



## 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.

### September 23

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

### October 28

Wildlife-Friendly Gardening 101, with Melissa Lefebvre, Backyard Habitat program, Canadian Wildlife Federation

### November 25

Water Gardening Through the Year, with Richard Inchley, Richard Inchley Ponds and Aqua

### December 9

Annual General Meeting and Potluck

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

## This Issue: Community Gardening

### Brewer Park Community Garden: An Oasis in the City

by Catherine Montgomery

Tucked in between Brewer Pool and Westboro Academy, across from Brewer Arena in Old Ottawa South is an oasis in the city. There you will find some 50 garden boxes overflowing with vegetables and flowers plus teepees for climbing vegetables and flowers built atop half barrels, along with planters for herbs of all sorts. Welcome to the Brewer Park Community Garden.



photo credit: Catherine Montgomery

The garden grew out of the vision of a small group of determined people who came together in 2010 with a plan to create a community garden

in Old Ottawa South. The group wanted a garden with plots for individuals, families, and the community plus a children's garden, and a space to grow food to donate to those in need. All gardening practices would be organic, with no chemical fertilizers or pesticides.

After an extensive search of potential locations, the group identified a sunny, open space on Brewer Way, near Sunnyside and Bronson Avenues. Following the submission of documentation to meet the various requirements, the City of Ottawa approved the site on May 22, 2012, and the Brewer Park Community Garden (BPCG) was born.

It started quite modestly with 28 garden boxes built in summer 2012 with funding from the City of Ottawa, Just Food/Community Garden Network (see sidebar), TD Friends of the Environment Foundation (for the children's garden), David Churnushenko (City Councillor for Capital Ward), as well as support from EcoAce, a local company. The City recommended the construction of raised beds to avoid contamination from a previous landfill site located nearby and also for aesthetic reasons.

The following summer, thanks to funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Just Food Ottawa, and the Government of Canada's Summer Jobs Program, members and volunteers built 30 more garden boxes, 9 berry boxes, 4 communal boxes and a storage shed. The construction of the boxes themselves

took a team of volunteers several weekends of intensive work. Each 4 x 8 foot box is built of hemlock boards cut to size, stacked three high and fastened with strong corner braces sourced from Lee Valley Tools. Chicken wire is fitted to the bottom of the boxes to prevent creatures from digging up from underneath them. The boxes are lined with geotextile and filled with one-third sand and two-thirds quality garden soil.

Each box is planted according to individual preference, some choosing the square-foot gardening method, others planting in rows, and still others choosing to focus on one or two varieties of high yielding vegetables such as tomatoes and beans. Members include experienced gardeners and first-timers all working together to grow delicious, nutritious, pesticide-free food. Pests have included a hungry groundhog and voracious Japanese beetles. Surrounding the plants with nets has successfully deterred the groundhog and hand-picking and a jar of soapy water dispatches the beetles.



Green Peppers

The cost of a garden plot is affordable. Plot holders pay a one-time membership fee of \$20 and a seasonal fee of \$25. There is an application process in which prospective members must confirm that they live, work or are closely connected with the Old Ottawa South neighbourhood. Members agree to abide by the rules of the BPCG, which include a commitment to plant by June 15 and to clean up the plot by the garden's official closing date in the second weekend of November. In addition, members are expected to devote at

least 5 hours to communal gardening tasks, such as maintenance, watering and year-end clean-up.

The organizational structure of the BPCG evolved from a rather unwieldy 22-member coordinating committee to its current 5-person executive supported by a team of coordinators for various tasks including maintenance, communications, communal plots, donation plots, demonstration plots, etc.

The children's garden plots provide an opportunity for children from neighbouring Westboro Academy and local daycare centres to participate in fun gardening activities, see how vegetables and fruits grow, and learn about the importance and pleasure of tending the garden regularly. There have also been programs offered by and for garden members, including workshops on permaculture, square-foot gardening and nature photography. There are regular social events, such as potluck get-togethers, which help build a sense of community.

The most recent addition to the BPCG is the Biodome, whose grand opening was on August 17, 2014. The Biodome Garden, a pilot project, is the first of its kind in Eastern Canada. Like a greenhouse, the Biodome will give BPCG members an extended growing season, as well as serve as a demonstration, education and research station for gardeners, community members and local schools. The striking design of the 13-foot-high, 26-foot-diameter geodesic structure is composed of 75 triangles (nature's strongest shape) made from pine 2 x 4s, enclosing sturdy, transparent polycarbonate panels.



Building the Biodome

The dome allows air and energy to circulate more efficiently than in conventional buildings. Raised garden beds have been built around the perimeter, both inside and outside the dome. Passive solar energy will warm the interior to extend the growing season. The aggregate surrounding the dome's base will store heat and release it gradually, in a system that has been optimized by a garden member, who is a Master of Renewable Energy Engineering and Policy candidate at Carleton University. Water tanks will support temperature regulation and aquaponics, which integrate fish with vegetable production, will provide both fertilizer and a food source. Water for the Biodome will come from a rainfall capture system.

There are plots designated for sharing among garden members, plots for seed starting, demonstration plots as well as a plan to rent out some of the plots to community organizations. The Biodome is an exciting experiment: gardeners will need to figure out what to plant to take best advantage of the Biodome's growing conditions. Participating gardeners will monitor and document what grows well and share their findings with the membership and others.

The Brewer Park Community Garden is a labour of love for its members and volunteers. It's part of a local network of community gardens, all serving to reconnect urban dwellers with nature and help them develop a deeper appreciation of sustainable development. If you're in the neighbourhood or shopping at the Ottawa Farmers Market at Brewer Park one Sunday, feel free to drop by the garden where you can talk to a garden member, relax on a bench or wander through the paths to admire the variety of vegetables, herbs and fruits bursting forth.

(There is another photo in the web edition of this issue. Eds.)

### Just Food

Just Food (justfood.ca) is a non-profit organization working for a sustainable and just food system in Ottawa. One of its projects--the Community Garden Network--is an information and resource-sharing entity that supports the sustainable development of community gardens within the City. In addition, Just Food oversees more than 40 community gardens scattered throughout the city.

Its major project is the establishment of an urban farming set-up on NCC land just to the west of Blackburn Hamlet. The 120 acres of Just Food Farm are available there in quarter and half-acre plots at a cost of \$1,600 a year for people interested in farming. Make no mistake – this is truly farming as vegetables and other edibles are grown in bulk and sold on to consumers. Leasees of the farm plots have access to irrigation, some farm equipment, a washing station, and cold storage; Just Food also offers the urban farmers workshops on farming techniques and marketing.

## President's Message

### Giving Back

by Jamie Robertson

Gardeners are, for the most part, a generous lot. How many of us have admired a plant in a friend or neighbour's garden, only to have the owner offer to give us a slip or a division? For many people, this is how they got a start in gardening.

The OHS's plant sales in the spring and autumn are among its main sources of revenue, and they would not be possible without the many donations of plants by members. These plant sales, especially those at the Friends of the Farm and in Ottawa South, are a way of spreading the word, and helping people who are new to gardening or have limited resources get started. The plants for sale often come with advice and personal testimonials from OHS members.

The OHS has a long and rich history of giving back to the community. Indeed, the mission of the OHS is "to cultivate an interest in plants and gardening in order to create a beautiful community."

The Society was formed in the 1890s as part of the "City Beautiful" movement. This was a period when there was considerable interest in improving the local community, and encouraging people to landscape their properties and grow more and better vegetables, fruit and flowers. From the beginning, the OHS promoted knowledge of horticulture and gardening in Ottawa. It published a pamphlet in 1893 that listed the best annuals, perennials, and vegetables for the Ottawa region, and later published pamphlets describing how to grow flowers and vegetables. It distributed seeds and held flower shows, often offering substantial prizes. Junior gardeners and school gardens received special attention.

The early members of the OHS also aimed at the beautification of the city, and undertook many projects that would now be considered the responsibility of local government. This included plantings for the west bank of the Rideau Canal, and, later, the gardens of the Protestant Hospital on Rideau Street and the flower beds at the Plant Bath on Preston Street. During the First World War, the OHS formed a "Vacant Lot Association," and developed countless wartime gardens, provided seeds, plants, labour, and instructional lectures to demonstrate how to "Grow Food and Help Win the War".

In 1916 the OHS published *Ottawa, A City Of Gardens*. It stated: "The enthusiastic horticulturalist is a public-spirited citizen," and reiterated that the OHS's object was to interest citizens in horticulture and assist them in beautifying their immediate surroundings: "This is accompanied by the distribution of plants, bulbs,

and seeds, and by carrying on exhibitions, competitions and educational meetings."

With the Depression of the 1930's, home gardens and public allotments assumed great importance, and the OHS also assisted with "Relief Gardens for the Unemployed." During the Second World War, the OHS identified public lands, paid for ploughing and tools, and provided know-how for what were known as "Victory Gardens."

In the early 1950s public plantings were carried out to demonstrate the advisability of using good bulbs, seeds, plants, and the best cultural practices. The OHS planted annuals at the Good Companions Centre and constructed outstanding landscape displays at the Central Canada Exhibition. Later, CPS members donated many hours to assist the Billings Estate in re-organizing its flower beds and planning a restoration of its 1930 heritage gardens. OHS members also took care of City Hall gardens, despite changes of location, from 1902 until 1990.

Despite enormous changes over the years, the mission and many of the activities of the OHS have remained constant. It still sponsors a community gardening program, and usually takes on one or two community projects each year, using funding generated by memberships and plant sales. OHS members have assisted in therapeutic plantings at Saint Vincent's Hospital, Abbotsford House, and the Rehabilitation Centre, gardens at the Perley and Rideau Veterans Health Centre, Georges Vanier Catholic Elementary School, and the Hospice at May Court. This year the Community Planting Committee worked on two projects: Carlton Lodge and a large street planter on Arthur Street.

Our hats' off to the dedicated and tireless volunteers of the Community Planting Committee for continuing on the OHS' traditions of beautifying the community and helping make Ottawa a better place to live.



## Revealing our Hidden Urban Garden

by Katrina Siks,

Cofounder of Hidden Harvest Ottawa

We can imagine our entire city as one vast garden. Much of it has been paved, some areas are not very well tended, and a few special places are wonderfully cared for (often displaying "OHS" signs).

Within our city's garden, there are fruits and nuts hiding in plain sight on every city block. Our knowledge of them is veiled by our cultural forgetfulness, and the faded wisdom of what foods grow here. Our grocery stores have replaced this knowledge with that of commodified foods - foods that are easy to make a profit on, processed and shipped en masse. Overtime, our sense of familiarity has grown rooted into the plastic wrap and cardboard that bears our daily nutrients.

Ah, but what is this? It is late August, I am out for my daily walk along the Rideau River, and I come across something in the grass. Might it be a wayward ball from the nearby tennis courts? I pick up a cluster of sticky, light green tendrils unfurling around seven or eight thumb-sized, smooth nodes.

Standing below a 30 foot tall tree with a compact crown, I astonishingly discover another, and then another of these clusters, perhaps 20 in all, hiding in the grass around me! Wide-eyed, I look up, and find more waiting to fall from the limbs overhead. I know it can't be the shrub-like American or Beaked Hazel, but I am sure I have found something interesting.



Turkish Hazelnut on the ground

It turns out that I (and the squirrels) did not discover something unique: in Ottawa there are 169 Turkish Hazelnut trees growing on City Property. The City Forestry department informed me that the city had started planting Turkish Hazels about 20 years ago – and they're just beginning to bear nuts all around town. The intrigue of the soft, green, sticky involucre is sure to attract much curiosity over the years to come, and I am hopeful that that curiosity will lead many on a path to learning more about our trees.

Turkish Hazels became popular amongst City foresters due to the tree's high tolerance of challenging city growing conditions, as well as our citizen's ready acceptance of the trees; their consistently shaped narrow crown provides a well-groomed look, accommodates for overhead wires, and the nuts cause minimal annoyance. Though the edible nuts are a tolerated side-effect for most, they are a welcome ingredient in my kitchen, as well as in the basket I display to curious tree lovers at Hidden Harvest Ottawa events.



Hidden Harvest group at 110lb elderberry harvest]

For the last two years my business partner Jason Garlough and I, with many dedicated volunteers, have endeavored to establish a project called Hidden Harvest Ottawa. We organize groups of volunteers to pick and share fruit and nuts which would otherwise go to waste, on city property and private property. Through our website, tree owners

register their trees for harvesting and volunteers sign-up to help. So far we have gathered: serviceberries, cherries, mulberries, chokecherries, plums, pears, apples, elderberries (see photo), crabapples, grapes, black walnuts, butternuts, Turkish hazelnuts and ginkgo nuts. Trained Neighbourhood Leaders host our harvest events, and ensure that the food collected is evenly shared with the parties involved – ¼ to each: the tree owner, the volunteers, the nearest food agency, and Hidden Harvest Ottawa.

Although Turkish Hazels don't cause complaints, not all food-bearing trees are so lucky. City Councillors have been drawn into neighbourhood feuds over cutting down property line-straddling black walnuts; petitions have been submitted to remove ancient, but stinky, female ginkgos.



Black walnuts, ginkgos, Turkish hazel

In years of good crops in our city garden, the abundance of these tree foods is all too often fuelling frustrations rather than filling bellies. And, with more than 43,000 people relying on Food Bank agencies each month in Ottawa, we indeed have bellies to fill.

We're happy when the city calls us to help prevent our healthy trees from being cut down, by removing the "problem" food and putting it to good use. Hidden Harvest envisions a food tree friendly city, changing the way we look at fruit falling to the ground – from a nuisance to a missed opportunity.

Last year Hidden Harvest rescued nearly 6,000 lbs of food from 142 trees and vines. We know this is a drop in the bucket of what is currently hiding out there. If, when out for your daily walk, you find pesky cherries or other fruit falling to the sidewalk, you can do two things:

- On city property: Register the tree yourself for harvesting online on the Hidden Harvest website.
- On private property: Approach the homeowner or drop off a Hidden Harvest leaflet (see below), encouraging the registration of the trees. With homeowner permission, you may also register the trees on their behalf.

Putting food to good use is just the beginning; we must continue to tend our urban garden. Gardeners, your green thumb is a tremendously powerful tool. You have the ability to help our city, and our urban garden, thrive.

Through your garden you have the capability of enriching our soil, supporting our pollinators, sheltering our amphibians, feeding creatures from birds to bats and of course, human creatures too. Your garden can engage the human passerby with curiosity and delight, and reconnect us to the wisdom we have forgotten: the nourishment of mind and body that comes from the plants that grow here. In this wisdom lays the potential for our city to feed itself local, wholesome, food.

Tree Registration Page:  
<http://ottawa.hiddenharvest.ca/offer-or-pick/>, click on "Register Your Tree"

Leaflet:  
<http://ottawa.hiddenharvest.ca/featured/wanted-more-trees-to-harvest/>

Volunteer Sign-up Page:  
<http://ottawa.hiddenharvest.ca/offer-or-pick/>, click on "Volunteer Sign-Up"

Find Katrina leading edible tree tours around Ottawa:

### Detroit City by Sheila Burvill

Readers of this issue of the OHS newsletter will rapidly form the opinion that Ottawa is buzzing with community gardening activities. What with Hidden Harvest, Just Food, and other like-minded organizations leading the charge to urban farming and growing in local garden plots, the experimentation such as the Biodome at Brewers Park, our own OHS community planting activities, and the city-wide collection of compost, Ottawa has figuratively rolled up its sleeves and got its collective hands dirty.

But we are not alone. Think of Detroit. The financial collapse of the American economy in 2008 hit Detroit hard. Although the decline had begun well before then, it was a bit more gradual prior to the latest recession. It's sobering to realize that the once mighty motor city with a population of over 2,000,000 now boasts only 688,000 inhabitants (August 2014 figure).

With all those people leaving, a lot of properties were abandoned, foreclosures occurred, and Detroit found itself with over 200,000 vacant parcels of land that the city was forced to take over, just one of the financial pressures which brought the city to file for bankruptcy in 2013.

Not all the news was bleak, however, and some of the rays of hope have come from gardening interests. After all, if you have access to cheap land and many Detroit mouths to feed, why not use the land to grow the food?

One of the initiatives was the adoption of an agricultural zoning ordinance in April 2013 which sets out agriculture as a legal use of land within the city. Even back in 2009, there were 875 community gardens and farms in Detroit. The growth in community gardening has contin-

ued and, as an example, plans for a 27 acre farm project were announced last March, it taking over a public school property being sold off.

Goats have found their place amongst the abandoned buildings and neglected land. The owner of a large hedge fund has bought 20 goats who will clear the land by doing what goats do so efficiently – eating. The result will be more goats and goat food products. Moreover, the initiative is creating jobs – urban youth becoming goat farmers.

Another businessman has set out to create the world's largest urban farm. Although initially fruit orchards were planned, efforts are now directed to planting 15,000 trees on newly cleaned up urban acres, step one in the plan. To learn more and to see the reaction of neighbours, check here for a video and more: <http://www.hantzfarmsdetroit.com/introduction.html>.

The overall aim in Detroit may be to grow vegetables to eat, to raise livestock, to create urban forests and farms on huge plots of abandoned land and to produce food items such as maple syrup but it's clear that the main crop being raised there is hope.

### Did You Know?

Mosquitoes can carry several diseases and infect gardeners through their bites, including West Nile. To help protect yourself from these pests, follow these prescriptives from the Summer 2009 issue of *Canadian Gardening*: wear long pants and sleeves plus a hat; avoid black clothes and prefer light colours; and apply natural insect repellants such as lemon eucalyptus oil





## Member to Member

### Dog-Strangling Vine: the Super-Invasive Species

by Sandy Garland

We deal with a lot of invasive species at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden (FWG) where I am a volunteer, but dog-strangling vine (*Vincetoxicum rossicum*) is definitely the one we hate. Hours and hours of volunteer time go into pulling, cutting, covering, and chopping it, but it just grows right back.



Dog-strangling vine grows in sun and shade. Here, under spruce trees, it fills the understory, surrounding and often covering woodland wildflowers.

Aside from the fact that it has no natural “enemies” in this part of the world, the plant’s root is so resilient, it’s almost impossible to kill. Like a hydra, the root crown produces one shoot after another in response to damage or other efforts to control it. Yes, people have tried fire – it grows back. And goats – they die, unless moved to healthier food. Digging it out is the only solution, but when you are faced with a sea of dog-strangling vine, that task is rather daunting.



Dog-strangling vine roots are massive and extremely resilient; when the green parts of the plant are damaged, the roots just send up more shoots.

Like its relative, milkweed, dog-strangling vine produces pods filled with seeds that are dispersed by the wind on silky parachutes. Unlike milkweed, each dog-strangling vine seed contains several embryos, each of which can grow into a new plant. Because dog-strangling vine resembles milkweed, Monarch butterflies may mistakenly lay eggs on it. But the caterpillars that try to eat the leaves soon die.

Dog-strangling vine is spreading – here in Ottawa as well as in Toronto and upper New York State. Where once it was confined to the Central Experimental Farm, where it was first found in 1907, now we see it in gardens and parks all over Ottawa – along the O-Train route, along rivers, in the Greenbelt.

If you find dog-strangling vine on your property, please dig it up immediately. If it has spread too much to dig up, at least pull off all the seed pods as they form, so that it won’t spread any further. The form of dog-strangling vine that we see here spreads only by seeds, NOT vegetatively by roots or rhizomes.

#### There’s hope

**Biocontrol** – Where dog-strangling vine is native, in the Ukraine, it is part of the local ecosystem and no more visible than Black-eyed Susans are here. Scientists from Canada and the United States have been studying it in its native habitat to see what keeps it under control there. After many years, they have found a moth whose larvae eat dog-strangling vine leaves. Some moths have been brought to Ottawa and

released in a controlled experiment at the Central Experimental Farm.

Needless to say, much care has been taken to ensure that the moth larvae stick to dog-strangling vine and don’t do damage to any other plants. Other insects were found to feed on dog-strangling vine, but they were not specific enough in their food habits to allow transfer to our area.



A dog-strangling vine leaf with an early instar *Hypena* caterpillar (circled) – tiny and difficult to see at this stage.

**Competition** – At the FWG, we have found that some native species, like goldenrods and purple flowering raspberry, can out-compete dog-strangling vine. Although dog-strangling vine can spread quickly and soon become the only plant in a field, both goldenrods and raspberries can grow taller and shade out dog-strangling vine so that only a few plants remain under their canopies.

**Aliens?** – Another, rather mysterious solution to the dog-strangling vine problem might lie in our “crop circles.” Several years ago, we noticed some areas at the FWG where dog-strangling vine was conspicuously absent. Most were almost perfect circles, 2-3 metres in diameter. We’ve consulted a well-known mycologist, Scott Redhead, and experiments are underway to try to discover the cause of the circles, but so far with no results. However, circles keep appearing and we’re hoping they are caused

## Member to Member

by some agent that can be used to defeat dog-strangling vine elsewhere.



Edge of a 3-m diameter dog-strangling vine-free circle showing grass (right) in the circle surrounded by dog-strangling vine (left) looking rather wilted - a peculiar phenomenon that cries out for investigation.

**Chemicals** – You may also have heard that the FWG has resorted to herbicides. In a small area near Prince of Wales Drive, glyphosate has been applied to a mass of dog-strangling vine by technicians from Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada. They plan to repeat this later in the year and again over the next couple of years. Yes, it takes that much herbicide to kill dog-strangling vine.

The problem is: then what? If the herbicide is successful, we will be left with a band of bare earth surrounded by the usual mix of native and non-native vegetation found in open areas around Ottawa. In our case, that mix includes dog-strangling vine. I believe there is hope that planting the bare spot will keep dog-strangling vine at bay, but I am hoping that the moth larvae or our crop circles will have reached a stage of practical use by then.

### For more info

FWG web page: Dog-strangling vine (a.k.a. Pale swallowwort): [http://ofnc.ca/fletcher/invasives/swallowwort/index\\_e.php](http://ofnc.ca/fletcher/invasives/swallowwort/index_e.php)

Gallery of photos of dog-strangling vine: [http://www.pbase.com/fwg/dsv\\_at\\_fwg](http://www.pbase.com/fwg/dsv_at_fwg)

Subscribe to the FWG newsletter [fletcher@ofnc.ca](mailto:fletcher@ofnc.ca)

### Dispatches from the Garden

On a Friday afternoon in early July this year, the centre fell out of our neighbour's tree. It's an old, very large Silver Maple and, essentially, one third of its extensive bulk came crashing down. Not onto my hosta bed, thankfully, but into our Sugar Maple where it hung precariously, partially held back by the cable which had been inserted about twenty-five years ago to hold the main crotch together.

Here's the wonderful thing, though. Our neighbour called "311" to report the problem to the City of Ottawa right away. (I should have mentioned that both the Silver and Sugar maples are city trees.) A couple of hours later, two workers from the City Forestry Services turned up in a truck kitted out with a hoist and bucket. The very first thing they did was move two of my planters located under the Sugar Maple out of harm's way. Then they figured out a plan of attack.

While my husband and I watched from an upstairs window, we saw one fellow put his two chainsaws, other equipment, and finally himself into the bucket which then was hoisted up into the canopy. The other fellow positioned himself below so that he could 'catch' parts of the tree branch as they were cut off. They coordinated efforts so that the ends and smaller diameter sub-branches were cut off first and then, cautiously, the larger, heavier branch material was dismantled. Finally the cable was cut at both ends. The resulting thump of the thick central core onto the ground

made up realize what a destructive accident could have happened, had they not been so careful.

When the workers left, my neighbour's and part of our front lawn was covered in tree debris but all of it organized as to size and positioned so that not one of my hostas was touched.

The following Monday morning, another City track appeared, this one hauling a chipper and in very little time, all the leaves, smaller branches, and twigs had been reduced to compost material. The remaining larger parts were carried away later and the now sadly diminished tree will be evaluated to see if further action will be required.

Nice to see our taxpayer dollars at work, so effectively and efficiently too!  
SB

## Did You Know?

While there are currently about 40 community gardens in Ottawa, there is only one City-run garden. It's located on Kilborn Avenue at Haig Drive and consists of 355 plots rented out to gardeners at varying rates of \$95.50 (non residents), \$76.50, and \$68.75 (seniors) per season. Some garden sheds are also available for rental (\$21.50).

More information is available by contacting:

Madeleine Brenning 613-247-4846  
[www.kilborggardens.ca](http://www.kilborggardens.ca)

## Member to Member

### The Perils of Public Planting: An Anecdote from the Past

by John Soar

Some of the members of the Society of long standing may remember when the meetings were held in the McNabb Community Centre. In those days two stalwart members of the Society, Gwen and Bill Bell, were always to be found doing something that needed doing; Gwen was always at the door greeting, checking membership, etc, and Bill was a willing setter out of chairs and tables, a great exhibitor in flower shows, and a wonder when it came to public planting for he was a professional gardener at the ornamental gardens in the Arboretum.

It was probably in the early eighties that the Society decided to plant tulip bulbs in the island in the parking lot. It was a large lot and had at its centre a large round island with a kerb and a crown of soil. That was the site chosen for a mass planting of bulbs. Bill and I agreed that we would plant them together and that we needed no other help. When I saw the sacks of bulbs and realised how much work we faced I was apprehensive. This was of no concern to Bill.

We met one Saturday afternoon in the Fall, worked the bed over, and started to plant. It was not a nice day and I thought that it would take some hours to complete the job. We set about it. Bill laid out the bulbs and started to plant. I have never seen anything like it. He planted twenty to my one or two! I was very slow but following his system of advancing on his knees with a trowel, dig, plant, fill, crawl, almost in a single rapid motion, we (he!) got the job done in an hour or so of cold and wet work.

That winter there was a lot of snow. It was regularly cleared from the lot and piled up around the edges and on our tulip island in the middle, good pro-

tection we thought. Eventually there was too little parking and too much snow. The City hauled the snow away with trucks and a large front end loader. There was plenty of parking after that but alas the island with our tulips was scraped clear at curb level and hauled away. That spring there was a meager showing of a handful of tulips. There was probably a great display in a snow dump somewhere. What tulips there were left on our island were dug up later for the planting of annuals.

Hey Ho. Public planting. There were other experiences of like nature. City Hall. Miniature Roses. They were good community efforts whatever the results.

(John Soar is a OHS life member. Eds.)

### Did You Know?

Thanks to Nathalie Chaly and the Oxford English Dictionary, we now know that we can call weeding by a much more high-faluting alternative word – “runcation”. Here is the official definition: ‘The action or an act of weeding. Also occas.: the action of rooting’.

Runcation, anyone?

### Members’ Plant Recommendations

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

This issue covers hostas. The OHS is fortunate to have two eminent hosta lovers in its ranks. Ann Frederking’s recommendations are small and medium-sized hostas while Robb Wainwright tells us what larger varieties he recommends.

### My Hosta Recommendations

by Ann Frederking

The hostas I list are based on those which I have grown successfully though there are many other hostas that do very well, particularly if you have a lot of space. I don’t have a large garden so most of the hostas I grow are small or medium-sized. My list of favourites could easily go on much longer and it might be different on another day. I have not included any which seem to be particularly bothered by pests.

I’ve started with the “Hostas of the Year” as nominated by the American Hosta Growers Association. In general these are all wonderful plants which grow well. Some of them are too large for my garden. If you have space in yours check out the entire list at [http://www.hostagrowers.org/Hosta\\_of\\_the\\_Year.html](http://www.hostagrowers.org/Hosta_of_the_Year.html)



## Member to Member



1999 'Paul's Glory' - Thick, char-  
trreuse leaves, irregularly margined  
with dark blue-green with some  
streaks. Leaves are heart-shaped  
and corrugated. Gets lighter during  
the summer, but how much de-  
pends on zone and where it is situ-  
ated. Medium-large.



2001 'June' - every garden needs at  
least 2 'June' hostas - one to be  
planted in a shadier spot. The  
leaves are a rich, powdery gold,  
with a very irregular blue-green  
margin. The centre will turn to  
creamy-white in bright light. In more  
shade, it will be more blue. Very  
heavy substance leaf. Medium  
sized.



2010 'First Frost' - reverse pattern  
of Hosta 'June'. Attractive blue

leaves with a 1/2" border of creamy  
yellow that ages to white by sea-  
son's end. Medium-sized.



2011 'Praying Hands' - this is a very  
unusual plant. There's nothing else  
quite like it. Each small upright  
clump is composed of strangely  
folded, lance-shaped, dark green  
crinkled leaves, each with a narrow  
cream border. Lavender flowers in  
August. Situate this one where it  
can be seen. Medium, upright  
mound.



2012 'Liberty' - this is the drama  
queen in my garden. A large hosta  
(though there certainly are many  
that are bigger), it holds itself up-  
right. The wide yellow margins on  
the blue-green leaves are striking  
and slugs leave it alone. Pale laven-  
der, tubular flowers on 40" scapes.



2013 'Rainforest Sunrise' - a lovely  
small-medium hosta. The cupped

leaves are golden and surrounded by  
a dramatic border of black-green.  
Quite distinctive. Light lavender flow-  
ers in mid-July.



2016 'Curly Fries' - the date is cor-  
rect; it'll appear on the American  
Hosta Growers' list in 2016. I've had  
this small hosta for 3 years and it's  
become a favourite. I love the reddish  
petioles and the upright habit. It's a  
small hosta, but it makes a state-  
ment. The lanceolate leaves get more  
yellow during the season. I have this  
one next to my driveway and I smile  
each time I park my car.

Other favourites:



'Country Mouse' - Tiny heart-shaped,  
blue-green leaves are surrounded by  
a pure white margin, forming a nearly  
flat clump. Pale lavender bell-shaped  
flowers mid-summer on a 15" scape.  
A true mini hosta, that grows well.



## Member to Member



'Pixie Vamp' - a registered mini that could hold its own in the garden. Dense, petite mound of neat heart-shaped leaves. Mid-green centers with distinct, yellow margins that change to creamy white.



'Peppermint Ice' - Shiny leaves with white centres and green margins of various shades. Small-medium. Mine appears to have rhizomatous tendencies. Bright lavender flowers in late July. There appear to be two plants on the market with this name. Ensure that you get the correct one.



'Rainbow's End' has yellow to creamy white streaks through leaves with medium and dark green margins. This one is very shiny and tough as nails. As close to a slug-proof hosta as anything in my garden. Small (21"w x 12"h)



'Lakeside Mom' - my favourite streaked plant - ovate leaves streaked with light green, greenish yellow, yellow and creamy white. Medium lavender flowers mid-summer. Medium-large

Every garden needs some solid green (or blue or yellow) hostas to calm the eye in a sea of variegated plants. A couple of my favourite green hostas are:



'Marilyn Monroe' - medium-large size, wavy-edged, grey-green leaves with dramatic, waxy-white undersides. Lavender flowers in late August or September.



'Restless Sea' - small-medium size. The gray-green leaves of 'Restless Sea' seem to be in a state of constant motion. Wedge-shaped leaves that are cupped at the leaf base have a slightly serrated edge and undulating

leaf margin, white undersides. Pale lavender flowers in late summer.

For other selections, just about anything in the 'Halcyon'/'June' family of sports grows well and holds up well during the season and none of them get too large. I especially like 'High Society', 'Remember Me', 'Stand By Me' and 'Bulletproof' (solid blue) as well as 'Halcyon'.

### Robb Wainwright's Top Hosta Picks (This Year!)

This summer Robb Wainwright opened his delightful cottage garden (and charming cottage) to OHS members as part of the July garden tour. With a shaded property, and the encouragement of a ready-to-share, hosta-collecting cousin, Robb's plantings focus primarily on hostas, which he features to beautiful effect in dry stone terraced beds. Robb's favourite hostas – this year at least! – are:



Abba Daba Doo



Striptease



## Member to Member



Lakeside Contender



Oh La La



Robb's Terraced Hosta Bed

## OHS Matters

### Community Planting 2014

by Margaret Scratch

The Community Planting Committee undertook two projects this summer – a neglected city planter on Arthur Street in Chinatown and one of the gardens at Carleton Lodge, a seniors' residence. Both projects were selected from a suggested list of five because they had enthusiastic and willing local committees ready to take on both the planting and long term maintenance. Both groups were a pleasure to work with and both projects were completed in what must be record time, due to the many local helpers. Both will also give pleasure to many others – to passers-by on Arthur and Somerset Streets and to the residents, their families and the staff at Carleton Lodge.

#### Arthur Street

A small condo at 40 Arthur Street has a garden committee which plans, plants, and watches over the grounds around the building. Across the street was a concrete city planter with a dead tree and several overgrown bushes in it that the gardeners at number 40 found an eyesore. They persuaded the city to replace the tree with a living serviceberry and contacted us to see whether the OHS might undertake planting something around the tree.



Arthur St. Before

The Community Planting Committee met with the condo gardeners and we talked about what they might like in the planter. This was the usual hardy, low maintenance and long blooming

selection but the plants also had to be salt tolerant as the planter is sprayed with salty snow by the street cleaners. We settled on a selection of day lilies, some *Rudbeckia*, geraniums, lady's mantle, lamb's ears, *Sedums* and *Heuchera*. But first the soil, which looked a bit like the concrete surrounding it, had to be amended. The condo gardening committee dug in 13 bags of sheep manure while we put out a grapevine call for donations of any of the plants we were looking for. The response was tremendous and we had to purchase fewer than half of the plants we put in. The only real hitch was the weather on the day of planting. It was pouring. But we carried on anyway and got everything planted in under two hours with the help of six condo volunteers.



Arthur St. After

#### Carleton Lodge

Carleton Lodge is fortunate in having a group of dedicated volunteers, among them Lynne Deachman an OHS member. Lynne prepared an application for OHS Community Planting assistance and introduced us to the garden volunteers. An early meeting with them in April revealed an ambitious plan for two gardens at the Lodge. The gardeners were prepared to do much of the work and to carry on adding to the garden after



## OHS Matters

we had put in some bare bones. We also decided that one garden in 2014 would be doable, with a further application for assistance with the other garden in 2015. So we started considering what plants to put into the Rideau Village garden, which is in the wing housing residents with dementia, hoping to create something pleasing to the eye in all seasons and perhaps remind the residents of gardens they had known.

Again the soil needed work and the Lodge gardeners took care of that, so by the time we arrived to plant, all parts of the garden had been thoroughly weeded and had received a good load of composted pine bark. We again put out a Grapevine call for donations of the plants we wanted to put in, and once again we were delighted with the number of donations we received. Thank you to the OHS members who dug out plants for us. We bought fewer than half of the plants we needed, among them day lilies, smaller hostas, several tall grasses which we used to mask a wire mesh fence, *Coreopsis* *Heuchera*, and a trumpet vine.



Planting the long border

We planted one Saturday morning in July with a veritable army of OHS Committee members and volunteers and the Lodge gardeners plus extra volunteers. We were greeted by the

staff and fed muffins and coffee as we set to work. It was an easy job since the soil had been so well prepared. One hitch was the fact that the sunroom windows overlooking a large, sunny bed were to be replaced in September, putting the plants in peril. We solved this by potting them, burying the pots in the bed and suggesting that the Lodge gardeners create a map to guide them when they put the plants in their final position.



The sun room bed

In all we created or re-arranged the large sunroom bed, a small shady bed with several interesting rocks in it, a long border along a fence shaded by trees, and a sunny bed in front of the mesh fence gate. As the morning progressed, several residents came out to watch us work, have their morning coffee and offer some advice. They seemed to enjoy the unusual activity and we hope they will continue to enjoy its results. A huge thank you goes out to the garden committee at the Lodge. They were wonderful to work with and so appreciative of our help. And of course a big thank you is due to our Community Planting Committee – Gillian MacDonnell, co-chair, Josie Pazdzior, Jean Stalker, Erin Cassidy Lynne Deachman and Lyse Morisset.

### Ontario Horticultural Association 2014 Convention

by Maureen Mark

The OHS Voting delegates to the convention were Gloria Sola, Gillian McDonnell, Sheila Burvill, Kristin Kendall, and Maureen Mark.

#### Resolutions

Five resolutions were presented. Of these, three were expressions of appreciation which we supported.

The fourth resolution was the amendment of by-laws to allow for the transfer of Kemptville and Gloucester from D2 to D1. We voted for the resolution and it was carried.

The remaining resolution proposed to withdraw reimbursement of expenses for recently retired directors to attend the next convention. After discussion, the resolution was passed.

#### Key notes from the business meeting

- OHA will continue to hold the treasurer bond funds for 2 years to deal any issues that may arise; funds will need to be distributed when no longer needed to address potential liabilities

- The OHA has negotiated lower insurance rates with a new supplier. Consequently, Societies will be receiving a credit for insurance of about \$26

- Travel insurance is now available and must be arranged with the OHA's agent

- OHA societies (284 in all) have increased membership by 143 members and volunteer hours have

## OHS Matters

increased by more than 10,000 hours, in part due to better reporting

- Societies have 3 years to comply with the new Canadian anti-spam legislation; OHA has prepared information on what societies should do. Jayne Huntley is looking into what changes the OHS may have to make.

- Scotia Bank will provide matching funds up to \$1000 for fund raising activities involving staff; bank staff can help Society fund raising activities by working as cashiers or manual labour.

### Judging Updates

For accredited judges there were four updates along with two practice judging sessions. Update topics ranged from how to present a garden for judging to principles of and criteria for judging design

Participants got some extra practice judging exhibits in the Show. As the classes had already been judged by the Convention judges, the prize ribbons were removed for the exercise. It was interesting to see how our shadow results compared with the judged results. The Cornwall convention may have been the first time judging has been addressed with such careful attention with the result being updates that were of a good calibre and truly useful.

### Tours, etc.

The 2014 OHA Convention included some off-campus activities. On Thursday afternoon there was a Pre-Convention Coach Adventure to the Montreal Botanical Gardens. Friday and Saturday's events included the opportunity to participate in a number of interesting and informative tours of the town of Cornwall and the neighbouring countryside. Participants had the opportunity to visit some wonderful local gardens,

among them the Tolley Gardens--6 acres and 1,100 varieties of hostas. There were opportunities to learn something about the heritage and more recent history of Cornwall; one of the bus tours was led by Jim Brownell, President of the Lost Villages Historical Association and Friday morning's Plenary presenter. Also hard to resist was a three hour guided cruise along the scenic St. Lawrence River. Altogether, there was an embarrassment of riches--the problem was deciding what to do, and wanting to do more.

Finally -- in the publications competition, the OHS newsletter was awarded first prize. That means you're currently reading the best of its kind in the province.

Next year's OHA convention will be in Ancaster on July 3, 4, and 5, 2015. Events and accommodation will be at Redeemer University College. Ancaster is close to the Royal Botanical Gardens.

### **Shows Corner**

by Lyse Morisset

The Indoor/Outdoor Fall Show  
Tuesday, September 23, 2014

We promised that the indoor show was coming up soon; it is indeed coming soon to an arena near you. Pick up your 2014 OHS Yearbook and follow along as we review the categories.

#### **Indoor**

This is an abbreviated version of the classical indoor show, but there are still 9 categories, 3 for the beloved gesneriads, one for orchids, and 6 for other favourites.

#### **Outdoor Flowers**

The autumn chrysanthemums and asters and other perennials all have their place, but so do the roses (if your rosebushes happen to produce blooms at this time of year)

#### **Outdoor Foliage**

Five categories dedicated to the ornamental grasses and other grass-like plants, but only the small and medium (the latter includes those up to 6 feet tall). Other foliage plants are also welcome.

#### **Edibles**

Not just the glamorous tomato, but all vegetables and fruit, as well as herbs can be displayed. There is no doubt that the appeal of the edible garden is increasing, even to provide "show" material.

#### **Design Division**

The overall theme for the design categories remind me of the Fall Agricultural Fairs and include the Midway and even a needlework project. Check it out !!!

Of course, the Novice section echoes the main stream and a "BEST IN SHOW" will be awarded in each of the above five sections.

#### The exhibition table

A table for display only, not for competition, will be provided. If you want to show a specimen that is interesting or that you would like identified, bring it along.

See you there.

## OHS Matters

### **We're going electronic!**

As of January 2015 the OHS News will be published as a web newsletter. Paper copies can be available for those who need it, but the electronic version will be our primary publication.

We are doing this for a number of reasons:

- It will save the OHS quite a bit of money. It takes about \$6 of your annual membership fee to print and mail 3 Newsletters to you each year. That \$6 could be used for more speakers, new programs, etc. It costs next to nothing to put the Newsletter on our web page.
- It is the way most publications are now being published. We want to be able to make our Newsletter as readily available as others.
- Printing limits the Newsletter to multiples of 4 pages. We often have enough material to go to 14 or more pages but have to omit some material in order to meet a printable number of pages. We want to be able to publish all the wonderful material our members contribute. On the web, there is no comparable limit to the size of an issue.
- More and more of our members already read the Newsletter in electronic form, but since it has been designed for a printed product, it has all the limitations of that format. It could be a much more exciting publication if it were designed as an on-line publication.
- We are doing it "to serve you better". We really are! On the web the Newsletter is in full glorious colour. It is too expensive to print in colour. And it is such a shame to see all those beautiful photographs in black and white. We have included one page in colour as an insert so you can see what you are missing in this issue.

We hope you will enjoy the Newsletter even more in its new format in January.

Newsletter Editors



## OHS Matters

### Did You Know?

Compost by the People,  
for the People

If you're willing to drive to the Trail Waste Facility with your own shovel and containers, you can load up with municipal compost for potentially a fraction of what you would pay at a garden centre. The City of Ottawa charges \$10.75 per carload (under 245kg). We asked for your experiences with using municipal compost in your gardens, and received the following response from OHS member and Master Gardener Rebecca Last:

"My contractor uses city compost, so I've had several loads of it over the years. Very occasionally, I've found little bits of plastic in it, but otherwise it seems to be good quality, nice fluffy soil. The fluffiness means that it tends to compact, so if you're using it in a raised bed, you need to be prepared to top dress after the first year. I have received a few weeds with my city compost, notably vetch and red sorrel, but not in such quantities that it was an issue. In fact, my home compost is far richer in viable seeds!"

You can find further information on purchasing municipal compost, including directions and hours, on the city's website.



### From The Archives

After many years of faithful service as the OHS Archivist, Jeff Blackadar has decided to relinquish the post. While the news is not welcome, we cannot be surprised because Jeff has just taken over as the President of the Ontario Horticultural Association. Indeed, we've been fortunate to have had him continue being responsible for the OHS Archives during his tenures as an OHS Board Member, as OHS President, and as the OHA District 2 Director. (And did we mention that he also has a full-time job and is the father of a family of three children?)

The OHS certainly wishes Jeff the best in his new provincial position and wants to thank him for his years of service to the OHS.

Sheila Burvill has agreed to take over custody of the OHS Archives for a couple of years or until a new OHS Archivist can be found, whichever comes first. Anyone interested in the position should contact her at [saburvill@sympatico.ca](mailto:saburvill@sympatico.ca) or 613-232-9712. In the meantime, she'll be finishing off an inventory of what is in the Archives which are now all housed in our storage locker.

SB

### New Members

The OHS welcomes the following new members:

Yvonne Ackerman  
Suzanne Allen  
Maurie Barrett  
Robert Bourassa and Liz Nowack  
Gaetan and Mafanway Buttigieg  
Francois DŽsilets  
Michel Gauthier and Bernadette SalamŽ  
Jacqueline Ellis and Paul Gilbert  
Maxime Frost and Family  
Marc and Barbara Gibbon  
Marijan Grobbink and Mitsuru Kachi  
Angela and Peter Hay  
Glen Hodgins and Sara Jordan  
Bill Kendall  
Emma Kirke and Elizabeth Moore  
Jessica Kmith and Luis Angeitos  
Ana Maria Leyton and Alvaro Yanez  
Judy Lugg  
Leanna McCaffrey  
Sara Nadeau  
Christophe Nadon and Family  
Anita O'Connell  
Janet and Mike Palmer  
Yolaine Richards  
Diane Riley  
Scynthia A. and Scynthia M. Ross  
Jeremy Rude  
Faye Varady



## Getting to Know Karen Moore

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

I joined about two years ago. I enjoy the monthly presentations which cover a wide variety of super-interesting topics; the newsletter is great; the shows and competitions are a lot of fun; and the fundraising plant sales are fantastic. The opportunity to contribute to community volunteer gardening projects is also great.

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

I've been gardening since the age of 14 - I'd gotten hooked on the Ellis Peters "Brother Cadfael" mysteries, set in the Middle Ages, and I loved the idea of this worldly monk's herbarium. I dug up a patch in the backyard and planted my first garden, including sage, thyme and monkshood.

### What is your role in the garden?

Everything! Sigh :-)

### What are your favourite plants in your garden?

I love them all, except for the "banishee" (see next question).

### What plants would you banish from your garden?

Creeping bellflower – the bane of my gardening existence.

### Is there anything you would have done differently in your garden?

I wouldn't have planted so many Gaura (whirling butterfly) seedlings, they turned into a jungle.

### How would you describe your garden?

Eclectic botanical collection, including

heirloom vegetables, traditional cottage garden plants, native species, lots of pollinator-friendly flowers, and plants with historical significance in terms of food, craft or medicinal purposes. The collection aspect overrules any aesthetic component at the moment, but I am working on that.

### Do you have any definite plans for the garden?

I definitely plan to keep expanding, re-organizing, and improving the aesthetic component. I'd like to catalogue it as well one day.



### Where is the best garden you have ever seen?

Longwood Gardens, Pennsylvania - <http://longwoodgardens.org>. I haven't been to Kew yet, it might take first place. A close second is the Botanical Garden at the Natural History Museum at the University of Oslo - <http://www.nhm.uio.no/english/visiting/botanical-garden/>.

### What sort of reading do you enjoy?

A wide variety - high and low-brow fiction, almost all genres except westerns and romance; and nonfiction, history, politics, biographies, science and nature.

### What kind of music do you enjoy?

Classical; folk; world music.

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January 2015!



## Photo Gallery



Brewer Park beds



Carleton Lodge and OHS planting team



Planting in the rain on Arthur Street



Sun room bed at Carleton Lodge



Giving credit on Arthur Street

