



Coming Events

Unless otherwise indicated the following events take place at 7:30 p.m. at the **Tom Brown Arena**, 141 Bayview Avenue. Consult the 2013 yearbook for a complete list of events for the year.

April 22

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

May 24

OHS and OVRGS bus tour to the Montreal Botanical Garden

May 27

Annual OHS Auction and Plant Sale

June 24

Hostas Galore, with Ann Frederking, OHS Member and hosta grower. OHS Summer Show

September 6

OHS Fall Sale, held in the Old Ottawa South Porch Sale

September 23

Fabulous Fall Florals, with Catherine Disley Engler, Master Gardener, Horticulturist and Floral Designer
OHS Fall Show

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

This Issue: Starting Over

Starting Over! (or, You CAN Take it With You!)

by Mary Ann Van Berlo

The St. Lawrence River was always special to me – my parents, with three youngsters in tow, often drove along highway 2, stopping to watch ships move through the locks and for ice cream cones. So when I saw a 2.4 acre riverside lot for sale in 2010, a vision of a home on the St. Lawrence surrounded by gardens was formed.

I started planning and planting immediately after the purchase. I chose a spot for the new house and saw there was still a lot of property open for some pre-construction landscaping. I planted a number of trees and shrubs that I had grown from seed or cuttings.

Planting these trees also planted an idea – one half of the property would be my 'arboretum' and the other half, around the house, would be perennial gardens. I added more not-so-common trees and shrubs, along with some favourites.

I installed a large shrub border on the crest of the slope to the shore using the lasagne method. After planting, I laid down cardboard and newspaper, then added about 15cm of wood chips. This area will look sparse while these plants mature, but time should take care of that. With all that planting you may think the lot was bare to begin with. Indeed it was not. One of the property's most appealing features was

a stand of mature oak trees along the waterfront. In the fall of 2011, with house construction slated for spring, I divided a large number of ferns, heucheras and hostas in my old garden and planted them under the oaks.

In May 2012 the shovel hit the ground for my new home. The shovel (more accurately the transplant spade) also hit the ground again at my old home, dividing more plants for potting up. I transported a car full of pots every time I visited the river property. An open area under the oak trees became the holding area for about 500 pots. Side note – I made sure the old garden still looked lush and full which of course was helpful when I listed it for sale.

Move-in date was September 29, 2012 and the outside still looked like a construction area. About 3 weeks later, the scaffolding, equipment and scrap brick were gone.

October 25th was a momentous day for me – topsoil started to arrive (picture me doing my happy dance!). My poor plants, having survived the summer in pots, were finally getting a permanent home in the soil. A few days of preparation were still needed: I levelled the soil, raked out stones and clumps of quackgrass, and then laid out the pathways. Using a hoe, I marked out the pathways on the soil, making sure the scale was realistic for a large perennial garden and leaving working space for the front walkway pavers that would be laid the next spring. I wanted casual and me-

andering paths that made access easy to all parts of the garden.

Next came plant placement. After determining exposure of the site and dividing my plants accordingly, I followed the rules of tall in the back (or middle if the bed is viewed from multiple sides) and continuous bloom throughout the garden. Since I was working with plants from my previous garden, I already knew their attributes.

Off to one side, I grouped plants by genus and species – all bearded irises together, all daylilies together, etc. Then I further arranged each group by height. That done, I was able to start placement. Trees got placed first, then shrubs – staying far enough away from the septic bed. Then I placed the perennials, genus by genus. As an example, with the mid-to-tall perennials, I placed the pots of tall bearded iris (probably 6-8 cultivars) in appropriate spots around the garden, so that in June, their blooms would appear throughout. This continued until all the plants were placed. After standing back and taking a look at where things were, what side-by-side arrangements/colour combinations had been laid out and some final tweaking, I finally started to dig!

Of course by then it was November, the nights were cold, and there were mornings when I had to chip frost away to dig a hole for the now dormant plants. What a sight for people passing by: “The new neighbour is planting dead things!!”. Next I added about 1000 bulbs. It was November 30th and I was done. Now all I could do was wait until winter was over to see whether all of this was worth it! When spring arrived, each morning’s walk around the yard was a journey of joy and discovery, welcoming back old friends – happy to see sentimental favourites appear.

There were some lessons learned. It was very late in the season when I planted, and the plants were probably stressed from living in pots all summer, so there were some casualties –

perhaps 7-10%. I found that plants that had been potted in loose potting mix had the greatest death rate while those in garden soil did relatively well. Another lesson learned – despite what we always hear about being able to plant bulbs up until the ground freezes some of my bulbs did poorly. They survived, but sent up only leaves or were disfigured. The temperature dropped well below freezing immediately after they were planted so maybe they didn’t have time to set roots for the winter. The new garden was by no means complete, but then, a garden never is. More planting and ‘hardscaping’, took place through the summer of 2013. My vision of a home on the river surrounded by perennial gardens was becoming a reality. I welcomed three garden groups for tours in 2013, including some OHS and OVRGHS friends. They were impressed to see how much had been accomplished in eight months (five of which were winter) by one person.

Consider this an invitation for a return visit to enjoy the gardens again as they continue to evolve.

[A list of Mary Ann's trees and shrubs is available in the web edition of this Newsletter as well as a photo album](#)

Did You Know?

The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm publish a newsletter four times a year that is available to the public online. The most recent issue features peonies and contains an article by OHS member Blaine Marchand. If you’d like to read the latest and see some lovely photos at the same time, connect to: <http://www.friendsofthefarm.ca/pdf/spring14.pdf>.

Starting From Scratch

by Josie Pazdzior

“In his garden every man may be his own artist without apology or explanation.” *Louise Beebe Wilder, Color in my Garden, 1990.*

This appealing philosophy suggests the creative joy to be found in gardening, especially in a new project, an opportunity many gardeners would embrace.

I am in the enviable position of having a whole new property to develop into gardens, front and back of the newly-built house into which we moved in February 2014. I first saw the property (50 x 126 ft.), a year earlier and the harsh reality of a neglected garden emerged gradually from the snow, the main features being stumps, weeds, and two grotesquely lopsided pear trees. After the house construction and erection of a fence, I started work in the fall with almost a clean slate, having managed to save only a Rose of Sharon perennial hibiscus and one pear tree, which produced some hard, tasty pears, and a little shade. There’s also a gnarled Ivory Silk lilac tree in front, but the stress of digging so close to change the water pipe, and the dust and compaction involved, may have done it in, sadly.



“Chaos, July 29, 2013”

The up side is that I do not have to deal with the overgrown hedges, Norway Maples, rampant invasives, large buried rocks, and derelict hardscaping found at the last place. The down side is that there are no rocky slopes

or hills to facilitate rock gardening, or notable woody plants to distinguish the landscape. We have flat, compacted, heavy clay soil (now topped by triple mix and compost), a south facing front yard, and a back yard partly in heavy shade, partly in sun.

Sensible advice you'll hear when renovating an existing garden is to observe your space for the first season, seeing which plants you want to keep, and becoming familiar with soil and site conditions before making major changes. Normally, when creating a garden, one would first learn the site, then plan the overall design, do the hardscaping, (walkways, paths, patios, arbors, etc.) and plant the larger materials, the trees and shrubs that form the more permanent structure of the garden. The design should include as much of one's wish list as can be done within the limitations of site conditions – and budget. There really is no existing garden here, and waiting was not an option, with my plants patiently waiting in pots.

A garden is to me above all a place, an environment that creates a special atmosphere, which can vary greatly. Some might prefer an open, sunny space with bold bright flowers, while others dream of a private, shaded grotto green with overhanging branches. My ideal garden would be an oasis of peace – and birdsong - with lots of interesting plants artfully arranged to show their best qualities and to set each other off. There would be views and glimpses of a "borrowed landscape", (not in our hands, though) and several "rooms" to create the impression of a larger area, with unexpected revelations and variety. Also, we need microclimates for special plants, and plants to attract pollinators. Other items on the wish list: a rock garden, vegetable patch, Zen style garden, a pondless waterfall, trial/holding beds, native plant corner, vine-covered trellises and arbors, a gravel garden, lots of containers, a raised deck to sit out on

at night – and a large composter! If this sounds too ambitious, it probably is. I think I'll find that it's not as big as I'd imagined, especially if the trees grow fast. And second-guessing starts already - maybe I should have made the veggie patch bigger?

The first step in making a specific design was to draw sketch maps showing the desired elements, considering sun and shade patterns, wind exposure, visibility from the deck and windows, placing of paths, etc. I put shrubs and perennials along the fence and in central beds, with vegetables in the sunniest middle part. The priority was to immediately move in the hundred plus favourite shrubs and perennials that I'd saved for some years, transplanted from one garden to another, and recently into pots. It may sound a bit obsessive, but gardeners understand how attached we can become to our plants – and to our walls!



"Planting Marathon, October 30, 2013"

The rear half of the back yard was ready for planting in late October, after receiving six to eight inches of triple mix topsoil. I piled the soil a bit higher in the beds, making paths around them to work from and minimize compaction of the wet black soil. Much time was spent deciding where the "woodies" should go, starting with the katsura tree, pagoda dogwood, Bloodgood maple, dwarf spruces, and others. I tried to picture them at mature size, and how they'd relate to perennials planted around them, how much

shade they'll cast, how their shapes express the design, etc. The perennials and spring bulbs went in around these anchor plants, also 27 garlic cloves. Some plants will be moved later to their ultimate homes. The future rock garden is planned for the very compacted area beside the garage, where the dug-up limestone rocks piled in the front will be brought and placed, then covered by a load of sand.



"Still Under Snow, March 2014"

I was very relieved to finish planting tulips just as the first snow fell. As usual, I planted almost everything else with Myke, the growth stimulant with mycorrhizal fungi – hope it wasn't too late in the season to be effective. However, perhaps I should have placed their crowns even deeper, as there will be more settling of the earth and likely some frost-heaving after this winter. I can't wait to see what comes up in another few weeks! (Please call off winter, someone.)

Did You Know?

The Canadian Field Naturalist reports that a new native orchid species for the Ottawa District has been discovered – Great Plain Ladies' Tresses (*Spiranthes magnicamporum* (Orchidaceae)). It was discovered in September 2013 in the north end of Burnt Lands Provincial Park. Details may be found at www.canadianfieldnaturalist.ca/index.php/cfn/article/view/1518.

Front and Centre

by Maria Fleming

I've never been a big fan of lawn for my property, but as I never knew when I might decide to up and move, I have tried to maintain the neighbourhood status quo in past years. However, I was never able to commit to the maintenance requirements and the lawn rarely looked very good. My credo was 'if it is green, it will do'. Then the drought of Summer 2012 ruined the front lawn and something had to be done.

Once the snow melted in 2013, it was clear no grass was coming back. I still felt lawn was what was required; however, no one seemed willing to come and give a quote for laying sod. Eventually, I did price out sod for the front and the cost was just not worth it. For the same money, I could have a front yard I really wanted, so after Mary Reid's 'Water Wise' OHS talk last April, I determined to remove the lawn and replace it with low growing perennials and native plants that would also be 'water wise'. Some new hardscaping would also be added.



Before—April

I consulted my graphed front yard sketch and took photos from the second floor to help me draft a design for a new low growing green space. I drew in a gravel path terminating in a specimen rock. I went down to Greely Sand and Gravel to pick out a 3/4 ton beauty and to order gravel, soil and composted mulch. The path was made shallow and framed with edging waiting for the rock delivery. The placement went well despite the fre-

quent reminders, that once it was placed, well, there was no going back.



In Progress—May

Over the years, the lawn became a mixture of grass and broadleaf plants; primarily violets. The violets thrived where the grass didn't, so I elected to work the violets into the new plan. What little grass was amongst the violets was weeded, black boxes in the neighbourhood were mined for newspapers, and existing beds were reshaped to fit the new path. The remaining 'lawn' was covered with newspaper, soil and then mulch. Though I had expected to work on this all summer, the long, cooler spring in 2013 allowed more sustained hours of work most evenings and weekends, so all was complete by mid June.



Finished—June

As it was difficult to source sufficient low and fast growing native plants, I chose three types of thymes and planted them in the mulched area knowing they would create a low carpet fairly quickly.

I contacted the Fletcher Wildlife Gardens prior to their plant sale and

once I had the sales list, I determined what native plants suited low water and semi shade to sun conditions and would stay fairly low. Sale day came and I had great fun choosing plants to add to the extended beds. Over the course of the summer, they filled in nicely, and there were even some 'freebies' that appeared with the purchased specimens. Clearly they were an excellent environmental choice, as they suited the conditions, and numerous pollinators were often present.

I don't use many annuals in the flower beds but I decided to 'edge' my pathway with purple cabbage of the edible variety. These added another interest to the yard, attracted butterflies (Small Whites) and provided ingredients for coleslaw and cabbage casseroles, come Autumn.

The section between the curb and front bed was the last design challenge as it had to be something that would withstand garbage bins and snow plows.

In late Summer, I sent my project photos to Garden Photos of The Day sponsored by Taunton Press. I also asked for some suggestions, and from these, I extended the pathway to the driveway so there was a purpose to it and added sedums to the curb area with some bricks to support the garbage cans. Unfortunately, the snow plow this Winter has made a mess of the curb, breaking up and scattering the stones. I'll find out after thaw how the sedums fared.



After—September

So far, neighbours' comments have been positive, and a number have stopped by to comment on the specimen rock and the changes to the yard. I have also added one of our new OHS signs, so hope to generate more interest in the coming months.

Shade-to-Sun Garden Conversion

by Laurie Graham

I moved in to my new, 1970s house in Carleton Place in the summer of 2012. When I had last seen the property, which had been in the spring, I had fallen in love with the backyard area. It was everything I had dreamed of: a spacious, screened-in porch overlooking meandering paths that led through lush garden beds to a large, stone lined pond. However, when I took possession in August, it was a quite different sight that greeted me.

The flower beds, most of which were filled to overflowing with mature hostas, had been seared to brown by the relentless, hot sun. Why, I asked myself, had someone planted hostas in beds that were in full sun for most of the day? I soon spotted a tree stump and realized that there had once been a large tree that had offered shade to the beds, but was long gone. Only the stump and a myriad of nondescript, 3-foot tall off-shoots remained.

So, my tasks were to get rid of the tree shoots, remove the hostas, and then plant sun-tolerant plants in the beds. I knew I should look at this as an opportunity, but soon the blisters on my hands and the pain in my back told me otherwise.

First, I tackled the hostas. Given that it took about half an hour to dig up each one, I soon realized that they had probably been in the ground since the 1970s. I persevered. Having removed them, what was I to do with these plants? I trimmed the

brown, burnt leaves off of them, jammed them into a wheelbarrow, put a "FREE" sign on it, and parked it on my front lawn. I repeated this process many times, until all the plants had been claimed by passers by. I then used bags of soil, amended with compost, to fill the gaping holes that had been made in the beds.

Next, I tackled the tree shoots. This was a much more difficult task as the roots, which were gnarly and as tough as fishing line, went down deep and were loath to let go of the soil. First, I cut the shoots down to the ground. Then, I removed as much soil from around the roots as possible and cut them back as far down as I could reach. None of this worked: later in the summer, the shoots returned. I repeated the process, but this time – forgive me, Ed Lawrence – I squirted Roundup on the open cuts. Time will tell if this strategy was successful.

Having completed these tasks, I began to research sun-tolerant perennials. I planted assorted grasses, roses, *liliums*, *shastas*, *echinacea*, *rudbeckia*, and *sedums*. I also squeezed in some Prairie smoke, *salvia*, *dianthus*, lavender, *gaillardia*, Russian sage, *euonymus*, and evening primrose. To finish, I dressed the beds with cedar mulch. Wait – did I say "finish"? Not quite yet, as I soon discovered how much the many squirrels that frequent my back yard enjoy burrowing through the mulch and tossing my plants into the air. That's a challenge to be dealt with this summer, should it ever arrive.



Moving to the Country

by Jennifer Mix

In late October of 2012, we moved from our 1920s brick home in Old Ottawa South to a modern rambling home on a granite ridge overlooking the Ottawa Valley near Dunrobin. It's a beautiful, rugged piece of land, about as different as possible from the small flat urban rectangle that I had so industriously gardened for 15 years.

The spring and summer of 2013 made me aware of how different this gardening experience was going to be. Here are a few observations made after a year of thought and hard work.

Challenge 1: The existing soil is quite heavy Pontiac clay. What isn't clay is surface-level, beautiful Precambrian granite; one does not argue with that. In addition, our property is largely wooded so the cleared area around the house which has been back-filled with soil is invaded by maple roots looking for more moisture and soil. Getting perennials started here is not a problem but keeping them well fed and relatively at peace root-wise is.

The solution: This will be ongoing: to keep working the beds heavily, adding leaf mould, and garden and kitchen waste compost. Root pruning along the edges of the beds nearest the woods will also help control their invasion, I hope.

Challenge 2: The previous owners had grown tired of weeding and over the years had laid layers of horticultural cloth on every inch of open ground around the house. They had then covered the entire area with layer upon layer of mulch. This made for a groomed look with strategically placed shrubs, but essentially, nothing was growing except the shrubs. It was a 'House and Garden' look without the garden.

The solution: I raked off the endless mulch, ripped up acres of cloth, and had good quality garden soil trucked in, spread, and worked to deepen soil

depth and replenish the existing severely compacted soil. I will reuse the mulch when it has broken down sufficiently to offer rich tilth to the clay beds and will work in manure until the soil is well integrated and ready to support a real garden.

Challenge 3: Stretching off to the south in front of the house is the septic tile bed, the top planted many years previously with hundreds of *hemerocallis*. Those spectacularly colourful daylilies, along with far too much soil, horticultural cloth, and mulch, unfortunately prevented the septic bed from transpiring.

The solution: To re-establish transpiration, we removed the daylilies and cloth, scraped back soil over the drainage pipes to the regulation four to six inches, tilled, raked smooth, and planted EcoLawn (a mix of fescues). The new growth of grass on the tile bed will look rather like a low-growing meadow, I hope.

Challenge 4: The potential garden areas are much larger than my old garden. I have had to rethink issues such as perspective, plant choice, landscaping, hardscaping, seating, watering, and time/energy management issues.

The solution: To fill the larger space, I aim to acquire large grasses, larger and more perennials, and new fruit-bearing shrubs. I have to think more about relative heights of plants to lead the eye into the distance and create longer vistas. Paths of stone or mulch will lead to and through different areas, such as the shade garden and the native plant garden. There is no question of watering the entire garden, as our water comes from a well. I always choose plants that are drought tolerant but now we've added new eavestroughs that will empty into three rain barrels. Weeding large beds is now done with a hoe until mulch is applied.

Challenge 5: The existing native plant base is not large enough and needs diversifying.

The solution: In the spring I was delighted to discover many existing

wildflowers in the woods around the house – trilliums, blueberries, pale corydalis, wild columbine, dog-tooth violets, and so many more. In a lightly wooded area, I have added more natives, some of them from the city garden. We have an ephemeral pond close to the lane-way, into which I planted native blue and yellow flag irises. Rock walls mean mosses, so I'd love to expand the selection of mosses as well. The only native plant I cannot find a home for is the poison ivy, which will be a continuing challenge.

Challenge 6: My first love is vegetable gardening and one of the main reasons for my move to the country! Well, the only spot for a sunny vegetable garden is directly in front of the house.

The solution: To gain a larger and sunnier garden bed, we moved the rock retaining walls edging the driveway. I raised the soil level with good garden soil and have worked in many bags of different manures. The area is still quite small, but with intensive planting, using square foot principles (if not all the practices) I hope to harvest lots of vegetables this summer. Vertical structures for vines can increase the square footage without enlarging the footprint, so I will be experimenting with trellises too.

Challenge 7: Our neighbours warn that any kind of gardening eventually brings hungry deer to the garden. We are already very aware of the multitude of chipmunks, squirrels, and mice that dwell here.

The solution: For deer, there is always fencing, or motion-sensitive sprayers, or deer-repellant sprays. For the smaller beasties, we'll just have to see what happens. We have foxes resident in the neighbourhood and as our garden has been supplying them all winter with a steady diet of mice, we hope this will continue.

There is a great deal of hope involved in gardening in the country.

The Children's Garden at the Russell Public Library

by Sylvia Spasoff

Russell is a very pretty village, about 40 km southeast of Ottawa. The Castor River runs through it, and there are two conservation areas with walking trails within the village, as well as a paved trail which covers several kilometres of the old Cornwall-to-Ottawa rail line. The village of Russell has a new public library building - an attractive brick and glass structure, with a beautiful garden on the north side, notable especially for its cutleaf alder. The garden was designed by Beyond the House - a very interesting garden centre that began in the Home Hardware just west of Russell, but has now moved to its own building just west of the grocery store along Craig St. They are now working on a Children's Fantasy Garden to the south of the building.



It is still in its preliminary stages, although most of the plants and trees are in, and it looks as though it will be wonderful. It will be completely fenced with the only access through the children's section of the library, although they are hoping that there will be a decorative wrought iron fence along the North Russell Road side with a gate. At the moment two Liquidamber "Silhouette" trees mark the gate. This is an unusual conical tree which may not be winter-hardy here, but which is being trialled, and will be replaced with another pair of conical trees if they do not survive. When I took the photos last fall these trees had turned a lovely deep pinky-red colour and looked fantastic. The

design incorporates a winding path in a curving oblong giving access to all parts of the garden which runs the length of the library building. There is a dry creek with a wooden bridge, a bird sanctuary area, and there will be a train-shaped structure with seats in it for reading. One of the highlights is the story chair - a massive stone structure in the back corner which they hope will be used to read to the children. It is quite stunning, but doesn't look too comfy at the moment. Cushions may be in order when story time is on.



The south side of the garden is shaded by existing mature maples and evergreens. The plantings so far include many bulbs and perennials and grasses (ferns, daylilies, miscanthus, etc.) Cindy Cluett, the designer, looked for interestingly shaped trees - a red obilisk beech, a Robusta green juniper, a Nootka false cypress and a contorted hazel, as well as a cutleaf buckthorn, a Carol Mackie daphne, lemon lights azalea and some small chamycyperus mops. The Girl Guides of Russell have started a number of zinnias, alyssum, cosmos, and other annuals to add to the plant variety.

The funding is being provided by the very active Russell Horticultural Society. Their exciting village beautification programme was begun some years ago by the then chair of the society, Lindley McPhail, and has continued with a number of projects, the children's garden being the most recent. Beyond the House has donated a number of the designs for these gardens which include the Legion, MacDougall Park on Craig Street, with its lovely little dry-stone bridge, and the north garden at the library. The village is well worth a visit.

Book Review

Easy Growing: Organic Herbs and Edible Flowers from Small Spaces by Gayla Trail.

New York, Clarkson Potter/Publishers, 2012 (ISBN 978-0-307-88687-3).

by Nancy McDonald

Gayla Trail lives and gardens in Toronto and many of us are familiar with her books, magazine articles, gardening columns in the Globe and Mail or website YouGrow-Girl.com. This book has helpful information for the new herb gardener as well enticing the experienced herb gardener to try something new. In section one, she considers how to grow a healthy herb garden in such garden environments as part shade, poor soil, gravel garden, raised beds, and containers. She gives lovely guidance on making a garden pretty as well as healthy with practical advice on fertilizing and dealing with pests and disease.

Section two introduces culinary plants and what is particularly interesting is the variety of edible plant parts that are accessible at our back door and never at the grocery store - flowers, stems, roots, seeds

Section three gives good information on harvesting and preserving the harvest and includes tempting recipes. I know some gardeners do not like mixing recipes in gardening books but as a practical girl raised on a farm, it works for me! Lavender shortbread and herb-encrusted goat cheese are two recipes I plan to try.

Gayla inspires us to grow flavour-packed plants in a budget friendly way with recycling and utilizing what you have in the process. A recommended read which will help you choose the right plant to experience aroma, culinary joy and convenience in your garden space.

Member to Member

My Jade Plant

by Janine Loring

My thirty year old jade plant spends its summers outdoors without any special care. I don't baby the plant. It just gets the rain from the heavens and, at times, it has to endure scorching sunshine. In fact, a few years ago, I took a saw to it because it was getting out of hand. See how this roughly treated jade rewarded me last fall. Just when the frost descends in the fall, my husband, Gerry and I bring it indoors into our basement. It sits in front of French doors in full sunlight. Watering is every month during the winter but when spring is in the air, I quench its thirst every two weeks. I have been looking at it recently and think another pruning is in store for it. The Chinese apparently have a saying that a Jade plant in one's home brings the household much luck.



Did You Know?

Thanks to our February speaker, Judith Cox, we now know that Margaret Atwood once said:

"In the Spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt

Member to Member

Dispatches from the Front in the War Against Slugs

Damn those SLUGS

by Robb Wainwright

As an owner and collector of the "buffet" food of slugs – hostas – I determined from the get go that they were not going to win the battle. With almost two acres of shade at my newly acquired cottage I soon realized that if I was really going to get into hostas, I must "slay the beast."

It just so happens that my cousin in New Brunswick has a hosta collection of well over 700 different varieties. I naturally turned to him for advice. "Oh, you can try many things but on the scale I have, only one thing works." He advised me to go to Loblaws and buy the no-name brand household ammonia (1.8L size) and Dawn dish soap (the dish soap makes the ammonia stick to the plants). The mixture is 1 part ammonia to 9 parts water.

I bought a large sprayer from the garden centre and worked out that using half the bottle of ammonia in my sprayer and topping it up with water created the perfect ratio. Now here is the most important part of the procedure: put your water in *first* after you have worked out the proportions. Then add the ammonia, then a healthy squirt of Dawn.

Apply first in the spring, sometime even before you see the first little shoots. Spray around and over the crown. Repeat every few weeks all summer long. When the plants are fully up, just spray the leaves and the solution will run down the U-shaped stalks and drench the ground. It will not hurt the other plants and slugs are "dying" to drink it up.



Another Recipe for Slug Control

by Gillian Macdonnell

Readers may have heard of this method of slug control and indeed may be using it but I had never heard of it before.

Recipe: Warning! Garlic odour may be strong when you are making this solution.

Put 2 large garlic bulbs in a small plastic bag. Using a rolling pin or a hammer, crush the garlic finely. Add the contents to 4 cups boiling water and continue to boil for two to three minutes. Cool. Pour the cooled solution through a sieve to get rid of the garlic particles, leaving a concentrated liquid ready to be diluted.

Mix 1 tablespoon for each gallon of water in a watering can with a fine spray nose and water the leaves of your hostas. It is best to do this in the afternoon, avoiding the midday sun. Continue to spray your hostas every 14 days from when the shoots start to emerge to late August to September. This recipe is not harmful to the soil and seems to improve the vigour of the hostas.

You may still want to use slug bait before the hostas start growing in the Spring as the solution works on the foliage only, not on the soil.

Monarch Populations Down: What Can We Do?

By Nora Lee

Recently, it was reported that the monarch butterfly population is down by 90% compared to about 6 years ago. The butterfly is not considered threatened and its population does fluctuate significantly from year to year. However, this past winter, the area covered by the overwintering population in Mexico was at its lowest, only 0.67 hectares, since 1994-95 (the peak being 96-97 at 20.97 hectares). (Chip Taylor, Director of Monarch Watch, <http://monarchwatch.org/blog/2014/01/monarch-population-status-20/>).

The problem appears to have a lot to do with habitat loss and in particular loss of milkweed plants which the caterpillars require to feed on. Millions of hectares have been newly planted with herbicide tolerant corn and soybean or existing farmland converted to these crops in the past 10 years causing the elimination of weeds including milkweed that formerly bordered fields. There has also been a reduction in the area available for overwintering in Mexico and a series of weather conditions in the past few years that have been hard on this species. CBC radio's Day 6, February 22, did a story on the decline (<http://www.cbc.ca/day6/blog/2014/02/20/saving-the-monarch-butterfly/>). At the end of the segment, the interviewer asked if there was anything that people could do and the guest, Dr. Karen Oberhauser, (<http://www.cbs.umn.edu/eeb/contacts/karen-s-oberhauser>) said Canadians and Americans could plant milkweed and nectar producing plants in our gardens to promote breeding and feeding of the butterflies. This call is echoed by Dr. Taylor, "Let's hope there are favorable conditions for monarchs over the next several years. While waiting for conditions to improve, let's plant milkweed – lots and lots of it."

Member to Member

On hearing the CBC story, my thought was, could the garden clubs and societies all across North America could get together on this and promote planting and conserving milkweed? Why not? Certainly, there is already a lot of collaboration going on and a number of websites offering information on how to do this. One of the collaborations is a partnership, called the Monarch Joint Venture (monarchjointventure.org), of federal and state agencies, nongovernment organizations and academic programs across the lower 48 states of the US. Obviously, the US has to take a lot of responsibility because of the migratory route of the eastern Monarch. Check out this map of last fall's migration:

http://www.learner.org/jnorth/maps/monarch_all_fall2013.html.

Further, a letter was sent by 150 scientists and conservationists to the "3 Amigos", Obama, Harper and Nieto, who met the week of February 17th, urging them to take action to protect the Monarch Butterfly. http://www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch/spring2014/c022014_letter.html

Still, with the calls to action, above, it won't hurt to go further and use our networks of gardeners and horticulturalists to spread the word.

As noted, there is already a fair bit of information published online about how people can help (see below). To engage garden societies and clubs, this information could be promoted through our networks and perhaps tailored to each region, as needed.

I'm looking for your help in spreading the word and also thinking of how we could work together to promote milkweed and nectar plant production in our gardens and other areas in our environs. We could go further and distribute seeds and plants, not just of milkweed but of nectar producing plants that butterflies like, not just Monarchs. We could prepare lists of nectar-producing plants that are suit-

able for our regions and make them available.
Let's talk.

PS: The good news is that the Three Amigos agreed "to create a working group to study ways to protect the monarch butterfly" (<http://monarchjointventure.org/news-events/news/leaders-agree-on-a-working-group-to-protect-monarch-butterflies.-what-can-w>).

Resources and how we can help:

Monarch Watch has initiated a Bring Back the Monarch Campaign: <http://monarchwatch.org/bring-back-the-monarchs/campaign>

Dr. Oberhauser has already done a lot to develop resources and raise awareness. Here is University of Minnesota's page about Monarchs which includes lists of milkweed and nectar producing plants to grow: <http://www.monarchlab.org/mitc/Resources/CommunityGarden.aspx>

This page is called, "How You Can Help Monarch Butterflies" and has much information on what people can do:

http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/monarch/conservation_action.html

It is part of the following website, Monarch Butterfly: Journey North, where people can join to report sightings and where I got the map above.

<http://monarchjointventure.org/>

- More specifically:

<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch/spring2014/update022014.html>

This story about the Three Amigos submit (<http://monarchjointventure.org/news-events/news/leaders-agree-on-a-working-group-to-protect-monarch-butterflies.-what-can-w>) also outlines the things people can do in-

cluding creating habitat and avoiding pesticides. It should be noted that, not only herbicides but also pesticides need to be avoided, the first to protect the plants that the butterflies rely on, and the latter to protect the butterflies and larvae. When purchasing plants, people need to avoid those that have been treated with insecticides – ask at the nursery.

The partnership above has identified what varieties of milkweed are best <http://monarchjointventure.org/images/uploads/documents/MilkweedFactSheetFINAL.pdf>. This page tells us that any species of milkweed is fine in gardens but if larger tracts are planted, the local native species should be used.

Monarch action by gardeners:

<http://www.wildones.org/learn/wild-for-monarchs/>

Are milkweeds noxious weeds? I consulted with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and they advised that the Noxious Weed Act does not apply if the weed in question is "far enough away". They said that for milkweed specifically, its seed has been documented to travel as far as ~75 m from the source plant at wind gusts of 24 km/hr. It could go further with higher gusts of wind but it doesn't travel kilometers from the source plant. This can be used as a guide as to an acceptable proximity from crops. I'm not sure, at this time, how this applies to municipalities.

Lyse Morriset suggests these additional sources of information on milkweed for Monarch Butterflies:

www.xerces.org/monarchs

www.naba.org

www.natureinstitute.org/txt/Milkweed.pdf

Member to Member

Lesley Taylor's Garden

Members who took the OHS garden tour of Mackellar Park in June of 2012 may remember that Lesley Taylor's lovely garden on Westminster Avenue had an intriguing house at its centre. If you'd like to see inside the house or revisit the garden, you'll be interested to learn that Lesley's place will be one of the five destinations for the IODE's house and garden tour slated for June 13 and 14, 2014. Tickets for the entire tour will cost \$35 and will be available for sale at the end of April. Tickets include admission to all five houses plus some concerts organized by Julian Armour and several informative talks. See the IODE website at laurentian.iode.ca for more information on the organization. Once the tour programme is finalized, it will be posted on the site too.

How to Win a Trophy Without Breaking a Sweat

by Lara Jimenez

It's a well-known "secret" that there is very little representation at OHS plant shows by novice exhibitors, despite there being separate divisions for those who are new to the activity. For three years now I have taken home a trophy and a cash prize, largely because there were so few other newbies competing. I did try to bring in my best specimens, but my effort was pretty much limited to racing through the yard at the last minute, secateurs and water jars in hand, to see what looked good. And in recompense I've enjoyed pocketing Plant Bucks, winning some cash, and most importantly hosting a piece of Canadian history: the Viscountess Willingdon trophy. If you're a novice, consider taking advantage of the excellent odds by participating. It's fun, easy, and enjoyable for exhibitor and viewers alike. You'll find all the details you need in the 2014 Yearbook.

Members' Plant Recommendations

Here is another installment in our series designed to tap into the particular expertise of OHS members. For this issue, we have asked Karen Moore to write about her experiences growing heritage tomatoes.

Heritage Tomatoes for every Occasion

by Karen Moore

In January 2012, I contracted a serious disease: heritage-tomatophilia. Like many gardeners, I had grown hybrid tomato varieties for years, mostly cherry tomatoes like Tiny Tim and Sweet 100 in containers. In 2010, I was fortunate to move to a home with a yard that could accommodate a decent-sized vegetable patch - it was already tilled, thanks to the previous owners, an avid Italian septuagenarian gardening couple.

My tomatoes weren't bad that year, but it was a wet summer and blossom end rot was a problem. In 2011, I did my best not to over- or underwater the tomato plants - but still lost some fruit to those disheartening sunken-in ends. A fleeting thought crossed my mind: maybe it wasn't solely about my cultivation technique - maybe the varieties themselves weren't best suited to the local variable weather conditions. Could I find varieties that would better tolerate heat and humidity; occasional drought; overly wet conditions in some years; and a somewhat short growing season? And so I became infected with a passion for trying out dozens and dozens of varieties of tomatoes.

While this interest was originally born from a desire for greater productivity and minimal crop loss, these benefits were quickly followed

by great appreciation for the truly amazing array of choice in terms of size, colour, shape, flavour and texture. There is a tomato for every purpose - slicers, sauces, paste, soups, canning, drying and snacking. There are flavours for every palate - sweet, salty, smoky, fruity, mild, strong, simple, complex; there is an abundance of shapes and sizes - small, perfect spheres, oblong ellipses, teeny-tiny marbles, huge misshapen monsters, some are ridged, some are smooth; some are meaty in texture, others grainy; some are juicy, others have large inner pockets perfect for stuffing. Some grow in heavy abundant clusters, others offer their fruit in a more restrained and elegant manner. Some are shrubby and upright, others spread their vines with tropical vigour to the farthest reaches. Foliage is no less variable - potato-leaved, lacy, feathery, stolid - all unified in their quest to transform sunlight into an alchemical elixir of flavour and nutrition. A rainbow of colours: scarlet, crimson, orange, yellow, pink, green, black, brown, white, purple, blue, in solids, streaks, marbled and faint blushes.

That first summer of the great tomato trials, 16 varieties were tested - 3 of these were eliminated, and the following year, 19 types were crammed into the garden, with 4 of these eliminated, and 4 rated as needing further testing. Whether by coincidence, better growing techniques, improved weather conditions, or better matching with local conditions, blossom end rot claimed very, very few of any of these varieties. Eliminated varieties generally lacked sufficient flavour, or had very thick skins, or an unpleasant m e a l y t e x t u r e .

This leaves 15 varieties currently in my "keeper" category (including Brookpact, a very early red developed in Alberta, Rideau, a delicious meaty beefsteak developed here in Ottawa by the Canadian Experimen-

Member to Member

tal Farm, Earl of Edgecombe, a versatile, rich orange originating in New Zealand, and Camp Joy, a very productive large cherry tomato, developed in California by noted English tomato breeder Alan Chadwick). 17 varieties have been added to these for this year - yep, 32 in total!

Happily, I love the cottage garden aesthetic, and I'm pretty sure my laid-back neighbours won't mind seeing tomato plants crammed into the front flower beds and perennial borders! I suppose I could grow only the new varieties, but I can't imagine summer anymore without the mouthwatering flavour of Jaune Flammé, the sweet smokiness of Black Cherry, or the perfect meaty saltiness of Black Krim on a hamburger fresh off the B-B-Q. My husband needs his fix of Purple Russian, and I can't show up at the cottage without a decent array of cherry tomatoes for my nephew, who eats them like candy. Some might suggest just sticking with the tried and true - but then we would have missed out on our favourite salad tomato, Osu Blue! And consider these intriguing names from some of this year's new-to-me varieties: Glacier, Bellstar, Rose de Berne, Marvel Stripe, Cherry Falls, Ildi, Banana Legs, and Bloody Butcher.



Jaune Flammé



Black Cherry



Black Krim



Purple Russian

Each variety has a story, and learning about these histories adds to the depth of flavour when tasting a new variety for the first time. There

is a generosity built into these seeds as well, the generosity of gardeners who can't help but share the kernels of life entrusted to their care. Consider Milan Sodomka of Prague, who in the mid 1970s shared 7 varieties of tomato seed with the Abundant Life Seed Foundation, including the variety Eros, which to my palate embodies tomato flavour perfection. Milan is a kindred spirit, saying in his letter enclosing the precious seeds "I am 70, and in spite of this I am most happy when I can try something new in my garden."

A number of OHS members grow superb heritage tomato varieties, and if you haven't had time to start your own plants, come to the annual OHS Plant Sale and Auction - you can bid on some intriguing seedlings during the auction, and there is a good selection of varieties available from the sale tables. Is your mouth watering yet!?



Osu Blue

Karen will have some of her heritage tomato seeds for sale at the Auction on May 27.

President's Message

by Jamie Robertson

Spring is always a wonderful time of year – but, this year, it is probably particularly eagerly awaited. We had a long and tough winter. As a result, everyone is looking forward to mild weather, spring flowers – even April showers!

With the arrival of spring, the gardeners get busy. It's as if we have all been in hibernation for the winter. The longer days and milder temperatures make us want to get outside. On the personal front, it's a matter of cleaning up the detritus left on the lawn and in the garden from the winter (as well as whatever we did not get around to finishing last autumn). Then there is the search for signs of new growth – finding out what made it through the winter and what did not. There is the re-discovery of plants that we had forgotten about, and sometimes things that survived that we had not expected. It is also a chance to get out and start some of those seeds you picked up at Seedy Saturday or from various catalogues.

Most importantly for the Ottawa Horticultural Society, spring is when two of our major activities are held: our booth at the Friends of the Farm sale on May 11, and our annual Auction and Plant Sale at the May 27 meeting. Besides being major fund-raisers for the OHS, these events are also an opportunity for members to share some of their plants, to pick up some new treasures, and to meet and talk to other members. Please consider donating some plants to one or both of these sales. And it would be great if you could consider volunteering some time to help out. The OHS is a volunteer group, and these activities require a lot of time and energy, so the more people that are involved the merrier. It is also a lot of fun!

OHS Matters

OHS Auction

by Blaine Marchand

As the days noticeably lengthen, our thoughts warm to the knowledge that in a few weeks, the first tentative blooms (particularly welcome after this long cold winter) will burst forth into flower. Not far behind, will be the fabulous OHS auction and plant sale. This year, it will take place on Tuesday, May 27, at 7:30pm, in the Tom Brown Arena. Also back for a second year will be OHS member (and self-confessed heritage tomato-philistia) Karen's Moore wonderful seedlings. The auction and plant sale are an important fundraiser for our Society. Please keep it in mind as your work in year garden in early spring. For more information or to volunteer, contact Blaine Marchand at (613) 728-7844 or blainemarchand@hotmail.com.

Rose Bushes in Peril - OHS to the Rescue

by Nicole Maksemuik

Last summer the OHS got the opportunity to rescue several mature rose bushes from a garden that was being redesigned to make it more child-friendly.

A young couple contacted the OHS (via our website) offering to donate rose bushes, if the OHS would come and dig them up. They had recently bought a house with a rose garden in an established east-end neighbourhood. The rose garden was in the center of their backyard lawn, and they were afraid their pre-school aged children would get hurt playing near the thorny bushes. Since we were coordinating the Fall Plant Sale in 2013, Jayne passed the message on to Anne Johnston and myself.

Anne went over to check out the rose bushes. She reported that they looked healthy, most were in bloom, and most were well identified. A few days later, I arrived at the young couple's garden at 9 a.m. armed with leather gloves, pruners, saw, garden fork, shovel, tarp, huge pots, labels, and a leaf rake. Although it pained me greatly to do so, in order to dig up and transport these bushes, I had to cut them down to a manageable size (about 60cm). Before proceeding, I selected the nicest blooms and presented the homeowner with a huge fragrant bouquet of assorted roses. By late afternoon I had more than a dozen rosebushes dug up and labelled.

At home, I soaked all the roots in water to loosen and remove the soil, and potted them up in a mixture of commercial compost and Pro-Mix potting mix containing mycorrhizal fungi. By early Fall the rose bushes had all leafed-out again and some even re-bloomed.

Most of the rose bushes still had their metal identification disks attached and a few also had the nursery laminated photo tag attached. With additional support from my notes and photos that Anne and I took of the bushes in bloom, we are very confident that the roses are correctly labelled.

After consultation with other members experienced in OHS plant sales, we agreed that the Fall Sale (part of the Old Ottawa South Porch Sale) was not the best venue for these rose bushes. We decided to reserve a few of the choicest cultivars for the OHS Auction in May 2014, and to offer the rest at the Friends of the Farm Sale earlier in the Spring. We are hoping that the beautiful large specimens that we are offering (almost all are in 3-gal ps) will appeal to the more knowl-

OHS Matters

gardeners that these Spring plant sales attract, and fetch a higher price.

As I write this, the rose bushes are still buried in my vegetable garden, sleeping soundly under a thick blanket of snow. Keep your eyes peeled to the Grapevine in the Spring to find out which cultivars, from the Austin English rose to the Morden Parkland Series rose, we will be offering.

District 2 Report

By Jamie Robertson

As many of you may know, the Ottawa Horticultural Society is a member of the Ontario Horticultural Association, the OHA. The OHA is a provincial organization whose mission is to provide leadership and assist in the promotion of education and interest in all areas of horticulture and related environmental issues in Ontario, through a network of approximately 278 horticultural societies dedicated to the beautification of their communities. The OHA pursues its mission by various means, including providing grants for trees and community beautification projects throughout Ontario; developing programs in the areas of conservation and the environment, youth and horticulture; providing support to its member horticultural societies in the form of shared insurance plans, promotion, speaker lists, procedure manuals, volunteer recognition, projects, events and web sites; holding an annual convention and providing educational opportunities for members; and publishing items of a horticultural or environmental nature such as the *Trillium* newsletter, the Rain Barrel Booklet, and the Ontario Judging Standards. More information is available on its website: <http://www.gardenontario.org/>

The OHA is divided into 19 districts. The OHS is part of District 2, which comprises the City of Ottawa as well

as the Counties of Renfrew, Lanark, and Grenville. The District has 21 member horticultural societies, representing over 2,200 members.

Each District has a Director who represents it on the board of the OHA, and the District acts as the liaison between the OHA and the member societies. Among other activities, the District sponsors District flower shows, puts on horticultural judging schools, and provides shared training and publicity. Kathryn Lindsay, an OHS member, is currently the District 2 Director.

Each year the District has an Annual General Meeting. This provides an opportunity to meet with other regional horticultural societies, transact business and elect the District Executive, as well as to hear interesting speakers. This year the District 2 meeting was held in Perth, on Saturday, April 5, 2014. The theme of the meeting was *Gardens Growing Forward*. The guest speakers were author and gardener Marilyn Simmons on "Growing with Your Garden" and Mary Shearman Reid of Green Thumb Garden Centre on "Gardens Growing Forward". Lunch was provided and the annual general meeting of the District was held afterwards. This included reports from various committees and initiatives.

During the meeting, there was quite a heated discussion about the realignment of District 2. It covers a large geographic area, and it is difficult for members of societies at the far reaches to attend or host events. District 1, on the other hand, is the most south-eastern part of the province, and comprises the Counties of Dundas, Glengarry, Prescott, Russell, and Stormont. It only has seven member societies, with about 850 members in all. There has been considerable discussion in

recent months about balancing Districts 1 and 2, perhaps with the transfer of some horticultural societies from District 2 to District 1. In the end, only two societies appeared to be interested in moving at this time. It was decided, after considerable discussion at the AGM that District 2 would support the Gloucester and Kemptville Horticultural Societies moving to District 1, if this is what the members of these societies want, and if District 1 agrees. It is not that District 2 wishes these societies to leave, but that the societies themselves see some advantages and logic to such a realignment.

It should also be noted that the OHA is having its annual conference this year in Cornwall, a short drive from Ottawa. The dates are July 18 to 20. An array of special speakers has been lined up, as well as bus tours to gardens, historical sites, and areas unique to the region. There will be seminars and workshops on a variety of topics, pollinators, soils, and dahlias to name a few. A night of entertainment is planned for the Friday evening. At the banquet on Saturday, the keynote speaker will be Larry Hodgson, a free-lance garden writer, lecturer, photographer, and author of over 40 books. Further information will be made available closer to the dates, but keep this in mind for a summer excursion.

Did You Know?

Tetanus is a disease gardeners should be especially wary of since its cause, the bacterium *Clostridium tetani* is found in soils all over the world. Best, then to keep your tetanus vaccinations up-to-date. Booster shots are recommended every ten years.

OHS Matters

Shows Corner

by Lyse Morisset

Yes, there will be a gardening season with two judged shows—the summer show on June 24th and the Fall Show on September 23rd. Your plant bucks (\$1 per entry) can be used at future OHS plant sales.

There are two new twists to the 2014 show program: The Summer show will feature Hostas on far more than the Show tables as you will see in the remarks that follow. The indoor plants will be shown and judged in the Fall show this year, along with the classes found on a regular basis in the Fall show.

Our favourite June garden flowers will not be forgotten in the Summer show. Check the yearbook and you will note six classes dedicated to roses. The venerable peony, the hemerocallis, the iris, and a number of other summer regulars are listed in a total of 10 classes. Our June favourites will still have their stage.

The Summer show 2014, for the first time, will feature one particular genus, without totally neglecting the traditional summer garden flowers.

The June 24th multi-stage Hosta event promises to be a show to show off your hostas by entering them in one of the many classes. There will be fifteen classes to choose from; compare that to four specifically reserved for hostas last year. Hostas are classified according to colour and to length of leaf, measured from base of leaf to tip. Usually three leaves represent a complete entry in the Show.

This will be a show to see the great variety of hostas, the variations in colour of leaf, colour of flower, texture of leaf, tolerance for sun, etc. The spectrum of sizes is itself surprising, going from a teeny mini 5

cm to 1.5 metres in height and width for the majestic Empress Wu.

It will also be a show to learn, since our very own Ann Frederking will be the speaker at the meeting that night. Ann has become an expert. This is what happens when an aficionado so passionately explores a category of plants that she ends up growing close to two hundred varieties. Ann will inform us on the ins and outs of growing hostas. We will learn about their infinite possibilities, how best to care for them, where to use them most effectively, and much more.

An added bonus will be the opportunity for all members to have their unknown hostas identified by the experts on hand that night. That will mean binging in a leaf plus sufficient information about the whole plant to allow Ann or other members to put a name to the mysterious plant. This special exhibition table will be another learning experience.

The show offers an opportunity to admire, as with all the OHS flower shows, the results of the skills of fellow members in growing plants, hostas and others, that you have yet to try.

Your indoor plants will enjoy a rare treat this year before being shown in the September 23rd show. They can spend some of the summer out of doors; this is much better than a greenhouse. Think of the wonders the sun will do for the succulents and cacti; your azalea will probably restart to bloom by then; your amaryllis could be in flower. This should be a very colourful show. Remember the three-month ownership rule.

Coming to You this June – Hostas Galore !!

by Gloria Sola

The June meeting on Tuesday the 24th, will be dedicated to that chameleon plant – the Hosta. If you've ever wondered what the fuss is all about, come and see the diversity of this plant. We know it as a staple of the shade garden, but did you know that some cultivars grow and do better with some sun? Did you know that some hostas look different in the summer than in the spring? Some chartreuse-yellow variegated ones get lighter (lutescent) and some yellow ones go green (viridescent) as summer progresses. And did you ever think you didn't have room for a hosta? Some hostas are only two inches high. On the other hand, some hostas grow to be over 4 feet high and 6 feet wide with leaves measuring 18 by 25 inches.

To demonstrate the Hosta's great diversity, we are asking members who plan to attend the June meeting to bring a leaf from one or more of their hostas. There will be a table set up with places identified for blue hostas, green hostas, ones with yellow or white margins, ones with yellow or white centers, and other variegated. Place your leaf where you think appropriate and if you know its name, make a sign for it. We will also have a spot for those unknown ones for members to suggest what they think the plant is. Now, if when you are cutting off your leaf you think it is a very pretty one and representative of its kind and you find two more like it, you might want to check out the hosta classes in the plant show that will also be going on that evening and enter the leaves in the show. There is no cost to enter.

Our speaker will be Ann Frederking a self-confessed hostaholic. So come, learn about and enjoy that very diverse plant – the hosta.

OHS Matters

New Members

We welcome the following new members:

Heather Armstrong
 Marlene Byard, Kevin Doelle
 Margaret Dailey-Plouffe
 Brian Derrah
 Ying Fong, Katja Graether Sophia,
 Juliet & Choi Nan
 Richard Hinchcliff, Josephine Stanic
 Frances Johnson
 Wanda McWilliams
 Earl New
 Saree Parry
 Cathy Pearson
 Adrian Poplawski
 Claudia Reid-Musson
 Sarah Rhamery
 Barbara Riley
 Mabel Smyth
 Carina Thulin Loop

Did You Know?

Jennifer Mix planted the EcoLawn over her septic bed in August, watered it well, and watched it grow quickly through September and October. The benefit of this grass is that it doesn't need regular mowing, just the occasional trim to cut back the seed heads. It is advertised as being an ideal grass for septic tile beds.



2013 Hosta of the Year
 "H. Rainforest Sunrise"

Finding a New Sound Sysstem for the OHS

by Sandra Garland

We are unable to include Sandra Garland's article in the print edition of the Newsletter due to limitations of space. It is available in the online edition. *See page 17 online.*

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

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

Editor, OHS Newsletter
 Ottawa Horticultural Society
 P.O. Box 8921
 Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3J2

or by email to:
info@ottawahort.org

or in person at the regular meetings

Editor: Margaret Scratch
 Associate/Contributing Editors:
 Sheila Burvill, Lara Jimenez
 Contributors: Sheila Burvill, Maria Fleming, Sandra Garland, Laurie Graham, Lara Jimenez, Kristin Kendall, Nora Lee, Janine Loring, Nancy Macdonald, Gillian Macdonnell, Nicole Maksimuik, Blaine Marchand, Jennifer Mix, Karen Moore, Lyse Morisset, Josie Pazdzior, Jamie Robertson, Gloria Sola, Sylvia Spasoff, Mary Ann Van Berlo, Robb Wainwright,
 Design & Layout: Margaret Scratch

Deadline for the next issue: August 15, 2014

Publication date: September 15, 2014

continued from page 16

borders, trees meticulously pruned, a water feature which looks as if it grew by itself, an impeccable Japanese stone garden, and the cultivated garden moves gradually into the surrounding forest. I love this garden because it was created by people who loved each other, and it is so right for its place. Nothing feels forced or artificial. It is really special to me.

10. What sort of reading to you enjoy?

I'm pretty eclectic- I like novels, non-fiction (but not too academic), and I have a passion for the "detective/mystery" genre. Just now, I'm reading *The Luminaries* and at the same time a selection of Nordic noir and of course, Louise Penny. All at the same time.

11. What kind of music do you enjoy?

I'm an old lover of what we called folk music, and I still love the song writer/singer stuff. Also, love women's voices from the McGarrigles, to Alison Krause, to Gillian Barber. And, then there is Billie Holiday.

12. What film would you like to find yourself in?

There was a movie called *Shadowlands* with Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger- I loved how that movie looked. But it would have been a lot of fun to have had a small part in *Mama Mia*.

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

My husband and I have been buying old painted Canadian furniture and folk art for about 40 years. I love old textiles. I also love looking at art. Since I retired I have done some volunteer work with the Ottawa Art Gallery- a wonderful opportunity to look at beautiful and interesting things and to learn a lot.

Getting to Know Kristin Kendall

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

I joined the club about three years ago but seldom attended meetings because of a conflict with the Tuesday nights. But I have a little more time now and I'm happy to be more involved. I'm interested in the speakers and sales, and I especially like the way horticultural societies work in communities. And, I always enjoy anything with other gardeners- always lots to learn.

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

I've been gardening with this degree of enthusiasm for about 20 years, most recently for the first time in a back garden with a southern exposure and both sun and shade. We made a side garden from our driveway, and have a front yard with potential too. It helps that we don't work any more so we can be a bit obsessive. My parents did not garden- my mother and father planted one of those strips with annuals upside down once. However, my mother's father had a garden at a cottage near Digby N.S., and she always told me about his garden with red roses and purple clematis climbing up a fence. Maybe that was my starting inspiration, though I don't have that combination, yet.

3. What is your role in the garden?

My husband and I garden together, sometimes with heated discussion. I seem to get dirtier than he does, but he does the heavy digging and is a brilliant transplanter. (Move them really quickly in the dark and they won't even notice.) He likes pruning, I like pulling things out. We both enjoy pondering about possibilities- if we did this, then we could move that...

4. What are your favourite plants in your garden?

I particularly love the plants that like some shade, but I fall in love regularly with white Phlox too. The shady side of the garden is easier for me, and I treasure, for example, Maiden Hair fern, *epimedium*, *hellebore*, *trilliums*, *sanguinaria* and so on. I currently crave a lady's slipper- had some once but left them behind when we moved at the end of October. I also love *heuchera* and St John's wort- how can anyone resist plants named Crème Brûlée and Chocolate Lion?



5. What plants would you banish from your garden?

I truly dislike *ajuga* and snow on the mountain- other than that I'm really tolerant- most plants look ok somewhere.

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

Hindsight is 20/20- for example, I would have planted our Japanese maple in a cooler shadier spot, and put the Pagoda dogwood somewhere where it would have space to grow. We took it out, and I still miss

it. Maybe there will be another one some day. Every year I see plants we should have put somewhere else, but the plants change too.

7. How would you describe your garden?

It's a bit of a muddle, but we do love it and constantly do things to it. I particularly love the garden early in the morning, and then again later in the afternoon. Something about the light. Maybe tea in the morning and a glass of wine in the late afternoon.

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

I want to be smarter with mulching, and I think we need to avoid the dreaded "one of each syndrome"- we need to focus and try to see the whole not just the parts. If we had pots of money, we might change the layout of the decks which we inherited with the house

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

I've seen lots of gardens that I loved- small city gardens behind gates in Charleston South Carolina, gardens in New Zealand, the conservatory at Allen Gardens in Toronto, and so on. But, I like the gardens belonging to people I know because they are so personal. I have a friend who makes a small garden of plants she got from a wonderful gardener who died about 15 years ago. I like it when you visit a friend, or even a new friend, and have a look around the garden, and of course, part of the conversation is always about next year. One of the most beautiful gardens I have ever seen is outside North Gower. The house is at the end of a long drive though second growth trees, and was probably built in the 1920's. The garden was created over about 40 years. The house is settled by the landscaping around it, there are lush perennial

continued on Page 15

OHS Matters

Finding a New Sound System

by Sandy Garland

After almost a year of agonizing over our sound system, we can finally hear our guests and announcements – loud and clear.

Last spring, pleas went out at various meetings for a volunteer to look into replacing our old sound system, pricing alternatives, etc., but no progress seemed to be made. As a relatively new board member, I saw an opportunity to do a simple little job. How hard could this be? I actually know a couple of people who are “experts” in this field. I would just ask them.

I soon found out that at least *some* knowledge is required even to know which questions to ask. Fortunately, my friend Tom, who is also a gardening enthusiast, was able to recommend two stores where one might find the equipment I was looking for.

But what was I looking for? What was wrong with the existing system – besides the fact that I couldn’t hear half of what was said at meetings, that is? While straining to hear Lynn talk about her climb up Kilimanjaro, I suddenly realized that we had only one speaker – and it was at the far side of the room.

And while watching another guest talk over the top of the mic, which was getting heavier and heavier as his talk went on, I was struck by the idea of a headset – not only would it be much lighter, but it would also free up hands for pointing and advancing presentation slides.

I also got to know Janet Kelly, who carries our sound system back and forth to meetings, sets it up, and makes sure everything is working as well as it can. Janet gave me a list of our current equipment, so that I wouldn’t mistakenly buy the same thing.

Armed with this information, I set off to visit the recommended stores. At the first, my granddaughter had a wonderful time trying out all the drum sets, but I didn’t get much information from the sales staff. They recommended two systems, but didn’t seem to have either in stock. They wanted to rent us equipment, but not the ones they recommended. Hmm.

Several weeks later, I made it down to Steve’s Music on Rideau Street. The sales staff there were terrific. Between Larry and Étienne, both Janet and I were shown speakers, headsets, and all the “boxes” in between. One Saturday morning, Janet and Étienne even set up the components and plugged in our old microphone (which turns out to be good quality and have lots of life left in it). What a difference! Clear, crisp sound! Sold!

But, back at the board meeting with invoices and recommendations, I found that no money had been budgeted. We would have to wait.

Weeks went by, more talks were muffled. Then out of the blue, an OHS angel appeared. In honour of her parents, Chris and Bob Burvill, “who believed in sharing any good fortune that came their way,” Sheila Burvill donated enough money to buy the new sound system.

New board member, Kristin Kendall offered to do transport duty - pick up the system and get it to Janet in time for our February meeting. Et voilà!

We’re using the good old trusty microphone to hand back and forth among people who have announcements, and our guest speaker gets to use the new headset leaving hands free to point, gesture, or hold notes.

Thanks to everyone involved, we can now sit back and really enjoy our monthly meetings.