



Coming Events

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

January 27

Monarchs in Mexico, with Dr. Jean Lauriault, Environmental Specialist, Canadian Museum of Nature

February 24

"Mucking about" in the dirt is good for your health (and ways to stay healthy when gardening), with Nancy McDonald, Master Gardener

March 24

Armchair Garden Travels: French and Belgian gardens – endless options, with Maria Fleming, OHS member

April 28

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

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

Winter Issue

Memories of Sicilian Gardens and Gourmand Experiences, October, 2014 by Phil Reilly

Being away from our Kinburn gardens for five weeks during growing season is atypical for Carole and me. Committing to a 15-day "Grand European Tour" river cruise from Amsterdam to Budapest was just a start to a special exception in the fall of 2014. We found caretakers for our gardens and two cats and eagerly awaited the celebration of our August 40th wedding anniversary!

By chance, after we had secured our Viking tour tickets, we had lunch with our friend Paul Zammit, Director of Horticulture at the Toronto Botanical Gardens. He mentioned that in the fall he was to host a garden and gourmand tour of Eastern Sicily. The perfect timing of his tour (to begin the day after completion of the Viking river cruise) convinced us to sign up for this additional 10-day tour. With Paul's zeal for and knowledge of Mediterranean plants and his zest for life, we knew we would come away from Eastern Sicily with a better understanding of the conditions under which succulents and other Sicilian native plants thrive. For those who know Carole, you'll know that succulents are a passion for her, so the Sicilian tour especially appealed to her.

Our Sicilian tour group consisted of two women (members of the Toronto Botanical Garden), ourselves, and Paul. For the first six days we were based in the popular tourist destination town of Taormina, set

high above and overlooking the Ionian Sea to the east and Mount Etna on the west. We then spent four days based in the more southerly seaport city of Siracusa, set in a lowland agricultural area. Each day, en route to visit at least one notable garden, we usually had a guided tour of an archaeological site or centuries-old town. This helped us immensely to understand the historical colonization and current conditions of the Eastern Sicily region.

Our luxurious Taormina hotel, the Grand Hotel Miramar, set on a steep hill with a panoramic view of the Mediterranean, was within easy walking distance of many venues and restaurants. Using the services of a local guide who met us at our hotel, we made our way through the narrow and winding streets of Taormina to access several local venues - the best-preserved Greek Amphitheater in Europe, the town's extensive public gardens (formerly the estate of Lady Florence Trevelyan, a Scottish woman who was "invited to leave" Britain after a well-publicized romance with the future king Edward VII, (son of Victoria), a steep-sloped estate garden and mansion/museum, Casa Cuseni (built by the British painter



Grand Hotel Miramar

Robert Kitson between 1905 and 1907), and the local Cathedral plus other notable historic buildings located in the “old town “ section of the town.

Day trips to the Catania area, about an hour's drive south of Taormina, allowed us to visit four estate gardens, the Catania Botanical Gardens (begun in the 1850's by the University of Catania's Botany Department), a vineyard (with winery) on the lower slopes of Mount Etna, and to attend a half-day cooking class at the cooking school (La Cucina del Sol) of chef and cook book author Eleonora Consoli. Carole has already treated several family members and good friends to recipes from the class including Sicilian meatballs, Pasta alla Norma, and caponata.

The estate and public gardens we toured in this area typically featured towering Stone pines (*Pinus pinea*), both chest-high and towering palms, cycads, gigantic yuccas and aloes, cacti bearing colourful orange fruit, various other native and imported succulents, and drought-resistant “lawns” of the morning glory family – a ground cover called dichondra (*Dichondra micrantha*).

Most of the estates that we visited had one thing in common: each was behind a high wall, requiring entrance through a formidable, usually solid, gate. In conversation with either some estate owners, or our chauffeur, Mafia-associated stories emerged—not surprising given that we were in Sicily!

At the Catania-area Benanti family vineyard and winery, which featured several varietals of award-winning wines, our sommelier-guide took us part way up the slope of Mount Etna to show us their growing regime (which lacked often-seen micro-irrigation to each plant) and explained their wines' characteristics resulting from the coarse-textured, acidic, and nutritionally rich volcanic soil. It was here that we learned that periodic eruptions of Mount Etna were considered, by those in agricultural pursuits, as essential to rejuvenating the local soil fertility. Having to remove layers

of volcanic dust or pumice from roads, homes, and vehicles, even rebuilding destroyed properties, was simply an inconvenience to be endured! Not being a wine connoisseur, I found the description of soil-plant relationships educational. Wine tasting of a range of Benanti's wines, both on the hillside among the vines and in the winery's educational center, resulted in the purchase of a few bottles soon shared each evening while our group relaxed and related our favourite moments of the day.



Benanti Nursery

Our experiences in Siracusa were memorable in their own way – starting with the Algila Ortigia Charme Hotel on the island of Ortigia, which provided the Baroque atmosphere of an old palace on the waterfront in the historic center of town. Since 2005, the entire city of Syracuse has been listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. From our hotel it was just a 10-minute walk to many (and there are many) historic venues on Ortigia. A half-day guided walking tour of the huge archaeological remains of both a Greek and Roman amphitheater, a 15-minute drive off-island from our hotel, followed by a tour of the streets of Ortigia, provided just a glimpse of the 2500 years of conquest history of the city.

While based in Siracusa, we explored the towns of Modica, Noto, Sicilia, Sicili, and Ragusa—all ravaged by a huge earthquake in the late 1600's. Rebuilding of the towns, in “a Baroque style”, resulted in arrangement of cities according to predetermined schemes, the creation of great parks and gardens, and emphasized cathedrals, parish churches, monastic buildings,

residential mansions and, above all, royal palaces. In southern Sicily, yellow-coloured sandstone was readily available and this soft coloration of buildings is unique to the region. A guided walking tour of Modica certainly brought all these characteristics into focus.

Interspersed with tours to a couple of estate gardens were visits to the oldest chocolate confectionary in Sicily, Antica Dolceria Bonajuto, where we first saw the procedure of chocolate making from cocoa bean to chocolate bar. We were treated to taste-testing a host of deliciously flavoured bars with the expectation that purchases would result – and they did! Some chocolates made it to Kinburn – but not all!

On another day we went to the southern end of Sicily to visit Gli Aromi, a specialty herb nursery. In 30°C heat, 90% humidity, and in open-to-the-sky conditions, we were led by one of the nursery's owners through uncovered hoop houses to view display pots of lavender, geranium, mint, chili, capers and a selection of medicinal plants. As we toured, we were encouraged to taste a leaf of the many cultivars of each type of plant to experience the subtleties of their flavours. Then, in their outdoor kitchen, we were treated to plate after plate of delectably-spiced sauces, relishes and crackers; with wine of course!



Gli Aromi

Memorable at this estate were allées of palms and the vista towards Mount Etna overlooking hectares of organically-grown orange, lemon and ancient olive trees. Resembling stone walls, ancient Arabian aqueducts separated garden beds and still distribute water to garden beds and the citrus groves.



San Guiliano Estate



San Guiliano Aqueduct and herb and citrus Gardens



San Guiliano view of citrus grove

A pond garden, replete with Amazonian water lilies, was in more shade than I would have predicted. Contributing to the awe of this estate was the ornate family sized church attached to the extensive Baroque-styled home. Ending this exploration, and indeed our tour of Sicily, was yet

another delicious five-course luncheon, presented by formally-attired servers, on the patio overlooking an ancient olive grove.



San Guiliano Pond with Amazon water lilies

Memories of Sicily will linger—especially of the food!

Thanks go to Linda Clay/Arts & Leisure Tours of Woodbridge, ON for organizing this exceptional tour. The selection of venues, superb accommodations, and provision of a chauffeur made our experience a truly personal and memorable one. And what a coup it was to have Paul Zammit as tour leader!

A six page photo essay of this tour is available at this link: <http://rcgardens.ca/sicilytour.pdf>. In the near future I'll also have a Power-Point presentation for garden clubs. Availability requests can be sent to me by email at reilly@magma.ca

More information may be found online at:

Taormina and Catania

– search “Taormina public gardens”
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orto_Botanico_dell%27Universit%C3%A0_di_Catania

Benanti www.vinicolabenanti.it/en/azienda/

La Cucina del Sol <http://fxcuisine.com/?Display=110en/>

Casa Cusini www.casacuseni.com/

Siracusa

www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syracuse,_Sicily

www.algila.it/en/hotel_syracuse.htm

http://www.bonajuto.it/en/cioccolata_modicana.htm

www.gliaromi.it/

http://newsite.grandigiardini.it/lang_EN/giardini-scheda.php?id=138

Did You Know?

You have to pity the poor trees that are planted in very small spaces surrounded by concrete. What a struggle they have to get enough water to survive but some succeed very well despite the odds. You can see some outstanding examples at

<http://www.boredpanda.com/plants-flowers-versus-concrete-asphalt-pavement/>

President's Message

by Jamie Robertson

Winter is a time for rest and reflection for gardeners. Unlike some places where people can garden around the year, here, in the National Capital Region, we are forced by the cold and snow to take a break. This allows us to recharge our batteries and to have a respite. It permits us a time to read about gardening, look at gorgeous photographs, and go through seed and other garden catalogues. It is time to think and plan for next year. Winter brings us perspective. We gain inspiration and ideas so come spring we can hit the ground running.

Even though our gardens are dormant, activity at the OHS continues. At our annual general meeting in December, the new board of directors for 2015 was confirmed, with three new members joining the board. Several of our committees – the newsletter, publicity and program – have new members and chairs, ready to begin their work. Our monthly meetings through the winter months offer interesting speakers and topics to educate further and inspire us more.

Like gardeners everywhere, the OHS is drawing up plans for the spring. While many of our activities only take place when the weather improves, the work and preparation need to be started beforehand so that we too are ready. Our plant sales and auction, community planting, and garden tours, as well as a planned bus tour, require a lot of forward planning and logistical preparation so they succeed.

If any of you have some extra time this winter, please consider volunteering for one of our committees or activities. There is always plenty to do. Plus, it is a great way to meet people and get involved in the OHS. We encourage new and newer members to become involved. Your energy and ideas are most welcome. I trust you all will have a good winter, and I hope to see you at our monthly meetings and other OHS activities.

On behalf of the OHS, I send you my very best wishes for a happy, healthy and floriferous 2015.

Bugs in the Garden – A Blast from the Past

Editor's Note: It was clear from the number of questions following Melissa Lefebvre's talk at the October 2014 meeting that OHS members are very interested in the wildlife that might be living in their gardens. We've long had on file notes taken at entomologist Henri Goulet's April 2003 presentation on "Bugs in the Garden" and this seems like an appropriate time to print them in the newsletter. We hope you find the notes useful.

Dr. Goulet is an Agriculture and Agri-Food researcher. His personal area of expertise is sawflies. Here is a summary of his talk:

- In a typical backyard, only about 1% of all insects are 'bad' bugs - that is, will do harm to plants or animals. The diversity of backyard insects is remarkable. For instance, there are more than 350 species of wild bees in Ottawa. (The honey bee is an introduced species.)
- Pay attention to bugs while gardening – some are colourful and very beautiful (for instance metallic green bees on asters in the fall).



Photo Credit: Anne Johnston

- Biodiversity promotes healthy plants, as the chances that 'bad' insects are controlled by their natural predators (e.g. parasites) are greater. Also, since most 'bad' insects target certain plants, the more variety in plant life there is, the more limited their food sources are. For instance, tent caterpillars are much less numerous and do much less damage in a primary forest where there is greater diversity of plants.

- Mulch provides a good refuge for a more varied population of insects.

- In general, gardeners should encourage good insects that will act as natural control for the 'bad' ones. Plants such as asters and yarrow which have blooms over a long season will encourage nectar-loving insects to live in the garden.

- 5% of all insects in Canada were accidentally introduced from the host country. These tend to be the problem bugs since they don't encounter the same natural controls here. Many of these came in the soil used as ballast for the boats that brought pioneers to the country. Once in Canada, these insects adapted to our different climate and food sources in order to survive.

- Importing natural controls from the host country in order to control the 'bad' insects often doesn't work since the controls immediately encounter much more severe conditions here and cannot survive. In the meantime, many of the 'bad' ones have acclimatized and have reached an intolerable level (e.g. European red lily beetle).

- Persistent research by entomologists has been successful in identifying natural controls that can live in this country but this level of expertise is thin on the ground in Canada. Dr. Goulet was hopeful that eventually a control for the European red lily beetle will be found. It's a matter of identifying a natural control in Europe that can also survive in or adapt to our different conditions. (Editor's note: sadly, Dr. Goulet was a bit too optimistic about this. The European red lily beetles are still with us.)



From the insect's point of view, plants in your garden that are under stress are prime targets. It pays to know life cycles and plan accordingly. For instance, growing vegetables from seed will produce plants advanced enough in growth that earwigs won't target them by the time earwigs appear in the garden. In general, plants grown from seed tend to be stronger than purchased bedding plants.

Some stresses on plants can be very subtle. For instance, hot soil stresses potatoes. In their natural locations where they developed (such as highlands of Peru), soil rarely becomes hot. Mulching, which keeps soil cool, is an effective way of preventing stress in potatoes and that's why farmers use straw on rows of potatoes.

Mulch

by Peter Rofner,
Richmond Nursery

The other day, I just finished going over my whole garden, planting, moving, and mulching. That made me think of mulching and what mulch to use where. Consider this the definitive mulch guide for your reference.

Mulches typically serve two purposes in your garden. First, they retain moisture by creating a barrier between the soil and the air. Second, they suppress weeds. Note that I mention suppress and not stop since mulches typically stop annual weeds from germinating. Tough perennial weeds and grasses that spread with underground rhizomes can usually penetrate mulches. At least it reduces the amount of work.

There are a few major types of mulches out there along with a few not-so-common types.

Cedar mulch is probably the most economical mulch. It's essentially the shredded remains of cedar bark. It's economical since cedars are well-used in the lumber industry. You can also find cedar mulch that contains a dye to make it red, black, or even strange fluorescent colours. Cedar mulch has good lasting power in your garden, though yearly applications can also act to slowly acidify your garden. At some point you may need a bit of lime to counter that acidity.

Pine nuggets are the pine tree equivalent of cedar mulch. Pine trees develop a chunky scaly bark which is chipped off and processed into chunks of various sizes. It is more expensive, but it breaks down very slowly so it lasts a very long time.

Cocoa mulch comes from the shells of the cocoa bean during processing. It's a very fine reddish-brown colour that gives a chocolaty smell when spread. It breaks down quickly and doesn't alter the pH of the soil. However, it can develop mold in wet or damp areas, and has a toxic reaction if consumed by dogs (though most dogs don't try and eat it).

Stone mulch can be any aggregate like pea-stone, river rock, crushed brick, white marble, and so on. Needless to say, it doesn't break down at all. Stone mulch can have a warming affect on the soil, so keep it away from plants that like cool roots like clematis.

Composted mulches are a collection of mulches developed to "feed" the garden. All mulch (except stone) does eventually feed the garden, but composted mulches are already partially broken down. Nincompoop is a good example since it's a composted horse manure type of mulch. For the first year it acts as a plain mulch and it gets worked into the ground like compost the following year.

So, other than aesthetics, how do you select the right mulch? Let's look at uses.

Stone mulches are best for permanent plantings where things aren't going to change much. They're also most appropriate where erosion can be an issue - near driveways, walkways, downspouts, etc. Since they're permanent, I usually suggest adding landscape fabric underneath to really make it hard for those weeds.

Pine nuggets take a long time to break down so they work well around the base of trees or in shrub gardens. Because of their slow breakdown, it's very hard to work the soil where you put pine nuggets.

Cedar mulch is good for perennial plantings. It lasts long enough to not break down after only one year (though an annual top-up is best) and its thicker mat prevents weeds better. Composted mulches are also good for perennial gardens since they feed the garden well. They're also very economical for trees and shrubs. Just lay them on thickly so you don't have to re-apply regularly.

Cocoa mulch is the best for annual gardens. Since you're turning the soil over annually, you want something to break down relatively fast. It's also very light so it's much easier to spread between your annuals. Just watch those damp places since you will probably have mold (not bad mold, but still mold).

One other question I get often relates to freshly ground tree chippings. Some people say it's dangerous for your garden, other people love it. Fresh tree chippings last a very long time in your garden, for one, so you have a very hard time re-planting. Also, during the break-down process, the mulch actually binds nutrients. This nutrient binding can starve your plants. That's also why I don't suggest using straw between the rows in your vegetables - it will bind the nutrients and starve your vegetables. Fresh mulch also has the potential

to introduce pathogens into your garden. We do use fresh tree mulch often in very permanent plantings, but add extra food to compensate for the nutrient binding.

So there's the definitive mulch guide. Mulch is wonderful for your garden as long as you select the right mulch for the right use. If you come across another mulch that's not in our guide, you can probably use it as a template to see what its best use is. Use mulch wisely and it will greatly reduce the work in your garden.

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Long Distance Gardening in the UK

by Laura and Rob Brandon

In 1960, my in-laws bought Hobbs as a summer cottage but then retired there from London in 1970. Located inland from the Sussex coast at Rye, the house was originally two farm workers' cottages. It looks out over the fields of a nationally recognized area of outstanding natural beauty close to woods listed in the Domesday Book. Laura's mother Mary created the garden over many years while her father Gerald waged war on any unwelcome and destructive intruders. He scared off rabbits from the vegetable garden with an air rifle and ran the hose down the molehills. For a number of years its half an acre also accommodated a paddock for the family's horse and pony.



Fall with Laura's bonfires

I met my future in-laws for the first time in that garden and our involvement with Hobbs and its garden has varied over the years. In the early days, we would drive down from Bristol with the unvaried expectation that we would walk around the garden with Mary. In those early days I suspect I was on probation to determine if I had any horticultural aptitude that would make me a suitable son-in-law.

The view has not changed since then but the agriculture has. The hop fields are long gone, the apple trees in the surrounding orchards have been grubbed up and replaced by first sheep and now corn, but no new buildings mar a view that has been unchanged since the mid-eighteenth century. When we immigrated to Canada we returned more infrequently to the UK with children in tow, but weeding and working in the garden was always something we would do. Visiting Sissinghurst and Great Dixter (ten minutes away) with Mary were also enjoyable diversions.



Early fall morning with neighbouring sheep

Gerald died and as Mary and our children grew older our visits became longer as we tried to ensure the garden was kept up to her high standards. We would visit for around two weeks in the English spring when the weeds were in full growth, and again in October to put the garden to bed. Our secret for keeping the garden relatively weed free was the ruthless weeding of beds in the fall and again in the spring followed by heavy mulching with compost. Grass and hedge

cutting were contracted out. This period lasted for about ten years with Mary directing operations while we worked. In her last years, we retained John, a retired engineer, who helped out in the summer. The three of us, with occasional help from Laura's sister, who also lives overseas, kept the half-acre of garden and perennial beds going, although every winter we lost one or two prized shrubs. In general, we did not add to the garden except for replacing lost trees.



Side bed showing heavy mulching



Spring with daffodils



Summer with lots of grass to cut!

Following Mary's death in 2009, peacefully in her own bed at Hobbs, Laura, her sister, and I have directed the maintenance of the cottage and gardens with John's help. Without Mary to inspire us, at this stage it is all about simplification and economy. The vegetable garden has been reduced to raspberries and blackcurrants and four big beds have been grassed over. Laura's brother lives in the house but his health precludes any active involvement in the maintenance.



Mary and Graham

While the future of Hobbs is uncertain, it is likely that Laura and I will spend more time there, probably during the spring, when there is snow on the ground in Ottawa, and in the fall. Although we would love to bring the garden back to the condition it was in in its prime this is likely impractical. Nevertheless, the structural elements of the garden such as hedges, trees and shrubs are good, and if the beds are weeded in the spring and well mulched and cleaned up in the fall then the garden will look good in all seasons. Having a reliable person to keep an eye on the garden and do the grass cutting and weeding when one is away is likely necessary for a garden of any size, otherwise one is faced with a jungle each spring and fall. As John is in his early seventies we are wondering what to do when he hangs up his spade.

I have been involved in the planning, planting and maintenance of an

English garden under the eagle eye of an expert plantswoman over many years. As I look out over a view that has not changed since I first arrived at Hobbs, I consider myself fortunate to have had this experience.

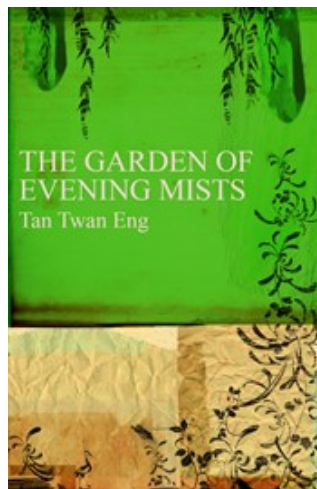
Did You Know?

A mid-September 2014 broadcast on television of the "Chopped" tournament edition featured Sedum 'Pink Pearl' as one of the ingredients the competitors had to incorporate into a main course dish. Most of the three amateur competitors put it into a fresh salad. Apparently, it has a crisp, peppery taste.

Book Review

by Margaret Scratch

The Garden of Evening Mists, by Tan Twan Eng. Myrmidon Books, 2012.



This is a novel for all you fans of Japanese gardens. Teoh Yun Ling is a Chinese Malaysian retired judge who has spent her career prosecuting Japanese war

criminals. She and her sister were interned in a Japanese prisoner of war camp as young women and her sister died there. Yun Ling first heard of Nakamura Arimoto as a teenager. Several years after the war and her release from the camp she had sought him out and asked him to create a garden in memory of her sister. He refused but offered to take her on as an apprentice so she could learn how to create the garden herself. But who is Nakamura Arimoto? As she works with him in his 'Garden of Evening Mists' a strange relationship develops between the two and a sort of healing and forgiveness comes to Yun Ling.

But for the gardener, perhaps the most interesting parts of the novel will be the descriptions of the garden itself. It is high in the hills of central Malaysia, where at the time of its creation a civil war is raging between Malaysian Communists and the government. The garden is large and combines styles from several different periods in Japanese history. It is designed to walk the viewer through a journey mapped by carefully placed and marked stones and by vistas designed to let the viewer understand the relationship between the garden and the land beyond it. Everything in it has been very carefully considered, every juxtaposition carefully explored for its meaning.

This is a rather strange novel and sometimes disturbing, but it offers a wonderful description of the creation and meaning of a Japanese garden and how a garden can put peace and meaning in life.

Did You Know?

Cicero wrote to his friend Terentius Varro "If you have a garden and a library, you will want for nothing". Epistulae ad Familiares (Letters to his friends), book IX, epistle 4.

Teahouses in Japanese Gardens

by Sheila Burvill

You see them in almost every large Japanese garden--teahouses. They may be of different sizes, designs, and orientations within the garden but all are traditional in design and integral to the design of a garden and, indeed, to the enjoyment of a garden. They give a quiet respite from the sun or rain and add a structural element of human presence within a plant-dominated landscape. They draw the eye, providing focal points within views, and they provide platforms from which to sit and enjoy the combination of water features, hills, paths, and rocks -- all common components of many a Japanese stroll garden.



The primary function of a teahouse, though, is to provide a place to enjoy the tea ceremony, a traditional activity dear to the hearts of the Japanese and tourists alike. A Japanese tea ceremony is nothing like the British cream teas of say, the Empress Hotel in Victoria B.C., though these are also dear to the hearts of the Japanese and tourists. In Japan, the tea ceremony is quiet and more meditative, austere rather than sumptuous, and deeply entrenched in tradition.

Although it certainly can make for a restful and refreshing interlude at the end of a busy afternoon, it is more ritual than anything else.

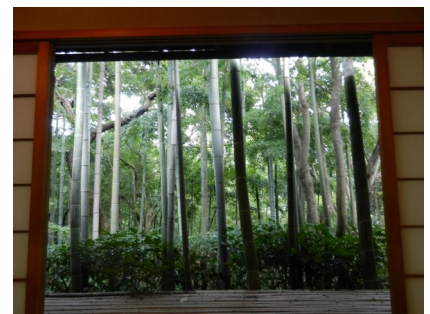


As shown above, tea ceremonies in a traditional geisha house are formal. The geisha wears beautiful garments, styled for the specific season; her makeup and hair are precise and arranged to emphasize the beauty of the nape of the neck. The teapot and cup are carefully chosen to add to the beauty of the occasion and to enhance the green froth of the tea. There are special ways to hold and manoeuvre the cup and a certain number of sips to take. All the 'rules' have been carefully honed through the centuries to distill the essence of beauty into the ritual. (It must be said, though, that many find the tea itself tastes absolutely vile.)

Within a garden, the tea ceremony gains an additional component of grace because enjoyment of the surrounding natural beauty is enhanced. The contents of the cup are a distillation of the garden. The tea is green, referencing the mosses or ground covers in the wider view, the smells of the tea are as herbaceous in character as is the surrounding landscape, the liquid in the tea cup shivers and reflects light just as the water surfaces outside do.

While one can sit in a garden teahouse oriented towards larger vistas, most teahouses also contain windows through which a much more tightly circumscribed view, framed by an open window, is presented.

And this allows a different appreciation of the garden -- such as we see in the photo below, taken inside the teahouse of a garden north of Kyoto. The walk to get to the garden goes through a bamboo forest where the height, uniformity, movement, and sounds of the exceedingly tall bamboos are impressive indeed. From the teahouse window, however, we see only the lower stalks of a few bamboos and, almost without realizing it, begin to appreciate the essence of the bamboo stalk -- the celadon green of the outer surface, the absolute straightness of the trunk, its division into precise geometric nodes. It's that concentration of visual sensation in the smaller space that leads one to a deeper appreciation of the garden.



Having said all that, it must be confessed that the tea 'ceremony' in that particular garden north of Kyoto was about as far away from the ritualized beauty of the geisha house as possible. Here our 'geisha' was a hearty looking girl -- no exquisitely decorated urban beauty she! We were waved into the teahouse, wet shoes and all, and encouraged to sit on actual chairs rather than kneeling on tatami mats. With a broad welcoming smile, she plunked down overbrimming cups of green frothed tea in front of us and, almost as an afterthought, a little cookie each. Yet the cups were beautiful, the views both through the window frame and out over the garden lovely, and the sound of soft rain on the tile roof soothing. And the tea still absolutely vile.

Member to Member

Recommendations

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

For this installment of the series, we've asked Anne Johnston what her favourite daylilies are.

Super-Short Daylily Recommendations List by Anne Johnston

Over the years, I have come to realize, and accept, that I am a hoarder of sorts. I don't collect wicker baskets or china dolls, but I do collect plants. I am especially drawn to plants from which there are a huge number of varieties to select from such as hostas, peonies, and daylilies.

It is really difficult to recommend daylily varieties. First, there are over 60,000 registered cultivars; that's a lot to choose from. Second, their forms and colours are a very personal choice. That being said, I am going to suggest a few of my favourites as well as how and where to shop for them.

I have become very choosy about the daylily cultivars I buy. Because of my interest in hybridizing daylilies, I always research their progeny potential and weigh that against their price. In the last few years, I have been purchasing my daylilies from specialized vendors such as Whitehouse Perennials

www.whitehouseperennials.com/ (just outside of Almonte), Artemesia Daylilies www.artemesiadaylilies.com/ (who gave the OHS a presentation three years ago) and Nottawasaga www.wilsondaylilies.com/. For next year, I am currently looking at very recent introductions available at

Jardins Shefford www.jardinsshefford.com/index.php. The "All Things Plants" daylily database <https://allthingsplants.com/plants/group/daylilies/> is a great resource for pre-screening my finalists. When considering my selections, I look for good branching, lots of buds and gorgeous fertile flowers. By the way, I have noticed that the photos posted on the growers' websites are often "exaggerated" (as in "Photoshopped"), so consider the photos with a large grain of salt. For this article, I have tried to find photographs (ripped off the web) that are representative of their true colours.

When shopping for daylilies, you will notice that some are listed as "diploid" and some as "tetraploid". Diploids have two sets of chromosomes, while tetraploids have four sets. Tetraploids tend to be stronger stemmed with more vibrant colours, but if you are looking for blue daylilies, you are more likely to find them in diploids. If you are planning on crossing your daylilies, keep in mind that diploids can only be crossed with diploids, and that tetraploids can only be crossed with tetraploids.

Here are some of my favourites from my garden (in no particular order):

'Distant Star' (Roberts 2001). **Diploid**. This beautiful "unusual form" daylily has very dark red petals with a black eye and a large yellow throat. I would describe it as delicate, but intricate. I know it's a strange way to describe a flower but if you see it you may feel the same.



'Last Flight Out' (Hanson 1992). **Tetraploid**. I realize this is an older cultivar, but it must have been ahead of its time back in 1992. The almost blue eye is quite stunning as is the white mid-rib. I really do enjoy it.



'Zahadoom' (Stamile 2002). **Tetraploid**. I am currently using 'Zahadoom' in my crosses. It has a nicely ruffled edge which is the same colour as the plum eye.



'Rock Solid' (Stamile 2002). **Tetraploid**. This one has 6-way branching, which is quite amazing. 'Rock Solid' currently has 61 registered child plants! Talk about a good parent! It is often paired with 'Zahadoom' with great success. It is known for its dark eye. It is an eye-catcher for sure.

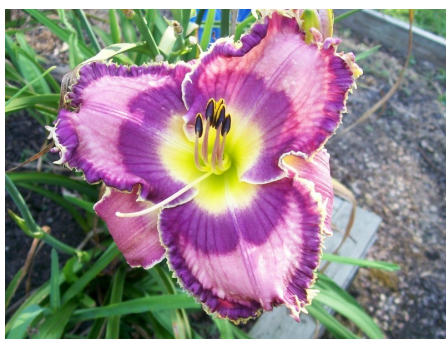


Member to Member

‘Piping Rock’ (Stamile 2004). **Tetraploid**. Another 6-branched, it is a red-purple with a ruffled gold edge. Very pretty. This lighter eyed daylily makes a nice contrast when planted next to a dark eyed daylily like ‘Rock Solid’. I have used ‘Piping Rock’ with ‘God Save the Queen’ in a cross, and one of its child plants is very beautiful.



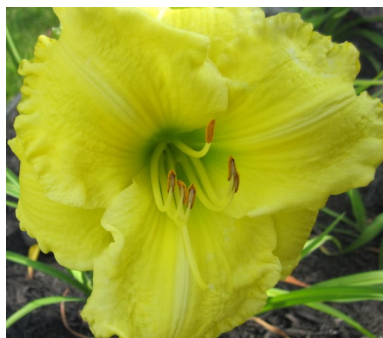
‘God Save the Queen’ (Morss 2005). **Tetraploid**. With a two-coloured edge and a nice large flower (7”), this daylily is stunning. I am using it in my hybridizations with great success. It currently has 48 registered child plants, which is encouraging for the hybridizing enthusiast.



‘Destined to See’ (Grace-L. 1998). **Tetraploid**. The petals are cream coloured and the eye is purple as are the edges. The flower is a nice 6” diameter while the plant is about 24” tall. The eye stands out very well because of the lighter coloured petals. It’s an interesting daylily that has been used extensively in breeding programs by others resulting in 70 registered child plants.



‘Omomuki’ (Stamile 1991). **Tetraploid**. I have received more than one positive compliment on ‘Omomuki’. It is located right next to the steps of our backyard deck. It has beautiful bright yellow flowers, and so many of them! This plant is a beacon of sunshine in the garden.



‘Lavender Arrowhead’ (Stamile 1999). **Tetraploid**. This “unusual form” daylily has a nice large appliqué throat, large flowers (9”) and tall scapes (36”). It shows up beautifully in the garden. I am using it in my crosses but have not yet seen a flower; I expect to see one next summer though.



‘Long Stocking’ (Stamile 1997). **Tetraploid**. This “spider” form daylily is very tall (46”) with large flowers (9.5”). With its yellow-green throat and red petals it really stands out in the garden.



‘Stella de Oro’ (Jablonski 1975)/ **‘Stella Supreme’** / **‘Ruby Stella’**. **Diploids**. Everybody knows them and probably everybody has them in their gardens. Being dependable repeat bloomers, I use them in my front porch planters amongst my annuals. I fertilize them as I would my annuals and in the fall I plant them back in the garden to overwinter to be dug up again and put back in the planters the following spring. Annual flower plants are pricey, but by adding these staple perennials in my planters they keep adding colour all summer long, and when not in bloom they look like grasses.



Member to Member

When it comes to daylilies, there are so many choices that if I started to add the plants from my current "wish list" it would fill the entire newsletter. Some of the varieties I listed are available at many local nurseries; others are available from specialty nurseries (who usually offer mail delivery of plants). The possibilities are almost endless.

In 2014, I made dozens of crosses and collected 716 seeds. Gulp. What was I thinking? There is a strong possibility that some of the germinated seeds will be available at the May Auction. So stay tuned!

Did You Know?

The eminent Victorian horticulturalist Gertrude Jekyll, after she began losing her sight, was able to distinguish the identity of trees just from the sound of the wind blowing through their leaves. Moreover, she was able to name rose cultivars by their scent even when she was blindfolded.

Plants We Hate

by Kristin Kendall

This is a particularly provocative title, and I would not like to be held accountable for what I write today. My opinion may have changed by this time next year.

Some plants I dislike when I think they are abused or misplaced. I hate seeing hostas, not the sun-loving varieties, planted in full scorching sun. Another example: marigolds, red salvia and petunias planted in masses in neat shapes or rows. I don't think anyone still likes foundation plantings with junipers and mugo pines. But all of the above plants look really beautiful and interesting when they are properly looked after in places where they have room to grow, or in combination with other plants. At the Merivale United Church garden tour last

summer there was a stunning massed planting of marigolds and dahlias – not in geometric rows – which glowed on a dark and rainy afternoon.

I don't know the names of some of the plants I dislike – I'm pretty sure they are weeds, and I don't own a weed identification book. There is a creeping little menace that crops up where I would like thyme to serve as the ground cover, and it also nestles into the spaces between my patio stones. There is a little thing which looks like clover with small dark red leaves. It hugs the ground like a ground cover and you can't pull it out. Nameless or not there are garden monsters, and we think we know them when we see them, in places where we don't want them.

My personal hit list includes goutweed, bugleweed (*Ajuga reptans*), and any form of crabgrass. But the only one of these that I think *everyone* hates is crabgrass. But who knows when we will be bowled over by some modern and stunning landscape design incorporating mass plantings of crabgrass?

When we inherited our present back garden, there were masses of rudbeckia, Canadian anemone and *Artemisia*. We had come from a garden that was completely shaded by an enormous old maple tree that lived outside our fence and beyond our control. Some of the time I was literally gardening in the dark. So I was thrilled by the abundance of sun and sun-loving perennials.

Then, we began to make the new garden our own, and sooner or later the three old faithfuls were gone, we believed. I said to myself that I hated the rudbeckia, that the anemone were too invasive, and the *Artemisia* was popping up everywhere, that there were more refined varieties of these common plants.

But then this year in the spring a patch of the original anemone ap-

peared beside a granite basin we keep filled with water. It flowered early and long, and looked really pretty with Virginia bluebells and sweet woodruff. Then some *Artemisia* appeared in a sunny place and it was a lovely soft and quiet gray note with some *Tradescantia* (also at one point pulled out by us), and a red Japanese maple (this one we planted) in the background. A bit later on we welcomed back some of the original rudbeckia which appeared just in time to counter what turned out to be a little too much purple, lavender and pink.

So much for deciding that there were some plants that I would banish forever and not miss. What would be the fun of gardening if there were no surprises, and if you always knew for sure what you might like or dislike? (Except for goutweed, bugleweed and crabgrass...)

Did You Know?

Most gardeners know that apple and rose varieties are grown by grafting the speciality shoots onto common rootstock, but did you know that lilac varieties are grown in a similar way? In the case of lilacs, the rootstock often used is privet. The technique involves using the privet as a kind of nurse plant for the lilac for only a few years. Planting the graft deep ensures that the lilac scion has a chance to develop good roots to take over from the privet rootstock which gradually wastes away.

OHS Matters

Shows Corner

by Lyse Morisset

Summary for 2015

Two judged shows to be held in conjunction with the regular meetings on June 23 and September 22, 2015:

- Each will include a novice division
- Each will include individual specimen and decorative classes
- Each will include flexible groupings or collections of garden specimens of the season
- Each will include an exhibitor table

The June show will combine the indoor plant show and summer garden plants while the September show will include both garden plants and edibles.

Do plan to look at OHS shows in a new light in 2015. Try to consider the shows as a way to share little bits of your garden with fellow members. After all, we have two principal ways of sharing our real-life plants among ourselves. We can explore the gardens of personal friends, of course, but for those members we know less well we have to wait for the summer garden tours. Given the complexity of organizing these visits, the OHS can manage only a handful of these treats every year.

The shows allow members to bring in transportable parts of their home garden into the meeting room to share with other members. These individual blooms or specimens of foliage or edibles can trigger interactions between fellow gardeners about conditions of growth, cultivars, ways of acquiring these plants or other aspects of the plant material. It is a way for members to engage in conversation and to exchange gardening tips.

There is an obvious competitive facet to the shows that follows from a

long, silver-plated tradition dating back a century and more. This adds fun and glitter to the whole affair and rightfully rewards those with the luck to have their blooms appear at the appointed time and the skill to grow or arrange their plant material.

There is more than the judged portion to the shows being proposed for 2015. Our members made enthusiastic use of the "exhibitor table" during the Hosta Extravaganza event this summer. This exhibitor table will be back for each of the June and September shows in 2015. This unadjudicated, optional setting is the opportunity to bring in a bit of your garden, to have it identified, to query other members regarding optimal growing conditions, simply to display, or maybe to amuse.

The OHS's Facebook Group

by Sandy Garland

The OHS Facebook group is not growing as fast as the plants in our gardens, but its 88 members do use it to trade information, share gardening articles, ask gardening questions, and show off their best plants.

We started the group a couple of years ago to publicize the OHS monthly meetings, which are open to the public. The hope was to attract attention and possibly new members. We also post other garden-related activities and events, such as those of the African violet, orchid, and rock garden societies, Friends of the Farm, and Master Gardeners.

We link to articles on gardening, and this year members have learned about seed germination, plants that grow under walnut trees, climate change, and topsoil. Neat gardening ideas - like a circle of sunflowers that grows into a secret room, an alleyway of wisteria, raised or unusual plant beds - have also been shared.

For the conservation-minded, we have photos and articles on bee boxes, composting, and pollinator patches.

Some members have offered surplus seeds and plants; I benefitted from Phil Reilly's kind offer of Virginia bluebells and common milkweeds. Others have been collecting extra walnuts - which nicely removes them from Phil's garden beds.

We announced this year's Science Fair winners, suggested travel destinations for gardeners and warned about pesticides in plants bought from reputable vendors.

Many members got good answers to their questions: Has anyone used eggshells or coffee grounds for gardening? How do people label small plants? Why no bees using my Bee Condo? Harvest swap, anyone? What is this on my sedum? Should I plant Japanese knotweed? What is this plant?

Several people tried to use the group for commercial purposes, but were promptly removed or restrained.

The group is very collegial, unassuming, and welcoming. Jump in by posting a photo of your garden this summer. Or tell us how you get through the winter with no garden to sit in. The group is what we make it. You can help make it great!

OHS Facebook Group -
www.facebook.com/groups/6012313849/

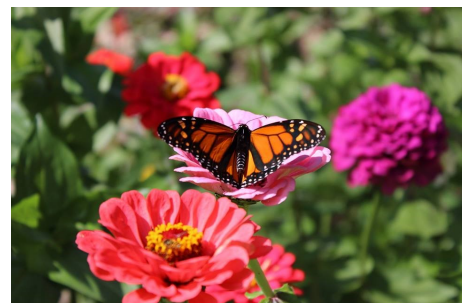


Photo credit: Erin Cassidy

OHS Matters

From the OHS Archives: Ottawa Valley Gardeners and Florist Club by Sheila Burvill

Until recently, the OHS Archives contained a hand-written ledger recording the founding, minutes, members, and finances of the Ottawa Valley Gardeners and Florist Club and a fascinating document it is.

The Club was formed after a meeting on April 5, 1889. The initial membership fee was set at \$2 per annum with the first membership list consisting of 24 names. The aim was "to lift up and carry forward all that tends to advance the welfare of its Members and promote the interests of Horticulture." James Sorley was elected as the first president on May 9, 1889.

Despite the adoption of the official name of Ottawa Valley Gardeners and Florist Club, the organization is most often referred to as "Gardeners & Florists Club" throughout the document.

Dipping into the ledger pulls out many interesting facets of horticultural endeavours of both the Club and other organizations such as the Ontario Agricultural Department and the Central Canada Fair, but of particular interest to OHS members is the following extract, dated Nov. 10, 1892:

The forming of an Horticultural Society occupied the remainder of the evening and a motion was moved by A Geddes seconded by J. Watkins that the Secretary be authorized to write to J. Craig asking his attendance at our next meeting to discuss the advisability of forming an Horticultural Society.

And on Dec. 8, 1892, a letter from J. Craig was duly entered into the minutes, containing, in part:

I beg leave to say that I have been in correspondence with the Ont. Dept. Of Agriculture with a view to ascertaining the most desirable basis on which to advise

formation of such a Society. The result of which correspondence in short has been as follows. 1. That an Electoral District Agricultural Society may be organized by eight individuals signing a prescribed Schedule. 2d This Society could devote itself entirely to Horticultural interests and aims. 3d The Annual membership fee would be \$1.00 and the Annual Grant from the provincial Government would be \$350.00. 4th Under the provisions of the Act an Annual report is required.

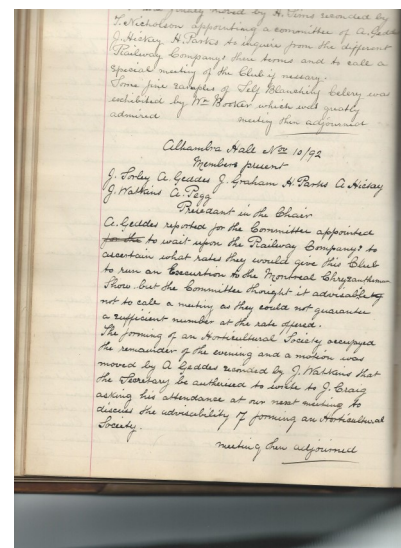
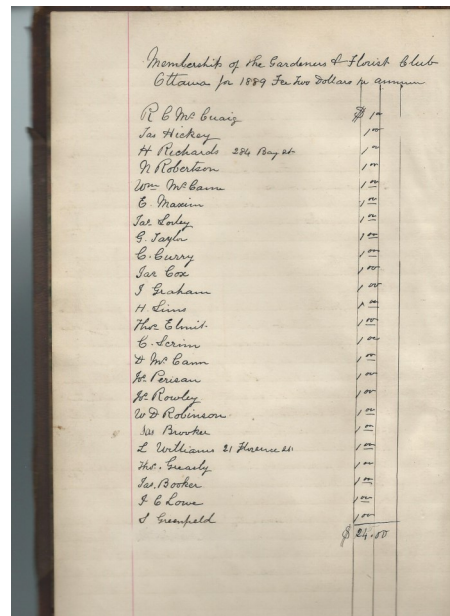
The letter went on to detail the conditions under which a "Township Horticultural Society" could be formed so as to be eligible for a provincial grant or as a branch of an existing agricultural association.

We learn little more about the matter until Feb. 21, 1895 when the minutes refer to changing the "Act" regulating "Electoral Societies" to allow for "carrying on Horticultural Societies pure & simple in cities."

The document ends with the report of the June 11, 1896 meeting of the Ottawa Valley Gardeners and Florist Club.

Incidentally, the only appearances of female names in the document were in reference to widows or wives of members. A different time indeed!

Jeff Blackadar, former OHS Archivist, had made arrangements to place the ledger into the collection of the Ottawa Room of the Ottawa Public Library. However, we have been informed that the matter is still under review as acceptance policy for the Ottawa Room has recently changed. Sheila Burvill is storing the ledger, carefully bundled up in acid-free paper to protect the leather cover, until the Ottawa Public Library makes a final decision.



Did You Know?

During the Dutch Golden Age, at the peak of tulip mania in March 1637, some single tulip bulbs sold for more than 10 times the annual income of a skilled craftsman.

OHS Matters

D2 District Meeting Report

by Lara Jimenez

On October 25 fellow OHS board member Kristin Kendall and I attended the District 2 Fall Advisory Council Meeting in Carleton Place. The following topics were discussed and may be of interest to Society members:

- The D1-D2 realignment, which was decided at the April 2014 D2 Annual General Meeting, will likely take effect as of January 2015. As a result of this realignment, two board positions will become vacant and need to be filled – secretary, and assistant district director for Ottawa Basin & webmaster.
- The Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) has approved a Garden Ontario Week for the third week of June 2015.
- The D2 2015 Photo Competition deadline will be March 31. Entries from Society members are very welcome! Information on the classes, prizes and how to enter can be found at <http://www.gardenontario.org/site.php/district2/news/online/3564>
- A motion was passed stipulating that "Regarding District 2 financially-sponsored events (i.e. AGM & Flower Show) profits be equally shared between the district and the host society (s)." Profits at these events can result from silent auctions, market places, etc. This motion takes into account that D2 makes money available to societies who are hosting a D2 AGM in order to help cover the cost of speakers. In cases where this financial support is not requested by the hosting society any profit can remain with that society.
- The 2015 OHA Convention will be hosted by District 6 (Brant, Halton, Norfolk, Wentworth, Hamilton).

New Members

The OHS welcomes the following new members:

Vanessa Bishop
Lise Boulay
Renée De Vey
Margaret Delicate
Keiko and Bruce Grundison, Mei & Leah
Laura Henderson and Sean Crowell
Neil Kelly
S. Ryan King
Jane Krider
Adelheid Malowany
Susan Moss
Jane Sargent
Shelley and Robert Sommerville
Lesley Taylor
Ken Wright

Ottawa Garden Symposium Report

by Lara Jimenez

On November 8, fellow OHS board member David Burroughs and I attended the Ottawa Garden Symposium organized by Michel Gauthier, Executive Director of the Canadian Garden Council and a past executive director of the Tulip Festival. This was the first symposium of its kind (at least in recent memory) and brought together 57 representatives from 43 gardening organizations in the region. Four main topics were discussed:

Garden Days is a three-day celebration of National Garden Day (inaugurated in 2013), which is held annually on the Friday before Father's Day. The objective of Garden Days is to draw attention to our cultural garden landscape and history, and to underscore the importance of public and private gardens, and the value of home gardening and environmental stewardship. Those present were called on to provide their ideas for participation in Garden Days. Participants were quite keen to participate in this event, suggesting activities such as a competition among city councillors' gardens, a plant swap, and Monarch butterfly and youth programs.

Communities in Bloom is a Canada-wide annual event in which participating communities are evaluated either provincially or nationally on the accomplishments of their entire community (municipal, private, corporate, institutional, citizens) on eight key criteria: Tidiness, Environmental Action, Heritage Conservation, Urban Forestry, Landscape, Turf & Groundcovers, Floral Displays and Community Involvement. Discussion at the symposium centred around the question of whether Ottawa should be involved in Communities in Bloom, with a general consensus that Ottawa should be involved in the event in future.

FLORA Canada 2017 is a four month-long 150th anniversary event to celebrate Canada's floral and garden diversity and showcase the value of urban gardens and landscapes. It also aims to be a catalyst for the creation of the Canadensis National Botanical Garden in Ottawa. Again, there was broad support for Ottawa participation in this event.

The creation of an **Ottawa Garden Council** was discussed. This would be a coordinating body that would have as its goal to provide a unified voice for the Ottawa gardening community.

Each of these undertakings will be discussed by the inaugural Garden Council Steering Committee that was formed by volunteers from among those present at the symposium, including OHS member Lynne Armstrong. The Steering Committee will set out strategies to pursue participation in and outreach for each of the events, as well as study the possibility of creating an official Ottawa Garden Council.

Did You Know?

Wise words from Ralph Waldo Emerson: "What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered."

Getting to Know Sheila Carey

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

I think I just renewed my membership for the second time. I had full intentions of getting out to meetings, and wanted to learn more about gardening in the Ottawa area. Unfortunately, getting to meetings hasn't happened because of the timing, but I plan to try this year!

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

I've been gardening since I moved into my house in 2005. I still think of myself as a novice, as I have so much to learn! I'm always looking around at what other people in the neighbourhood have in their gardens for inspiration.

How would you describe your garden?

An ongoing project! I try to change something every year, but every winter I think I'm going to plan what I'm going to do, and somehow spring arrives with no new plan. So I'd have to say my garden is evolving, but not with a real plan. Some day!

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

I inherited a mature garden, but I've created more garden space than was here when I moved in. I guess the best features are some beautiful peony plants in the back garden. One thing I want to work on is to get some more variety in the colours. I have a lot of various shades of pink, and I'm trying to switch it up a bit. The thing I like the least is slugs! Those and a rhubarb plant at the back of the garden which acts as slug bait.

Are you the main gardener or do you have help?

I'm the gardener. It is a labour of love that I take care of all on my own. I

had a really busy spring and early summer last year, so it kind of got away from me and became a bit of a jungle. One of the nicest things about gardening, though, is that you get a chance to do it all again. Next year I swear I'm going to tackle the weeds early, though.



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

As I said above, I *always* plan to be more organized. I guess you could say that I plan to plan. I'm definitely a trial and error gardener. Eventually I want to get rid of the little section of lawn that I have and just have garden and path.

Are there gardening web sites that you look at regularly?

Google is my friend, so I end up looking at a variety of sites. I usually search online for help with issues. A couple of years ago, I was taking some of the Guelph horticultural courses, and found a lot of good sources of information -- horticultural societies (including this one) have a lot of useful information.

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

I love Mediterranean style gardens. The first garden that really struck me (before I had my own garden) was my landlady's in Santa Monica, where I lived for two years. She was a landscape designer, and the garden was really beautiful.

Another garden I loved was that of a friend who rents out a property in Modica, Sicily. It was filled with herbs and fruit, which he encouraged guests to use. Some day I think I need a Mediterranean garden of my own.

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

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