It is October 26, 2013

*There is no death! The leaves may fall,
And flowers may fade and pass away—
They only wait, through wintry hours,
The warm, sweet breath of May.”*

John Luckey McCreery (1835–1906)

**Garlic** – don’t forget to plant garlic – it is not too late (plant by the end of October). Plant each clove – pointy side up - about 2 inches deep, about 3 inches apart (some recommend 6-9 inches apart). Don’t worry if some of it starts to sprout in the fall. Harvest it around the third week to the end of July the following year. Don’t forget to save a few heads for planting again in the fall. After harvesting, I let it sit in a dry place (garage) for about two weeks, then bring it in.

**Garlic and Potatoes** - I wanted to report that after I harvested the garlic, around the third week of July this year, I planted potatoes in its place. I had purposely purchased a bag of seed potatoes in the spring called German Butterball, a yellow variety, and kept them in a dark place until the end of July. After the garlic was harvested, I planted the little wizened and “chitted” (sprouted) seed potatoes, (purchase these when they are sale, exactly for this purpose, and don’t worry if they are shrivelled and soft or sprouting at planting time). We had the first killer frosts on October 24 and again the next day, the 25th. The stems were still green before the frost, and then, of course, wilted when the frost hit. I dug up a couple of plants and to my surprise, I had potatoes ranging in size from nuggets to ones of medium size, I would say at least 10 pounds worth! All without chemicals and beetles.

**SOME UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**November 16, 2013 Poinsettias**: check out Rekker’s Garden Centre in Bowmanville for their poinsettia festival. It is a wonderful sight with thousands of plants. There are many unusual varieties as well as more traditional ones. The special open house for the poinsettias is Saturday, November 16th, 2013. The greenhouses are open to the public that day to tour on your own or go on the guided tour at 11:00 a.m. or 2:00 p.m. Well worth the visit. By the way, as wholesalers of chrysanthemums, they had 150,000 available this year! Here is the link: <http://www.rekkers.com/pages/hours.html> **Phone: 905-623-2300**

**November 23, 2013 (Saturday) Annual Holiday House Tour:** Station House Gallery in Whitby is hosting the popular self-guided annual fundraising event with homes located in Whitby and the Durham region from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. I have been to many of these tours and really enjoy not only seeing the house and the front gardens, but what they have done with evergreens, branches, hydrangeas, berries, boxwood, etc. You can pick up some great ideas. The cost is $30.00 per person. **Phone 905-668-4185**

<http://www.whitbystationgallery.com/What-s-On/Events/What-s-On-2013/24th-Annual-Holiday-House-Tour.aspx>

**November 29, 30 and December 1, 2013: Christmas in Clarington County** 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. A mall-free shopping tour featuring Artists & Activities, Special Home Decor, Luxurious Bath and Body Products, Gourmet Treats, Wines. Lots of items garden related items available. <http://www.thesprucetree.com/christmasinclarington.html>

**February 22, 2014 (Saturday) “Get the Jump on Spring”:** at Toronto Botanical Gardens – a great event in the middle of winter when we need a plant fix**!** 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Check out the free lectures, clubs, societies, plants and seeds for sale. The Ontario Rock Garden Society always has their leftover seeds for sale at very reasonable prices – many rare varieties. Free parking, free admission ($2.00 donation is appreciated) . <http://torontobotanicalgarden.ca/enjoy/special-events/jump-on-spring/> **Phone 416-397-1341**

**Richters Herbs:** If you need a greenhouse break mid-winter consider going to Richter’s Herbs in Goodwood for their free lectures/seminars. Check their website under events for more information in the new year – usually posted sometime in January. The topics are varied and interesting and are now podcast on their website if you miss any. It is wonderful to be in the greenhouse while it is snowing outside! They also sell a huge variety of dried herbs for tea and health, tea paraphernalia, tinctures, plants, books, seeds and seed starting supplies plus garden giftware. <http://www.richters.com/show.cgi?page=Events/events.html&cart_id=8922243.27980>

You can order a catalogue if you prefer something in print. **Call 905.640.6677**

**WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE KILLER FROST?**

We had two killer frosts so far this year – October 24th and October 25th the first one the day after our October meeting. I thought you might be interested in what survived. There so many that survived the meltdown, especially the shrubs, I have had to pair-down the list to the following plants:

**PERENNIALS**

Allium thunbergii “Ozawa” – this low growing arching allium defines the edges in the rose garden – dozens of plants are in full bloom with pinkish/purply blooms. Ozawa continues even through snow! I deadhead in the spring.

Clematis – non-climbing clematis “Inspiration” has one pink bloom on it right now. All the others are done. In its first year and growing in a tall tomato cage, it has been blooming non-stop all summer with no sign of disease or mildew on its leaves. Love this clematis! I got it at Vandermeer’s.

Fern Polystychum Setiferum (soft shield fern) – just a gorgeous, delicate, lacy fern growing nicely in the dry soil under the Austrian Pines. Several other ferns are growing there as well – in the dry conditions – but I have lost the names unfortunately. Ferns generally like moist soil so I must try to find the names of these ferns that are growing under the pines which suck up all the moisture available.

Hakonechloa “ All Gold” – what a gorgeous perennial grass – low growing, golden/lime green, cascading like a waterfall - growing under the Austrian pines in dappled shade. Next to it is a late flowering chrysanthemum in a very deep rosy pink. The two colours are outstanding next to each other!

Heuchera’s – absolutely not fazed by the frost. I love these plants as alternatives to hostas. They are not bothered by slugs and will thrive in a morning location or dappled sunlight, as well as light shade. I have them growing under Austrian pines. Especially spectacular right now is one called Bronze Beauty – 3 plants are just covered in creamy white blooms and it is October 26th as I write this!! Cassandra is also blooming. Others that have faired well are Chocolate Veil, Rave on (bloomed all summer), Southern Comfort, Electric Lime, Frosted Violet, Spellbound (gorgeous grey/purple leaves). A few from my collection have just fizzled out over the summer – likely from lack of water as I do not water any of my plants. I am looking for a variety called Magnum, with giant 10” leaves – it will fit in nicely with the hostas.

Hostas – a lot of the hostas are toast. Four that stand out right now are Ripple Effect with heavily rippled leaves, Blue Ivory (a beautiful blue and white hosta), Rainbow’s End and the huge Sum and Substance.

Hydrangea arborescens “Incrediball” – while most of the blooms of hydrangeas are now turning brown, especially after the frost, this hydrangea has been outstanding all summer and still looks fabulous. Lots of new blooms throughout the summer has kept it fresh looking, the blooms are huge – the size of soccer balls and many are still quite creamy white – not green as is typical of Annabelle! It is relatively upright as well, much more so than its sister “Annabelle”. It is growing in a morning sun location, so it doesn’t get that browning with too much sun. It needs lots of room – grows about 4 feet tall and wide.

Physostegia variegated – this is a variegated variety of the obedient plant and not as rampant as the plain green one. The upper leaves on this plant have turned into the most brilliant purple – it is just gorgeous and really stands out in the perennial garden.

Roses – Maxi Vita (this one always has a bloom on it), continuous blooming Summer Memories with shiny leaves and white gardenia like flowers, and the Knockout roses – all still blooming.

**THE ANNUALS THAT HAVE SURVIVED THE FROST**

**So many of the annuals are now done but the following were unfazed until we get a really big major killer frost.**

Anagallis monellii – a low spreading plant, in a glorious shade of royal blue, blooms all summer, and will self-seed. It also comes in orange. It is very drought tolerant and does well in pots with its spreading nature. I love this plant and would not be without it for the blue garden – Mason House always has plants for sale in the spring – otherwise no one else sells it that I know of.

Calendula – I have had a bed of orange calendula’s self-seeding for years. This plant just keeps on blooming all summer, and is absolutely not affected by the frost. I got “best in show” for this plant the day before at the October meeting – pick and plunk class!

Gomphocarpus physocarpus, commonly called balloon plant, is still blooming with tiny white blooms and sporting balloon shaped pods at the same time. Very tall and willowy. I must have this plant every year – usually I grow it from seed or buy it from Mason House. Rare and rarely available.

Grasses – Pennisetum “Prince” and Pennisetum “Vertigo” – both outstanding – Prince is five feet tall and arching, Vertigo is more upright – about 4 feet tall. Both are very dark in colour. Papyrus “King Tut” – generally grown in water, is doing extremely well planted in the soil in an area that gets flooded when it rains. It too has not been affected by the frost and looks fabulous.

Nicotiana Whisper Shades of Pink – the self-sown seedlings from last year’s plants took a while to get going and blooming, but now that everything else is gone, it has been untouched by the frost and providing me with loads of colour. There are loads of pink blooms, looking as fresh as ever. The original whisper plants were hybrids, so the seedlings I got this year are all manner of colours – rose, pink, white, red, lime, and all shades in-between. All are grown in the tropical (jungle) garden – I let them go for the summer, culling out hundreds of seedlings!

Petunias will take several hits of frost. I am growing Petunia supertunia vista “fuchsia” and “bubblegum” and “silverberry”. One of my fuchsia petunias measured at 6 feet in diameter – I couldn’t believe the size of these plants. They have provided me with outstanding colour in the rose garden when the roses are down during high summer. They are used as groundcovers and scramble through the roses – they also keep weeds at bay. Love these plants. The new petunia Picasso in Pink was quite lovely as well – a nice shade of pink edged in green. Many comments on this petunia from visitors.

Parsley – Italian – you would think the leaves on the parsley would be toast, but not so. I am washing and freezing bagfuls of parsley for the winter. Also, wasabi arugula – loads of white flowers cover the plants. I am getting used to the powerful spicy flavour of the leaves – I just eat a few whenever I visit the veg garden. The lavender (Munstead variety) is fresh as ever, with a few flowers here and there.

Swiss Chard – I prefer this to kale. I have been freezing swiss chard like crazy – it has been producing delicious leaves all summer and is still going strong. I love the variety called Bright Lights and purchased two packs in the spring. The stems are in various shades of pink, red, yellow, apricot, white, orange. The veining in the leaves matches the stems, while the leaves can range from green to deep burgundy. Gorgeous. I prefer to remove the stems and ribs from the leaves before freezing.

**SOME SITES TO CHECK OUT OVER THE WINTER**

**Garden Import:** a mail order company located in Thornhill, specializing in **bulbs** but many other plants as well. Check out Dugald Cameron’s tips on “how late can you plant bulbs”. Please note that their pick-up location is different than the address shown on the website. Call ahead if you ever want to pick up anything to get the address.[**https://snt148.mail.live.com/default.aspx?id=64855&rru=inbox#n=1589904828&rru=inbox&fid=1&mid=e229ad9a-3cce-11e3-9dd8-00237de3d374&fv=1**](https://snt148.mail.live.com/default.aspx?id=64855&rru=inbox#n=1589904828&rru=inbox&fid=1&mid=e229ad9a-3cce-11e3-9dd8-00237de3d374&fv=1) **Phone number 905-731-1950 Toll Free:1-800-339-8314**

**More on Bulbs:** Don’t despair if you have not had time to plant your bulbs. I have planted bulbs, including tulips, daffodils, hyacinths and minor bulbs as late as January, during a “January thaw”, quite often getting unheard of sale prices (sometimes 90% discount). Just make sure the bulbs are not dried up, bulbs showing little green growth tips are OK. You can also plant them in pots with potting soil, as close together without touching, water once, place in the dark (a black plastic garbage bag is good or in a cardboard box with newspaper over top to keep out the light, place in an unheated garage. You might want to wrap the box with an old blanket or carpet to keep from freezing. Check in March for sprouting and gradually introduce outside. Marjorie Mason plants hers in plastic hanging baskets and buries them in the vegetable garden, with the hanging part sticking out. Easy to locate and pull out in the spring when they start sprouting.

**Hostas**: [www.goldenbrookhostas.com](http://www.goldenbrookhostas.com) Mail order (Canada only) located in Blackstock just east of Port Perry. Can pick up orders also. Great website listing a huge selection of hostas with photos, prices and latest varieties

**John’s Perennials –** 4300 Concession 7, Uxbridge Phone for hours – there is a clearance sale for the month of October with fabulous deals, not sure what happens with leftover plants after. Open until Christmas with greens for sale as well as holiday arrangements. <https://www.facebook.com/johnsgardeninuxbridge>

**Phone: 905-862-8175**

**Kingsway Greenhouses:** located in Oshawa, will now be open year round, including Christmas Eve. Note they are always closed on Saturdays, but open the rest of the week. Here is the link for their new extended hours- <http://kingswaygreenhouse.com/our-store/kingsway-greenhouse-store-hours/> **Phone: 905-434-3851**

**Mason House Gardens**: will be open this year each day until the end of October, and then for the first time on week-ends until Christmas (Friday, Saturday, Sunday). You can purchase Fairy Gardens and accessories, bulbs (a huge selection sold individually, not in packs) tropical plants and likely Christmas greenery. I have been told that there will be many new tropicals available in the new year. I wonder if they will also be available this fall? [www.masonhousegardens.com](http://www.masonhousegardens.com) **Phone number 905-649-3532**

**Fairy gardens** – Christmas is coming. Why not consider a fairy garden for someone on your list. It can be a dish garden, complete with tiny plants, fairies and furniture and accessories. Or, just buy the fairies and some accessories. They are currently available at Mason House Gardens [**www.masonhousegardens.com**](http://www.masonhousegardens.com)

**905-649-3532** and at Sheridan nurseries <http://www.sheridannurseries.com/> . **905 686-0844 Whitby location.**

**Pickering Nurseries for roses**: This mail order nursery selling bare root roses is located in Port Hope. They are now taking orders for shipment in spring 2014. They have a huge assortment of roses with an excellent and easy to navigate website. I have ordered roses from here many times – roses not available elsewhere. You can save shipping charges and pick them up if you wish, then head to Port Hope for lunch. Port Hope is a beautiful town. <http://www.pickeringnurseries.com/> **Phone:** 905-753-2155

**Valley Succulents** – a Canadian (B.C.) on-line site for succulents and cacti. There are some very interesting plants available at this web site at reasonable prices. <http://www.valleysucculents.ca/> I have not ordered from here before but am considering this year as I want to get echeveria “Paul Bunyon”. It is a weird plant.

**E-Garden Magazines**: A free on-line garden magazine from Horticulture Magazine: <http://issuu.com/horticulture/docs>

This is a great garden website - sign up for their free newsletter <http://awaytogarden.com/>

**DECK THE POTS WITH BOUGHS OF HOLLY**

If you have a big property with lots of evergreens, consider having a “Deck the Pots with Boughs of Holly” party. Every year I host a “deck the pots” party the second week-end of November for my “lady” friends and their daughters and granddaughters only. So far, we have had terrific weather. My husband and I cut the greens ahead of time, as well as red dogwood branches, orange flame willow branches, holly berries, grasses, boxwood, etc. (I have just purchased a dragon willow for future weird flattened branches!) I provide breakfast for my friends, and then we go outside and prepare our Christmas pots using the greens provided, plus whatever they want to cut in addition from the garden – grasses, pods, lavender, bayberry, beautyberry, etc. They have to bring their own pots filled with soil or sand – make sure they do this ahead of time before freeze-up and keep the pots in the garage until the party. Obviously not everyone is going to have a large property filled with conifers. You can have each guest purchase evergreens (provide a budget) and then pool all of them at the party. Everyone brings their own ribbons and accessories. It is a fun day!

Here are two of the recipes used for the breakfast.

Lord’s Famous Hard Sauce

*This recipe came from my sister-in-law’s grandmother – it is quite an old recipe- likely over 100 years old. It is so delicious!! It makes a lot so no need to double (I use one recipe to serve 20-25 people).*

*½ cup butter ½ cup white sugar*

*½ cup brown sugar 2 egg whites*

*1 cup 35% whipping cream (250 ml. container) ½ tsp. vanilla Dash of salt*

1. Melt together in a double boiler the butter, the white sugar and brown sugar.
2. Beat 2 egg whites until stiff and gently fold into above mixture. Cook for ten minutes. Let cool in pot. *It will be lumpy.*
3. Whip the whipping cream and fold gently into the cooled mixture in pot. If you add the whipped cream before it cools, it will melt.
4. Add the vanilla and a dash of salt.
5. Pour into a bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Can be made the night before. Keep in fridge. Can be gently mixed before serving.
6. Serve with French Toast Strata, pancakes, excellent for Christmas pudding.

French Toast Strata *Pre-heated oven 350 degrees, 45 min. to one hour, uncovered*

*12 cups bread cubes 250 gram pack of Cream cheese (I use light)*

*8 eggs 2 ½ cups of milk (I use 1%, it doesn’t matter)*

*6 tablespoons of butter (½ cup), melted ¼ cup maple syrup or table syrup*

1. Grease a 3 qt. (9”x13” pyrex glass pan). Place half of the bread cubes in the dish. Top with cream cheese cubes and remaining bread cubes.
2. Combine eggs, milk, melted butter. Beat until well combined. Pour egg mixture evenly over the bread and cheese cubes. Using a spatula, lightly press layers down to completely moisten. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 2 to 24 hours. (I make mine the day before and keep it in the fridge).
3. Remove plastic wrap from baking dish. Bake, uncovered, in a 350 degree oven until center appears set and the edges are lightly golden – about 45 minutes to 1 hour. Let stand about 10 minutes before serving to set. Serve with additional syrup (maple syrup is good) and Lord’s Famous Hard Sauce.
4. Makes 6 to eight servings (see below).

*Here is how I changed the recipe. I used ½ pack of light cream cheese cut into small cubes for one recipe.*

*I used 2 ¼ cups of milk and ½ cup of table syrup. I turned off the oven after 50 minutes of cooking & let it sit in the oven ‘til serving time (about ½ hour). I should have greased the bottom as it did stick.*

Tips:

-Remove the pan from the fridge at least 1 hour before baking to bring it to room temperature.

-You can replace some of the milk with ½ and ½ cream or 5% light cream.

-Best bread for strata is any basic white bread. The Villagio Italian sliced 675 gram loaf with sesame seeds is excellent. Dempster’s Smart White bread with whole grains is also excellent. Also, you can use 1 loaf of white sliced bread – 675 grams. Only one loaf required per recipe. Leave the crusts on.

-Although the recipe says 6 to 8 servings, I find one recipe feeds about 10 people as it is very rich.