



Coming Events

Winter Newsletter

www.ottawahort.org

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.

January 26

A Tour of Gardens of Kyoto, Rob Brandon

February 23

Success with seeds: germinating, growing, gathering – a panel presentation and discussion, Sylvia Spasoff, Telsing Andrews, and Kelly Noel

March 22

Pruning Ornamental Shrubs, Demystified, Caroline Dabrus

Pallet Garden Box Gardening

by Graeme Burvill

Before beginning, I would like to state that I am a novice gardener and have only been growing herbs and veggies for a few years. Also, since I don't own my own home, my setups over the years have been based around the fact that they cannot be permanent, nor can they take up a lot of space. This has caused me to go through an evolution of creative ways to still grow the plants I want but with the least impact on my living space.

In the past, I was limited to growing in a variety of small planters, but over the years, I moved to larger plastic containers such as 5 gallon pails, recycling bins, and storage bins. This allowed me to move the plants out of the way, as well as get them into sunnier areas around the property. In 2015, I wanted to increase the variety of herbs I could grow, without having to have a bunch of containers scattered everywhere. I turned to the internet for help, and helpful it was. Let me tell you, there are a million ideas out there, and after a Sunday morning on the internet, I had found an idea that suited me. A key consideration was not spending a lot of money on a setup that I might very well have to scrap at the end of the year. I found a really great solution that was cheap, easy, and pleasing to the eye. I in no way take credit for the design or idea - I simply watched the "how to" video found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOadilqJeeq> and followed the instructions.

be costly and, for those who don't have access to the proper tools, it can be a challenging task. The video I found basically used a shipping pallet, landscape fabric, and some staples - simple, easy, no carpentry or any major construction here, just a positive attitude and a staple gun needed. I also needed a box cutter to cut the fabric, though scissors will also work. I had to buy the staple gun, and found one on sale for \$13. It came with a box of staples, which is nice as you will use a lot of them. That, together with the cost of the landscape fabric, brought my costs to around \$25. This was a little more than I wanted to spend, but let's face it - 25 bucks ain't what it used to be.

Once you have all your materials, the process is fairly simple. Lay your pallet face down. Lay out your fabric and double it up. It's best not to cut the fabric from the roll until you have properly sized it up to the pallet. Just looking down at your pallet you can see all the slots across the face which will serve as the beds for your plants.

To make the beds, you take the doubled up fabric and wrap the entire backside of the pallet and the bottom and two sides as well. This is easier to do by using two pieces of the doubled up fabric as the rolls you buy at the store generally are not wide enough to wrap a whole pallet. Once you have your first piece sized up and loosely tacked in place, you can cut it from the roll and get your second piece ready. When wrapping the bottom of the pallet, it is important to bring the fabric around from the back and up the face of the pallet by about 6 inches. This will allow you to put in a ton of staples which will support everything when

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

Building a good raised garden box can

you have the pallet standing up against your house. Once the pallet is wrapped, put it face down and staple along the slats to attach the fabric firmly to the pallet. This will create one big pocket for the soil. Once the plants are inserted between the slats and tamped in firmly, the roots will help keep the soil evenly distributed when the pallet is placed on end.

You are almost done now; the only thing left is to add more staples everywhere. This will ensure the fabric will not peel off anywhere and leak precious soil. One thing I found when using my cheap stapler is that it often had trouble tacking the staples all the way into the wood; to fix this, I used a hammer to tap in all the staples. If you don't have a hammer, use a brick; if you don't have a brick, revert to your caveman roots and use a crude stone. You will immediately feel a sense of animalistic pride in your work!



So now you have your pallet garden ready to go. I'm lucky enough to live in a place which has a great composting program that creates healthy soil from biomass collected locally (Prince George, B.C.). This is done on a large scale by professionals and the result is a lot of high quality soil available at next to no cost to anyone who wants it. Many of you may have the added cost of purchasing soil for your pallet box, but check around - you may be able to get your hands on some free dirt! With the dirt on hand, lay the pallet flat and fill with soil, as shown in the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOadilqJeeg>. When it's filled, you can start planting. Once your plants are firmly tucked into their beds, you can carefully stand the pallet up and place it in your sunniest spot. And because the top is left open, you can even fill that once the pallet garden is

standing upright. Please note - this pallet garden is going to be heavy - you may need a friend to give you a hand putting it in place.

As the plants grow, the garden starts looking cooler and cooler. In the video I watched, the gardener finished by planting flowers on the top of the pallet; this really made it look amazing and it fit right in with the décor of the backyard. You can be creative and fill this thing however you want - improve on it, redesign it, that's really what it's all about. I filled mine completely with herbs as growing flowers is a waste in my opinion, as I don't enjoy eating them.



I did have a few setbacks with this set-up. A major one was the amount of sunlight that actually reached the box once it was leaning up against the house. With all the tall shrubbery around the property and the shadow of the roof looming over the box, there just wasn't enough light for the herbs. So I opted to drag it out by my veggie garden and lay it flat on the ground. This gave the plants an additional 3 hours of sunlight each day, which made a huge difference, though the pallet did take up more ground space.

In retrospect, perhaps I didn't have the right spot for a truly successful standing pallet garden. But I still had a really great box that yielded more herbs than I have previously harvested from any of my other setups. Everything was in one place and it still looked great in the yard. Making a garden box out of pallets is not a new thing and has been done a million different ways. Using the Google machine, you can see a variety of different styles and functions of garden boxes. So don't be afraid to play around and make yours unique!



Did You Know?

Prince George, B.C. has roughly the same plant hardiness zones as the environs of Ottawa – zone 4a or 4b.

Vertical Vegetable Crops

This article originally appeared in the Lee Valley Gardening Bulletin. Reprinted with permission.

When garden space is limited, growing vegetables vertically is the answer. Growing a garden upwards takes up less ground space, makes the most efficient use of available light, and is easier on your back. When rampant vines are kept under control by supporting them, ripe vegetables don't touch the damp soil, and you end up with less spoilage. Even better, you don't need to bend down to harvest your crops: they're within arm's reach!

However, vining crops must have strong supports. Material used for support should meet at least two basic criteria: 1) it must be sturdy enough to support a bumper crop and withstand strong winds, and 2) it must be tall enough for the plant type. A third criterion you might consider is aesthetics – the structure should blend into the greenery.

Strong string (jute, twine, etc.) or netting can be attached to hang from the top rail of a structure and be secured at its base. By linking several structures together, you can even create a

privacy screen next to a patio. Or, if you arrange your frame like a teepee, it can double as a shady fort for children to play in on hot summer days.

Growing a garden on the vertical doesn't have to mean that you need to actually "build" a support. If you look around, you might already have a structure or two in your yard that could double as a vining vegetable support. Netting attached to a brick wall with brick clips, for example, is perfect for light vining plants such as peas. On the other hand, because pole beans don't like mesh and get confused by horizontal strings, these should be supported by vertical strings against a wall or even a tree (provided the bean foliage doesn't deprive the tree of essential light or vice versa). Or, if space is really limited, why not grow peas and beans in hanging baskets and let the vines cascade down rather than up?

A fence is another supporting option. It can sustain the weight of cucumbers and tomatoes. To grow up a fence some vegetables require a little more assistance. Raffia ties or sponge-covered plant ties can be used to encourage the plants to grow where you want them.

You can be as creative as you want when it comes to supporting your vegetable plants. What's important is that you do support them. You'll be amazed by the rewards.

Editor's note: Some crops that you can try include peas, pole beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, squash, zucchini, and melon.

Did You Know?

If your backyard composters can't supply enough for your needs, you can buy quality compost from the City's Trail Waste Facility to help your garden grow. The compost is sold from March until November (while quantities last). The Trail Waste Facility is located at 4475 Trail Road, off Moodie Drive, south of Fallowfield Road. Please bring a shovel and containers

for loading your own compost and wear proper footwear.

The Trail Waste Facility accepts payment by cash, cheque, Interac, money order, Visa and MasterCard.

President's Message

by Jamie Robertson

There are some places where you can garden all year long. Attractive as these sound, there is some virtue in the rhythm of the seasons that we experience here in the Ottawa area. Yes, it would be nice to have longer springs and autumns, and most of us would prefer somewhat shorter and less severe winters than we experience. There is, however, something to be said for having an enforced break from gardening. By the time November rolls around, most of us are rather pleased to pause, even if not everything was done that we wanted. When spring finally arrives, it brings with it a sense of renewal, of a fresh start, and of hope and new beginnings. It is an opportunity to try something new, and to put into practice some of the resolutions we made for the year ahead.

Winter is a time to catch our breath and relax indoors. It is an opportunity to recharge the batteries. And it is a time to plan. There is certainly no shortage of gardening books that are both educational and enjoyable to read (even if only to look at the pictures). There are television programs and videos about famous gardens or gardening techniques. There are seed catalogues and other plant brochures to peruse.

And there are the OHS monthly meetings. Our program committee, headed by Erin Cassidy, has come up with some exciting and interesting topics for the coming months. Rob Brandon will be speaking about gardens in Kyoto in January, and in February three of our members will be sharing their advice and experiences on successfully starting seeds. In March, there will be another panel discussion, this time on the pruning of shrubs and perennials, something that many of us are hesitant

or nervous about doing. These talks will provide ideas to inspire you, so that when spring finally comes around, you will hit the ground running with new perspectives.

It can be daunting to face going out on a cold Ottawa winter night, but the OHS monthly meetings provide a wonderful opportunity to improve your knowledge and chat with fellow gardeners. Please mark your calendars and join us. Remember, it's never too early to start planning for the next season in the garden!

A Very Small Garden in Tuscany

by Sheila Burvill

On the far-east side of Tuscany, not far from the border with Umbria, there's a small hill town named Anghiari. It's an old place indeed. It's known that the Romans were there because the long road running through the town down the hill and leading to the nearby town of Sansepolcro is straight as a die, as Roman roads all over Europe and Britain are wont to be. But the Etruscans are rumoured to have founded the place even before the Romans arrived.



Anghiari is enchanting, consisting of an old medieval centre within stone walls, and newer sections all around the walls radiating down all sides of the hill. It's not only the walls that are stone; the entire medieval area contains nothing but stone or old brick buildings, with the occasional tile roof or timber beam showing. The streets are cobbled and most of the plazas are of laid stone too. There's not a park to be seen in this ancient precinct.



To be sure, there is greenery in the medieval sector – great terracotta urns full of rosemary bookending a bench on the ramparts, for instance, and effusive container gardens bordering the walls of private dwellings.



But there's only one true garden in old Anghiari and it has an Ottawa connection. You see, Ottawa resident Mark Curfoot-Mollington owns a street-level apartment in one of the houses in Anghiari as well as the larger part of the adjoining garden. The house itself is over 750 years old. The age of the garden itself is not known with certainty, but it does appear on some very old plans of the town. Today the house is divided into individual apartments, but at one time it was a fairly substantial single dwelling. The garden may have existed from the time the house was built, or possibly it was created when another building was demolished. In any case, today it's the only green space appearing on the street maps posted throughout the town.

Because of Anghiari's position on top of the hill, the streets run at different levels. So at one side, the garden's gated entrance is at street level, while on the opposite side, the perimeter fence is level with the second stories of buildings on the adjacent street. That's why it's such a surprise to realize that the persimmon tree that centres the garden is actually planted into the ground. There's also a hedge and some luxuriant vines that sit directly in the soil.



Most of the other plants are in containers sitting on the stone courtyard surrounding the persimmon. The tree, incidentally, bears edible fruit that are systematically harvested at the peak of ripeness. Some containers sit atop a low free-standing wall that delineates different sections, with the plants at eye-level for people sitting in the garden. That might imply that the garden is larger than it actually is. To be sure, there are places for a table with chairs, a small patio for a lounge or a drying rack perhaps, and a short walk in front of the house toward the far wall. Overall, though, the garden can't be much more than 20 feet square.



We felt quite smug to be able to sit inside this lovely garden, feeling the envy of passers-by who could only glance in through the open grill gate!

Author's Note: I, along with other family members, rented the property last October and that's how I got to know about the garden. If readers would like more information, please contact me at saburvill@sympatico.ca or apply direct to Mark Curfoot-Mollington at marcocurfootmollington@alice.it

Specialist Gardens in the Bay Area – Not Your Usual Botanical Garden

by Sheila Carey

Horticultural enthusiasts visiting California are spoiled for choice when it comes to botanical gardens, as there are 64 in all. Since I have friends living in the Bay area, I tend to visit in the winter months, when I'm hoping for some greenery to lift my spirits. The San Francisco Botanical garden is, of course, the largest one in the region. On a trip at the end of last winter, I managed to visit two specialty botanical gardens, quite different in scope and intent.

The first garden I visited was the Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek (<http://www.ruthbancroftgarden.org/rbgarden/pages/plants.html>).



This relatively small 2.5 acre garden is focussed on xerophytes (water conserving plants), and is home to cacti, succulents, and trees from around the world was started in the 1950s by Ruth Bancroft, who became fascinated by succulents and began collecting them. In the 1970s, she was given land that was originally a pear farm to plant a new garden. Here she worked to create a garden from her succulent collection, which had grown quite large.



The Ruth Bancroft Garden became the first preservation project of The Garden Conservancy, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving American gardens, and has been open to the public since 1992. As it is quite small, it is easy to tour the garden, and, using the pamphlet handed out, to identify all the species mentioned. A different brochure is provided each month and docent-led tours are also available. There are interesting small works of art throughout, and benches on which to rest and enjoy the scenery. As a garden-starved Canadian, it was marvelous to be sitting in the California sun admiring the splashes of colour throughout. A rather striking plant is the *Aloe buhrii*, which is native to South Africa, and adds a dash of orange.



Also impressive was another South African plant, *Polygala virgata*, a member of the pea family which grows to 6 feet and has lovely purple flowers.



My one criticism of the visit is that the price seemed a bit steep at \$10 for such a small garden. However, given the drought conditions in California, the educational role this garden plays can offer inspiration for gardeners looking to do their part planting drought-tolerant plants, and fans of succulents will enjoy this focussed environment.

On another day, we made a visit to wine country in Glen Ellen, California, where we visited the Quarryhill Botanical Garden (<http://quarryhillbg.org/>). This is a much larger garden of 25 acres, focussed on the plants of Asia, including magnolias, dogwoods, maples, birches, roses, lilies, rhododendrons, and many others. It was also founded by a woman, Jane Davenport Jansen, in 1987. The first seed-collecting expedition to Asia was in the fall of 1987, and by spring of 1990 there were young plants ready to be planted. The grounds here are lovely, and there are a few suggested tours one can take. The main garden is a sprawling Asian Woodland Garden, featuring ponds and waterfalls and, of course, many plants and trees, including the trident maple, *Acer buergerianum*, a favourite of bonsai enthusiasts.



There is also a lovely Chinese Heritage Rose Garden. This is a lovely botanical garden in which to go for a walk, as a respite from the wine touring that was, of course, also a feature of the day's trip. One can spend hours wandering in the gardens and sitting down for a picnic, all while enjoying views of the garden and surrounding Sonoma Valley. As with the Ruth Bancroft Garden, one can either take a self-guided tour using a brochure, or go on a docent-led tour.



There are many things to see and do in the Bay area, but if you're a fan of succulents or of Asian plants, it is worth seeking out these specialized botanical gardens.

What Every Gardener Should Know About Soil

This article originally appeared in the April 2001 OHS Newsletter. It was adapted from an article prepared by Linda Temple.

What is soil?

The study of soil is a career in itself, involving many elements that are beyond the scope of interest of the average gardener. In general, we do not care how it got there or how it evolved. For the gardener, it is the basic structure, no matter how unpromising, in which plants may be grown. So, for our terms of reference, let us consider soil to be the top meter of material that constitutes the root zone for most plants, although trees will, of course, go much deeper than this if they can.

Soil provides an anchor for plant roots and a reservoir of water, air, and nutrients for plant life and growth. Ideally, it is made up of 44% mineral material, 6% organic matter, and 50% pore space, half of which is large and filled with air, and the other half of which is small and water-filled. The soil particles making up the mineral portion are graded by size. They range from 0 to 0.002 mm for clay, 0.002 to 0.05 mm for silt, and 0.05 to 2.0 mm for sand. The varying proportions of different-sized particles combine to give the soil its feel or texture.

How do I know what kind of soil I have?

Soil texture, or the type of soil you have, can be home-tested in several ways. One way is to dig a hole 40 to 50 cm deep where you want to plant. Then fill a clear jar two-thirds full of water and add soil from the hole until the jar is almost full. Add 15 ml (1 Tablespoon) of dish detergent to the jar to break the bonds that might hold the soil particles together, and, after replacing the lid, shake vigorously. Allow the jar to stand undisturbed overnight. The soil particles will settle, largest at the bottom to smallest at the top (see Figure 1).

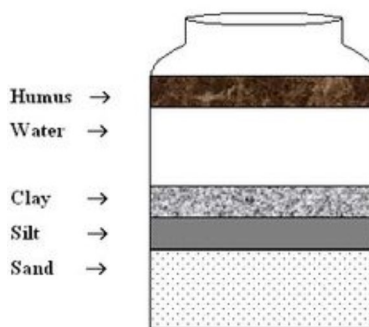


Figure 1: From this water test you can determine the percentages of sand, silt, and clay in your soil.

You can then mark off the thickness of the layers on a piece of paper and estimate the percentage of the sand, silt, and clay. Then refer to Figure 2 to determine the type of soil texture you have.

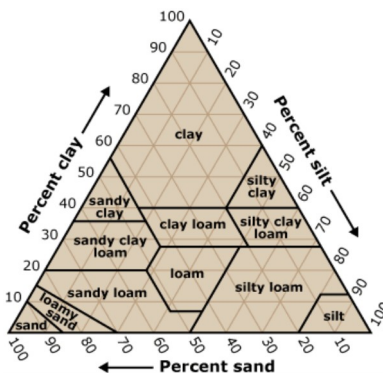


Figure 2: Once percentages of sand, silt, and clay have been determined, find the intersection of the three lines that correspond to the three proportions to determine the soil texture type.

Another test of soil texture is to take a handful of moist soil and roll it into a ball. If you can make scratches on the surface of the ball, if it feels and sounds gritty and usually breaks apart in your hand, then you know you have a high sand content. Silt content is high if the ball of soil feels smooth to a bit greasy, holds its shape with some finger marks, and will only roll into a short, thick ribbon. With clay soil, the ball will feel smooth and sticky, will show few to no finger marks, will hold its shape, and will roll into a long, thin ribbon. If your handful crumbles when you try to make a ball, your soil has a nice balanced texture.

What is pH?

The term 'pH' stands for 'potential hydrogen' and is the measure of the concentration of hydrogen ions (H^+) compared to that of hydroxyl ions (OH^-). It is a logarithmic scale, with 0 to 6.9 indicating acidic conditions (more H^+ than OH^- ions), 7 being neutral (equal number of H^+ and OH^- ions), and 7.1 to 14 indicating an alkaline environment (fewer H^+ than OH^- ions). The normal range of soil pH is between 4.5 and 8, but most plants will do well between 6 and 7, with 6.5 being optimal for nutrient uptake. You can test your soil's pH level yourself with the help of a small soil testing kit available from most garden centres.

What is organic matter?

Organic matter comes from the remains of vegetation, animals, and the constant renewal of plant roots and root hairs. The importance of organic matter in the building of healthy soils cannot be overstated. It adds nutrients, and improves drainage and soil structure.

Organic matter provides food for animals, bacteria, and fungi that break it down into its basic elements, ready for plants to absorb. In fact, upon decomposition, organic matter supplies many of the nutrients needed for plant growth. The presence of organic matter in a soil also makes it able to withstand additions of acid or base compounds without changing its pH. This is called the 'buffering capacity' of the soil.

Coarse organic matter on the surface of the soil will reduce water loss by evaporation and will lessen the impact of falling rain by slowing the rate of surface run-off, allowing more water to percolate into the soil, and thus reducing erosion. Pulled down into the soil by rodents and earthworms, coarse organic matter helps physically to keep the soil open and spongy. In addition, the burrowing action of critters in the soil opens and mixes soil layers, improving drainage, structure, and aeration.

How do I keep my soil healthy?

For plants to develop normally, they must have a constant supply of at least 16 essential nutrients from the air, water, and soil. Air provides carbon and oxygen; water provides hydrogen and oxygen; and soil provides the other 13. In order of the relative amounts found in most plants, these are: nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sulfur, boron, chlorine, copper, iron, manganese, molybdenum, and zinc.

The most obvious way to enrich and renew our soil is to compost organic materials and return them to the garden. By regularly adding organic matter to the soil there is less need for chemical fertilizers, as organic matter promotes a gradual release of plant nutrients.

A good indicator of your soil's health is the presence of earthworms, for which you can easily test. On a day when the soil is somewhat moist and warm, dig a cube of soil 30x30x30 cm and spread it out on some newspaper. Sift through the soil and count the number of earthworms. Ten or more is a good sign; none is not!

Did You Know?

Experienced gardeners know that different types of plants have varying drainage requirements to grow well. But how do you know what the drainage characteristics are in your garden? Here's what Karen York suggested in an old *Gardening Life* article:

1. Dig a hole about 1 foot (30 cm) deep and wide.
2. Fill with water.
3. Time how long it takes to drain completely.

Complete drainage in 30 minutes or less indicates good drainage; in 30 minutes to 4 hours indicates moderate drainage; and if your hole still contains water after 4 hours, you have poor drainage.

Member to Member

What's in a Name: *Heuchera*?

by Robin Woods

In 1738, Linnaeus assigned several species of plants, all native to North America, to the genus *Heuchera*. He did this to honour his friend, Johann Heinrich von Heucher, a German Professor of Medicine and Botany at Wittenberg University. *Heuchera americana*, commonly known as alum root, is native to Ontario and the Eastern U.S. Native Americans used it as an astringent and styptic, and it is still widely used as a medicinal plant. However, alum root is also the common name of *Geranium maculatum*, or cranesbill, which has similar medicinal properties and uses. Use of the scientific name removes any confusion!

But how should we pronounce *Heuchera*? Some say, 'Hoy ker uh' as I do; others say 'Hue ker uh'. I asked one of my contemporaries, Dr. David Lewis, a botanist and gardener; he confessed to using both! Since Johann von Heucher was German, I emailed another friend, Dr. Linda Dietrick, who teaches German at the University of Winnipeg and is also studying for her Master Gardener certification. She replied that Heucher should be pronounced 'Hoy ker' as "it honours Mr. Heucher best". However, although I say "Hoy ker uh" I know that when others say "Heu ker uh" we are talking about the same plant!

Editor's note: If you have a question about a plant name, please contact Robin Woods at rwoods026@gmail.com. As a retired professor of botany and a doctoral graduate of the University of Oxford, he is eminently qualified to answer it. We'll be happy to publish his reply.

Did You Know?

In England, some traditionally thought that it was unlucky to bring lilacs into the house. (<http://Plant-lore.com>)

Winter Regeneration

by Sheila Carey

Winter isn't the time one typically thinks of for doing garden work in Ottawa, but there was some regenerative work done in my garden last winter. For a couple of years, I had noticed that my lilacs were flowering less and less, and there was an increasing amount of dead wood that I had difficulty in pruning. I sought advice from an arborist, who recommended regenerative pruning be done in the winter. It is done then to avoid removing live greenery. In the fall, when the leaves drop, the energy from the canopy is sent back to the root ball, which is called 'downward feeding'. When the shrub is pruned in the winter, the energy remains in the plant roots, and the shrubs have the same amount of energy coming into spring, but with less wood to feed. In the spring, that energy is sent back up the stems to produce live growth.

To regenerate my lilacs, which were straggly and partially shaded, some stems were removed to reduce overcrowding, and the remaining stems were cut back to one-third their height to encourage re-growth at the base. This all took place one cold and snowy day in February, when the dauntless crew waded through the snow to work on my sad-looking lilacs.

So, was the regeneration successful? Yes, I think so. There were very large, healthy-looking leaves on my lilacs this past summer, and I'm told that after year two, I will see more flowering. I'm really looking forward to seeing my lilacs in full bloom again!

Editor's note: Don't let your lilacs get into such a sad state! Attend the March 22 meeting and learn about pruning ornamental shrubs.

OHS Matters

Native Plants in an Urban Garden – Show Competition Award

by Gillian Macdonnell

Mary and Joe Bryant came to Ottawa in 1967 and have long been recognized for their significant contributions to the horticultural community. Mary was a keen horticulturalist and a life member of the Ottawa Horticultural Society until her passing in 2011. Joe continues to garden and participate in OHS activities. The Mary Bryant Award, a painting by Mary Bryant of native plants, was donated to the OHS in 2004 by Mary and Joe Bryant to encourage the use of native plants in our gardens. Mary followed up with an article in the September 2005 newsletter on gardening with native plants.

In keeping with the desire of the Bryants to promote the use of native plants, the OHS created a new garden competition to be held annually to award the painting to the best garden that has complementary plantings of native and introduced plants. A committee was formed to visit gardens that were nominated for this competition. Gardens were visited twice during the season to determine the winner for the year. The competition recognized the whole garden, as judging criteria included general appearance, landscaping and environmental features, but particular note was made of the element of attractive native plants.

However, recently competitions have not been held annually as anticipated due to the lack of nominations. No awards were made in 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2015. A review of the use of this award was carried out in 2015 resulting in a decision that the garden competition would be discontinued and that another purpose for the award would be sought that would be consistent with the Bryants' wishes.

Please contact a board member if you have any ideas on how the OHS may award this gift donated by Mary and Joe Bryant.

In the meantime, the painting will be awarded in 2016 as a prize for the

best entry in the flower show competitions featuring native plants. For the summer show, new classes have been created to feature native plants. These classes will cover a full range of possibilities. There will be classes for horticultural entries, design entries, and educational entries (e.g., posters, photos). Start planning how you might win this fabulous award!

Shows Corner January 2016

by Gillian Macdonnell

2015 Fall Show Award Winners

Having fewer classes in the Fall Show seems to have had a good effect. Though small, it was a good show with some unusual specimens.

Two novices have walked off with prizes at the Fall Show: Marilyn Light and Heidi Malowany. Both won cash prizes of \$20 and both won Best in Show as well. Marilyn's tomatoes were the envy of all, especially her Indigo Sunrise, and Heidi entered a stunning black taro in the foliage class. I can vouch that the judge was quite blown away by these two entries.

Other prize winners were Gillian Macdonnell; Josie Pazdzior, who entered a number of classes and won a Best In Show for her triangular trough garden; and Emilie Henkelman, who excelled in the Design Section, winning among other prizes Best in Show for her design 'My Favourite Colour is Pink'.

Shows in 2016

In 2016 there will again be two judged Shows: a similar small Fall Show and an interesting take on the Summer Show that has resulted in a few more classes. In order to highlight the Mary Bryant Award - a lovely painting by Mary herself - the Summer Show will feature some classes, both Horticultural and Design, for native plants. Regular Show Rules apply in that horticultural entries must have been in the possession of the entrant for a minimum of 2 months before the show but design classes may include plant material from any source.

New Set-Up for Trophies and Prizes

In an effort to make the Shows portion of the Yearbook less complicated, the Trophies section will be moving to the website. Further from sight doesn't mean out of mind however; members are reminded that trophies and/or cash prizes are awarded for highest aggregates and Best in Shows for each of the two shows in the year and for the Show Year in total.

New Members OHS

Susan Alcott
 Susan Barker and Don Paskovich
 Shawn Batten
 Melanie Bechard
 Suzanne Buan
 Anne Castle
 Jacqueline Crawford
 Fran Doy
 Etienne Forgues
 Anne Heffernan
 Andrea Hitchon
 Patrick Lebrun
 Tom Malis
 Kate McNaughton
 Amanda Munro
 Helen and Mark Nowell
 Karin Petersen and James Mactavish
 Caroline Polis
 Carolyn Ragan
 Anne and Ron Robinson
 Margaret Ryan
 Lois Simmons
 Wesley Stevenson
 Denize Tan
 Susan Tanner and Irvin Waller
 Barbara Thorpe
 Claude Tremblay Brun del Re and
 Renzo Brun del Re
 Wendy Turner
 Lindsay Vyvey
 Ian Wilson
 Joseph Woodhouse and Cassandra
 Baker

OHS Matters

Ottawa Garden Council Update

by Lynn Armstrong

It has been a busy and productive first year for the Ottawa Garden Council. The Council held a forum in early spring 2015 with participants from garden groups from across Ottawa in order to identify areas of mutual interest and to give the Council direction. The first initiatives of the Council have been to set up a website – www.gardensottawa.org – and to create an interactive Ottawa Garden Map. The map highlights over 140 gardens of all shapes and sizes in all parts of Ottawa, and includes public and private gardens, parks, memorial sites, rooftop gardens, green walls and community plots. This map is an ongoing project, and the Council welcomes new additions and more detailed information on the gardens if you have info to share.

The Council especially hopes that this map initiative will allow garden groups to become aware of other gardens and gardeners with similar interests for the purposes of information sharing. The Council also hopes that it will promote an interest in facilitating garden visits by creating garden tour routes for those on foot, on bikes, and in cars.

The Ottawa Garden Council will also be hosting a forum for interested gardening groups on February 6 from 1-4 pm at the Sandy Hill Community Centre. The agenda for the Forum will be the following:

1. Garden Council update, including a discussion on the current City of Ottawa bylaws and their impact on gardening. In particular, how the by-laws affect front yard and boulevard gardens.
2. Garden Days, June 17-19, 2016 – What is being planned and how you can engage with Ottawa's Official Garden Day and garden celebration.
3. Ottawa 2017: 150th Celebration – How are gardens going to be highlighted as part of the celebration? Ideas include the creation of the

2017 Garden Boulevard and branding of the capital as the "City of Gardens."

Keep an eye out for a more detailed and formal invitation to the February 6 forum coming in the OHS Grapevine.

If you have any suggestions for the forum or additional information for the Garden Map, please contact the Ottawa Garden Council at info@gardensottawa.org.

Did You Know?

According to the folks at the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden, the seeds of most fruit that you buy in grocery stores will be the product of a hybrid plant developed by breeders. Plant breeders often spend years developing new varieties and may grow thousands of crosses to select desirable plants for industry. These are then propagated by asexual means to produce clones of the desirable plant. If you plant this seed, you will not get the same type of fruit that you bought at the store. (You may not get a plant that produces fruit at all.) And of course, the time required to bring trees to bear fruit can mean a decade before you even know if you have anything.

Source:

<http://forums.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/threads/growing-citrus-trees-from-seeds-advice-please.6602/>

Community Planting Selection Process

by Gillian Macdonnell

The purpose of the projects taken on by the Community Planting Committee is to contribute to the beautification of Ottawa. Projects may be undertaken directly by the Society, in partnership with other horticultural or community groups, or in support of civic programs. The OHS may supply materi-

als, labour and expertise, or funding support. The Committee determines the emphasis to be placed on these program elements in a given year based on the needs and opportunities that are presented.

The following criteria are applied to requests received by the Committee:

- the project should make a real difference to the community in which it is located;
- the project should be visible and accessible to the public;
- the project should promote environmentally-prudent gardening;
- the duration of any project is a maximum of two years, with a clear plan for hand-over by the OHS to a community group involved; the planting must continue to be maintained after the OHS hand-over; thus a longer-term commitment is required of the community.

Did You Know?

While it is true that you can get tetanus from stepping on a rusty nail, you might be more likely to get it through a minor scrape or puncture wound while gardening. Because spores of the tetanus bacterium, *Clostridium tetani*, occur everywhere in our environment and are found most frequently in soil, gardeners can be at particular risk of contracting tetanus. This is an acute disease that can lead to paralyzing muscle spasms and other serious complications, including death. Vaccination is the only effective means of protection, and it is recommended that adults receive tetanus booster shots every ten years in order to ensure long-term protection. (Source: www.immunize.ca)

OHS Matters

The OHS Archives – On the Move?

by Sheila Burvill, temporary Archivist

There was an article in the electronic version of the January 2015 issue of the OHS newsletter describing a very old ledger of the Ottawa Valley Gardeners and Florist Club. The article mentioned the need to find a suitable home for the publication, perhaps in the Ottawa Room of the Ottawa Public Library (OPL).

Staff of the Ottawa Room, although given our information, never got back to us. So, as the OHS temporary Archivist, I contacted the City Of Ottawa Archives in June, 2015, to see if they might be interested in receiving the ledger. Since it also happened that the City Archives had recently asked us to supply some OHS publications missing from their collection, a meeting was scheduled for me to deliver our publications, and for one of the City Archivists to examine the ledger. It turned out to be a most auspicious meeting.

The City Archives were delighted to accept the historic document we were offering, as well as the missing OHS publications. Moreover, the Archivist said that they were expecting more OHS items to arrive the next day from Archives Canada. It turns out that the national body wishes to turn over documents and items of local interest to local institutions that are properly equipped to register, store, and give access to such collections. As part of that initiative, several boxes of OHS material were in the process of being shipped from Archives Canada to the City of Ottawa Archives. Moreover, the City Archives are in negotiation with the OPL's Ottawa Room to similarly transfer items more properly held in an archives rather than a library, and it is expected that OHS material will form part of a future transfer.

The City of Ottawa Archives moved into a new state-of-the art building in June, 2011, that is eminently suitable

for storing the transferred material. They are also very interested in knowing what is contained in our own archives, and in entering into discussions about which of its contents might be better stored in their facilities.

Since the OHS archival material is currently stored in four large plastic boxes in our storage locker, and since accessing their contents is very difficult, the OHS Board agreed that City archival staff and the OHS temporary Archivist should collectively review our material to determine what can be moved into the excellent storage facilities offered by the City. This would unite all OHS memorabilia in the same place, maintain it in proper long-term storage, and facilitate access to it. The OHS will retain in our storage locker what it deems useful to our ongoing activities, most likely items such as the runs of OHS Yearbooks and Newsletters in printed form.

The City Archives is eager to accept digitized items as well, particularly Board minutes and photographs. So electronic records held on OHS-owned computers may also be transferred or copied to them.

All in all, it seems likely that the OHS Archives *per se* will be moved to the City of Ottawa facility and only an OHS publications collection will remain in our storage locker. In addition, the role of the Archives Committee convenor (aka OHS Archivist) will need to be re-defined.

Did You Know?

A historic squash has been grown by students at the Canadian Mennonite University. It was first reported internationally as a squash grown from seeds from an archaeological dig. Further research, though, found that the seeds of this Gete-Okosomin squash — which, roughly translated, means “cool old squash” — were originally given in 1995 to David Wrone, an emeritus University of Wisconsin historian, by some elder women gardeners from the Miami Nation in Indiana. These squash had been grown and their seeds saved by the Miami Nation people for many generations, perhaps even for thousands of years.

The men and women keeping the seeds grew them carefully so that they would not cross-pollinate with other kinds of squash, maintaining their preferred varietal characteristics. One of the squash grown this season weighed in at more than 14 kilograms.

The squash seeds will eventually be available for sharing through the fledgling Red River Regional Seed Library hosted on CMU's campus.

<http://www.canadianmennonite.org/stories/stewarding-agricultural-diversity-across-cultures>



Getting to Know Sylvia Spasoff

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

I think I joined sometime in the nineties, recruited by Pat Russell, who brought a lot of people into the Society around then.

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

I have been gardening off and mostly on since around 1972.

How would you describe your garden?

I have a large country garden with perennials in both sun and shade, and a formerly large kitchen garden which is getting smaller each year.

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

I like that I have a lot of space in which to work, but that of course carries its own problems, and I have to hold myself back from increasing the planting areas. I should, in fact be reducing their size, as my energy decreases with age. I really love all the plants in my garden, especially the peonies, the daylilies and the hostas. If something doesn't work, it doesn't last long.

Are you the main gardener or do you have help?

My husband is very helpful with the heavy work, like digging up an overgrown Siberian iris for example, but I am the plant person.

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

I have a tendency to plant things too close together. I like a somewhat chaotic garden but mine might be a little too much so. I'm also trying to reduce

the amount of weeding that is necessary by mulching a lot more. I made a mistake a number of years ago by planting gooseneck loosestrife right in a perennial bed because I like the flower very much, especially in bouquets. But it has now taken over quite a large area and something drastic



needs to be done with it. I may naturalize some of it out in the field where it will have much more competition to keep it under control.

Are there gardening web sites that you look at regularly?

Not really.

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

Local gardens like those of Nathalie Chaly and Heidi Geraets inspire me very much. I like gardens that were designed by the gardeners themselves.

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

I like cooking and baking. I paint in both oils and watercolours, mostly landscapes. I enjoy choral singing. I read a lot of fiction and a little non-fiction and, sadly, I watch too much TV.

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