gardening and horticultural interests in interactions with government and other agencies. There are similar national and municipal organizations that represent a variety of disciplines in the arts and acquire funding to further their interests.

During the consultation meeting, City Councillor Fleury, along with two City staff, participated in a discussion about front yard gardening. Sundaura Alford-Purvis from Landscape Ontario indicated that the uncertainty of working with the existing city bylaw is very problematic, and that this was the type of issue where having a single voice for gardening interests would be useful in resolving the difficulties. Councillor Fleury agreed that, although there was generally a positive feeling about gardening and landscaping at City Hall, budget and time pressures mean that improvements come slowly and have to be championed.

There are several initiatives that the Garden Council is promoting for 2016, including the naming of garden representatives in each council ward. As well, development of the Council's Garden Map continues, with the view of promoting a Garden Boulevard in time for the celebrations of Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017. Lynn Arm-

strong noted that the OHS had developed a gardening manifesto titled "Ottawa, a City of Gardens" over 100 years ago. Lynn suggested that, a century later, this might serve as a model that the gardeners of Ottawa might want to apply in some way. She described the plan for a 15 km long garden boulevard that would promote existing gardens, enhance awareness, create a legacy brand, and set the stage for Canadensis. It includes 45 gardens from Rideau Hall to the Experimental Farm, and from Lebreton Flats to Sussex Drive. The NCC likes the idea. Further meetings are planned on the project.

OHS members are encouraged to check out the Council's web page at www.gardensottawa.org/Garden_council.html for ideas and programs and there is also a Facebook page with up-to-date information.

Shows Corner – Spring 2016

by Gillian Macdonnell

The snow is melting daily now, daylight saving has come into effect and as I write this, March is already bringing April showers. Are you, like I am, thinking about gardens, gardening and perhaps even the coming Show at the June meeting?

As I mentioned in my last article in the Winter newsletter, the show in June will have an interesting twist that I hope you will enjoy and perhaps will entice you to enter. Three sections are devoted to native plants to honour the gift of a painting given to the OHS by Mary Bryant in 2004. One of the sections features a rare opportunity: an educational display on your choice of topic regarding native plants. The exhibitor that accumulates the most points in these sections will be awarded Mary's painting to display in their home for the next year.

Most of us have some native plants in our gardens; I will wager some of us have native plants and don't realize it. To help you get started with your plan to win Mary's painting, here are some

sources you can consult about native plants and if desired, purchase them with a view to give your gardens more of a native flavour and perhaps encourage you to attempt a design or two for the Show.

The Fletcher Wildlife Garden website is a mine of information, not least of which is the list of wildflowers that grow in our area at http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher/flora-fauna/wildflowers/database/index_e.php. Don't stop there however, the entire site is chock full of useful information on native plants, their environment, and many other subjects of interest as well.

When it comes to where to obtain native plants for your garden, there doesn't seem to be anywhere in the immediate vicinity that specializes in native plants. However, many of our favourite local haunts including those that generously give OHS members discounts will have some native plants. Our own plant sales and auction are also excellent ways of finding natives as well. And remember, if you are entering a design class you are free from the restriction of having owned the plants for three months.

So I encourage you to arm yourselves with native plants and enter the Summer Show with gusto – who knows, you may be the one to carry Mary Bryant's painting home.

Editor's note: Check out Fletcher Wildlife Garden's annual native plant sale for native plants. Sat. June 4, 2016 9:30am-12:30pm at FWG. Keep an eye on their website for a list of plants that will be available at the sale. <http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher/>

Did You Know?

According to 2013 figures from the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN, Canada produces more lentils than any other country in the world. About 99% of Canadian production is grown in Saskatchewan.

OHS Matters

OHS Matters: The 2016 Plant Auction and Sale

by Maureen Mark

The snow has melted and should be gone in your area. That means it is time to start thinking about your garden and OHS fundraising activities. There are a number of events and many ways in which you could contribute. The highlight for many members is the annual OHS auction, with our own Marilyn Light as auctioneer. If you have never attended an OHS auction, you have missed something special. Marilyn shares her extensive horticultural knowledge and experience as she introduces each special plant with skill and humour to extract as many pennies from the pockets in the room as possible. It is entertainment, education, and fundraising in one event.

As your garden emerges, please consider what plants could be divided and donated to the various OHS plant sales. Plants that are named, labelled and potted command higher prices. Please consider donating rare or unusual plants to the OHS auction. Popular items include unusual hostas, newer daylilies or irises, woodland plants, and special fruit and vegetables. Contact Maureen Mark (tel.: 613-521-4597, or mmark@rogers.com) by April 30, with the name of the plant that you propose to donate, a description including preferred garden location and hardiness, and a photo if available. As there is a limited amount of time for the auction, any special donated plants that are not auctioned will be sold at a special table during the plant sale following the auction.

Please consider how many friends, family, coworkers, and strangers you could invite to share an extraordinary evening. Start working on them now to reserve the date: Tuesday May 24, 2016. Let's pack the room with as many pockets as possible for Marilyn to pick.

New OHS Members

Elena Aminkova
James and Michele Canton
Ken Church and Penny Turnbull
Caroline da Silva and Mieke Cullen
Natalie Filiou
Brenda Flood
Nancy Gabler
Emily Gordon
Elisabeth Humphrey
Jolanta Kania
Matt McKechnie
Tanya Naylor
Shelley Pelkey
Lorne Pennycook
Angela Petersen
MaryAnne and Christopher Petrella
Sarai Porritt
Catherine Presseau
Phillip Richard
Karen Saer
Henry and Nelly Sewell and Samuel
Sarah Shapiro
Lis Smidt
Beth and Robert van Wyndgaarden
Deborah Watt

Did You Know?

2016 is the International Year of the Pulses. Pulses are a subgroup of legumes; only legumes harvested for dry grain are classified as pulses. Legume species used as vegetables (e.g. green peas, green beans), for oil extraction (e.g. soybean, groundnut) and for sowing purposes (e.g. clover, alfalfa) are not considered pulses.

<http://www.fao.org/pulses-2016/en/>

Coming Again – our Fun-filled Bus Tour to the Montreal Botanical Garden's Great Gardening Weekend

by Gloria Sola

Our biennial members' bus tour to the Montreal Botanical Garden's (MBG's) Great Gardening Weekend at the end

of May never fails to provide a delightful experience of plants and gardens. There are 30 great theme gardens to explore, such as the Chinese and Japanese gardens, the shade garden, the Courtyard of the Senses, and alpine and aquatic gardens, as well as 10 greenhouses full of desert and tropical plants. We also organize two guided tours, one of the alpine garden and one of the shade garden, at an additional cost of \$1.00. It is worth noting that the MBG is ranked in the top 10 botanical gardens in the world.

There is no shortage of plants in full flower at the MBG in May, including primroses and alpine, as well as flowering shrubs and trees such as rhododendrons, cherries, crabapples, and magnolias.

This special weekend also provides an exceptional opportunity to shop, as the MBG assembles each year a large marketplace with nurseries and vendors of gardening-ware from all over Quebec and nearby Ontario. It is a wonderful place to browse and buy things for the garden that you didn't even know were available! And we have plenty of space on the bus to bring home your purchases.

This year, the tour is on Saturday, May 28th. It begins at 7:00 am at two pick-up places: one in the west end (Park and Ride) and one in the East (TrainYards). A comfortable coach bus takes us to the MBG. There is a restaurant at the MBG, but many members bring a picnic lunch. This is an all-day trip; we come back to the pick-up places around 7:30-8:00 pm. The \$55 price includes the bus fare, the entry ticket, and the driver's gratuity. Your seat is reserved once payment is received on a first come, first served basis.

This is just another benefit of being an OHS member.

Getting to Know Laurie Graham

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

I joined in 2001. I did so because I had just purchased my first house and knew nothing about gardening. A friend who was already a member, Jennifer Mix, suggested that it would be a good way to get up to speed on the subject. She was right.

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

I feel like a semi-pro now, having gardened for 15 years. Until I open a gardening book that is, or go on an OHS garden tour, or listen to Marilyn Light at one of our plant auctions. I've come to accept how little I know and how much I will never absorb. I now realize that I'll always be a novice when it comes to gardening in general. Instead, I focus on learning as much as I can about the lives being lived in my own garden.

How would you describe your garden?

It's a long, narrow space. A large screened-in porch interrupts one end of it and at the other is a shed and a large, oval-shaped pond. A winding path, with beds on each side, leads from the porch, past the pond, to the shed. Most of the beds are in full sun from late morning onwards, so they are planted with sun-loving perennials. One spot is shaded by a large bush, so it contains native plants. Creeping plants wind their way around the edge of the pond, backed by taller plants, such as day lilies, roses and rudbeckia.

What do you like best about your garden? What least? Favourite plants?

I love the pond. Frogs move in every year and I enjoy watching them sunbathe on the lily pads during the day, and listening to them croak at night. What I like least is the material that is on my paths. The former homeowner constructed them out of about a six-inch layer of finely ground red brick. While they look lovely in the spring, they are a breeding ground for weeds and are completely overrun with them by mid-summer. What isn't covered by

weeds ends up sticking to people's shoes and being deposited throughout the house. My favourite plants are my roses – probably because I spend the most time on them and, as such, am heavily invested in them. You rose lovers will know the drill: a daily inspection for Japanese beetles, bucket of soapy water in hand. Yuck. But oh, those glorious, sweet-smelling blooms!



Are you the main gardener or do you have help?

Help? I wish!

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

I have a grassy area on the other side of the porch that could do with a makeover. A veggie patch, perhaps... What I should do is get rid of the ground-brick paths. I am overwhelmed by the prospect of doing so, though.

Are there gardening web sites that you look at regularly?

Yes, for reference purposes. Sites like davesgarden.com, pondclinic.com and, unfortunately, weedinfo.ca.

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

I have no absolute favourite. I've been inspired by a number of gardens on our OHS tours, though. I always take pictures and still have them all on my computer. When I'm in search of new ideas, I scroll through them.

When you aren't in the garden, what activities and interests do you pursue?

I sell antiques and collectibles on line, so much of my spare time is spent at auctions, flea markets, etc., in search of treasures. On a similar note, I belong to a collectors' group called the Canadian Ceramics Circle. I drag myself to an exercise class every week and I recently joined a choir. Most of all, I enjoy sharing any kind of activities with family and friends.

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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:

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