

THE OTTAWA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



OHS NEWS

January 2014

www.ottawahort.org

Coming Events

Unless otherwise indicated the following events take place at 7:30 p.m. at the **Tom Brown Arena**, 141 Bayview Avenue. Consult the 2014 yearbook for a complete list of events for the year.

January 28

Floriade 2012, with OHS Member, Phil Reilly

February 25

Making Scents of Your Garden, with Judith Cox, Master Gardener

March 25

Gardening in the Dark: Grief and Gardens in World History, with Dr. Eric Weichel, Postdoctoral Fellow in Art History, Concordia University

April 22

Photograph Your Flowers Like a Pro, with OHS Member and photography prize-winner Anne Johnston

This Issue: Winter Reading

Hosta Books

by Ann Frederking

There are four valuable hosta books in my collection:

The Hostapedia, An Encyclopedia of Hostas by Mark Zilis. Rochelle II: Q and Z Nursery, 2009.

The following ISBNs are associated with this title: ISBN 0967944015 and ISBN 9780967944012. The price is \$79.95 US plus shipping if you order direct from the publisher. There are other sources to be found on the Internet. In any case, many hosta nurseries carry it.

This is the Hosta Bible. In it, Mark Zilis describes every hosta he has encountered in the last 30 years. There is an interesting and lengthy introduction which touches on how new hostas are developed, how hostas are named, hosta societies, plant patents and a guide to reading the descriptions. The next 1012 pages are devoted to descriptions and pictures of thousands of different hostas and the final 75 or so pages are devoted to various indexes. This is not a lap book but is a very valuable reference for the serious hosta grower.

The Color Encyclopedia of Hostas by Diana Grenfell and Michael Shadrack. 1st Edition. Portland OR: Timber Press, 2004 and ***The New Encyclopedia of Hostas*** by Diana Grenfell and Michael Shadrack. 2nd Edition published in 2009. At time of writing, the Barnes

& Noble website shows it on sale at \$39 (see www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-new-encyclopedia-of-hostas-diana-grenfell/015814296?ean=9780881922007) but other Internet sources might vary.

I own the first edition. The second edition, while including more, newer hostas, is similar. The book has full descriptions and photographs for over 750 plants as well as informative sections of growing hostas. I particularly like this book because it is organized by colour categories which makes it possible to look up a hosta one is trying to identify.

Timber Press Pocket Guide to Hostas by Diana Grenfell and Michael Shadrack. Portland OR: Timber Press, 2007. Try searching on ebay.ca since there's a wide range of prices but check the other sources on the Internet as well.

This is a much smaller book than the others at only 212 pages, but it still touches on over 800 hostas and included 302 photographs. The first 27 pages are devoted to general hosta topics including lists of hostas for specific purposes including lists of various colour categories, outstanding flowers, ground cover, and edging. The hosta descriptions are alphabetical and the final 14 pages are devoted to nursery sources, a glossary and an index.

The Book of Little Hostas: 200 Small, Very Small, and Mini Varieties by Kathy Guest Shadrack and Michael Shadrack, Consulting editor

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

Diana Grenfell. Portland, OR: Timber Press, 2010. (ISBN 9781604690606) The price on Amazon.ca is \$22.02.

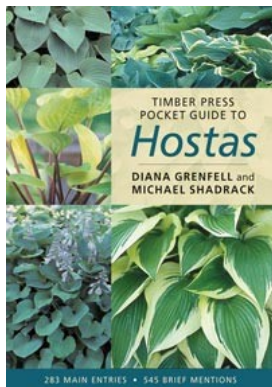
This book focuses on the many small or mini hostas available and offers chapters with an introduction to hostas, special tips on growing and creating spaces for little hostas and companion plants. It includes many beautiful photographs and is completely indexed. If your garden is as full as mine but you still want to add hostas, this is highly recommended.

Ann is not the only OHS member who has recommended the Timber Press Guide to Hostas.

Timber Press Pocket Guide to Hostas. by Michael Shadrack and Diana Grenfell. Portland OR: Timber Press, c 2007, Fourth Printing 2010.

reviewed by Gloria Sola

Did you ever go hosta shopping with your list only to find the plant is not available or your eye gravitates to some lovely hosta that you didn't know existed? Oh for a tablet and Google at hand. But luckily, there's another option. At 6 x 8.5 inches, this paperback guide is quite portable and is illustrated. A picture, usually of a mature plant, can give you a good idea if the hosta you're considering will fill that special spot in your garden. Written by well-know hosta expert, Diana Grenfell, and with photographs by Michael Shadrack, it not only gives sizes and descriptions, but adds comments about characteristics, sports and similar cultivars. At about \$25 this is a very nice reference book.



Perennials for Every Purpose by Larry Hodgson. Emmaus PA: Rodale, Inc, 2000

reviewed by Kathy Wallace

This book is useful for beginning gardeners as well as more experienced ones wanting to make changes in gardens. I like the book's arrangement. Part 1 is Perennial Gardening Made Easy and has information on starting a garden, picking 'perfect perennials', designing a garden, and keeping plants 'alive and kicking'. Part 2 then focuses on choosing the best perennials for specific seasons, conditions and goals. Most sections include about a dozen plants.

Comprising most of the 500+ page book, the section called 'Choosing the Best' is very helpful. Yes, there are many new varieties introduced since the book was published but each plant mentioned gets two-pages devoted to it and includes a plant profile (bloom, height, spread, light and soil preference etc). Other information shared includes growing tips, 'good neighbours', problems and solutions, favourite variety or cultivar, and alternative recommendations. Writer Larry Hodgson gardens in Quebec so his text has a definite appeal to Ottawa area gardeners.

There are photographs in the book but the focus is largely on the text. I find the section on 'Good Neighbours' or companion plants very useful. He has done lots of testing and freely shares advice based on his experience.

The book still seems to be available from spots like Amazon and used copies are quite a bargain. I think I got my copy years ago from ABE books and it is actually a discarded library book.

President's Message

by Jamie Roberston

Winter is a time for curling up with a good book, which is what this issue of the OHS newsletter is all about. It is also a time for going through the garden and seed catalogues that have started to arrive. While most of us are usually ready for a break by the time October rolls around, it does not take long before we start getting anxious to plan for next year. Gardeners are always looking for new plants, new ideas for re-designing their gardens, or something that will improve them.

Just as winter is a time for re-charging our batteries, the same holds true for volunteer organizations, like the Ottawa Horticultural Society. Our annual meeting and potluck dinner in December provided the opportunity for changes in the board of directors. Gloria Sola, in particular, finished an incredible job as president, and deserves our deep appreciation and thanks. And we all owe a large debt of thanks to the departing board members – Lynn Armstrong, Sheila Burvill, Rosemary Campbell, and Matt Machmeuller – who worked so hard and made so many contributions.

It is also an opportunity to welcome new board members – Lara Jimenez (Vice President), Barb Walker, Penny Irwin, Lyse Morisset, Dave Burroughs, Kelly Stone and Kristen Kendall – as well as returning members – Maureen Mark (Secretary), Sandra Garland, and Cynthia Rattle. Gloria Sola has agreed to become the Treasurer, a function that she has been performing for the past several months. What a team!

Although the board of directors provides general direction and sets policy for the OHS, it is you our members on whom we rely. So, please do not hesitate to let any of the board members know of your ideas or concerns. We represent you and want to

ensure that the OHS continues to thrive and improve.

Volunteer organizations do not run them themselves. The OHS is extremely fortunate in having such a broad base of volunteers. This is brought home each year at the annual general meeting when the names of the volunteers are read out. All of the time and energy of these people is greatly appreciated. If you are not already involved in some way, and are looking for a 2014 New Year's resolution, please consider helping out with one of our committees or activities. It's a great way to meet people, have fun and make a contribution.

And be sure to come out to the OHS meetings during the winter months – they provide a respite from the shovelling and cold weather, and will further help inspire you as you make plans for your garden in just a few months' time.

Reader's Digest Illustrated Guide to Gardening in Canada. Montreal: Reader's Digest Association (Canada) Ltd., c1975.

reviewed by Carolyn Sprott

I don't have that many gardening books but my bible is probably *Reader's Digest Illustrated Guide to Gardening in Canada*. My copy was given to me by my parents and is an old one published by The Reader's Digest Association (Canada) Ltd., c1975.

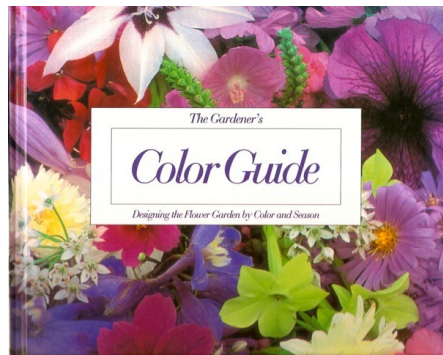
I like it because it gives the common and botanical name, zone hardiness, decorative characteristics, special requirements and remarks, suggestions for propagation, as well as a drawing of the plant. I'm sure there have been updated versions of this book published and it may not be a book that long time gardeners would like but for someone just starting to garden, it is the perfect book.

The Gardener's Color Guide: Designing the Flower Garden by Color and Season. Edited by Jane Good, illustrated by Turid Forsyth. Camden East: Camden House, 1993.

reviewed by Lesley Taylor

The book I would like to recommend is *The Gardener's Color Guide: Designing the Flower Garden by Color and Season*. The editor Jane Good (doesn't seem to be an author) and the Illustrator is Turid Forsyth. It was published 1993 by Camden House Publishing.

This book of plant illustrations is organized by season and by colour. It also shows the heights of the different plants. I have used this book many times when I was looking for a plant to fill a particular spot in my garden. I have also given this book to friends who had recently bought a house.



The Compact Garden: discovering the pleasures of planting in a small space, by Brian Fawcett. Camden East ON, Camden House Publishing, 1992

reviewed by Sheila Burvill

I have a small urban garden so, naturally, I'm always on the lookout for gardening books on small gardens. 'Small garden', though, is a relative term and too often I've been disappointed to find in books that the garden design material and instruction apply to gardens either far larger than my own or for more rural settings. Or they talk about plants which are just too exotic or refined for my rather limited skills.

In *The Compact Garden* I've found the perfect book for me. Brian Fawcett wrote it after a friend made a similar complaint to him. Her city lot measured 100' by 30' and all she wanted to do was "to grow a few flowers and vegetables". Well, my lot is 100' by 40' and I want to grow flowers and vegetables too. I love this book and its tattered, falling apart state attests to how much I've used it over the years.

The book's first chapter is entitled 'Common Sense in a Small Space' and it covers the basics: why garden in the first place? what conditions you have in your garden, the importance of neighbours and fences, common problems, tools needed, soil amendment, composting, mulching, etc. The next section moves on to vegetable and fruit gardening, with sections on commonly grown edibles, pretty much all advice deriving from the author's personal experience.

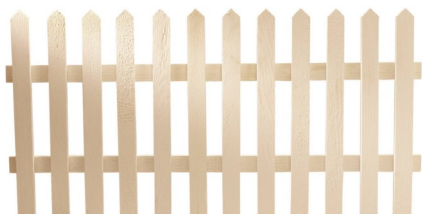
Then we get into the flowers, shrub, and trees and how to use them aesthetically but practically. Again, Fawcett's personal experience tailors much of his advice. If he admires a certain plant but hasn't had any success growing it, he'll tell you. (Check out the section on gentians, on page 101, for example.) The text is peppered with stories of other gardeners

such as Jim, a fellow baseball player. This section is called 'My Favourite Fairy-Tale Garden'. He's not referring to the garden style; it's more about a gardener's transformation from rank amateur to morning-glory expert – lovely!

Now there are a few problems with the book. If the large array of garden photos were all taken in Fawcett's garden, I think it must be considerably larger than mine and so imitating certain garden sections is out of my reach. Some of the information, such as the plant hardiness zone map, is outdated. And if you don't hold the same ecological (and maybe political) views as the author which he freely shares, you may be inclined to disparage the value of his gardening advice.

As much as I value the good gardening advice in the book, I must admit it's often Fawcett's wry observations and turns of phrase which keep me reading it, over and over. Here's a sample; it's step 7 in a list of instructions on how to remove grass to create a garden plot: "Take a break from gardening for a few days while your poor back recovers. Rave to your friends about what a terrific garden you're going to have. Go to your chiropractor and have your spinal column put back into alignment, but do not tell him or her what you've been doing. Chiropractors often don't understand gardeners."

I sure wish Brian Fawcett lived over the back fence from me. It would be great just to natter away with him about gardens and gardening.



The Modern Library Gardening Series. Edited by Michael Pollan. Random House, 1979-2002.

reviewed by Jamie Robertson

Garden books, like travel books, tend to fall into two broad categories. There are the "how-to" books, the guides and reference books that provide practical information to help and guide us. And then there are the "literary" books, whose authors used their imagination and writing talent to entertain and inspire us.

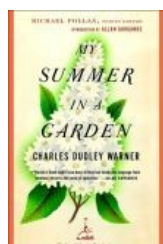
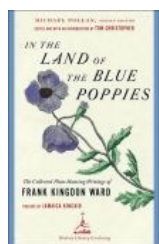
Several years ago the US publisher Random House, through its Modern Library imprint, selected a series of classic books in its "Modern Library Gardening Series." The series editor was the author Michael Pollan, who himself wrote the classic garden books *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education* (1991) and *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World* (2001). More recently, he has focused on food: *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (2006), *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto* (2008), *Food Rules: An Eater's Manual* (2009) and *Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation* (2013).

The Gardening Series involves largely re-prints of older garden books, making available in attractive modern editions various authors who are enjoyable but often forgotten or obscure. It includes non-fiction – essays and memoirs – that would generally be considered gardening classics, as well as fiction that involves gardens. In his general introduction, Pollan notes "...I read to garden, and garden to read, counting myself lucky for having stumbled on a sideline with such a lively and lasting literature." He notes that the books chosen for the series are the classics that form the backbone of the literary tradition of gardening books.

The Series consists of the following books:

- **The American Gardener**, by William Cobbett: Out of print since 1856, this was perhaps the first classic work of American gardening literature. Cobbett was one of Victorian England's greatest and most gifted journalists, and spent two years on a farm on Long Island.
- **A Garden of Earthly Delights**, by Joyce Carol Oates: Oates is a prolific novelist, and this book is the first of a quartet of novels that explore social class in America and the inner lives of young Americans.
- **The Gardener's Bed-Book: Short and Long Pieces to Be Read in Bed by Those Who Love Green Growing Things**, by Richardson Wright: Wright was the editor of *House & Garden* magazine in the 1920s and '30s. Each of the 365 perfectly sized little essays in this book is meant to be read in bed at night after a long day's work, either real or imagined, in the garden. The book is described as "a charming and mischievously funny companion to curl up with."
- **The Gardener's Year**, by Karel Čapek: Čapek was a Czech writer and this book was first published in Prague in 1929. It is an account of the trials and tribulations of the gardener's life, combining a richly comic portrait of life in the garden, narrated month by month, with a series of delightful illustrations by the author's older brother and collaborator, Josef.
- **Green Thoughts: A Writer in the Garden**, by Eleanor Perényi: This collection of seventy-two essays is alphabetically arranged, on topics ranging from "Annuals" and "Artichokes" to "Weeds" and "Wildflowers." Perényi draws upon her wide-ranging knowledge of gardening lore to create a delightful, witty blend of how-to advice, informed opinion, historical insight, and philosophical musing.

- ***In the Land of the Blue Poppies***, by Frank Kingdon Ward: The British plant collector and explorer Frank Kingdon Ward went on 24 plant-hunting expeditions throughout Tibet, China, and Southeast Asia, in search of new species of plants during the first years of the twentieth century. He was responsible for the discovery of numerous varieties previously unknown in Europe and America, including the legendary Tibetan blue poppy.



- ***My Summer in a Garden***, by Charles Dudley Warner: Warner—prominent in his day as a writer and newspaper editor—was a dedicated amateur gardener who shared with Mark Twain, his close friend and neighbor, a sense of humor that remains fresh today. In monthly dispatches, Warner chronicles his travails in the garden, where he and his cat, Calvin, seek to ward off a stream of interlopers, from the neighbors' huge-hoofed cows and thieving children, to the reviled parsley weed.
- ***Old Herbaceous: A Novel of the Garden***, by Reginald Arkell: This classic British novel of the garden is the story of Bert Pinnegar, an orphan who rises to become the legendary head gardener of an estate and the most esteemed flower-show judge in the county. In addition to being a comic portrait of an archetypal and crotchety head gardener, the book is sprinkled with nuggets of gardening wisdom.
- ***The Secret Garden***, by Frances Hodgson Burnett: A classic work of children's literature, this is the story of Mary Lennox, a sickly and difficult young girl, who is brought from India to her mysterious uncle's sprawling estate on the Yorkshire moors after her parents die of chol-

era. One day she discovers a hidden and neglected garden, where she meets Ben Weatherstaff, a curt but gentle gardener, and discovers her hidden-away invalid cousin, Colin Craven.

- ***We Made a Garden***, by Margery Fish: This enchanting book was first published in Great Britain in 1956 but was not available in the US until published as part of the series. It is the story of a unique and enduring English country garden in Somerset. Fish and her husband each have a strong set of horticultural opinions and passions, and they negotiate the development of their garden, by turns separately and together, often with humorous collisions. There is lots of helpful advice in this one.

I have read several of the books in this series, and look forward to reading the others. The fundamentals of gardening have not changed that much over the years, so older books are just as enjoyable and useful as the more recently published ones. The idea behind this series of making classic gardening books available is commendable, and it is unfortunate that the series seems to have been discontinued. Most of the books are still available, however, and can also be found in libraries and second-hand book stores.

Did You Know?

New Book on
Canada's Plant Emblems

Two scientists and a senior technician from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada published a book in 2012 on the official plant emblems in Canada. The book, entitled: *Official Plant Emblems of Canada: a Biodiversity Treasure* is as entertaining as it is informative. You'll have to try book stores or online sites if you want to buy it though; it's no longer available from the government publisher.

Plant-driven design: Creating Gardens that Honour Plants, Place, and Spirit, by Scott Ogden & Lauren Springer Ogden. Timber Press, Portland OR, 2008

reviewed by Kristin Kendall

The premise for this wonderfully illustrated and thought provoking book is summed up at the start with a quotation from Jens Jensen, a Danish-American landscape architect: "Every plant has fitness and must be placed in its proper surroundings so as to bring out its full beauty. Therein lies the secret of the art of landscaping."

Scott and Lauren Ogden lament what they see as a growing gap between professionals who design landscapes and those who tend gardens. They say that all too often creating a "garden" is understood as a home improvement project. One-size-fits-all landscapes are installed and furnished as if they were living rooms and kitchens. In this iteration, the garden is seen as a product and once it is in place, not much has to be done. The plants become accessories instead of the starting point.

This is a book about garden design, but there are no rules, no instructions, and no architectural drawings. For the authors, a garden is created in an on-going partnership between the gardener and the plants, and the gardener does not have complete control - there is always the accidental and an element of spontaneity. A garden begins as a home for plants. If we choose plants (not ever plant material for the authors) in a way which respects their requirements, which grow happily together, which relate to the wider context of community and region, then design will follow.

The book starts where many of us start, with a love of plants, and a desire to have them look healthy and beautiful in spaces we like to be in. There are 6 chapters dealing with all

aspects of plant-driven design. Within the chapters, there are numerous plant lists and special information pages. The plant lists alone are worth the price of admission, and topics as varied as homeoclimatic assessment, Koppen Zones, fertility and pH, and plant metabolism and climate are included.

I have a small city back yard and the Ogdens have larger gardens of their own in Colorado and Texas so you might expect that their experience would be useless for me. Not so. The principles of plant guilds apply, the list of plants which need to be back lit works for me, and there are lists of junipers, unsung trees, and a chapter called Plants as Heroes. This is not a book with a narrow regional focus, but it is a book with a focus which applies in a variety of regions and climate conditions- even in Ottawa.

I don't own this book now, but I wish I did. I can return to it over and over again and find new and useful information, and a wealth of ideas and inspiration. The concept of plant-driven design suits me- it was the plants I fell in love with when I started gardening.

In Your Garden and ***In Your Garden Again***, by Vita Sackville-West. Michael Joseph Ltd, London, 1951 and 1953.

reviewed by Blaine Marchand

Sissinghurst is a mythical, romantic garden writ large. As has been often cited in books and biographies, the building of a garden amid the ruins of a centuries-old castle and its estate was a joint creative collaboration of its creators, Vita Sackville-West, a poet and writer, and her husband, Harold Nicolson, a diplomat and a politician. Their lives are equally as rich and fascinating as the garden itself.

Purchased in 1930, the garden took shape, with Harold designing a layout of long views and many rooms, which Vita could embellish with her vivid

abundant plantings, even before they turned to renovating the buildings in which they would live. However, if truth be told, the final garden design was not as cut and dried as the handiwork of only the couple.

Harold and Vita did not work independently on the garden. The couple influenced each other in its shape and on its plantings. But two women employed as gardeners, Pam Schwerdt and Sibylle Kreutzberger, who laboured alongside Vita and so came to understand her planting style, much influenced the garden as it is known today. In addition, in the years following Vita's death in 1962, her son, Nigel, who had inherited it, transferred the garden to the National Trust. This brought the funds needed for the garden to be renovated and preserved for future generations. His decision was a most fitting one as Vita had been a founding member of the National Trust Garden Committee. There is also a very interesting book written by Nigel's son Adam, *Sissinghurst: An Unfinished History*, about the transfer of the garden to the National Trust.

Today Sissinghurst is one of the most visited gardens in England, with over 200,000 visitors a year. It is also one of the most photographed gardens. As a result, the simple mention to gardeners from around the world of the White Garden, the Lime Walk, the Nuttery, the Moat Walk or the Tower and each person will be able to conjure up immediately the image of it. Such is the power the garden holds.

But often I ask myself, what of Vita, the gardener, who brought so much creative energy to Sissinghurst. What did she sound like? What were her thoughts about gardening? Luckily, in 1948, Vita began writing a weekly garden column for *The Observer* and these columns were gathered together in different volumes, *In Your Garden* and *In Your Garden Again* came out in quick succession as noted above. A further collection, *Even More for*

your Garden, appeared in 1958 from the same publisher.

In the two collections, Vita brings her literary touch, her sense of humour and her deep understanding of gardening to the entries. On January 11, 1953, writing of a Christmas party and a pot of Persian cyclamen, she waxes: "... it stood there in the corner by itself, looking so modest and Jane-Austen-like among its far grander companions."

Vita had a clear idea of what was expected of her in these columns. On March 11, 1951, she writes: "*A friend of mine, whose own fingers are of the greenest, reproaches me from time to time for making gardening sound too easy. My optimism, she says, is misleading. Yet I try to avoid recommending 'difficult' plants, or at any rate to accompany them always with a warning. The truth is probably that most plants are temperamental, except the weeds, which all appear to be possessed of magnificent constitutions.*"

Throughout her columns are the names of various plants she likes and recommends to her readers. She lists nurseries in which these plants can be found and at what cost. It is easy to think that Vita and Harold were well-heeled and above it all but in the books she often cites that the prices for some plants are dear and she recommends other options, such as growing plants from seed or trading with other gardeners one knows. And she talks frequently about the soil conditions in which the plants she mentions thrive. Vita is quite aware that she is not writing for a select group but for readers who come from all walks of life. She tailored her column to them although always informed by her own knowledge.

But she does not hesitate, as she does in March 30, 1952, to let her dislikes be known in no uncertain terms: "*Perhaps it is not only nostalgia for an age which, rightly or wrongly, we esteem to have been happier than our own, and it was cer-*

tainly more leisurely, but also a natural reaction again the exaggerated blooms we are offered today: size not subtlety. Who wants a begonia like a saucer?"

And, like all true gardeners, even Vita, whose garden drew visitors in her own time, was not above visiting other gardens for inspiration. As she notes in her column of August 26, 1951 – *"In the hope of picking up some new ideas, I have just spent ten days visiting gardens, either famous or modest in the West of England. My interest in the shrubs or trees....something I didn't know, or else through ignorance or prejudice had never attempted to grow."*

Although well-known, she did see herself above reproach. She was not someone drafting lines at a remove in her lofty and famous Tower. She is not above reproaching herself when needed or the mood struck her. On September 30, 1951, she chides: *"I only wish that I could practise in my own garden the principles which I so complacently preach, week after week, in this column."*

For gardeners, these two collections are an interesting read. Although speaking of a different country and giving prices long gone, as are a fair number of the nurseries named, they still provide much insight to us in 2014. Vita's maxim in an entry on May 31, 1951: *"The behaviour of plants is indeed inexplicable. It breaks all the rules; and that is what makes gardening so endlessly various and interesting."* is as true today as it was then.

Beverley Nichols

by Jamie Robertson

Beverley Nichols was a well-known British author and journalist from the 1920s until the 1960s. He wrote many books, in a variety of different genres. Although he was very well known in his time, he is largely forgot-

ten today – except for a series of gardening books that he wrote.

Nichols' most famous book is *Down the Garden Path*, which was first published in 1932, and has been in print ever since – which is quite an achievement. It tells of his purchase of an old thatched cottage and his rehabilitation and development of the surrounding garden. There are no photographs, but the book's charm is enhanced by a drawing of the property on the end-pieces, and charming etchings throughout by Rex Whistler.

The book is slight, but amusing. The narrative is meandering, rather like a conversation with a good friend or raconteur. There is a certain amount about gardening. The garden has to be rejuvenated, and then Nichols builds a rock garden and a pond, and plants a small wood. Nichols was acknowledged for having promoted and encouraged winter-flowing plants. His discussion inspired me recently to buy some winter aconites – they are unlikely to flower in January, as in Nichols' garden, but I look forward to seeing them bloom in early spring. This, however, is not a how-to, or reference book, and most gardeners are unlikely to learn much from it.

Nichols is one of those English gardeners of a certain era and class that don't seem to have actually got their hands dirty that much. Instead, they had staff – gardeners – to do most of the work, while the author sits back and decides what goes where and what should be done next. Most of us do not have that luxury, nor would we probably enjoy it as much as doing the actual work ourselves, and enjoying the satisfaction that results. Nichols was essentially a middle-class gardener, with probably only one gardener, but he is writing about a time and place that is far removed from our own.

Nichols goes on to describe some of the rather eccentric characters in

the village. These seem to be composites, with certain personalities and foibles, rather than real people. Some of the anecdotes are amusing and fun, while others are a bit silly and overly sentimental. Nichols was writing a book to be enjoyed by his largely female audience of the 1930s, and, while somewhat dated, the book does retain its essential charm.

The success of *Down the Garden Path* led Nichols to write a series of other gardening books. The three books that constitute the "Allways" trilogy are *Down the Garden Path*, *A Thatched Roof* (1933), and *A Village in the Valley* (1934). The second two focused more on the cottage itself, and the village, respectively, but both contained many of the same attributes and characters as the first. Nichols obviously had hit on a certain formula that worked, and he was not one to ignore it. (Interestingly, the Ottawa Public Library classifies the latter two books as fiction, although they are ostensibly continuations of Nichols' experiences.)

In later years, Nichols wrote other books with a gardening theme: *How Does Your Garden Grow?* (1935), *Green Grows the City* (1939), *Merry Hall* (1951), *Laughter on the Stairs* (1953), *Sunlight on the Lawn* (1956), *Garden Open Today* (1963), and *Garden Open Tomorrow* (1968). He also wrote *Forty Favourite Flowers* (1964) and *The Art of Flower Arrangement* (1967). Most of these books were very popular and well-received at the time.

The three books that constitute the Allways trilogy are still in print from Timber Press, and can also be found at the Ottawa Public Library. Several of the other books are still in print and can often be found at used book stores and rummage sales, where they are certainly worth picking up. These are not serious treatises on gardening, but they can be a pleasurable way to pass a winter afternoon.

***The Well-Tended Perennial Garden: Planting and Pruning Techniques.* Expanded Edition:** by Tracy DiSabato-Aust. Portland, Oregon, Timber Press, 2006.

reviewed by Pat Russell

Although this book has been reviewed in the Newsletter twice, by myself in 2006, shortly after it was published and by Laurie Graham in the September 2008 Newsletter, I make no apologies for reviewing it once again. It still remains the best gardening book I have come across, and since I have talked to a number of people, some who were recent members on our garden tours, who were not aware of it, I think it is time to review it yet again.

Beth Chatto, the famous English gardener with her wonderful garden in Essex, England says it all: "*The Well-Tended Perennial Garden is a breath of fresh air among today's plethora of gardening books. It is so full of original ideas combined with earthy, hands-on experience. I could not put it down, but spent two days making notes to pin up on the potting-shed wall - and that after 60 years of gardening.*"

What makes this book so different from the many others out there? For one thing, Tracy does not baby her plants and is not a slave to them: for example, she hates staking, so gives practical advice on how to cut back such plants as phlox, asters, Shasta daisies, etc. that are susceptible to flopping over, so that they won't need to be staked. Also, she gets the most out of her plants: the many excellent colour photographs illustrate how to cut back hemerocallis, geraniums and the like to encourage a second bloom later in the season. She gives advice, again with helpful illustrations, on how to pinch back, disbud and thin out plants to encourage more blooms. I really like how she gives before and after illustrations of such advice. She has entire chapters on deadheading, pruning, dividing, staking and cutting back, as well as one

on pruning to prepare for Winter and pruning to prepare for Spring. While the first part of the book contains separate chapters on such subjects as general bed preparation, planting, maintenance and pests and diseases, she devotes the last part of the book to an A to Z encyclopedia of perennials. Here she gives a detailed description, including zone hardiness, of every perennial you have in your garden with advice contained in the general sections as it pertains to the individual perennial. While the author lives in Ohio, she has advice on each plant's hardiness and adaptation to colder or warmer climates. The appendices offer a month-by-month planting and maintenance schedule for perennials in general as well as helpful lists of plants that are adapted to specific conditions or have special pruning or maintenance requirements. There is also a special chapter on ornamental grasses.

This is the book I refer to almost exclusively now for advice on perennials, as does my friend and neighbour, and fellow member, Sue Chalmers. In fact we have introduced the term "doing a Tracy" on a plant when we are comparing notes on how our various perennials are doing.

A word of caution: the book does not include alpiners, roses, clematis or other climbers.

The Lost Garden by Helen Humphreys. Toronto: HarperCollins, 2002.

reviewed by Sheila Burvill

It wouldn't be a complete book review issue without at least one novel and here's my choice – *The Lost Garden*.

It's 1941 and World War II is raging, with London under air attack. Gwen Davis who describes herself as "a thirty-five year old woman with plain features" is sent to the country to

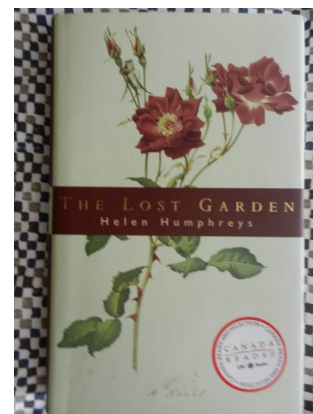
oversee the work of a group of Land Girls. Gwen is a horticulturalist who works for the Royal Horticultural Society and it's up to her to teach the 'girls' how to prepare the land and to raise food. Socially awkward and inexperienced, she much prefers parsnips to people so she can't even be bothered to learn individual names in the beginning.

The land for crops is on the estate of a large country house. Complicating matters are the numbers of young soldiers billeted there, awaiting orders to go to the front to fight. Gwen is advised and guided by the Canadian Captain who leads the soldiers but here, too, she's uneasy, reluctant to ease up on the girls as he recommends.

It's not a happy situation all round for Gwen but then she spots an anemone, and then others leading her through a hedge where she discovers a long-lost garden. Searching through documents in the house, she finds the old plan for the garden so she secretly starts to rehabilitate the garden.

It's the garden, the Captain, the cruel circumstances of war, a book on the genus 'Rosa', the recent suicide of Virginia Woolf, and the growing understanding of the Land Girls as individuals which allow Gwen to find in herself a capacity to love.

This isn't a long book (182pages) but it's a very enriching read.



Member to Member

Members' Plant Recommendations

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 Mary Pratte what her favourite peonies are. Mary is a former President of the Canadian Peony Society and is well-known as a peony expert. Her advice has been sought by the Central Experimental Farm and Rideau Hall, amongst others.

Peonies

by Mary Pratte

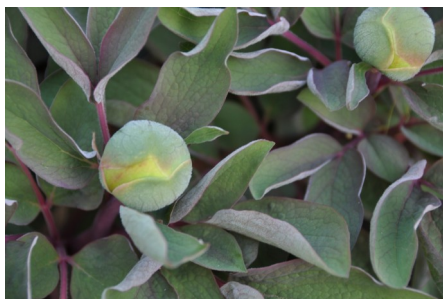
I have loved peonies since living in England as a child – my mother would pick them for display in the house, and the fragrance and beauty of those blooms has stuck with me all my life. They are the only flower I love to see shed their petals on tables and countertops, and even then, I have trouble cleaning up that deliciously soft pile of satiny reminders of a glorious flower, now finished.

All three types of peonies (both wild and cultivated) make for wonderful garden plants – the well-known herbaceous ones, the tree peonies with their huge, elegant blooms and pointed foliage, and the newest of the bunch, the Itoh hybrids. The latter are crosses between herbaceous and tree peonies, so they have the best of each – large flowers and beautiful leaves of the tree peonies with the habit of herbaceous ones. While tree peonies sometimes lose their flower buds to cold temperatures because they are held on stems above ground, Itohs have buds under, or just at the surface, of the soil, ensuring a more floriferous plant. And the flowers last longer and are more substantial as well!

While it is almost impossible to pick only a few favourites from the thou-

sands of peonies available these days, there are some which really make my heart beat faster... although this is just a short list...if the newsletter were ten times as long, I would find another 100 to add!

Wild Herbaceous Peonies



Paeonia mlokosewitschii – Such a rare beauty, and a wild one, at that! This is the only true yellow herbaceous peony. A single row of petals on a flower which only blooms for three or four days doesn't seem like anything to get excited about, but the blue/pink/green leaves and stems in very early spring and red and blue-black seeds in the fall extend interest in this plant.



Paeonia veitchii – I was first introduced to this little plant at the Reford Gardens in Québec. A short, early plant suitable for rock gardens, it is the last peony to emerge and the first to bloom in their gardens. Its foliage is unusual and it sets black seeds in the late summer.

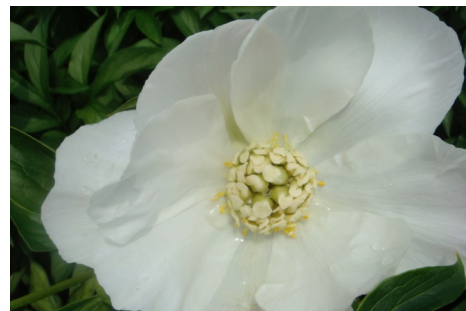
Cultivated Herbaceous Peonies



Paeonia 'Moonrise' – An early bloomer bred by A.P. Saunders (one of the sons of William Saunders, first Director of the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa), it is of a pure white with a nest of yellow stamens from which emerge several white-tipped stigma. Its best trait, however, is that blooms open in sequence instead of all at once, for a longer bloom period.



Paeonia 'Bowl of Beauty' - A mid-season peony, the contrast of the deep pink guard petals and the boss of staminodes at the centre make for a pretty sight. The carpels are often decorative as well, so no need to deadhead this one right after bloom.



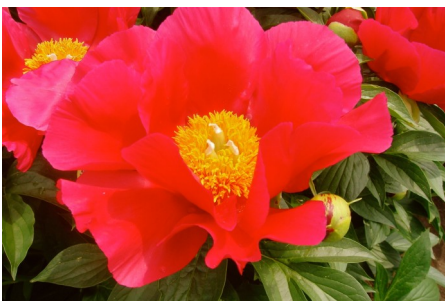
Paeonia 'White Innocence' – The tallest peony around, in my garden it

Member to Member

tops 5 feet, so would be stunning at the back of a border. Unlike other peonies, the side buds emerge first, followed by the main bud which often has a decorative 'button' of carpels at the centre. Another Saunders introduction.



Paeonia 'Mons Jules Elie' – While I do not have many double peonies on the list, they are huge favourites and this one, in particular, is lovely. While many double peonies fall over after even the lightest rain, it is not their fault! They were bred for cut-flower production, so fragrance and voluptuousness trumped strong stems. Stake them as best you can, cut them for your home, store in the fridge for a few weeks (instructions on Canadian Peony Society website, peony.ca), and remember your mothers and grandmothers and great-grandmothers who enjoyed these top-heavy blooms so unabashedly, and do the same!



Paeonia 'America' – Bold and very red, this single peony stands out in a border. While most of the blooms emerge at the same time, shortening length of bloom, the strong, rain-defying flowers stand tall and straight

on massive stems. The effect of all of that really stops people in their tracks!



Paeonia 'Dandy Dan' – A very deep red semi-double, this peony turns heads, especially as it blooms about the same time as many of the mid-season double pinks. Although not always easy to source, it is well worth having in the garden.



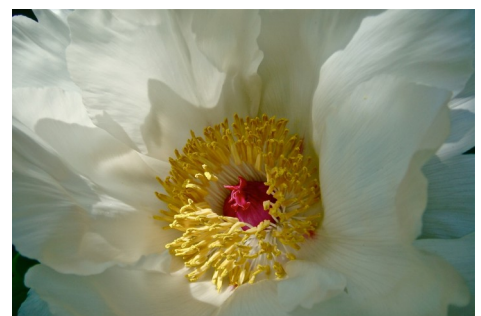
Paeonia 'Mary Pratte' – Sorry, I am a bit shy about it, but I just have to include this one! When the Canadian Peony Society was working to have a peony named after former Governor General Adrienne Clarkson at the 2004 show it held at Rideau Hall, my husband asked, in passing and in a joking manner, if I would like to have a peony named after me. My answer was a resounding NO! I thought nothing more about it. But the next year, for my 50th birthday, my sneaky family surprised me with exactly that. I

have been convinced over the years that it is something for my grandchildren, so I have slowly begun to talk about it. And I do love this beautiful, simple peony, when all is said and done, so it is definitely on my list!

Tree Peonies



Paeonia 'Age of Gold' – A gorgeous yellow tree peony bred by A.P. Saunders, I am sure I read once that this one sits on his grave, so that will give you an idea of how stunning it is! Saunders introduced about 70 tree peonies, and because of his use of the wild *Paeonia lutea* (yellow) tree peony parent, many of these beauties have petals of yellow or other unusual colours.



Paeonia 'Sea of Tranquility' – Produced by American breeder, William Gratwick, and registered by his daughter in 1996, with whom I went on a peony study tour to China in 2004, here is the description of it on one of the peony websites (paeon.de) - The flower is so pure and elegant that it seems to exist only in the fantasy world. That says it all...

Member to Member

Itoh Peonies



Paeonia 'Bartzella' – This is a WOW type of peony. Double and bright yellow with red flares at the base of the petals and very floriferous, this is a real statement plant for your garden. The stems are strong, the flowers long-lasting and substantial, and as with other Itohs, it is very hardy in cold climates, requiring no protection



Paeonia 'First Arrival' – The first Itoh to bloom in my garden, it is almost a lavender-pink colour. Like other Itohs, it is hardy and produces many beautiful flowers and also has beautiful leaves which often show good colour in the fall.

Plants We Hate

by Lara Jimenez

I'm going to sound like a grinch (and maybe I shouldn't admit this during the holidays), but I hate poinsettias. Given that they are inescapable at this time of year – in supermarkets, lobbies, and friends' houses – I spend the winter months in a constant state of botanical dismay. Lucky for me no one I know has tried to "over summer" these in their Ottawa gardens.

It's a bit strange that I dislike poinsettias with such gusto. After all, red is my favourite colour. Plants native to other countries strike me as appealingly exotic. And I'm a big fan of large gaudy blooms (or what one English horticulturalist who spoke here years ago termed "vulgar displays of colour," now a favourite phrase of mine).

And yet the ubiquitous seasonal poinsettia, in its foil-wrapped holiday get up, strikes me as a disappointing specimen even when at its most primped, straight from the greenhouse. Despite the vividness of its red colour, the bracts are unappealingly dull, giving the plant an oddly drab appearance. The plastic pots and metallic foil they are invariably sold in look cheap – it's like there's an effort afoot to distract the buyer from how boring the plant really is by surrounding it with glitz and ribbons. "Look! I'm festive!" Meanwhile, you know that the anthropomorphic poinsettia would show up at the office potluck in a glittery red and green Christmas sweater with only a bag of chips to contribute.

And we haven't even touched on what happens to these plants after the holidays, when they become leggier and spindlier with every passing day; when they litter what-

ever tabletop they may be marring with a sad collection of dessicated leaves, like a reminder of used gift-wrap from a bygone celebration: "Party's over!"

Maybe these plants are pining for their native Mexico, where they are perennials that can grow to a fair height. In their native climate they have a touch of Dr. Seuss about them (at least in the photos I've seen online), but pot them up and make them part of the red-and-green holiday scene and they lose all their charm. I've been cheered to see that there are other types becoming available – pink, cream, mottled – these seem less heavy-handed in their effort to herald Christmas and I might be willing to give them a try in my home, but in the meantime I'll take a magical amaryllis any day!

Did You Know?

Abkhazi Gardens

The Land Conservancy of British Columbia (TLC) was granted protection by the B.C. Supreme Court last October because it could no longer pay its bills. The insolvency puts the future of the famous and beautiful Abkhazi Gardens in Victoria in jeopardy because it is owned by the Land Conservancy. While the TLC intends to sell some of its property to raise funds, it's uncertain whether its assets can be legally sold.

OHS Matters

The Making of a Banner

by Maria Fleming

I was approached in September 2012 by Sheila Burvill with the request to make a quilted banner for our society. As there were no time constraints, I agreed to do so.

Several members of the Board sent photos of banners from other societies. I looked at the good and 'not so good' aspects of them and came up with a shape and relative size. I sketched out some designs including full name, logo and creation dates. I added more images on some sketches for comparison. In November 2012, I met with the Board to show my ideas, 2 size mock ups, and discussion of what should stay or what should go.

We came up with a basic shape and size. The decision was to go simpler rather than ornate. Someone suggested we integrate the Tulipa "Ottawa" for some colour. After some back and forth, the font was agreed upon.

Creative endeavours like this require that I be in the right frame of mind, so due to family commitments, other design projects and garden season, I did not revisit the banner until September 2013, though it had been on my mind.

I attended the September 2013 Board meeting with a fabric mock up of what I hoped would be the final banner. It met with acceptance with nothing other than a little tweak to the size and I was ready to create the permanent top. The image is machine appliquéd to the top using a fusible product to secure all the letters and images, then the edges were stitched to ensure adhesion and to finish the look. The tulip was enhanced with additional stitching to blend the red and yellow colours and added to the

OHS emblem. Two narrow strips of fabric were added between the body and the border to add some additional depth and colour.

It was evident that the banners with the most appeal showed a lot of whitespace with a good amount (or a lot) of quilting. For a banner that will be packed, stored, transported many times, I felt that machine quilting would be sturdier than hand quilting, and it would be easier to create a strong quilting component to the banner. I had already discussed the project with a woman who quilts as a business and she was prepared to take on that project.



Once the Board agreed on the final design, things went quickly. I had time to dedicate to completing it; Wendy Foster (the quilter) was able to complete her portion within the week allowing me to complete the final touches in October.

During the September meeting, I also discussed the concept of how to hang the banner. I have seen

different methods or items used as stands and some work better than others. I think this is as important a decision as the banner itself. I knew I could finish the banner to be adaptable to a few hanging systems and the Board agreed with that concept.

Again, our Sheila – the woman with the contacts – approached a member's husband who has an interest in wood working and has provided items for us in the past. Bob Spasoff and I have communicated back and forth. Bob spent a good amount of time researching premade options and creating some mock ups for wooden stands he could make for us. After a meeting, we reduced the options and Bob put together a comprehensive document with website links and option descriptions to provide to the Board. I added my impressions and recommendations and sent it off to them. Decisions on how and where to use the banner, where to store the stand, and feasibility of carrying it around with all our personal items need to be considered, therefore the Board will take a little time to weigh options and determine the stand option sometime in the New Year. In the meantime, I have come up with a solution to hanging the banner at our meetings without a stand. I have also come up with a banner storage system that keeps it clean and portable.

It was a fun project, though at times daunting; knowing that the final product would be in use and representative of the Society for some time.

OHS Matters

The Updated OHS Website

by Jayne Huntley

One of the actions in the 5 Year Strategic Plan was to update the OHS Website. This was seen as important both to make it more user friendly, with material easier to find, and also to make the behind-the-scenes maintenance easier.

The OHS was lucky in that Jeff Blackadar had created a website for the organization at a very early stage in the growth of the internet. That site served us very well for many years, and much of the material from that site has moved – or will be moving – to the new site. I am working with Jeff, for example, on what the archives page will look like, and I will be adding more garden tours and community projects from earlier years.

The current update gave us a chance to step back and ask what we wanted the site to accomplish now, particularly as the technology that we can use did not exist when Jeff first set up the site. Based on the survey carried out by Lara Jiménez and discussions in an informal working group, we concluded that the site should provide information on OHS events and activities, provide general gardening information, and give the public a clearer sense of the benefits of joining the OHS.

We've added a section that spells out more clearly the benefits of joining the OHS, and it is also easier to join or renew memberships; there is now an on-line form that can be submitted, and by the time you are reading this we should also have PayPal in place for payment of membership renewals and for donations.

The information on the site has been organized in a way that makes it easier to find, and the navigation panel on each page makes moving around

the site easier. You'll also notice that the site has more photographs interspersed on the pages, and that photos are linked to activities rather than being in a separate section of the website.

One of the features that I particularly like is that we can list events that are open to the public and those that are for members only separately, which will make it easier to add things such as D2 activities or the garden tours to the overall events calendar. The site administrator will benefit from another great feature that generates a map for each event as soon as the address is entered – much easier when we get to garden tours!

As we were working on the site, we realized that there was more than one "official" OHS email address. We've now standardized this as info@ottawahort.org for all general enquiries.

Although it is "live" the site continues to be a work in progress, and it is something that is there for all members. If you have comments or feedback on the site, or if there are things that you would like to see added or changed, please let me know. We may not be able to accommodate all requests, but it is important that we know what you are looking for.

District 2 News

Members of all the District 2 horticultural societies who attended the District 2 business meeting in Kanata last fall were somewhat surprised to hear that the Ontario Horticultural Association will be entertaining a proposal to re-align some societies from District 2 to District 1.

Essentially, there is a proposal to change the boundary between District 1 and District 2, resulting in some District 2 societies moving to District 1. The OHS is one of the societies affected. The other societies affected include: Gloucester, Nepean, Kemptville, Manotick and the Ottawa Valley Rock Garden.

Currently, District 1 is small in size and is made of only 7 local societies while District 2 contains 21 so the shift would provide more balance between the two districts. There are other advantages too:

With fewer horticultural societies within a small geographic area it would be easier for the director of district 2 to visit all of the constituent societies and for District 2 members to journey to district meetings.

With a few more societies in District 1 there would be a greater number of societies to share resources and projects.

However, there are some disadvantages:

*The current proposal plans to keep West Carleton, Stittsville-Goulbourn, Kanata - March, and the Water Garden societies within District 2. This would split the societies centred in Ottawa between two districts. The main reason for doing this seems to be to keep a large city to host a future OHA convention within District 2.

OHS Matters

Should the resolution be approved, it means that the Directors of both District 1 and District 2 would be required to travel to Ottawa.

*Sorting out how much of the District 2 funds would have to be transferred to District 1 will be problematic.

It's important to keep in mind several other considerations:

Details of which societies should move to District 1 can be decided based on what makes the most sense for members of those societies

Financial details to allow the splitting of district 2 reserve funds can be decided within District 2.

The district boundaries do not have to follow any municipal or other boundary within Ontario.

The changes in the districts can be planned to take place over a timetable that makes sense.

The changes won't proceed if there is strong opposition to the idea.

The proposal is bound to be a hot topic at the District 2 Annual General Meeting which will be hosted by the Perth Horticultural Society in Perth on June 5, 2014.

Another Company is Offering Us a Discount

If you check the back of your membership card, you'll find a list of nurseries and garden-related businesses that offer a 10% discount to OHS members. You can now add another business to the list: Beyond the House which is located on Craig Street in Russell.

Beyond the House offers floral design services, landscape design, and garden maintenance.

You can find a wide variety of plants to buy during the growing season, including perennials, trees, shrubs, annuals, and vegetables. In addition, cut flowers and floral arrangements may be purchased throughout the year. There's more information available on their website (www.beyondthehouse.ca).

Please remember to bring your membership card with you if you're shopping at any of the businesses listed on it. Note any limitations on the discount offered. Show your card before your purchase is rung up and, of course, thank the merchant. That will keep everybody happy.

2014 Bus Tour Saturday, May 24, 2014

Please keep this date open if you're interested in going on the 2014 Bus Tour. Once again, we'll be joining with the Ottawa Rock Garden and Horticultural Society to go to the Montreal Botanical Garden (MBG). And once again, we'll be able to take advantage of the Great Gardening Weekend event held annually at the MBG.

The Great Gardening Weekend at the Botanical Garden is perfect for green thumbs and garden buffs. Growers from across Quebec will be on hand, offering the most recent varieties and some of their rarest plant specimens. There will also be demonstration booths and gardening talks, accessories, and many more activities. It is a superb opportunity to stock up on plants of all kinds. OHS members who went to the same event in 2012 loved it and they loved the special tours of two sections of the botanical garden arranged just for us.

Keep your eyes and ears open for details and be prepared to sign up early for what will undoubtedly be a popular tour.

Photos from the MBG Great Gardening Weekend 2013



New Members

The OHS welcomes the following new members:

Gayle Ashby
Coreen Blackburn
Bill Collins and Kate Harrigan
Lynne Deachman
Nadia Diakun-Thibault
Ailsa Francis
Gayle Quick
Carolyn Rosen and Daryl Conley
Sylvie Roy
Mary Stuart

OHS Matters

Shows Corner

by Lyse Morisset

Shows are for Sharing

The mission of the OHS is to cultivate an interest and knowledge in plants and gardening in order to produce a beautiful community. This was the mission of the OHS at the time of its creation in 1892 when Ottawa was a much less attractive little town and its citizens were called upon to beautify the landscape.

OHS Flower shows celebrate this 122 year-old tradition which has handed down from generation to generation the knowledge and the enthusiasm for growing plants in order to add beauty and other positive attributes to our city.

Shows are the setting where some happy results of this same interest and knowledge are shared with all of the members. Shows acknowledge the skill, the persistence and the care that the exhibitor demonstrates when he or she produces a specimen for one the many categories of a show. The specimen may be a single bloom, a cluster of flowers, a few colourful leaves, perhaps even something edible from a vegetable plot or berry bushes, but the living material is grown by the member.

The exhibitor may be quite surprised and delighted that such a product should emerge that particular season. Weather conditions are so variable from year to year that all of the best planning and care does not guarantee that the anticipated bloom will make its appearance at the appropriate date for the show.

We encourage all members to bring in their delightful surprises to share with the other members. The Shows Committee deliberates at length and

works hard to stage these events and we invite all of you to participate.

This year, the Shows Committee has come up with yet new approaches.

Again, there will be two shows and both will be judged by qualified individuals. As was the case last year, the shows will coincide with the June and September meetings respectively. Do note that the indoor plants have been moved to the September date so that the indoor plants will benefit from an outdoor holiday and will likely be at their very best.

June Show

This show will focus on HOSTAS but will include the regular June categories of outdoor plants.

Fall Show

This show will include the indoor plants, the regular Fall categories and the OHS chrysanthemums.

So here's to a bountiful year in 2014!

Remember you have to have owned the plant for 3 months before showing it as your own.

Did You Know?

The 2013 District 2 flower show which was hosted by the Beechburg and Deep River Horticultural Societies had 21 exhibitors with over 200 exhibits. 47 of these were in the design classes.

Something to Consider

You have probably read about the recent changes to Canada Post service and rates. The increased cost of mailing will affect the cost of mailing your OHS Newsletter to you by a substantial amount.

We hope you have had a look at our fine new web site. It looks beautiful, up-to-date and easy to move around in. And it has everything you need to be an informed member of the OHS, including this Newsletter—in colour!

Now would be a good time to bring these two changes together and start receiving your Newsletter electronically. It's never been easier or more pleasant. Do consider it.

The Editors

This Newsletter is published by The Ottawa Horticultural Society (OHS) and is distributed to OHS members free of charge.

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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or by email to: info@ottawahort.org

or in person at the regular meetings

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Design & Layout: Margaret Scratch

Deadline for the next issue: March 15, 2014

Publication date: April 15, 2014

Getting to Know Barb Walker

1. When did you join the OHS and what are your club interests?

I joined the OHS about 4 years ago. I had seen the advertisement in the local newspaper and was curious to see what it was all about. After attending the first meeting, I knew I would be back. My club interests include exhibiting for both the flower and photography shows. I also enjoy helping out on sale days, and listening to our interesting speakers.

2. How long have you been gardening and from where does your interest come?

I have been gardening for about ten years now. My mother and both grandmothers enjoyed flowers; so I guess that's where my interest comes from. My mother's favourite flowers have always been hollyhocks. I can remember one grandmother having rose bushes in the front and back of her house. And my other grandmother had nothing but cosmos all in the front of her house.

3. What is your role in the garden?

I am the landlord of the garden. I do the planting, watering, weeding, and more weeding. I try to keep everything alive and happy.

4. What are your favourite plants in your garden?

My favourite plants include bee balm, meadowsweet and roses. I like the bee balm for its unique flower and long lasting blooms. Mapelawn was downsizing some plants at one visit and, for a small donation, I picked up a meadowsweet plant - such a fragrant plant, and pretty to photograph. And of course roses are at the top of my list, with my Peace rose being my favourite.

5. What plants do you wish had never been planted?

I wish I had never planted yellow loosestrife. I wish I had researched it and found out how invasive it is. And much as I love the colour purple, I have violets taking over the back yard.

6. Is there anything you would have done differently in the garden?

Yes, I would have spent more time raising the beds in the back garden. And I would have spaced out the plants more carefully.



7. How would you describe your garden?

I would describe my garden as simple and forever changing. A work in progress.

8. Do you have any definite plans for the garden?

Yes, I need to have the trees overhanging the back garden trimmed back so that it will not be so dry, and to let some sun in. And I need to raise the beds there as the tree roots are becoming a real problem. I would like to add some large

stones at some point; I think it would add some interest. My fence has two trees, a peony bush, and a few shrubs; so I'm going to leave it like that for now. As for the front of the house, I moved a few more plants from the back this past Fall.

9. Where is the best garden you have ever seen?

The Maple Lawn Gardens in Westboro. It's a 19th century walled English garden named a national historic site in Canada. The garden is in bloom from Spring through the Fall, and is always a pleasure to stroll through when I'm in the area.

10. What sort of reading do you enjoy?

I enjoy the daily newspaper, any garden magazine and looking through old recipe books when I get the chance.

11. What kind of music do you enjoy?

I enjoy rock, pop and some blues.

12. What film would you like to have starred in?

The movie "Vacation".

13. When you are not spending time in your garden, what are your favourite pastimes?

I enjoy watercolour painting, photography, baking, walking, biking and fishing.