THE OTTAWA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

OHS NEWS

Sept 2017

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

Setpember 26 – **From a Country Garden**
Sahra Esmonde-White, Esmonde-White Gardens

October 24 – **Reford Gardens**
Alexander Reford, Director, Reford Gardens (AKA Jardins de Métis)

November 28 – Small Water Features
Ian Stewart, Yards Unlimited

December 12 – Annual General Meeting and Potluck Supper

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

Fall Newsletter

On Choosing A Tree For The Yard

by Eric Jones

There are so many things to think about. The basic question is: why do you want a tree in the first place? A farmer would think about what products or services the tree would yield over time—such as wood or fruit or protection from the wind. In cities, it is more common to want a tree for its looks: how it frames the house and brings out the shapes and colours of the garden.

The important thing is to recognize the main reason you want the tree, so as to narrow the options. I'll focus on just three things you might consider when you select a tree, in no particular order.

Tree space and the rest of the space

The space that trees occupy is exquisite: designs created by evolution. A conifer such as a pine or spruce has a shape that is roughly conical: one stem with many side branches.

A deciduous tree like a maple or oak has the inverse shape: the stem splits into several large branches. Beyond this basic division of trees, some have special shapes like columns and globes.

The shapes and colours change with the seasons, from a bare skeleton in winter to lushness in summer.

How will the rest of the space look when the tree grows up? If you are going to have to keep pruning the tree to fit your vision, you have the wrong tree. It's important to let the tree grow into its natural form and to remember that any cutting opens the tree to infection.

People usually underestimate how much room a full-grown tree can occupy, including the roots. The roots of trees usually extend well beyond the dripline of the tree crown. A tree with a diameter of 18 inches requires about 1000 cubic feet of soil to accommodate the roots. One of the primary reasons why city trees do not grow as well as woodland trees is the lack of room for roots. For instance, a full-

grown red oak can be 70 feet high and 40 feet wide. It's not a good idea to plant one of these close to a building or a lot line.

If you don't have room for a large tree, there are many fine medium-sized trees such as hornbeam (or blue beech), ironwood, Turkish hazel, katsura, and magnolia. Trees such as pin oak or red maple are suitable for slightly larger spaces.

Hornbeam

Turkish hazel

Unobtrusive evergreens can fit into garden borders or niches: *e.g.* dwarf chamaecyparis varieties and columnar arborvitae.

Dwarf chamaecyparis

Trees also make space available to us by creating protected areas in the yard. Deciduous trees are particularly useful for shading and cooling a house and its yard in the summer. But if you don't want your garden plants to be shaded, you need to plan accordingly. Some trees provide a partial, or dappled shade: *e.g.* honey locust or serviceberry.

Serviceberry

The vulnerabilities

Certain trees have well-known vulnerabilities. For example, pioneer trees grow rapidly but have short lives (*e.g.* poplars, willows, birch).

Other trees are not favoured because they are susceptible to pests. European birch is vulnerable to bronze birch borer, cherry trees are vulnerable to black knot and fire blight, native elms are vulnerable to Dutch Elm Disease - the list goes on... Some resistant varieties of elm have become available, but these varieties do not look the same as the original white elm.

Some trees are undesirable in the City due to their unslakeable thirst (e.g. willows). Their roots interfere with sewers and basements. Other trees have sensitive roots (e.g. sugar maple), and should be located where the ground won't be routinely disturbed.

All trees are vulnerable to improper planting and maintenance practices. A tree can be doomed by being planted to the wrong depth or by having its roots damaged in transplanting. After planting, the base of the tree needs to be protected from predators and weed whackers, among other things.

Tree companions

Trees aren't hermits. If they grow in nearby woodlands, or even in the next province, they're linked in various ways to local plants and animals.

Some of the tree companions are microorganisms that grow on the roots and improve the success of the tree. The network created by these mycorrhizal fungi makes it harder for pests or pathogens to attack the tree. They can be encouraged by mulching. (Note that they are <u>not</u> encouraged by overwatering, fertilizing or adding mycorrhizal products; there are already enough fungi in the soil.)

Other companions are insects and birds. If a tree is not from "here," it may not attract the same insects and birds as local trees. (Tip: If the leaves are never chewed by insects, the tree is probably non-native).

The things that attract most wildlife are the flowers and fruit that grow on the trees. Many trees in the rose family are bird magnets: crabapples, hawthorns, and serviceberries. Other shrubs that attract birds are viburnums and dogwoods.

You could even take companionship a step further by planting understorey species that would normally be growing next to the trees in a natural setting. For example, false spikenard and leatherwood grow alongside maple-beech-hemlock in local woodlands.

Beyond these considerations, there are many others for tree selection: particularly hardiness and availability. If the tree can't survive in this climate or can't be obtained, it's a non-starter. On the other hand, a few current favourites with the City are being overplanted on our streets (Japanese tree lilac, amur maple, honey locust) so you might want to consider other options. Other factors to consider are texture, size, water, soil, and light requirements (shade tolerance).

President's Message

by Jamie Robertson

The summer is winding down. The days are getting shorter, the nights are cooler, and there is often dew on the grass in the morning. Where does the time go? Many of those garden projects that we optimistically listed in the spring remain undone. Plants that were supposed to be moved or divided continue undisturbed. Each year, summer seems to speed by faster.

This has been an odd year. Spring was cool and late. The summer was particularly wet. According to Environment Canada, we had the wettest July on record in Ottawa. On top of that, there was not one day in July when the temperature climbed above 30 degrees Celsius. All the rain meant that the weeds and grass continued to grow, and, in fact, thrived. A great deal of time was spent weeding or mowing the lawn – only to have to start again almost as soon as you finished!

Gardeners are, by nature, a sturdy and optimistic bunch who persevere. Each year brings new opportunities and challenges. If something worked this year, it can be done again next summer. If something did not work as we hoped, we can try something different next year. Even if things did not get done this year, or if time runs out, we simply can add it to our list for next year. In addition, there are always new flowers and vegetables, or new varieties, to try.

Autumn brings with it the winding down of gardening. There are places where you can garden around the year, but most of us in eastern Canada are secretly relieved that we get a break for a few months over the winter. It gives us a chance to recharge, and make new plans.

With September, the OHS's regular monthly meetings resume. Some great speakers are lined up, so it is an opportunity to be inspired and learn about new ideas, different techniques, and magnificent gardens. Meetings also provide an opportunity to meet and chat with fellow gardeners, and to compare experiences and share problems encountered during this past season.

Please join us over the next few months, and get involved with the Society. If nothing else, it will be a chance to reflect and dream until you are ready to get your hands into the soil again next spring.

What We Did in 1992, our 100th Year of Existence

by Jeff Blackadar

1992 was a very busy year for the Ottawa Horticultural Society. We hosted the District 2 Flower and Vegetable Show (as we did again in 2010), held our plant auction, and organized the mums for sale to our members. (Then in its 20th year, the mums sale was run by Virginia and Oswald Peck.) The OHS also organized a public lecture at the main library, held a tour of Rideau Hall's gardens, made a sizable donation to the Friends of the Farm for a fragrance garden, took a bus tour to Ohio, and held a gala dinner at the National Arts Centre, attended by Ottawa Mayor Jacqueline Holzman.

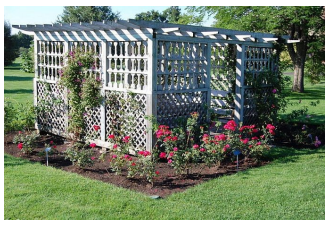
As if that wasn't enough, members of the OHS decided to build a centennial project, a clematis arbour, at the Central Experimental Farm. Members who contributed $100.00 or more towards the building of the arbour formed the "100 Club" of donors. The arbour was constructed in the spring of 1992, and, on May 21, was ceremonially opened by our honorary president, Mayor Holzman, our president, Judy Shedden, and our vice-president, Art Humphries. Officials from Agriculture Canada were present to thank OHS members for their gift. The names of the donors are engraved on metal plates that are set into the entrance to the arbour.

Research in the OHS archives calls attention to some landmarks that are now located near the OHS clematis arbour. Just a few feet away is a bed of Lycette- and Lorrain-bred daylilies that were donated to the Friends of the Farm in 2007 through the efforts of OHS Past President, Blaine Marchand.

Walking north from the clematis arbour, in the Farm's ornamental gardens, one reaches a sunken garden surrounded by a rectangular walkway. This was the site of Dr. W.T. Macoun's residence and is now the W.T. Macoun memorial garden. Dr. Macoun was a horticulturist at the Dominion Experimental Farm from 1898 to 1910, and served as the Dominion Horticulturist from 1911 to 1932. He served as a president of the Ottawa Horticultural Society and later helped found the Ontario Horticultural Association. The sundial at the eastern side of this garden is a memorial to Dr. Macoun and was built with the aid of donations from 47 horticultural societies.

A few more steps north and then west along the NCC Driveway, a granite and bronze fountain is located in front of the Agricultural Museum. The fountain was built as a tribute to Dr. James Fletcher, an important Canadian pioneer in the fields of botany, entomology, and mycology. Dr. Fletcher worked with W.T. Macoun, and in 1880 was a director of the Valley of Ottawa Horticultural Society, a predecessor of the OHS. Dr. Fletcher became first a charter member of the OHS in 1892, and then its president in 1898.

Editor's Note: The clematis arbour and the Macoun memorial garden mentioned above are the sites of the OHS's 125th anniversary projects in 2017.



Clematis Arbour now known as the Pergola

The Founding of The OHS— 1945 to 2000

The Society has held shows or flower competitions since its earliest years. The first show was in late May, 1893, with exhibits and a talk on "Spring Flowers". We continue to hold Shows in which our amateur growers demonstrate just how perfectly an African violet, a tulip, or a rose can grow. Today we sponsor five shows - the Indoor Garden Show in April, the Spring Show in May, the Peony and Iris Show in early June, the Rose Show in late June, and the September Show for fall flowers. Garden Shows are a very good way to see new and interesting varieties and cultivars of flowers.

Through a century of growth and change, the Society has had one constant source of strength. For horticultural societies are not just shows and proiects, they are people. They draw people together who are interested in growing better vegetables, in trying out new flowers or preserving heirloom plants, in improving their lawns, and in beautifying their homes as well as their city.

The Society was built and is still being built by people who care about creating a better environment here in backyards and public spaces. The people of the Society - our members - have kept the Society young and growing for a hundred years and more.

Did You Know

One of the most extensive known collections of Arctic plants is stored in a hobbyist's Whitehorse basement. Botanists and other researchers of Arctic flora value this resource, which has 10,000 official specimens pressed, mounted, named, and numbered. Bruce Bennett has been collecting since the 1990's, and his herbarium is officially named BABY, for Bruce A. Bennett, Yukon.

http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-herbarium-plant-collection-bruce-bennett-1.3941898

Fireflies in the Garden: Building a Wildlife-Friendly Garden

By Rebecca Last

This past summer, my husband and I spent several evenings on the porch, enchanted by firefly lights flickering through the garden. Sadly, fireflies are no longer a common sight. Habitat destruction, pesticide use, and climate change all contribute to dwindling numbers of these and many other species.

Fortunately, we gardeners can help. Recent studies have shown greater species diversity, especially of pollinators, in urban areas than in farmlands. On farms, most fields are sown with only one type of plant, *i.e.* mono-crops. Vast expanses of a single plant – corn, soy, canola, whatever – offer pollinators a monotonous diet and only for a short part of the growing season. In contrast, urban gardens offer a much greater diversity of plants, while our efforts to create gardens that bloom all season also help pollinators find food from early spring to late fall.

One way to help wildlife is to have your garden certified as Backyard Habitat by the Canadian Wildlife Federation. Certification is easy, costs only $10, and earns you bragging rights throughout your neighbourhood. The CWF website offers numerous resources to help you be a better wildlife steward.

Providing the Basics

All living organisms need food, water, and shelter. You can add features to your garden that will supply these needs – bird feeders, water features, and bird houses, for example. A better approach, in my opinion, is to think of your garden as a mini-ecosystem that probably already includes the key elements that wildlife needs.

Food

Bird feeders are designed with different birds' habits in mind. My most effective and durable feeder is a hanging flat tray that provides a measure of security for birds that would otherwise feed off the ground. My least successful purchase was a hummingbird feeder. If the feeder was not cleaned and refilled daily, the sugary syrup fermented and attracted thousands of ants. Instead, I now plant tubular- or trumpet-shaped flowers, especially red ones, for hummingbirds.

Photo: Sheila Carr

Suet feeders provide valuable calories to all bird species in late winter and are especially attractive to woodpeckers, blue jays, and starlings. All birdfeeders require regular cleaning, at least every week or two, to discourage the transmission of disease among the birds that use it.

Hairy woodpecker on suet feeder
Photo: R. Last

You can also supply late-winter food for birds by simply leaving last season's dead plants standing. Seed heads of plants such as *Echinacea*, New England asters, *Rudbeckia*, sedums, and many others provide ample food for birds to pick at. Minimizing your fall cleanup has three other advantages: it's less work for you, the dead plant material provides shelter for wildlife, and the attractive seed heads add winter interest to your garden.

We are advised to plant native plants to feed pollinators. There are many lovely native plants but the work of plant breeders complicates things. For example, purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) now comes in pink, white, orange, and yellow cultivars, and in double forms with cute little topknots. These new cultivars are

not native; no species of insect co-evolved with the creations of plant breeders. Furthermore, cultivars have two drawbacks in the wildlife garden: they may lack the ultraviolet markers that guide pollinators to the nectar and pollen at the centre of the flower, and double-flowered cultivars may even lack the nectar and pollen altogether!

Native plants are particularly important larval food of butterflies and moths. Milkweed, for example, has been rehabilitated from a noxious weed to a desirable garden plant because monarch butterflies lay their eggs on these plants. (Note that there are many different species of milkweed, *Asclepias* sp., and they can have different roles in sustaining monarch butterfly reproduction. For instance, *A. tuberosa* is a wonderful nectar plant for monarchs but is not a host species for their larvae.) Remember, if you want butterflies in your garden, don't squish their caterpillars.

Where food is concerned, pollinators are not picky. Bees adore the occasional bit of Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) that I allow to flower. Pollinators of all kinds throng to flowering herbs like mint and oregano. Even plants we consider weeds can be a valuable source of nectar. Queen bumblebees gorge on nectar-rich dandelion flowers when they emerge starving from hibernation. In general, many small, long-blooming flowers are more useful to pollinators than a few showy blooms.

Water

A simple birdbath is the easiest way to add water to your garden. It will need to be cleaned and refilled daily. A piece of slate or a board in the birdbath that slopes down into the water will enable insects to also drink. I do not recommend "bee baths" (shallow dishes of water filled with marbles or stones) because, in warm weather, these can grow algae and bacteria so rapidly that twice-daily cleaning is required.

If your space and budget permit, nothing attracts wildlife like the sound of running water. The minute I power up my waterfall in the spring, birds begin to visit from blocks away. My waterfall is shaped like a set of stairs to allow shallow splash pools for birds. It also falls into a 600-gallon pond that holds goldfish and attracts frogs, and less welcome critters such as the occasional raccoon or skunk.

Blue Jay in waterfall
Photo: Suzanne Juneau

Leopard frogs beside the pond
Photo: R. Last

Other options for running water include bubbling rocks, a circulating fountain, and pond-less waterfall. All will achieve the same effect while using less space and money than a waterfall. *Editor's note: the November meeting will provide ideas for water features.*

Shelter

When purchasing a birdhouse, pick one that can be opened for cleaning and where the entrance for birds is at least 12 cm from the floor of the birdhouse. Recycle your broken flowerpots into toad homes by half-burying them sideways in the ground. Toads are your best friends for combating earwigs. Dense conifers provide valuable shelter for small birds during the winter. The best kind of wildlife shelter is a densely-planted garden and a gardener with a light touch. My winter clean-up consists only of removing dead leaves from pathways and disposing of diseased plant material. Everything else waits until spring to avoid disturbing over-wintering bugs and amphibians.

No matter how nice a birdhouse you install some birds will build their own shelter
Photo: R. Last

The Space Between

Species diversity flourishes at the margins between two ecosystems – along riverbanks, at the edge of forests, and in swampy areas between dryland and water. So it is in your garden. The more you can create conditions that mimic these natural frontiers, the more likely you are to succeed in attracting wildlife. Paying attention to who visits and what attracts them will help you to evolve your garden into an ever more productive habitat over time. Since our garden received Backyard Habitat certification, new critters have appeared, and our horizons have expanded beyond gardening to bird-watching, bug-watching, and generally being more in touch with the living world.

Information on backyard certification:
http://cwf-fcf.org/en/explore-our-work/connecting-with-nature/in-the-garden/get-certified/?referrer=https://www.google.ca/

Did You Know

Garden Making, that excellent Canadian gardening magazine, is reducing the number of issues published per year from four to two. This has been necessitated by the economics of the magazine publishing industry; not nearly as many people are subscribing to magazines now and advertisers are increasingly likely to divert their money into digital publications rather than paper. Current subscribers will still receive the same number of issues as they expected, but these will be spread over twice the number of years.

The History of Botanical Gardens in Canada

by Sheila Carey

In Canada's sesquicentennial year, it seems appropriate to look back at the history of botanical gardens in Canada. For the purposes of this article, I have used the definition of botanical gardens which states that they must have a purpose of scientific research, conservation, display, and education. The first Canadian botanical garden was established in Kingston at Queen's University (then Queen's College) in 1861. George Lawson, a Scottish professor of natural history and chemistry, established the gardens in front of Summerhill, the Principal's residence. Professor Lawson established these gardens for the study of botany, and also founded the Canadian Botanical Society. Lawson left Kingston for Dalhousie University in 1863, and the gardens only lasted about a decade.

However, in 1999, the Snodgrass Arboretum was established on the same location, and features trees native to Canada as well as species introduced from other parts of the world, including many rare species.

Summerhill, 1865
Source: http://www.queensu.ca/camplan/arboretum/history.htm

In 1887, following the passing of the 1886 Experimental Farms Act of the federal Department of Agriculture, a second Canadian botanical garden was established here in Ottawa. This garden has had many name changes over the years, and now is known as the Arboretum.

The next botanical garden was not founded until 1916, in Vancouver at the University of British Columbia, by John Davidson. Nicknamed "Botany John", he was not an academically-educated botanist but, like Lawson, was a Scottish immigrant to Canada. He had built his career assisting in museum and laboratory work at the University of Aberdeen and emigrated to Vancouver in 1911. The following year, he was given the role of provincial botanist, and one of his duties was to establish an herbarium and botanical garden. The 44 hectare gardens are still part of the University, and include an Asian garden, an alpine garden, a native plants garden, a food garden, and a physic (medicinal) garden.

The fourth botanical garden to be established was in Montreal, in 1931. Brother Marie-Victorin, President of the Société de Biologie de Montréal and Camilien Houde, the mayor of Montreal at the time, were instrumental in its early development. Work started in 1932, providing employment for labourers hit by the depression in Montreal. Work was stop-and-go until 1936, when a Chief Horticulturalist was hired. The gardens have continued to expand ever since as new gardens were added over time. The Montreal Botanical Gardens now extend over 73 hectares and rank among the top 10 botanical gardens in the world. These gardens are a favourite destination for OHS tours, which visit the gardens every two years.

Other large botanical gardens in Canada include the Royal Botanical Gardens of Hamilton founded in 1941, patterned after Kew Gardens in England and consisting of 809 hectares; the 77-hectare University of Alberta botanic garden founded in 1959 and named the Devonian Garden; and the Newfoundland Botanical Garden, founded at Memorial University in 1972 and consisting of 34 hectares. These gardens have joined the Montreal Botanical Gardens and the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden to form the Canadian Botanical Gardens Consortium for Biodiversity.

This article took a peek at the historic development of early major scientific botanical gardens in Canada and some of the people behind them. However, there are many fine botanical gardens not described here, and many municipalities have established botanical gardens over the last decades. There are many gardens in Canada worthy of your attention in a sesquicentennial - or any other – year, and it's not too late to get out and explore gardens this fall, taking advantage of Canada's Garden Route site, a Canada 150 project with a comprehensive list of Canadian gardens. See http://www.canadasgardenroute.ca/.

Did You Know

Prior to 1960, the OHS carried out many community planting projects. Here is a list of only a few of them:

- Landscaped areas around the old Protestant Hospital at the east end of Rideau St.
- Landscaping around housing projects of the Canadian Legion including one entire street
- Flower beds and boxes at the Ottawa Home for the Blind
- Supply of plants and bulbs to the Good Companions for use inside and outside their building
- Landscaping around the old Grace Hospital on Wellington St.
- Plantings around the Ottawa Home for Friendless Women
- Landscaping around the original Carnegie Library
- Assistance to various schools' horticultural activities including extensive landscaping at Devonshire School
- Considerable support to the Central Canada Exhibition
- Maintenance of large flower beds at Lansdowne Park
- Landscaping around the old Animal Shelter on Mann Ave.

Source: Fred Pain's manuscript of The Story of the Ottawa Horticultural Society. 1960

Member to Member

Big Yellow Daisies

by Trish Murphy

There are so many native tall yellow daisies in late summer that they seem to define the season. Sometimes I think there are too many yellow daisies. Aesthetically, I favour blue and purple flowers. I can never imagine thinking there are too many late summer gentians, can you?

But watch the exuberant insect activity on a wild stand of sunflowers or of Silphiums and you understand how much the native pollinators rely on those daisies; evolution has provided such a diversity and abundance of this flower form for a reason. So, if you are red-hot on yellow daisies, grow lots of them. Even if you are, like me, a bit tepid, I urge you to find a few big late-season yellow daisies for your garden. They come in a wide variety of plant shapes and habitat preferences, and can perform different functions in the garden.

The Black-eyed Susan group, genus *Rudbeckia*, has members familiar to gardeners, and most of us know the perennial sunflowers, genus *Helianthus*. There are less-familiar genera: *Silphium*, *Actinomeris*, *Coreopsis*, *Ratibida, Heliopsis,* and *Helenium*.

Mid-July starts the parade of yellow daisies with the common Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) of old fields and waysides. This is an annual, a biennial, or a short-lived perennial that springs up easily from broadcast seeds and is a lovely, even a necessary, component of sunny meadows and other naturalized plantings. Almost as familiar is another Rudbeckia, *R. triloba* or Brown-eyed Susan, also a biennial. Taller, with smaller flowers in large sprays, Brown-eyed Susan can come back year after year from seed in that most trying of garden conditions, dry shade, although not in heavy shade. Brown-eyed Susan is considered to be naturalized from further west, not originally native to eastern Canada.

Completely different in character from these rather insubstantial biennials, with their tendency to move about from year to year, are the Silphiums, some of the longest-lived and most deeply rooted flowers we can grow. Two tall and dramatic yellow daisies in particular are Compass Plant (*S. laciniatum*) and Prairie Dock (*S. terebinthinaceum*) that come to us from the tall-grass prairies, and grow wild in the prairie remnants of southern Ontario, south and west of London.

The bloom of Compass Plant, photographed in the wild at Dutton Prairie, west of London, Ontario

Their flowers are very similar: large and attractive yellow daisies from big round buds on towering stalks, 7 or 8 feet high, that reach above the waves of prairie grasses. Prairie Dock has huge, bold basal leaves. The leaves of Compass Plants, however, are as long but deeply indented, something like an oak's, and extend further up the stem. Both of these plants are drought-tolerant sun lovers with extraordinary tap roots which can reach down 20 feet. Not surprisingly, they may take several years to become large enough to flower.

Cup Plant, another Silphium, *S. perfoliatum*, is potentially as tall as its prairie relatives, but is massive and leafy all the way up. It springs into growth relatively early and thus can be used as a summer privacy hedge. It is called Cup Plant because the perfoliate leaf bases form a little cup around the stem. Small birds and large insects drink from these cups after rains.

For gardeners who know the shorter Lance-leaved and Thread-leaved types of coreopsis, Tall Coreopsis (*C. tripteris*) can be a surprise. It is indeed tall, very tall, to flower above the prairie grasses. It is also very slender and airy, even delicate, if a rock-hardy, 8-foot perennial can be called delicate. Unlike the Silphiums, it is a runner, with creeping roots. Let it thread its way among big clumps of perennial grasses such as Switch Grass and Big Bluestem.

Cheerful annual sunflowers, with their huge discs of seeds, have perennial relatives with smaller flowers. Of the diverse species of perennial sunflowers, I grow two of the tallest and the last to flower: a native called, accurately if unimaginatively, Tall Sunflower (*Helianthus giganteus)* and another, Maximilian's Sunflower (*H. maximiliani*), from Manitoba and points west, which has naturalized in the East.

Maximilian's Sunflower against October sky

Tall Sunflower has abundant flowers of a pretty, clear yellow that contrast nicely with the purple of mature stems.

Tall sunflower in bloom

Member to Member

With all the rain this year, our oldest clump of Tall Sunflower is 12 feet and rising, and now looks more like a Lombardy poplar than a perennial. It will be dazzling against the blue sky when it blooms in September.

Trish Murphy measuring this year's Tall Sunflowers (13 feet)

Maximilian's is our last yellow daisy to flower and one of the last flowers of any kind to bloom in our garden, in October. It is a robust plant. The flowers are nice for cutting.

The perennial sunflowers, the Silphiums, and another large-statured but small-flowered relative called Wingstem (*Actinomeris*), all make nutritious seeds that are sought out by goldfinches and other seed-eating birds when the relatively small but oil-rich seeds ripen in the fall. Although these are large plants, it is worth finding a spot for them close to a window or a sunny deck, for the chance of watching a flock of goldfinches alight.

Musing on Lawns and Frost Seeding

by Blaine Marchand

Earlier this year I wrote about the benefits of "frost seeding". Although this technique was originally aimed largely at farmers for sowing crops, the latest trend proposes that those craving velvet green lawns can also venture out while the winds of March still blow and, baring a mitten-warmed hand, cast grass seeds on the snow. The premise is that as the snow melts, the seeds are drawn down through the white stuff into the softening earth and are kept moist by the melting drifts. That, at least, is the theory.

Ever adventuresome and braving the elements, out I went with a package of grass seeds on which was emblazoned in large green print the promise of a lawn that would be lush and bountiful. Now as you all know, late winter in Ottawa can be a little unpredictable. And this year it fit the description to a T. One day, spring was in the air; the next, dire winter winds cut and chilled those outdoors to the bone; the following day, a torrent of rain pooled upon the ragged edged crusts and quickly turned sheer, adding yet another layer of ice. Undaunted once I was warm inside, I clung to my illusion that in just a week or two my reinvigorated lawn would spring forth fully formed. But in this city, patience must go hand in glove with expectation. It seemed spring would never arrive.

Frost seeding literature waxes poetic about the "honeycomb effect". This happens when the frost begins to leave the earth and the soil surface expands and contracts as moisture escapes, leaving a web of holes. The broadcast seed work their way into that honeycomb and start to germinate. I am not quite certain if the seeds I sowed were fully literate and knew how to metamorphose, transforming hyperbole into reality. Or, maybe it was simply the truculent spring weather we had or the paucity of my broadcasting technique.

Yes, there was definitely some germination, but not quite enough to cover the bald spots in my lawn that rival those on my head. Nonplussed, once it was relatively mild I set off (well beyond the suggested best-by-mid-March date) to the local hardware store to buy another bag of grass seed and once more dispersed its contents. Perhaps the dexterity of my wrist and fingers had improved in six weeks or perhaps it was better seed quality along with all that rain in April and May, but germination sprung forth. Although my lawn does not have pretences to being a golf green, it does for all intents and purposes complement the perennial gardens which flourish around it.

I stubbornly cling to this idea despite the jest thrown my way by my down-the-street neighbour David, who as he passed by, mused that lawns are useful only for goats. But I remain resolute. As Andrew Marvel wrote in The Garden: "Yet it creates, transcending these, … a green thought in a green shade."

Broaden Your Horizon with These Unusual Shrubs

by Ailsa Francis

In the beginning, there were only 5 shrubs, much like there were only 10 perennials – wink wink. Surely you remember when a trip to the garden centre or nursery was a five minute rather than day-long affair, and the shrubs to be found there were just shy of boring: the ubiquitous bridlewreath spirea; unruly weigelas; mildew-y French hybrid lilacs; the underwhelming tatarian honeysuckle; and finally potentilla, the shrub that tries to justify its existence with its extended flowering period, but in my opinion, even that can't make up for its predictable die-back and bedraggled shape.

Thankfully, today spireas, weigelas, lilacs, honeysuckle and even dare I say potentilla, are available in various sizes, colours, and forms, giving these vintage shrubs a rebirth in any garden.

But today I want to introduce you to

Member to Member

some shrubs that may not be on your radar but indeed should be. Summersweet (Clethra) and I got off to a rocky start. I try not to recommend plants that I've not had success with but there are always exceptions and I've come to believe that certain plants refuse to grow for certain people. (Case in point, azaleas, which for me always seem to get eaten by larvae when leafing out in the early summer and bloom sparingly in the spring.) Anyway, I have always thought that summersweet is a shrub masquerading as a perennial because of its attractive spires of pink or white flowers that bloom continuously from mid to late summer.

Clethra

Stick with the cultivars though and not the species form, which is native to North American wet locations (hence my early disappointments as I had not kept this plant moist enough), and can grow to nine feet in height and breadth. What you want are the more ornamental and compact cultivars like 'Ruby Spice' (3-6' tall and wide), 'Hummingbird' (2-4' tall, up to 5' wide), 'Vanilla Spice' (3-6' tall and wide) or 'Sixteen Candles' (3-5' tall and wide). The pros about summersweet are its spicy scent, its long blooming period (4 -6 weeks) that attracts bees, butterflies and hummingbirds, striking fall foliage colour, deer tolerance, and disease resistance, as well as its ability to thrive in full sun or partial shade. Cons include the possibility of root rot and the fact that it has the ability to spread perhaps too vigorously if happy.

Deutzia is just a great word to say. Doot-sia. Why wouldn't you want to grow it and say to your neighbours, "this is Doot-sia!" Or maybe that's just me. You've not heard of it? Well, that's likely because it's considered Zone 5, which has always been marginal for us here in Ottawa. But, thanks (or no-thanks) to climate change, we can grow it here now (as we can many other shrubs and perennials once considered 'tender'). The Deutzia you'll find at the nurseries here are the cultivated varieties like Compact Lemoine Deutzia (*Deutzia x lemoinei* 'Compacta') or Nikko Deutzia (*Deutzia gracilis* 'Nikko'). Both plants bloom in mid to late spring when they are densely covered in delicate and lightly-scented white flowers in frothy sprays. The shrub's shape is rounded and the foliage is refined, turning deep purple in the fall. The compact form is a well-behaved 3' tall and wide, while Nikko is only 2' tall and can reach 5' across. Deutzia should be grown in full sun and can thrive in less than ideal growing conditions—for example, with salt spray and pollution—and is adaptable to both moist and dry soil.

If you have an expansive area that you want to cover, especially on a slope, you need Bottlebrush buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*). But know beforehand that this shrub actually resembles a glorious tropical monster, thanks to suckering stems that can reach up to 20' in breadth and more than a dozen feet tall over time. Again, it is considered a Zone 5 plant that is native to North America, and can be grown either in full sun or as an understory plant. The foliage is broadly palmate, like hands with reaching fingers, and the foot-long blooms appear in mid-summer like erect white candles, striking in their appearance – hence the common name, bottlebrush. In the fall, this plant produces fruit like that of the horse chestnut, called buckeyes, but they should not be eaten. The autumn foliage is golden and the overall effect in every season is very attractive. If you have the space, by all means get one.

Speaking of shrubs that cover ground, but perhaps not as much as the bottlebrush buckeye, consider the bush honeysuckle *(Diervilla lonicera*). This suckering native shrub can be found growing as an understory plant in our local open woodlands but works equally well in the garden, either in sun or part shade. Called bush honeysuckle because of its yellow tube-like flowers that resemble that of honeysuckle, this plant also has glossy green leaves that turn brilliant shades of orange and red in the fall. Bush honeysuckle will grow in average soil but will also tolerate drought - perfect for Ottawa summers. Its flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies and it appears unaffected by pests and disease. At a mature height of 3' tall and 4' wide, it fits well into smaller gardens and does not need pruning.

Diervilla lonicera

There are a number of shrubs available at nurseries now that are show-stoppers in terms of foliage effects and interesting fruiting or flowering. Several that should be in your garden are the dappled willow (*Salix integra* 'Hakuro-Nashiki'), the cut-leaf elderberries (namely *Sambucus nigra* 'Black Lace' and *S. racemosa* 'Sutherland Gold') and the various colour forms of smokebush (*Cotinus coggygria* 'Royal Purple', *C*. 'Golden Spirit', or the green-leaved species).

Cotinus cogygria

Member to Member

All of these shrubs thrive in full sun to part shade, although the golden forms can experience sun scorch if the summer heat is too intense. If you're not fussy about flowering but are growing them for their striking foliage, cut back hard in the early spring to promote new growth. This keeps the plants bushy, colourful and shorter.

If you're interested in seeing these shrubs used well in the perennial border, seek out the designs of Nancy Ondra either on her blog (https://hayefield.com/) or in her books, including *Foliage: Astonishing color and texture beyond flowers* (Storey Publishing; 2007).

Tulip Recommendations – an addendum

by Sheila Burvill

In the September 2015 issue of the OHS Newsletter, I wrote about my favourite tulip varieties but little did I know then that an even better tulip was coming my way.

Last year, I ordered *Tulipa 'Prins Willem Alexander'* from Botanus and what a stunner it turned out to be. '*Prins Willem Alexander*' is a Triumph tulip that blooms later than many and, in my garden, lasted for several weeks in peak condition. The flower stands about 18" high and is a deep orange with faint purple flames on the sides of the thickish petals. Those flames intensify in colour as time goes on. By sheer accident, a purple allium (*Allium* 'Purple Sensation') was planted nearby, its colour playing off *T. 'Prins Willem Alexander*' beautifully. As I said earlier – stunning! Highly recommended!

Fiskars Tools

by Tuula Talvila

When you look at your garden tool collection, does it include the distinctive orange and black handles of Fiskars tools? You probably didn't grow up like I did, with a strict rule in the house that no one was to use the iconic orange-handled Fiskars scissors for anything – they were my mother's sewing scissors and she wouldn't have tolerated them being dulled by paper. Until more recently I didn't know that Fiskars also makes gardening tools. Today my shed boasts a selection of Fiskars tools that includes long-handled grass shears, regular shears, a pruning saw, loppers, two pairs of secateurs, with the collection rounded out indoors by embroidery scissors, regular scissors (for fibre crafts only!), and kitchen shears. I'm not saying they're necessarily a superior garden tool but, being of Finnish descent, I can't help but favour such an old and successful product from Finland.

I recently had the pleasure of a three-week trip to Finland and, as our peregrinations included a two-night stay in the village of Fiskars, I wanted to learn more about the history of the ironworks founded there and the company's production of garden tools. Just an hour west of Helsinki by train, Fiskars is an immensely picturesque village laid out along the Fiskars River. Nestled in the trees – alders, oaks, maples, birches – in a small valley, the village's historic buildings create a bucolic setting for the artists now working, living, and selling their handcrafted goods there. It's a lovely place to stay – a night or two in one of the historic inns (ours was the former cutlery mill) provides ample time to stroll through the village, visit the craft shops and studios (which include glass, ceramics, iron, fibre arts, knives, leather, modern wood furniture, textiles, jewellery, candles, and many other delights), see the ironworks museum, and of course stop at a 'kahvila' for coffee and pastry, a national pastime in Finland.

Walking paths and multiple footbridges lined with flower boxes allow for a pleasant walk criss-crossing the little river, and a peaceful rest can be had on one of the many long white benches found along the way. A "tree species path" takes you through part of town then along winding residential streets leading up the hillsides where different tree specimens are numbered. My sisters and I had fun guessing what each tree was before consulting the brochure, and the lupin-covered roadsides provided an idyllic countryside for walking.

Along the tree species walking path

At the ironworks museum and in the Fiskars shop's historical display we learned about the history of the company and the village that grew up around it over the centuries. The ironworks was founded in the valley in 1649 by a wealthy Dutch businessman who was employed in Stockholm, Sweden. Upon being granted permission by Queen Christina of Sweden to construct an ironworks, he set up a blast furnace and bar hammer. (Finland was a fully integrated part of the Swedish empire until 1809 when

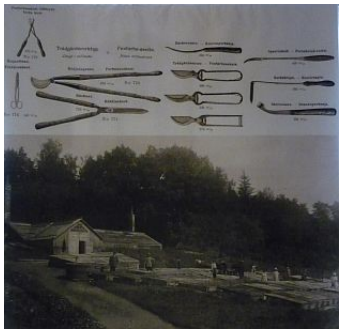
Member to Member

Sweden lost it in war with Russia and it became an autonomous Grand Duchy of Russia until finally gaining independence 100 years ago, in 1917.) The location of Fiskars was chosen not because of local ore deposits, as I had originally assumed, but because of the abundant forests which could provide wood for making the charcoal used in the blast furnace (thereby preserving Sweden's own forests), and also for the water power provided by the river and the site's proximity to the coast. In fact, iron ore was mined in the archipelago around Stockholm and transported to Fiskars. Initially, the blast furnace produced pig iron from crushed ore. The melted pig iron was cast into bars, after which it was further processed and strengthened by repeated heating and forging. Knives, nails, wheels, wire, hoes, and cast-iron pots and pans were produced.

Building bricks made of slag

The Great Northern War of 1700 (which we had never heard of before), during which Russia laid waste to the southern coastal areas of Finland, left the country in famine and the Fiskars ironworks in ruin. There was no money in Finland to repair and restart production. Eventually, with investment from some wealthy Swedes, the ironworks were revived and continued to be owned by Stockholm merchants for almost a century. Little had changed since the ironworks' founding, both in terms of iron production methods and, apparently, workers' salaries which were paid partly in cash, with the remainder coming in the form of firewood, sometimes a plot of land, and even dried fish.

A significant expansion took place under the ownership of Johan von Julin, a pharmacist from Oulu in west-central Finland. Beginning with his purchase of the ironworks in 1822, he was a benevolent force who not only improved production - he shifted from iron manufacturing to refining and diversified the product range to include agricultural machinery, knives, forks, scissors - but also founded a school in the village and employed a doctor. During his period of ownership until his death in 1853, Julin also turned Fiskars into a model farm that used crop rotation methods, experimented with irrigation, put on agricultural shows, and introduced new equipment. Livestock breeding continued in Fiskars until about 1970; the last herd of cattle were descendents of a herd Julin himself had bought.



From the museum display about garden tools

During the early 1800's gardening became an established practice in Fiskars. A kitchen garden and greenhouses behind the company owner's manor house supplied food staples, exotic fruits, and flowers. Workers' salaries began to include an allotment on which to grow vegetables. Gardening at the manor house also inspired the design and production of gardening tools at the foundry, which continued to be made at Fiskars until the early 1900's when production was moved to another location nearby. Today, the majority of Fiskars tools in production are for gardening.

During the late 1800's Fiskars continued to be a significant contributor to agricultural development in Finland. By the end of that century, the foundry was producing forty different models of plough after having experimented until creating the right implement for Finland's soils. Over one million of the Fiskars model No. 10 plough were made and it was in wide use until the mechanization of the 1960's.

The popular model No. 10 plough

The Fiskars ironworks' fortunes continued to rise and fall during the first part of the 20th century. The period between the First and Second World Wars saw much expansion and modernization of the company. In the aftermath of the Second World War, Finland paid reparations to the Soviet Union. While this was costly for the small country, it helped to rapidly develop its industries, as the reparations were paid for the most part in goods such as machinery and ships. During the 1960's, plastics came into wide use and, when combined with steel, the ergonomic orange-handled scissors were born. As the historical display in the Fiskars tool shop states “The orange-handled success paved the way for Fiskars to start conquering the world.”

By the 1980's, the village ironworks were obviously too small to support the continually-growing global company, and much of its operations were relocated elsewhere in Finland and to the United States. After that, the village began to decline and die without its only industry. Then, in the 1990's, a Fiskars executive hit upon the idea of renting out the unused space to artists in order to reinvigorate the village. These days, the village is home to approximately 600 residents, including some of the most repected names in contemporary Finnish design and craft, with a fabulous array of artists' goods carried in the almost forty shops.

Member to Member

Fiskars Group today is still a Finnish company headquartered in Helsinki but I was surprised to discover how huge it is: its portfolio of brands comprises Iittala and Arabia (Finnish glass and ceramics respectively), plus Wedgewood, Royal Albert, Royal Doulton, Waterford crystal, and Royal Copenhagen among others. The company still owns the buildings in the village and holds company social events at the grand Neo-Classical manor house, but it is the craftspeople and the peaceful, natural setting that have made it the enchanting little spot that it is today.

References:
"Fiskars 1649: 360 Years of Finnish Industrial History", Fiskars Co., Raasepori, 2009, 94 pages.
Fiskars Village website (English): http://www.fiskarsvillage.fi/en/home/
Fiskars Group corporate website: https://www.fiskarsgroup.com/

Did You Know

If you're unlucky enough to get a poison ivy rash, you should use soap and water to wash all the parts of your body that have been exposed to the plant. Be sure to clean your fingernails well. Dry out the blisters and ease the rash by using compresses of water or Burow's solution (check with your pharmacist). Once the rash is dry, apply calamine lotion to relieve the itching.

This advice comes from Coleen Brady, B.Sc. (Pharm.)

Film Review: The Gardener, directed by Sebastien Chabot

by Margaret Scratch

The gardener of the title is Frank Cabot, member of a wealthy Boston family which has owned a large summer property near La Malbaie, Quebec, for several generations. After some financial reverses as a businessman, Cabot turned to gardening in this property, eventually creating the large Jardin des Quatre Vents. Several OHS members have been fortunate enough to visit the garden and all have come back enthused and moved by its beauty. This documentary film does justice to its beauty and its creator.

The garden is a series of "rooms" or, rather, "vistas". They are all large and can be seen as complete in themselves. The film's stroll through the vistas reveals how carefully the plantings are placed to lead the eye in many directions. The colours are equally carefully chosen to impart a particular feeling to the viewer. This is a film for serious gardeners and includes a complete listing of plants featured in the credits which follow the film.

Cabot agreed to be interviewed for the film but insisted that the film be about the garden and not him. In this it does not succeed. The lengthy conversations with Cabot reveal more about the man than he might have wished. He believed that gardens have a soul and can impart a sense of spirituality to a viewer. He wanted visitors to his creation to drink in the feeling of tranquility he'd imparted to the garden. He also had a whimsical side to his horticultural efforts, with many of the areas featuring playful statues, such as the frog musicians.

The film also features interviews with Cabot's son, his head gardener, Adrienne Clarkson, and Penelope Hobhouse, the acclaimed British garden expert. She is enchanted with Les Quatre Vents and heaps praise on Cabot's vision and dedication. I found her comments among the most interesting in the film.

My only criticism of the film is perhaps just a wish for more. I have never been to Les Quatre Vents and would have enjoyed a wider view of the garden. I wondered how the various vistas related to one another and what an overall impression of this lovely space might be. But that is a very small complaint. The film makes one wish to see the garden and inspires the gardener in each of us.

Plants We Hate: Conclusion

by Heidi Geraets

Hate in the garden. Really?

Over the years, in the Member to Member section of the OHS News, we have had a column called: "Plants We Hate", and I for one, could never quite dig it!

I think it was the juxtaposition of plants in the garden and the notion of hate that somehow didn't connect with me. Hate is such a powerful, hurtful, exhausting, and negative emotion that I just could not imagine it even among my most obnoxious weeds.

Mind you, I appreciate the catchy title and I have to confess that I learned about a few new, interesting plants. Often 'hate' simply came down to preference or personal taste and sometimes I found myself exactly on the opposite side. What some fellow gardeners 'hated', I found interesting and attractive. For me, the garden is a bit of an extension of myself, and hate,—well, it is just too exhausting.

Editor's Note: this is the final contribution to the "Plants We Hate" series. Heidi's said it all!

Member to Member

What's in a Name - *Geranium*, *Erodium*, And *Pelargonium*

by Robin Woods

The Greek names of the crane, the heron, and the stork - three birds with distinctive long, pointed beaks - are respectively geranos, erodios, and pelargos. The three plant genera, *Geranium*, *Erodium*, and *Pelargonium* in the family Geraniaceae all have long, pointed fruit capsules, resembling the shapes of the beaks of the three birds.

Species belonging to the genus *Geranium*, commonly known as crane's bills (or cranesbills), are widespread in Europe and Asia. Geranium flowers typically have 5 petals and 10 stamens, and are radially symmetrical (regular). Many species, including *Geranium dalmaticum*, are grown in rock gardens. Species in the genus *Erodium* have very similar fruit capsules and regular flowers with 5 petals, but 5 fertile and 5 sterile stamens. Some, including *Erodium reichardii*, are also grown in rock gardens. The Eurasian species of *Erodium* are known as stork's bills (or storksbills), whilst in America and Australia, in accordance with the Greek, they are sometimes called heron's bills.

Geranium dalmaticum
Source: Wikimedia commons

Erodium reichardii

The history of the third genus, *Pelargonium*, is complicated. Plants with distinctive long, pointed fruit capsules were brought to Europe around 1600 by Dutch traders returning from southern Africa. They were introduced to England in 1631 by John Tradescant the Elder, gardener to King Charles I. Since the fruit capsules were like those of the native wild geraniums, they were classified as members of the same genus, despite having irregular flowers with 5 petals, 2 to 7 stamens, and a single spur-like nectary. They were commonly referred to as *Geranium africanum*. The first formal classification of these African Geraniums was made by Johann Dillenius in 1732. Dillenius was born in Germany and educated at the University of Giessen. He moved to England and in 1734 was appointed Professor of Botany at Oxford University. In 1732, Dillenius published Hortus Elthamensis, descriptions of rare plants grown at Eltham, London. He included 7 species of African Geranium. With respect to their floral characteristics – irregular flowers, 7 stamens and a nectary - Dillenius noted "It would be possible, therefore, if anyone wishes to make a new genus [of these geraniums] of which the flowers are unequal or irregular, to call them *Pelargonia*". His suggestion was formally taken up in 1738 by Johannes Burman, a Dutch botanist and physician, and published in a book devoted to plants collected from the Cape Colony. Carl Linnaeus disagreed, and in Species Plantarum, published in 1753, he allowed only one genus, *Geranium*, and shoe-horned *Geranium*, *Erodium*, and *Pelargonium* into it. This remained the situation until 1792 when Charles Louis L'Héritier de Brutelle, a French botanist, published Geraniologia and, basing his classification on the floral characteristics, listed the three genera that we now recognize.

Pelargonium is by far the most "horticultural" of the three genera. Pelargoniums have been extensively bred and hybridized, and have attractive flowers and foliage. I did come across a very interesting phenomenon in my research: if Japanese beetles eat the petals of Zonal Geraniums they become paralysed! Apparently just two petals can paralyse a beetle for 24 hours, long enough for them either to die from dehydration or to be eaten by a predator. So, Pelargoniums are useful as well as decorative.

Unfortunately, the common names are still confusing. *Geranium* species can be Geraniums or Crane's bills; *Erodium* species, which should be called heron's bills, are generally known as stork's bills; and for most gardeners, *Pelargoniums* are simply Geraniums, or perhaps Garden Geraniums! So I think it is appropriate to end with a question: "When is a *Geranium* not a *Geranium*? And the answer: "When it is a *Pelargonium*!"

Member to Member

Lilies in the garden again?

by Nathalie Chaly

I well remember my first sighting of a lily beetle, thinking how lovely it was with its bright scarlet body and neat, contrasting black legs, body, and antennae. Just goes to show how wrong first impressions can be!

Adult lily leaf beetle

Lily leaf beetles, or *Lilioceris lilii*, were accidentally introduced to North America in Montreal in 1943, where they began to attack mainly Fritillarias and all types of true lilies, both native species and cultivated varieties such as Asiatic, Oriental, and Trumpet lilies.

The beetles lay their eggs on the underside of lily leaves, where the larvae develop, eat the leaves voraciously, and acquire what scientists euphemistically call a 'fecal shield'. More plainly, the larvae become covered in their own excrement. This is a defense against predators and – believe me - a truly disgusting sight!

Lily leaf beetle larvae in the fecal shield

The larvae don't kill the host lily directly, but the poor plant can't withstand for very long being defoliated every summer and dies within a year or two. By the 1990's, the beetles had spread to Boston, Massachusetts, and were soon affecting lilies in Canada as far west as Manitoba. By the early 2000's, much though I loved what lilies added to the garden - colour, structure, and fragrance - I was no longer growing them. Indeed, lilies are now a rare sight wherever *L. lilii* is established.

Controlling the beetle has proven difficult and no method has been fully effective. Hand-picking requires constant vigilance and is practicable only with a small number of plants. The next level of control is treating the plants with neem oil, a botanical insecticide made from the neem tree. Neem kills larvae and repels adults, but must be applied very heavily and repeatedly, every five to seven days.

More recently, a product derived from a soil-dwelling bacterium, spinosad, controls the beetles if used regularly at the first sign of infestation. It is found in the United States under the name of 'Captain Jack's Deadbug Brew' but may not be available in Canada.

How about biological control of the beetle? There are no known natural predators of *L. lilii* in North America. In Europe, though, the beetle is controlled by natural enemies in the form of ant-sized parasitic wasps, or parasitoids, that lay eggs on the beetle larvae; as the eggs hatch, they kill their host. Since the late 1990's, the potential of the parasitoids to control the beetles has been of great interest to North American scientists.

Researchers in Rhode Island have shown that the parasitoids survive well in northern climates and that they prefer *L. lilii* larvae over other hosts – are, in fact, attracted to the larvae by the fecal shield. Starting in 1999, they began releasing parasitoids at sites throughout New England and, to test whether they were spreading, enlisted Master Gardeners and other gardeners to collect beetle larvae researchers for dissection. Between 2007 and 2013, they received over 2000 larvae from 240 gardens in six states!

The tests showed what they'd hoped to find: the parasitoids were well established in the region and the lily beetle population was declining.

Closer to home, the laboratory of Dr. Naomi Cappuccino, professor of biology at Carleton University, has been studying the effect of releasing parasitoids in the Ottawa area. First released in 2010, they became established immediately and have been killing off lily beetle larvae apace. What is more, the wasps have now been found at some distance from the release site, in several gardens in the Glebe and Ottawa South. It is also encouraging that many gardeners in this area have reported that lily beetle numbers and damage are down.

So is there hope that lilies will again grow freely in Ottawa gardens? Well, the researchers are now confident that, in the long term, parasitoids can control lily beetles throughout Canada and the United States. I'll be glad to help them along, just as soon as those parasitic wasps become available commercially!

Neem oil: https://www.gardeners.com/buy/neem-oil-spray-aphid-and-fungus-control/8586855.html

Spinosad: https://www.gardeners.com/buy/spinosad-insect-control-spray/38-991RS.html

Did You Know

Gloria Sola reports that this rose seems especially unattractive to Japanese Beetles. Her other roses may have the beetle on them but rarely this one:

Royal Bonica (*Rosa* 'Royal Bonica')

Description: A lush pink shrub rose enhanced with mild fragrance and dark, shiny leaves. Extremely disease-resistant with blooms in flushes of sprays throughout the season. Doesn't appear to attract Japanese beetles like other roses.

OHS Matters

Shows Corner

By Gillian Macdonnell

In April, we had our second Summer Show emphasizing native plants. I am pleased to note there were more members entering the show with more exhibits this year. Our plan, as it was last year, was to present the Mary Bryant Award to the member with the highest aggregate in native plants. To our delight and probably to the member's surprise, we presented the painting to Elaine Hoskins, someone who had never entered a Show before, much less won a trophy. Elaine may enjoy the painting for the whole year until the next Summer Show.

Several members also won trophies at the Summer Show for having the highest aggregates in various classes. Emilie Henkelman won the Thomas Monette Trophy for the highest aggregate in the Indoor Plant Section, and Deborah Watt won the J. R. Menzies Trophy for the highest aggregate in Sections B to D (Garden Flowers and Foliage). As well as the Mary Bryant Award, Elaine Hoskins won the A. J. Freiman Trophy for obtaining the highest aggregate in the Native Plant Section.

Many thanks to our entrants and the volunteers that helped set up, take down, print cards, clerk, and carry out the other jobs related to showing off the products of our gardens.

Before the evening ended, the judge for the Show, Nicole Cote, said a few words about the Show and her enjoyment in judging it. She mentioned that the Design Section was very sparse and that perhaps OHS might consider having an event or program that involved easy hints on how to create a design. There are a number of judges in the area who could be asked to participate, Nicole herself being one of them. This strikes me as being a good idea and I saw some nodding heads in the audience when the idea was broached – will this be on the program in the future?

Did You Know

Dr. Bernie Pukay, an Ottawa veterinarian, used to write a weekly column for the Ottawa Citizen. In one of them, he explained that cats like to dig in gardens because they like the texture of soil and they can easily cover their stools with it. To make your garden beds less attractive as outdoor litter boxes, Dr. Pukay suggested trying one or more of the following techniques:

•Cover the soil with bark chips, decorative stones, plastic sheeting or landscape fabric. These materials discourage cats from pawing the soil. Chicken wire buried under a thin layer of soil will have a similar effect.

•Try growing plants which will deter pets. Geraniums (by which he may mean pelargoniums), rue, and a border plant called *Coleus canina* are recommended.

•If you can catch the cat in the act, spraying it with a hose will make the cat think twice before returning. If you lack the patience or the luck to catch it in the act, there are motion-activated sprinklers available that will do the job for you.

•You can try putting out orange and lemon peels, coffee grounds, pipe tobacco, lavender oil, lemongrass oil, peppermint oil, eucalyptus oil or mustard oil. The smells may put cats off but don't be surprised if their effect is limited. Noxious or toxic items such as cayenne pepper or mothballs are not recommended because they are inherently dangerous.

•An official outdoor litter box designed to answer a cat's excretion preferences and installed in an out-of-the-way location may be the answer for some.

New Members April to August 2017

Catherine Bell, Robert Bell
Holly Bickerton
Graeme Boocock, Louise Lewis-James and Anita, Thira and Freya
Dianne Caldbick
Ghislaine Camire and Andrew Christie
Marie Cousineau and Christie Unitt
Zsofia Grandpierre and Ross Guiller
Sergey Haletski
Fran Johnson
Pam Lapointe
Tina Liu
Sandie McArdie
Tess McEachern and Ashton O'Brien
Suzanne and Terry Mooney
Carolyn O'Malley
Hailey Parker
Anil and Inci Sevgi
Maureen Sly
Kristina Small
Owen Sparey, Stephanie Hurman and Matilda
Wendy Trudell
Helen Tsai
Ute A. Walpurger
Ann White
Jenna Wouters

OHS Matters

June 2017 OVRGHS/OHS Bus Tour: on the 1,000 Island Garden Trail

by Gloria Sola

In spite of the iffy weather we'd been having, Saturday, June 24th, turned out to be a wonderful, sunny day for our bus trip. We visited four gardens of the 14 listed on the 1,000 Islands and Rideau Canal Garden Trail; each was special in its own way, having a different atmosphere and features from the others.

Our first stop was 'A Labour of Love' in Oxford Mills. This extensive property, with its many fine large trees throughout, contains an intimate courtyard with a pond and bubbling water, a swimming pool, and, at the rear of the property, a large naturalized wildlife pond with lots of goldfish which we happily fed.

A Labour of Love Garden
Photo: Helene Williams

With its many flower beds and beautifully manicured vegetable patch, the property is well geared for outside enjoyment, boasting a spacious exterior 'kitchen' strategically located by the pool.

Gong and Stone Sculpture at a Labour of Love
Photo: Helene Williams

From there we went to Van Berlo Gardens in Maitland. Several of us have visited Mary Ann's gardens over the years, starting just after she moved here in 2012. It is always a treat to see how things are progressing and to check out the many new additions. Van Berlo Gardens are very much a plant collector's dream of paradise with many rare and unusual plants, all well-spaced and laid out to encourage careful perusal of each specimen. We were met at the gate by an eye-catching white clematis in bloom on the fence in her sun garden facing the road.

Van Berlo Gardens
Photo: Helene Williams

Behind the house, next to the St. Lawrence River, is her shade garden, and along the sides are her trees, including a spectacular *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy'. We ate our lunches by the St. Lawrence, comfortable in Mary Ann's many seating areas and bemused by the sight of her picnic table firmly mired in the unusually high waters of the St. Lawrence.

After lunch we took a short hop over to the Maitland Garden of Hope. Here, there is a series of different spaces, such as a fragrant garden, a wildflower garden, a rhododendron and azalea garden, a butterfly garden, and a culinary garden. Located on the monarch butterfly migration path, it is a registered monarch butterfly waystation. There are many shrubs incorporated into the 1.5 acres, including several pagoda dogwood "Golden Shadows". It's clear the focus is on providing a habitat for the conservation and enjoyment of native butterflies, birds, and bees. To prove the point, a rose-breasted grosbeak was happily eating striped sunflower seeds while we visited.

Our final private garden was Chillane Garden in Mallorytown. Over 1800 hostas of 650 varieties find their home here. They are found throughout the garden, but cluster primarily in one area with many large trees, including oaks and black walnuts. Just to the left as you enter the gate is a lawn that has three large triangles crisply cut into the turf, each triangle containing just a few small evergreens which have been carefully sized and sited. Also on the property are a formal rose garden and an enclosed herb garden. Centred in the garden is an old stone house, believed to date from 1837. It is well-maintained and in authentic condition, and forms a charming backdrop to the garden spaces. Many members commented on the feeling of peace that was prevalent here.

OHS Matters

We concluded with a visit to Rideau Woodland Ramble garden and nursery. Several people bought plants — some that they had seen that day on our garden visits and wanted to add to their gardens, and others too, of course. The rain held off while everyone either made their purchases or just wandered around the garden.

All in all, another enjoyable collaborative bus tour.

Did You Know

The OHS has arranged many bus trips through the years. Here's what past president Judy Shedden says about the one in 1992:

The bus trip in 1992 was to Columbus, Ohio. It was the 500th anniversary of 1492, when Columbus sailed the ocean blue. Columbus, Ohio had a big celebration, including a large flower show and gardens. It was a great excuse for an excursion during our centennial year and we had good fun on the bus as well as a pleasant trip. The bus stopped at a few places, including a "pomary" - a place which grew pomes (apples and pears). There was another visit but I have forgotten where. It is hard to believe it was 25 years ago.

Getting to Know Rebecca Last

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

I started attending OHS meetings with my friend Josie and joined in the early 2000s. Ottawa winters are so miserable that the chance to enjoy photos of lovely, lush gardens in mid-winter was a big draw. I've made new friends, and enjoy the talks, particularly speakers who combine scientific knowledge with practical gardening experience. Through our semi-annual shows, I've even gained an appreciation for flower arranging.

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

My speaker bio claims I've been gardening "on and off since about age 8". Truth is that my gardening was mostly "off" until my husband and I bought our home in Britannia. Twenty-five years later I still feel very much like a novice. For me, one of the great joys of gardening is that it is truly a journey in lifelong learning!

How would you describe your garden?

It is a cliché, but truthfully, my garden is always a work in progress. It's my laboratory for experimentation, whether I'm trying a new plant, new plant combinations, or a new type of gardening. It's also my pantry for fresh fruit, vegetables, herbs, and medicinal plants.

About twenty years ago, I started studying wildlife-friendly garden design and learned about native plants. In 2004, my garden earned Backyard Habitat certification from the Canadian Wildlife Federation. Over the past decade, I've become increasingly interested in permaculture and have been actively incorporating permaculture principles into my garden.

A conventional description is that I garden on an urban lot, about 35 feet wide. I get a lot into that space. The front yard includes fruit trees, shrubs, a veggie patch, and a wide variety of native plants. In 2009, my husband and I decided to tear up the top end of the driveway to create a raised bed on the side of the house so I could grow more veggies. The backyard was designed as our "cottage", with a rustic-looking cedar-sided shed, a pond, a waterfall, and a patio area for entertaining friends. There literally isn't a square inch that isn't planted.

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

Building the pond and waterfall was unquestionably an act of financial madness. However, it remains my absolute favourite part of the garden. It is fun bringing friends into my backyard and watching the look on their faces when they see all the hidden magic here.

I have a love-hate relationship with many of my plants. My sentiments fluctuate from season to season and year to year. I love the first delicate shoots in spring. I revel in the luxurious growth of early summer, but on occasion, I discover that my little green darlings have turned into giant people-eating monsters, seemingly overnight.

As we are so close to the Ottawa River, my garden is built on pure, white, beach sand. This means great drainage and practically no soil nutrients.

Consequently, I've learned to plant things that will grow in these tough conditions, often things that are seen as thugs in other people's gardens.

Getting to Know Rebecca Last

Not all my experiments work. I killed several batches of mint before finally getting a patch established. Now I spend altogether too much time yanking it out again. I value useful plants such as witch hazel and anise hyssop, but my favourites remain the showy ornamentals, no matter how brief their blooms. I have a particular weakness for oriental poppies, bearded irises, and Asiatic lilies.

Are you the main gardener or do you have help?

I am the main gardener, but I have used contractors when the garden required significant work. Over the years, I've also been fortunate to recruit enthusiastic young neighbourhood volunteers, who enjoy the garden, and assist with various garden jobs in exchange for lemonade and cookies. It is fun meeting up with these kids again years later, and hearing about their happy recollections of working and playing in my garden. My wonderful husband Richard enables my gardening addiction by keeping me fed and watered, and our spoiled rescue cats assist with both supervision and fertilization.

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

I'm pretty happy with the hardscaping we've done over the years. So now it is a question of maintaining the plant materials and adapting to changes. With so many plants crammed into my small garden, I need to be increasingly selective, even ruthless, in getting rid of the "under-performers", and this past, very wet, spring reminded me of the need to do something about stormwater run-off. As part of the original garden design, I built a dry-stone stream bed through the front yard to capture and direct run-off from the gutters. However, the grade is wrong, and that will be a big job to tackle one of these days.

Are there gardening web sites that you look at regularly?

I recently discovered Stephen Barstow's Edimentals blog (http://www.edimentals.com/blog/), which is most helpful for my permaculture aspirations. (My husband, the cook, occasionally laments that I ever heard of this man when I bring strange edibles, such as Tradescantia, into the kitchen!) I'm also a big fan of Taunton's Fine Gardening Photo of the Day (http://www.finegardening.com/garden-photo-day-blog) where I find inspiration for plant combinations and new selections of plants. The University of British Columbia's Botany Photo of the Day (http://botanyphoto.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/) is another favourite – as much for the great discussions in the comments as for the inspirational photos. When I'm researching, I frequently use websites from Canadian Organic Growers, Seeds of Diversity (https://www.cog.ca/) , Canadian Wildlife Federation (http://cwf-fcf.org/en/resources/gardening/), and OMAFRA (http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/ag.html) the agricultural pages of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), as well as the many excellent university extension sites from the U.S.A.

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

I've seen many gorgeous and inspiring gardens, not least on the OHS garden tours. In terms of design, I was inspired by traditional Japanese and Chinese gardens, which make amazing use of small spaces, and I have tried to apply these ideas in my own garden design.

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

I work full-time and do volunteer work with Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton, and those two activities keep me pretty busy. In my spare time, I enjoy reading – mostly non-fiction on economics, history, food policy, and of course, gardening. At the end of the day, I also like to curl up on the couch with a tacky rom-com.

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