



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 2017 yearbook for a complete list of events for the year.

Website:

Ottawahort.org

January 24

Making Containers for Your Garden

Judy Wall

February 28 – Wildflowers and natural habitats in Gatineau Park

Tom Delsey and Gwynneth Evans

March 28 – Pollinator Friendly

Matt or Marianne Gee, Gees Bees

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

Winter Newsletter

CANADENSIS The Garden of Canada / Le Jardin du Canada

by Gerald Patricia Lajeunesse



Canadensis is a Latin term used in horticulture to identify plant species that means "of Canada." As of 2017 – a year that marks Canada's 150th anniversary as a nation – it is hoped that the name will be widely recognized within the National Capital Region and, as such, will become associated with a future, nationally-significant botanical garden, to be located in Canada's Capital. Located within the historic Central Experimental Farm and adjacent to the Rideau Canal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, "**Canadensis: The Garden of Canada / Le Jardin du Canada**" will be inaugurated, we hope, as a fitting legacy project for all Canadians.

Soon after the Central Experimental Farm was established in 1886, a plan was put in place to develop a botanical garden, and a piece of land was earmarked for that purpose.

The botanical garden was meant to enhance the Central Experimental Farm and to complement the National Arboretum where hundreds of tree species have been planted over the decades. However, the plan for a botanical garden component was never realized.

In 1998, a volunteer-led, not-for-profit organization organized and began work to turn an old idea into a reality. Since then, the Canadensis Botanical Garden Society (CBGS) has promoted the idea of a botanical garden in Canada's Capital.

The plan is to transform a 34-acre piece of Experimental Farm land just south of the National Arboretum, the same footprint that originally formed part of the "Dominion Arboretum and Botanic Garden", into a meaningful botanical garden experience. In the foreseeable future, community residents and visitors to our city would be able to travel by water taxi from downtown Ottawa and, stepping off the boat at the Hartwells Locks of the Rideau Canal, would find themselves entering "**Canadensis: The Garden of Canada / Le Jardin du Canada**." The garden would complete the vision of the National Capital Commission of creating a horticultural node in the capital, along with the Arboretum, the Fletcher



Wildlife Garden, the Central Experimental Farm's Ornamental Beds, and Commissioners' Park.

Through Canadensis, visitors would explore today's reality and challenges. Various garden displays, each with its own landscaping narrative, including a Children's Garden, an Aboriginal Garden, Embassy Gardens, and several gardens representing Canada's regional diversity, its provinces and territories, would centre around a major water feature in the southern part of the Garden. This sector would also feature a Visitors' Centre and a contemporary Conservatory, open year-round.

In the northwestern sector, a number of research laboratories and gardens would be arranged like the spokes of a wheel radiating from the towering "green silo". Here, displays would be arranged according to themes that are especially relevant to life in 21st century Canada, including Climate Change, Microclimate Manipulation, Urban Agriculture, Economy Garden, Urban Landscape and Garden Design, to name a few.

As well, displays and laboratories would focus on innovative approaches to climate change and environmental sustainability that are being pioneered in Canada. A learning centre with classroom, library and design studio facilities would be located in a transformed, traditional barn that has stood on the site for years.

Thus, Canadensis will be a dynamic place, with a focus on youth and family attractions, and will feature many temporary exhibitions and events in all seasons of the year. In the northeast sector, an events pavilion is planned alongside exhibit grounds, with a canal-side amphitheatre and elaborate floral displays.

The Garden, as a place of beauty, relaxation and entertainment, will have something for every segment of the population from toddlers to seniors. As a centre for research, learning and education, however, and as an event venue, it will focus on youth and families.

It is realistic to expect that this horticultural

destination will unfold gradually over the next several years. In 2017, the CBGS is poised to announce the creation of Canadensis as a legacy project with a detailed masterplan outlining site preparation, infrastructure development and a funding strategy, with actual work being undertaken progressively in the following years as funding and resources permit.



It is conceivable that a grand opening could occur between 2020 and 2022, with a focus on a distinctive conservatory, visitor centre and research / learning facilities as an initial phase. The remaining entertainment installations and horticultural displays would be put in place as subsequent phases.

Following on successful events at the future site in 2014 and 2016, a third summer exhibition is presently being planned and organized. Similar to previous exhibitions, the *Canadensis 2017 - Beyond the Edge Gardens Exhibition* would be a temporary outdoor event opening mid-June until mid-September. It is also hoped that a spectacular public evening, closing gala event would celebrate in grand fashion the impending realization of a century-old dream.

As stated earlier, the ultimate objective would be to launch the plan for a botanical garden in our nation's capital as part of the 150th celebrations in 2017 and – through dynamic, interactive displays and programming – to inform and inspire both residents of our community and visitors alike of the need to engage, explore and participate in the wonders of horticulture and our natural environment.

You are invited to become a member of the CBGS by visiting the website: www.canadensisgarden.ca

President's Message

Over The Garden Gate

by Jamie Robertson

Canada's early settlers brought plants or seeds with them when they arrived and as they moved across the land. Over the years, gardeners traditionally saved their own seeds, and exchanged cuttings or divisions with neighbours, family, and friends. They also shared gardening wisdom and lore.

Today, gardeners have much greater opportunities. They can access a far broader range of plant material. But we have lost something important. Gardening is not part of the shared experiences of the community.

The Ottawa Horticultural Society is very much dedicated to helping spread knowledge about gardening. Our monthly talks provide gardeners – both novice and experienced – with the opportunity to learn something new, to develop their skills and expertise. The informal exchanges between members are also very important.

The OHS is a great place to learn new information, and for newer gardeners to meet and learn from more experienced ones. While there are lots of wonderful books on gardening, there is also a great deal that is best transmitted directly from one gardener to another. This is especially true when talking about our region's unpredictable climate and the variety of soil types found across the city.

Recently, the OHS has initiated programs to mentor new members, and to put people in touch with members who can help them out or answer specific questions. These are not intended to replace the discussions that go on at meetings and other events, but to augment them.

The OHS recognizes that it is not always easy to meet new people. So, we want to try to assist the process.

Like all organizations, the OHS needs and wants new members who keep our organization vital. But the challenge is to attract more young people and beginner gardeners. All of us were there at one point ourselves. Now it is our turn to pass on to others our own experiences and findings about gardening.

If you are interested in helping out with the mentoring program, or in helping newer members with your knowledge, we would like to hear from you. If you see a new face at a meeting or plant sale, introduce yourself and ask if you can help them out.

Gardening is a life-long learning experience. Perhaps while you offer your insights, the new younger members can, in turn, offer you new approaches or new trends. In the end, everyone's garden benefits from the exchange.

Did You Know

Thanks to the efforts of John Lubrun, caretaker at the Sunnyside Branch of the Ottawa Public library, and to the plant contributions of gardeners in the area, the garden beds at the north end of the library have long been admired and even given awards. So when John retired last May, there was considerable concern regarding the future of the garden beds. Not to worry, though. A local group of volunteer gardeners whose name is "Green Dreamers" received permission to maintain the beds and, in no time at all, the garden was weeded, spruced up, and looking every bit as attractive as before. Kudos go out to the Green Dreamers for their contribution to keeping up the library grounds on Bank Street in Old Ottawa South.

The History of the Ottawa Horticultural Societies Between 1854 and 1892

by Jeff Blackadar

Present research shows there were Ottawa Horticultural Societies (with some variance in the name) with documented activities from 1854-1859, 1862-1866, 1872-1873, 1878-1882, and 1892-present. Starting from 1854, each time the Ottawa Horticultural Society incorporated, its membership included people who were active in the previous society and this connection continued through 1892 to our Society today. The struggle to found a Horticultural Society in Ottawa that would continue for decades, instead of just a few years, reflects the resilience of the Ottawa Horticultural Society's members of the nineteenth century, and it is indeed fortunate a group of them gathered in the fall of 1892 to decide to try again.

Our current Ottawa Horticultural Society was established in 1892 and incorporated under the Province of Ontario's Agricultural and Arts Act of 1857 (revised 1887). By that date, other cities in Ontario such as Cobourg, Hamilton, Kingston, London, Peterborough, and Toronto already had Horticultural Societies incorporated under this decades-old legislation. When it came to the Victorian interest in gardening, had these other cities left the capital of Canada behind? In fact, 1892 was the fifth time a Horticultural Society had been founded in Ottawa. Furthermore, Dr. James Fletcher, who in 1898 served as one of the first presidents of the OHS, had also served as one of the directors of the earlier Valley of Ottawa Horticultural Society.

When looking at this history it is important to note that Horticultural Societies were legally incorporated under provincial legislation with a mandate to encourage horticulture. Notice of incorporation was published in the province's Gazette and the activities of the society had to comply with the legislation. Horticultural Societies were not merely clubs and only one could exist in a city.

1854–1859

A clue to the history of the Ottawa Horticultural Society before 1892 is found in Belden's Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Carleton from 1879: "There was a Horticultural Society organized in Ottawa as early as 1854...which survived some two years, but was followed by others from time to time, each of which succumbed after an equally brief existence."

And so the story of Horticultural Societies in Ottawa stretches back to March 9, 1854, when our city was called Bytown. The meetings and shows of that period's Ottawa Horticultural Society, one that functioned until 1859, are well-documented in a minute book from that time that also contains newspaper clippings related to the Society.

1862-1866

The history of the Horticultural Society in the 1860s is quite straightforward. On August 18, 1862, the Minister of Agriculture gave notice in the Canada Gazette of the incorporation of a horticultural society in the City of Ottawa. Known as the Royal Horticultural Society of Ottawa, it held shows until at least 1866.

1872-1873

An article in the Ottawa Free Press noted that the Ottawa Horticultural Society was founded on January 23, 1872, and correspondence with the Ottawa Agricultural Society indicates that the Horticultural Society of this period functioned until late 1873 at least.

1878-1882

Agricultural Societies were very similar to Horticultural Societies, and Ottawa also had an Agricultural Society from 1868-1882. It is also part of this story. The minute book of the Ottawa Agricultural Society (OAS) describes correspondence with "the Horticultural Society" in 1873 to cooperate on a fall show. A joint meeting of the Agricultural and Horticultural Societies decided that there was insufficient time to amalgamate their planned exhibitions, and the amalgamation was postponed to the spring of 1874. It would seem that some tension may have existed between the two societies over the holding of separate shows.

(A quotation from the Belden Atlas, page XII:

The present season, however, some dissatisfied members again started an independent society, advertised a very liberal prize list, and tried to forestall the Agricultural Society by appointing their show the week preceding the latter. But the people saw the game; the show didn't "draw" and not fifty per cent of the prizes were paid. This will probably teach people to take a real interest in those matters that "union is strength".)

It is from the schedule of one of these shows that we know that the Valley of Ottawa Horticultural Society held a show September 1-2, 1880, under the patronage of the Governor General and Princess Louise. James Fletcher, who was president of the OHS in 1898, is listed as a Society director in 1880. Incidentally, Sandford Fleming is listed as vice president. (Fleming was the proposer of worldwide standard time and a founding member of the Royal Society of Canada, among other accomplishments.)

An article in the August 14, 1878, issue of the Saturday Budget newspaper noted that the "first exhibition under the auspices of the Ottawa Horticultural Society will take place on the fourth or fifth of September next." Perhaps this is the show that drew the ire of some members of the Ottawa Agricultural Society as noted in the Belden Atlas of 1879? It appears that the in July, 1881, the Ottawa Agricultural Society proposed to merge its horticultural department with the Horticultural Society that had been running since 1878, since the OAS was winding down its operations under a debt burden from the purchase of exhibition land on Bank Street. This Horticultural Society existed until at least 1882.

Despite these references, the history of the Horticultural Societies through the 1870's-1880's is not always clear and the history outlined in this article on the Horticultural Societies in Ottawa throughout the nineteenth century is far from complete. Further research in the Ontario Archives may produce more evidence of the "Ottawa Horticul-

tural Society's" various incorporations in the Province of Ontario's Gazette. The Sessional Papers and Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario may contain reports from these Horticultural Societies. Letters and other documents from members and patrons of the Societies at this time may also help to tell the early story of the Society in more detail.

Did You Know

There are some trees that come in both male and female form, ginkgoes and magnolias being examples of this phenomenon. If fruit production isn't wanted for such trees, the home gardener may wish to specify the male form when purchasing one. (The ginkgo fruit, while perfectly edible, unfortunately has a strong and unpleasant smell.) Alas, planting a male form of a ginkgo, say, is no guarantee that fruit will never be produced because sometimes one branch on a male tree will spontaneously change to the female form. Once that happens, eventually the whole tree will become female. Robert Glendinning, who is on the staff of the Central Experimental Farm and who was our guide for the 2015 OHS tree tour, knows of specific ginkgo and magnolia specimens on the Farm where this intersex process has occurred.

Even very old trees can occasionally undergo a partial sex change. According to a report in Pink News on November 3, 2015, Europe's oldest tree sprouted some berries last year. The 3,000 year old Fortingall Yew which grows in Perthshire, Scotland had always been a male – so, no berries. You can imagine how people were startled by the phenomenon.

The Ottawa Horticultural Society – the Early Days

The Ottawa Horticultural Society is a living part of today's Ottawa, bringing together people, young and old, who love plants and love learning about plants. Yet the Society was born when Victoria was Queen and Ottawa was a newly fledged city just rising out of the swamps and wooded hills where the Ottawa and the Rideau Rivers meet.

The year was 1892 and a plank sidewalk along Elgin below Gilmour was an improvement project to be noted. There had been gardens and garden societies before in the city, but that autumn a group of local plant enthusiasts met at the City Hall to plan the launch of a Horticultural Society.

The purpose of the new Society was to "give instruction in the growing of fruits, vegetables and flowers and provide suitable conditions for exhibits of the products of members' gardens in due and proper season".

We still hold to this spirit, our stated purpose being to "encourage interest and improvement in horticulture".

Did You Know

The Ottawa Horticultural Society held a garden party in the summer of 1916 in the ornamental garden area of the Central Experimental Farm. While members of the OHS Ladies Auxiliary prepared and served the food and drink, it was the Farm who provided a marquee, seats, and milk, butter, fruit, and salad fixings. In July of 1917, the OHS held another tea and reception on the Farm. 700 people attended and also enjoyed a tour of the rose garden.

Greek Mythology in Your Garden

by Tuula Talvila

My son has an interest in stories from various mythologies and I read children's versions of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to him. While doing so, I was reminded that some of our plant names derive from Greek mythology. For instance, many people are familiar with the tale of Narcissus, the beautiful Greek lad who fell in love with his own reflection and subsequently fell into the pool when he tried to possess the alluring image. He was metamorphosed into a flower, and today we use his name for the genus of daffodils (and excessive self-love, or *narcissism*). I was also aware that Hyacinth and Daphne both come from Greek myths, but I became curious to see how many other examples there are that I wasn't already familiar with.

I did this the old-fashioned way and went to the library. By perusing a book entitled "*100 Flowers and How They Got Their Names*" by Diana Wells, it was easy to come up with a list of almost twenty plants whose names derive at least in part from a character in Greek myth. (I'm sure there are many more but this isn't my doctoral thesis so that is enough for my purposes.) Of those, I have selected several familiar plants to explore further. Several of the plants are known for the healing properties which feature in the myths, and many of the stories revolve around love. The Greek gods, as Diana Wells points out, had the power to turn the human objects of their affections into plants, in an attempt to preserve them forever, and "so it is that Daphne and Hyacinth and Narcissus, and all the poignancy of their loves, are still with us in our gardens." Although Wells also points out that "some of the plants that the Greek gods created to eternalize those they loved hardly seem worthwhile, because they aren't very long lived."

One plant, however, that can represent eternal love is the peony, which can live for a very long time. On the battlefields of the Trojan War described in Homer's *Iliad*, Paeon, physician to the gods, used various roots and herbs to treat wounds, but his

possession of these roots caused great jealousy to bloom in his teacher Asclepius, the god of healing. To protect Paeon, Zeus changed him into a plant, thus giving us the name for the peony genus, *Paeonia*. And, of course, *Asclepias* is the name of the genus of milkweeds.

One of the central characters of the Trojan War was Achilles, the half-human, half-god mighty warrior of the Greek side who commanded an army of soldiers called the Myrmidons. The Myrmidons were created by Zeus from an ant colony, taking their name from the Greek word for ant, *myrmex*. Modern derivations of *myrmex* include *myrmecology*, the study of ants, and *myrmecophory*, seed dispersal by ants as seen in the case of bloodroot.

To treat the wounds of his Myrmidons, Achilles used a blood-staunching plant known as allheal or bloodwort, but whose other common name, yarrow, may be more familiar. The botanical name of its genus, *Achillea*, honours Achilles.



Leaves of *Achillea millefolium* (yarrow)
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Despite the dangers, let's remain on the battlefield for a while longer and visit the tragic story of the great warrior hero Ajax, who fought on the side of the Greeks against the Trojans. After the death of Achilles, a quarrel ensued over who of the remaining Greek soldiers would be rewarded by receiving Achilles' magnificent armour. When it was decided that the armour would go to Odysseus, Ajax went temporarily mad. He ravaged the Greek camp and killed a ram that he thought was Odysseus. Upon recovering his senses, and in despair at seeing what he had done, Ajax killed himself on his own sword. Springing up from the ground where his blood had dripped were bright blue flowers with markings on the petals that resembled the Greek letters "AI, AI", a cry of mourning. These plants are the annual rocket larkspur, *Delphinium ajacis*, whose epithet refers to Ajax.



Ajax carrying the body of Achilles
Source: Wikimedia Commons

One Greek tale of eternal love is that of Selene, the moon, who gazed down every night on a beautiful young Greek shepherd named Endymion. So enamoured with him was Selene that she implored the boy's father, none other than Zeus, to make him immortal. Zeus put Endymion into an eternal sleep so that Selene could visit him every night, caressing him with her moonlight where he lay. Now picture a wooded glade at night with a carpet of nodding English bluebells lying bathed in the moonlight: *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* is the currently accepted botanical name for English bluebell, but it is a synonym for an older name, *Endymion non-scriptus*.

Apollo, another beautiful son of Zeus, was the god of music, medicine, archery, and prophecy. In his amorous pursuits, he managed to leave behind a botanical legacy of those who had once been the objects of his desires. For example, a young daughter of a river god caught the eye of Apollo, this after she had already spurned the attentions of several male admirers. Despite his insistence that he wished only to speak to her, she turned her back on Apollo and fled, never even seeing who her handsome admirer was. At last she came to the river where she begged her father to protect her from Apollo (and all those other pesky men). He granted her wish and the nymph Daphne began to solidify into a laurel tree just as Apollo approached. To honour Daphne, Apollo wore a crown of laurel leaves taken from her branches, and we have the name *Daphne* for the genus of laurels.

Another of Apollo's loves was a beautiful Spartan prince named Hyacinthus, but there was a second admirer who also loved the boy and grew jealous - Zephyrus, the god of the west wind. One day while Apollo and Hyacinthus were throwing a discus, Zephyrus seized the discus and blew it against Hyacinthus' skull, killing him. From his spilled blood sprang a flower, bending towards the ground like his head over Apollo's shoulder - the hyacinth, genus *Hyacinthus*.

Another boy who was a beloved of Apollo was Cypris, who had a tamed stag as a companion, a gift from Apollo. In an accident, Cypris struck and killed the stag with his javelin. His grief was so great that he asked Apollo to let him cry forever and he was transformed into a tree. The boy's name gives us the name of the tree, whose sap forms droplets like tears on the trunk, and is a traditional symbol of mourning - the cypress, and the botanical name for its genus, *Cupressus*. As Diana Wells writes, "so [Apollo] left a tree, a bush, and a flower - almost a complete small garden of metamorphosed passion."

The next time you are out in your garden after a rain shower and you look up to see a rainbow, think also of your freshly-watered irises.

If you were at the OHS AGM in December you may have learned from the plant quiz that *iris* is the Greek word for rainbow and applies to both the plant name and the part of the eye (because of its many colours). The goddess Iris was the rainbow personified and served as messenger of the Greek gods. She appears several times in the *Iliad*, bearing messages to Hector and Achilles from Zeus or his wife Hera. Her rainbow was also a connection between the earth and other worlds, and it was she who escorted souls along her *iridescent* bridge to another life. The distance between the thoughts of humans and the gods was also bridged via her rainbow.

The Greek stories and characters provided inspiration for Carl Linnaeus as he devised the botanical binomial names for many plant species. As with so many other aspects of ancient

Greek culture, the mythology is an enduring presence in modern times and can even be seen blooming in our gardens.

Reference:

Wells, Diana. (1997.) *100 Flowers and How They Got Their Names*. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC. 257pp.

Roman Gardens

by Sheila Carey

This is the first article on the theme of historic gardens. We hope to feature gardens in particular eras or specific gardens in history on a regular basis. If you have a particular area of interest and would like to contribute, please contact the Editor.

Ancient Romans had a rich tradition of gardening. Gardens ranged from small, utilitarian plots for growing herbs, vegetables, and fruit, to formal gardens in villas, public gardens, and parks. Although Roman gardens had their 'roots' in practicality, gardens were also an important feature of the Roman villa, whether an urban villa, or a suburban villa built for relaxation. By the mid-first century B.C., gardens had become entertainment spaces with plants, statues, and elaborate water features.

It is difficult to separate discussion of a Roman garden from Roman architecture. A Roman villa garden generally featured a roofed colonnade, or portico, of evenly spaced columns around a courtyard, or peristyle. There would be a pool or fountain in the centre, and possibly sculptures, and stone and marble furniture. Transition from the garden to the house was often aided by garden paintings along the walls of the columned space.

Remains of urban gardens can be seen in the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum. The House of the Vettii is a particularly well-preserved house and garden complexes. One can see how the garden, surrounded by a colonnade acted as a central focus of a house. The house did not have windows facing out onto the street, so the central focus was key.



House of the Vettii

By Patricio Lorente - ?, CC BY-SA 2.5,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=313915>

Archaeological excavations focus not only on the architecture of these complexes, but also on finding evidence of which species had been planted in the gardens. In the Villa Poppaea, (or Villa Oplontis) for instance, modern-day replanting was only done after the gardens' original plant types and locations had been identified. This is a very large villa, thought to have been owned by the wife of Emperor Nero.



Villa Poppaea

Source: Wikimedia Commons

For a North American reconstruction of a Roman villa and its garden, one need look no further than the Getty Villa in Malibu, California. The Villa was built by J. Paul Getty originally to house his art collection, which now is featured in two separate museums. Getty intended to recreate the Villa dei Papiri in Herculaneum, Italy. There are four gardens at the Getty Villa, including an inner and outer peristyle garden, a small herb garden, and the East Garden, as well as impressive water features. The latter have been turned off due to drought conditions in California.

A complex Roman garden featured ivy, acanthus, myrtle, box, plane, and Cyprus trees. Some trees, such as olives and citrus, were grown in large pots.



Getty Villa Internal Peristyle
Source: Wikimedia Commons

The plants in the Getty gardens are similar to those that would have been found in a Roman garden, including trees such as boxwood, acanthus, bay laurel, and yew, and fruit trees such as olives, fig, cherry, and pomegranate. Romans also planted herbs for both medicinal and culinary use, and the herb garden at the Getty grows herbs such as rosemary and thyme.



By I, Sailko, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11816482>

Large country estates had extensive garden areas traversed by tree-lined pathways where people could stroll. Pliny the Younger describes topiaries in country villas of the wealthy that represented hunting scenes, fleets of ships, and other fantastic creations. He describes the box hedges of his Tuscan villa as embellished by

“a sort of terrace, edged with box and shrubs cut into different shapes. You descend, from the terrace, by an easy slope adorned with the figures of animals in box, facing each other, to a lawn overspread with the soft, I had almost said the liquid, Acanthus: this is surrounded by a walk enclosed with evergreens, shaped into a variety of forms.”

The garden was an important part of Roman life, not just for practicality, but also for relaxation and entertainment.

Blessed with a moderate climate, Romans could enjoy their gardens year round. Visitors to Italy can still admire and enjoy the year round gardens of modern day Italians in Rome and beyond.

Sources:

Roman Gardens, Anne Jennings. English Heritage, London, 2006.

<http://www.getty.edu/visit/villa/gardens.html>

<http://www.ancienthistoryarchaeology.com/ancient-roman-gardens>

http://catena.bgc.bard.edu/texts/pliny_tuscan.htm

Did You Know?

In celebration of National Forest Week in September 2016, the Canadian Forest Service launched *My Tree*, a mobile application that provides a short list of native trees and their hardiness zones. This app allows Canadians to identify their hardiness zone and determine which native trees are adapted to that particular climate and location.

My Tree is a free application available on Blackberry, Apple, and Android platforms.

<https://appworld.blackberry.com/webstore/content/59998824/?lang=fr&countrycode=CA>

<https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/my-tree/id1153592945?mt=8>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ca.gc.nrcan.mytree&hl=en>

Member to Member

The Editors:

There are OHS members who have a special interest in particular groups of plants. For some time now, we've been asking such gardeners to share their expertise by telling us about their favourite varieties, so that we can look for them when shopping for plants. In this instalment of the series, we've asked Josie Pazdzior for her favourite rock garden plants.

Rock Garden Plants

by Josie Pazdzior

I have long found rock gardens very appealing because of the way they suggest a larger natural landscape, let the rocks tell their story, and display such wonderful plants. However, many of these plants require specific conditions simply to survive: mainly, lean, gritty or sandy soil with excellent drainage and good sun. I am finally able to create the permanent rock garden I have wanted, on what I hope is to be our final home property. In the summer of 2015, we built hills and walls as the base, and I installed a bunch of perennials that fall. Happily, these all showed up in the spring of 2016: old favourites and many new ones, some on the list below. This list was tough to compile because of the many desirable plants – either already familiar to me, or recommended by others - that had to be left out.

Warning: It can be very difficult to identify definitively the particular species or cultivar (cv) of alpine plants, among the thousands grown by enthusiasts and listed in catalogues and seed exchanges. So don't lose the label, do record the exact name, and keep updated lists - something I struggle to do!

Gardening with plants that grow most happily among rocks offers many opportunities for trying sexy new plants; but as ever, it's "right plant in the right spot". Many perennials and woody plants do not need the alpine conditions described above but still like a cool deep run for their roots, under and beside rocks. Arrange them to display the best features of both plant and

Member to Member

rock. For example, certain small grasses and ferns can set off rocks wonderfully, while too much dense foliage may hide the beautiful stone and make gardening difficult. The rock garden should be viewed up close, to appreciate the delicate beauty of alpine gems. Also, alpines, especially the “buns” and “cushions”, tend to look attractive - or at least interesting - even when not in bloom.

Many of the genera listed below include a number of hardy species, far beyond the one or two mentioned. Nurseries in the Ottawa area usually offer a small selection of rock garden plants, but if you crave the more exotic species, buying seeds or plants by mail order is the way to go.

Before thinking about the tiny perfect alpines you dream of, consider that, as in any garden, you start with plants for structure and winter interest: conifers, and evergreen and deciduous shrubs and “subshrubs”. There are also many of the smaller perennials – or dwarf versions—that work well in a rock garden. Some choices are given in the three lists below, with examples from my limited experience.

Conifers & Shrubs Many dwarf and miniature conifers are bred from material such as witch's brooms.

- *Picea abies*, Norway Spruce, dwarf cultivars. Planted last fall in an exposed sunny spot, in half-sand, half-soil mix, this tiny tree grew less than an inch this last hot, dry summer but should have increased presence in the landscape as it matures. I added a very similar Norway Spruce in the crevice garden, a cultivar called 'Tomba'.



Miniature Norway Spruce

Shrubs: Look for miniature versions of familiar shrubs like Spirea, Deutzia, Cotoneaster, Daphne, Salix (Willow) and Rhododendron.

Daphne: With their glossy green leaves and fragrant flowers, small *Daphnes* are invaluable in the rock garden, where several different *Daphne* cultivars may be used. I found the hybrid 'Lawrence Crocker' grows reliably into an attractive mound, and propagates easily from cuttings.



Daphne x 'Lawrence Crocker'

Smaller and Dwarf Perennials

Bulbs, miniature Hostas, small ferns and grasses, woodland ephemerals – Trilliums, Virginia Bluebells, Bloodroot, Trout Lilies, if you have room and maybe some shade

Gaillardias – compact/dwarf types in shades of yellow, orange, and peach; long-lasting bloom until frost

Campanulas – Many smaller types available

Penstemons – e.g. *P. hirsutus pygmaeus*, bell-like mauve flowers in summer, foliage turns red in fall

Veronicas – *V. repens* and *V. prostrata* - creeping types of Veronica

Phloxes – Creeping Phloxes: cultivars of *P. subulata*, (Moss Pink), *P. stolonifera*, and *P. douglasii*

Sedums - *S. ewersii* and many more species for rock gardens

Dianthus – Pinks or Sweet William: *D. gratianopolis*, *D. deltoides*, and more for rock gardens

For shadier spots: *Aruncus aethusifolius* (Dwarf Goatsbeard), dwarf *Epimedium* (Barrenwort), dwarf *Astilbe chinensis* or *A. pumila*, and a popular alpine, *Ramonda myconi*.

Alpine Favourites for Rock Gardens

Note: These alpines mostly require more or less the same conditions: very well-drained, lean soil and lots of sun, but also some protection with a stone / inorganic mulch. If your plants don't flower well, the soil may be too rich.

Lewisia, Bitterroot. *Lewisia cotyledon* has a basal rosette of succulent leaves and sprays of pretty flowers in pink, orange, and peach shades. It is 6" high, summer-blooming with possible repeat, and is reputedly difficult to grow. It needs really good drainage to avoid crown rot, and some shade from hot sun is appreciated. Plant it in a rock crevice. You'll often see it in Ottawa garden centres.



Lewisia cotyledon

Gentiana, sp. The true blue of gentians is gardeners' joy. *G. acaulis* (Trumpet Gentian) blooms in spring, and is good in paving stones and limy soil. *G. septemfida* blooms later in the season on longer stems and is said to be easy to grow; I planted a dwarf cv called *G. septemfida* var. *lagodechiana* in the rock garden, and sure enough, it produced a flower only two months later.

Member to Member



Gentiana acaulis in
MBG Alpine Garden

Delosperma, Ice Plant. Brilliant daisy-type flowers in many possible colours top the spreading mat of fleshy leaves. Only 2-3" high, the succulent leaves look attractive all season. New cultivars appear on the market regularly, e.g. 'Alan's Apricot', a Plant Select choice.



Delosperma hybrid 'Jewel of the Desert Peridot' in November garden

Scabiosa caucasica and *S. columbaria*. *Scabiosa*, or pincushion flower, is grown in regular garden beds; the smaller varieties thrive in well-drained, dry, sunny spots, and will self-seed there. *S. columbaria* var. *ochroleuca* has small lemony-cream-coloured flowers that continue to appear through summer into fall. I deadheaded my largest plant often and it flowered for months.



Scabiosa columbaria var. *ochroleuca*

Campanula pocharskyana 'Blue Waterfall', Serbian Bellflower. This lovely mauve dwarf bellflower continues to

put out cascading blooms if deadheaded after the first more abundant flowering. *C. carpatica* also works well in most rock gardens, though it's a bit bigger.



Blue Waterfall Blooms in November

Aubrieta deltooides, Rock Cress. Another long-popular plant is rock cress, which will reflower if cut back after the first bloom. It comes in many shades of pink, rose, and purple, and is easily grown from seed.



Purple Rock Cress with Saxifrage also blooming.

Primulas Many primulas grow well among rocks in the shade, but there are smaller ones for rock gardens, such as *P. auricula*, and *P. marginata*, which will take more sun than the others as long as they get enough water.



P. marginata.

Plants We Hate

by Sue Chalmers

Goutweed Or Bishop's Curse - "The cockroach of the botanical world in terms of its survival skills!"

From behind the fence at the bottom of our garden came the voice of our new neighbour. She was begging me to pull the heavy landscape material under the fence through to our side, and secure it down with bricks. "I've got Goutweed" the voice said, "If I'd known I would never have bought this house!"

Just retired from several engagements in Afghanistan as an embedded front-line Naval lawyer, she was now in frantic combat with this super-aggressive plant. We invited her over to our garden, as she'd expressed interest in a pinewood tree stump that she wanted to saw down and carve. She could hardly concentrate on this mission as she compulsively pounced on goutweed growing on our side of her fence. She informed us quite seriously of how much time she's spent on her knees methodically removing the underground trails of goutweed roots on her side, and we could tell that she was wanting to come and remove all traces from our side!!

Still sold in nurseries, goutweed is a beast to eradicate, but is not yet listed as a noxious weed in Canada. It has a web of underground rhizomes, and is happy in a range of soil conditions, thriving aggressively in shade, partial shade, and full sun. It sneaks between fences, and hides in the roots of shrubs and plants, making it impossible to remove. Once planted the green or variegated plant takes over, and will be just about the only plant you'll grow. If goutweed is in your Garden it's in your neighbour's too!



Goutweed

Member to Member

I fell in love with this charming and attractive plant! Gooseneck loosestrife is an erect clump-forming perennial. Growing on 12-18 inch stems are tapered panicles of closely-packed, small star-shaped white flowers, the stems arching gracefully and resembling goose heads. The plants quickly grow into densely packed 2 ft-3ft ranks and march aggressively, spreading throughout the border and crowding out any other perennials in their path. This loosestrife is not suitable for a small garden as it demands space to itself in a good-sized border. In my small garden, it quickly became a very wide patch and had to be removed. However, I could quite understand how it is valued by florists in fresh cut flower arrangements. So if you have a whole area to devote to gooseneck loosestrife, feature it, but it pays to read about the growing habits first!!



Gooseneck Loosestrife (*Lysimachia clethroides*)
 Dominicus Johannes Bergsma - Own work,
 CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=50628664>

Did You Know?

The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm and Sanderling Press have published a terrific new book about the history of the ornamental gardens on the Farm. "Blooms" is a handsome hardcover publication, containing many beautiful photographs to complement the text, and there are several mentions of the OHS in it. It costs \$35 and is available for purchase at the Friends of the Farm office (building 72 on the Farm) and at many bookstores in town.

Frost Seeding

by Blaine Marchand

Although the cold winds have layered our gardens in drifts of snow that will linger in Ottawa until the end of March or early April, we are intrepid gardeners. And so our thoughts are already turning to next year's gardening season. We eagerly anticipate the earth softening and the ground firming up so we can make our way into the greening world.

But for those who simply cannot wait that long, do you know that you can seed your lawns as early as mid-March and continue into April? According to the latest trend, these months are an ideal time to get outside and start building a lawn that will complement gardens. The process is called frost seeding.

As the frost begins to leave the earth, the soil surface expands and contracts allowing the moisture to escape. This creates a "honeycombing effect", so called because the soil's surface is composed of web holes. Broadcasting by hand – well, by mittens really as March in Ottawa can still be downright frigid – will put the seeds in contact with the thawing soil, where they will work their way into that honeycomb and start to germinate. As the sun strengthens, the soil heats up, and the melting snow and the late winter and early spring rains ensure adequate moisture for the seed. So, the grass begins to sprout.

The key for success is to keep the ground surface damp. In fact, after April, continual watering is required until the turf is fully established and has been mowed three or four times. Watering after this is only on an as-needed basis.

Frost seeding is also being promoted by the Ontario government for use in agricultural fields (www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/98-071.htm). It has been found that frost seeding, fed by the thawing and freezing through spring, creates a thicker pasture, which means better grazing for livestock.

In 2009, the Agriculture Canada Research Station in Kapuskasing, Ontario, designated selected fields to test frost seeding the following year. The station used cattle in the autumn to ensure that the chosen fields were grazed bare. This allowed the seed to be broadcast on free soil and guaranteed more light for the germinating grasses.

The following April, when snow was still on the ground – remember, this is Kapuskasing – red clover seed was spread on the fields by an all-terrain vehicle. The rate of seeding was 10 lbs per acre. In early June, tests showed that the red clover made up 50 per cent or more of the forage areas. Further, as a control in 2011, red clover was spread in other fields, but only at a rate of 5 lbs per acre. It should be noted that this time, the grass on the fields had not been grazed off by the cattle. In this case, tests showed the red clover percentage increased less than 15 percent.

In agriculture, frost seeding is beneficial in areas where the pasture or hay field has been depleted of legumes. As gardeners know, legumes take nitrogen from the air and fix it in the soil for plants, in this case grass roots, to use.

While frost seeding is being promoted as the latest concept, it actually replicates nature's way of spreading seed from plants onto the ground during the fall. However, with global warming and more frequent winter thaws, seeds can be tricked into germinating too early or can be washed away. Frost seeding allows seeds to germinate in a welcoming environment just as the soil temperature warms.

There is another early spring technique for lawns that I observed my former Italian neighbour doing for many years. He would broadcast granules of fertilizer across the snow still covering his lawn. When I inquired what he was doing, he informed me that the fertilizer melts through the snow. Then, as the warming spring sun melts the remnants of snow, the moisture brings the fertilizer down to feed the roots and the emerging

Member to Member

grass. His lawn was always a deep rich velvety green, of which he was immensely proud.

What's in a Name: *Kniphofia* and *Knautia*

by Robin Woods

We all recognise the flamboyant flowering heads of the red hot poker, garden plants in the genus *Kniphofia*. This genus contains about 68 species, native mostly to Africa but also found in Madagascar and the Yemen. Eleven cultivars have been given the [Royal Horticultural Society's Award of Garden Merit](#). *Kniphofia* was first described in 1794 by the German botanist Conrad Moench (1744 – 1805) and named in honour of Johann Hieronymus Kniphof (1704 – 1763), a German physician, botanist, and the Rector of the University of Erfurt.



Kniphofia

We are also familiar with the less striking flowers of the Macedonian scabious and the field scabious in the genus *Knautia*, a genus that occurs in Europe and Asia. The common name, scabious, comes from the use of these plants in folk medicine to treat scabies. Some species of *Knautia* have the common name of Widow Flower but I cannot find any derivation for this. The genus *Knautia* was named by Linnaeus in honour of Christian Knaut (1656 – 1716) and of his brother Christoph Knaut (1638 – 1694), both of whom were German physicians and botanists.



Knautia

As both *Kniphofia* and *Knautia* are named after German physicians, I checked to see how their names should be pronounced in German. The web site www.forvo.com deals with pronunciation in various languages and I found *Kniphofia* in German. All of the letters in *Kniphofia* are emphasized in German and it is pronounced k-nip-hof-ee-yah. I couldn't find *Knautia* in German but I did find it in Dutch, in which both the k and the n are emphasized and it is pronounced k-nowt-ee-yah.

In Standard English, the kn at the beginning of a word is pronounced as an n – as in knight or knife. I checked the Oxford English Dictionary and could see no exceptions. So in English the first syllable of *Knautia* and *Kniphofia* begins with an n sound. But what about the subsequent syllables? I thought that *Knautia* would be straightforward – I was wrong. It can be pronounced not-ee-yah, now-shi-ah or naw-shi-yah, and even, according to www.telegraph.co.uk, as naw-ti-er (naughtier!). Take your pick!

What about *Kniphofia*? Should the syllables be pronounced nip-hof-ee-yah, nif-oaf-ee-yah or nif-oaf-ay-yah? According to several sources, the ph is pronounced as an f and both nif-oaf-ee-yah and nif-oaf-ay-yah are acceptable! To be really certain that your listener understands just say 'red hot poker' or 'scabious'!

OHS Matters

Shows Corner

by Gillian Macdonnell

The Fall Show was notable for demonstrating the bounty of the autumn. Classes for ornamental grasses, rare vegetables, and collections of perennials and foliage were well-populated. Emilie Henkelman received the highest aggregate in Design, winning the Culley Trophy and cash prize; Gillian Macdonnell received highest aggregate in the Horticulture – Open classes and won the Margaret Driscoll Trophy; and Nina Prestera received highest aggregate for Horticulture – Novice, earning the Madame Vanier Bowl. Congratulations, Nina!

With the exception of the Mary Bryant Trophy, which was awarded and presented to Emilie Henkelman in June, the Summer, Fall and Show Year prizes are presented at the Annual General Meeting, held on December 6, 2016. The following members received these (virtual) trophies and the cash prizes to go with them:

Emilie Henkelman

The Mary Bryant Award
Best Design Incorporating native plants

The J.R. Menzies Award
Highest Aggregate Horticulture Open (Summer)

The Thomas Monette Award
Highest Aggregate Horticulture Open, Native Plants (Summer)

The Culley Trophy
Highest Aggregate Design (Fall)

The Devonshire Trophy
Highest Aggregate Design Open (Show Year)

Gillian Macdonnell

The Margaret Driscoll Trophy
Highest Aggregate Horticulture Open (Fall)

The Tweedsmuir Cup
Highest Aggregate Horticulture

OHS Matters

The A.H. Pratt Trophy
Highest Aggregate Special Exhibits (Show Year)

Sheila Burvill

The A.J. Frieman Trophy
Highest Aggregate Horticulture Open, Native Plants, Novice (Summer)

Nina Prestera

The Madame Vanier Bowl
Highest Aggregate Horticulture, Novice (Fall)

Viscountess Willingdon Trophy
Highest Aggregate Horticulture, Novice (Show Year)

In 2017, we will again have two Shows: a Summer Show at the June meeting that will highlight native plants, and a Fall Show that will be more general. Get your gardens ready and your designs in hand as we celebrate Canada's 150th Anniversary!

Shows Corner Native Plants – Exhibition and Use in Decorative Arrangements by Marilyn HS Light

Both the Summer and Fall shows, June 27 and Sept. 26, 2017, respectively, will have Entry Classes for native plant material as Specimens (Horticultural Division), and in the Special Exhibits and Design Divisions. Here are some suggestions for potential exhibitors as to which plants are considered native, how native plant material is best exhibited, and how such material might be used in design entries.

The term 'native plant' can be interpreted differently according to the intent of the writer and reader. For our purposes, we consider 'native' plants as primarily those that could be found growing in the greater Ottawa area, but with an understanding that the range of many native plants extends broadly into west Quebec, eastern On-

tario, and points beyond. Our region is remarkably diverse in terms of geology, soil type, plant habitat, and growing zones, but native plants sourced from our region have the best chance in our gardens, provided their habitat and soil requirements are met. These species serve regionally-adapted pollinators and other organisms that use these species as food. Many native species are available as seed-raised plants from, for example, the OHS Plant Auction and Sale, and the Fletcher Wildlife Garden Plant Sale, as well as from some specialist nurseries.

Any plant material entered in the Horticulture Division must have been grown by the exhibitor. As with other garden plant material, flowering stems and foliage stems, including fern fronds, are best conditioned before the show. A majority of blooms should be fully open; foliage stems including fern fronds should be selected from mature material not prone to wilt. To condition material, cut stems in the early morning of the show day and immediately plunge stems in deep clean water. Recut the stems while they are immersed in a bucket, and keep the material in a cool shaded place. It is useful to have some replacement stems to avoid disappointment. Avoid crowding specimens for transport.

Some suggestions for the Summer show include: *Allium cernuum* (Nodding Onion), *Asclepias incarnate* and *A. tuberosa* (Swamp Milkweed, Butterfly Milkweed respectively), *Campanula rotundifolia* (Bellflower), *Geranium maculatum* (Wild Geranium), *Helianthus helianthoides* (False Sunflower), *Iris versicolor* (Blue Flag Iris), *Lilium philadelphicum* (Wood Lily), *Maianthemum racemosum* (Solomon's Plume), *Penstemon digitalis* (Foxglove Beardtongue), *P. hirsutus* (Hairy Beardtongue), *Phlox divaricata* (Wild Blue Phlox), *Rudbeckia hirta* (Black-eyed Susan), and *Smilax herbacea* (Smilax). I grow most of these species and have found them to bloom in June, but as always, weather can affect expected outcomes.

Some natives unsuitable for exhibition include Blue-Eyed Grass that only opens in full sun, New England Aster

whose blooms are prone to close at dusk, and Maidenhair Fern because its fronds are so very fragile.

Ferns that form sturdy fronds are the best choices for both Horticulture and Design classes. These include the Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), Sensitive Fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), and the Shield Fern (*Dryopteris marginalis*). Remember to handle fronds with care.

Please consider the size and robustness of your native plants before removing leafy stems with or without flowers. For example, cutting a lily stem removes the foliage that would provide photosynthetic product (sugars) toward formation of the next season's bulb. One stem might be removed if the clump is robust, but always leave some foliage on the remaining stem portion. With *Allium cernuum*, removal of flowering stems is possible without damaging foliage.

Plan to include some native plants in your garden so as to be ready for upcoming shows. You may be surprised at just how easy they are to grow, how colourful they are, and how pollinator-friendly some will be. Check out the following link to the Fletcher Wildlife Garden plant sale list for 2016. It will provide you with some additional information and ideas for plants to grow. We look forward to seeing lots of native plant entries in the 2017 shows. Good luck and happy gardening!

Fletcher Wildlife Garden Plant Sale List - 2016

<http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher/flora-fauna/wildflowers/database/2016plantsale.php?orderby=blooms>

We are saddened to tell you that our circulation manager, Catherine Montgomery, unexpectedly passed away on January 5, 2017. She had been an OHS member since 2011. Her obituary may be found at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/catherine-montgomery-obituary?pid=1000000183463298>

A Report on the OHS Archives

by Sheila Burvill

This is to let you know about recent developments regarding the OHS Archives, just in case you're wondering where the contents might be right now.

First, a little background. The Archives boxes (five of them) have been stored for several years now in our storage locker at City Centre. There were a few problems with this arrangement. Whenever anyone wanted to consult anything in the Archives, she or he had to get a pass key from one of the designated key card holders, go to the storage unit, move out some sandwich boards, a table or two, boxes of Shows supplies, maybe a trophy or two or three, and whatever odds and ends had been piled on top of the Archives boxes. Furthermore, storing old and sometimes fragile material in plastic boxes is not ideal for the paper, photographs, cloth ribbons, etc. that make up much of that material. Moreover, a few items in the Archives didn't really belong to the OHS at all.

Two years ago, we contacted the City of Ottawa Archives to see whether they would be willing to accept ownership of a couple of the older and more fragile items, notably a minute book from the long-defunct Ottawa Valley Gardeners and Florist Club, and a crumbling OHS membership list from 1922. During the course of our discussions, we learned that OHS material formerly housed in the National Archives was being transferred to the City Archives, and that City Archives staff was discussing a transfer of OHS material from the Ottawa Room of the Ottawa Public Library to the newly built state-of-the-art facility of the City of Ottawa Archives.

So it made sense that our own archival material be offered to the City facility to consolidate all archival material related to the OHS in one place, and also to ensure that the items we were keeping in plastic boxes would be properly stored in conservation conditions. The OHS Board agreed, and so Dorothy (DJ) Smith and I went through all five OHS Archives boxes to see

what, if anything, we should retain in our storage locker and what would be better off being transferred to the City. We agreed that we should keep whatever copies of OHS publications we have in the locker but that the rest be reviewed by City archivists to see if they wished to have ownership transferred into their hands. (The City Archives don't accept just anything offered to them; all possible donations are evaluated by a committee to decide on the suitability of each item to the overall archival collection of the City of Ottawa.)

At the same time, we were asked by the Board to talk to the City archivists about our trophies, which you may know have not been cleaned or used for several years due to the lack of a volunteer to do these jobs. We took two sample trophies - one with a Rideau Hall association and a more standard example. As with other types of donations, City archivists understand the work and storage burden associated with silver trophies so they were not initially enthusiastic about any such transfer. However, once they realized that many of the trophies represented some significant history of Ottawa, either because of the Rideau Hall connection or because a trophy was given to the OHS by one of the "great and good" of Ottawa society, their interest was definitely piqued. Having said that, though, there are some trophies the City Archives are pretty sure they would not want. We left the two sample trophies plus a list of all the OHS trophies to help in their decision-making.

So that's where the OHS archival material currently is - our publications are in two plastic boxes in our storage unit, the rest plus two representative trophies are at the City Archives being assessed for suitability in the City collection.

Of course, if it should happen that the OHS ends up transferring most or all of the archives contents to the City, there really can't continue to be something we can call the OHS Archives and we therefore won't need an OHS Archivist. But we certainly will want to do historical research about our Society. We therefore proposed to the

Board that a position of OHS Historian be established if and when the OHS Archives are all consolidated at the City of Ottawa Archives.

New OHS Members

Mildred Austin
Pamela Barber
Pat Beechey
Rosalind Bennett
Diane Blander
Janice Cadieux and Pat Rochon
Donna Chan
Ian and Christine Cope
Mary and Emile Daniel
Edythe Falconer
Chris Fracassi
Katja Gillmore
Jill Hopkins
Barbara Horger
Elaine Hoskins
Kenella Johnston
Linda Kralik
Julie Martin and Lisa Gunn
Shannon McInnis
Barbara McKenzie
Myrna Pelletier
Sharon Platts
Ian and Vicky Pringle
Linda Seymour
J Straby
Deborah Watt
Katherine Webber

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Getting to Know Kathy Wallace

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

I have been a member of the OHS since August, 2003. Sheila Burvill and I were working for the same organization at the time, and she recruited a few of her colleagues.



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

I had a tiny garden when I lived in a townhouse for eight years. I moved to my current house with much more property in 1990. I guess that I've been gardening for a long time but I still feel that I have lots to learn, and that the garden is far from perfect.

How would you describe your garden?

I think of the garden as pleasant but rather ordinary. I'm in a semi-detached house, and the front garden is a small 20 ft x 6 ft border between the porch and an arctic blue willow shrub, by the eavestrough downspout. The area includes a variety of small hostas, some phlox, a PeeGee hydrangea, and a few other perennials. I tend to put annuals in pots and move those around as needed.

The back yard is quite large, with 7 garden areas, currently some doing better than others. I used to have quite a lot of shade in the yard but have now lost most of the trees, which has changed the exposure significantly. One remaining shaded area has a small woodland garden with some trilliums, Jack-in-the-pulpits, and yellow lady's slippers - all relocated through the years from the garden at our family cottage on Lake Huron. In the past few years, I have added quite a few more hostas to my gardens and have roughly 60 varieties now.

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

The woodland garden area is a favorite for sentimental reasons, since many of the native plants were once at our family cottage. When I bought the house in 1990, there was a colourful large perennial bed measuring about 20 ft x 20 ft - possibly a vegetable garden at one point. The soil was very poor and many of the plants within it

were quite invasive. I finally dug up the last of the plants just in the past couple of years, downsized the plot, and had it re-shaped. It is now much easier to access and will require less maintenance.

The areas that still need lots of work are the borders at the right side and the far back of the property. They are difficult to work with because there are tree and shrub roots present - although the trees have now died and been cut down. In 2017, I will likely be removing an old hedge and a metal fence, and will have both areas properly fenced. Many of the plants will spend at least part of that year in pots. Possibly, I'll be able to address the root problem then too.

Among my favourite plants are phlox, coneflowers, columbines, and hostas. The garden has quite a lot of pink, white, and blue, but less orange, red, and yellow.

Are you the main gardener or do you have help?

I used to do all the garden work, but then later hired help to cut the grass. I now have someone who cuts grass and also helps where needed. He does the spring and fall cleanups, and does things like weeding, top dressing, and mulching when asked. I still do planting, deadheading, and some weeding, but the help makes it easier if it is a hot humid summer. I spend less time in the garden as I get older. Spending many hours working outside tends to lead to aches and pain now.

Do you have plans for your garden?

Are there things in it you would do differently?

The garden is still a work in progress. I have now got rid of most of the inva-

sive plants and last year reduced the size of one garden area. It is now easier to work with, and most of the garden areas are also edged with pavers. After the fencing is done in 2017, I will likely rearrange some areas, bring in a lot of new soil, and I will also look into adding some trees or shrubs to help with shade issues.

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

I get inspiration from the gardens of some of my friends. OHS member Ann Frederking's garden was the inspiration for my current "hostaholic" addiction, certainly.

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

I'm a genealogist / family historian, and spend quite a lot of my indoors time on the computer doing research - or in libraries/archives doing research. I volunteer with some genealogical groups during the year but I probably do more of my own genealogy during the colder months.

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