



Brooklin-Whitby Garden Club Newsletter

Volume 23 Issue 1 Mar 2021

Inside this issue:

President's Message	1
Virtual Design show	2
The 80's	3
Civic Beautification of 70's	3
Favourite Native Plants	5
Asclepias syriaca	6
Stop n' Smell Rosemary	7
Dividing Begonia Tubers	8
Women Garden Influence	9
Virtual Show Schedule	10

BHS meets the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Brooklin United Church; except January, July and December. The November meeting is at St. Thomas Anglican Church.

Visit us on the web at:
www.brooklinwhitbygardenclub.ca
Follow us on facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/bhs1921/>



Keeping Ontario Beautiful

It's Our 100th Anniversary!



BHS has won many a Brooklin Spring fair's 'Best Float' over the years. Left, 1982 Junior Garden Club, Right, 2016 'Wagon Wheels & Ferris Wheels' float

This is intended to be a year of celebration: 100 years of horticulture, gardening and social joy. The joy and celebration that we are all looking for will be the return to a post-pandemic normal. However, we will continue to pursue opportunities to recognize the longevity of our club. And, regardless of calendar, we'll continue to recognize and celebrate next year as well!

This Spring we will ZOOM with Whitby in Bloom, execute a rain barrel sale, conduct a plant sale, and when given clearance, conduct our meetings in person once again. There will be Show competitions, virtual to start. We're working out the details of some of these events to comply with Health Department restrictions, but we'll do the best we can.

We've adopted a modernized logo to support our new name, the Brooklin-Whitby Garden Club. We want to widen our appeal, and recognize the support of Whitby residents. We're going to bring forth a wide range of gardening and horticultural topics from the best speakers available.

We have a great luxury not many groups have: a large garden park in Brooklin. It takes a lot of work to plant and maintain it, and I appreciate the work and time put into it by Faye Collins and her renegade gardeners.

Paul Cloutier has worked the last many months with the Town of Whitby to develop an anniversary plan that makes sense, has longevity, and again meets all restriction requirements. In order to fully expose the value of our history and contribution to the Brooklin community, and more recently to events in Whitby as well, we need your pictures and memories. A special request comes from the Town of Whitby, who are producing a "Door's Open" video, for stories, history, photos and more. If you can contribute to this, please let me know!

And finally, our Past-President Kathy Allam has moved on, all the way to Fenelon Falls, ON. Her contribution to BHS and BWGC will be sorely missed, and leaves a hole on our Board. As you remember, we also lost Denise Carter (moved), Lisa Ruck (work) and the late Leslie Tate. We're very fortunate to have a solid Board team, but I would be very interested in adding to the team!

Enjoy this edition of our BWGC Newsletter. A lot of work has gone into it and I think it's a fantastic reflection of all the work that goes into so many of our activities. Join us in celebrating 100 years, and creating a great year 101 for the Brooklin-Whitby Garden Club.

Let's get into this year and make it the very best we can.

Hans Paats, President BWGC

Brooklin Horticultural Society Garden

We are anxiously waiting to get back into our BHS Garden, for the 15th year of community beautification. Make a point of visiting and touring the Garden this year. 2020 was certainly challenging for our merry band of enthusiastic volunteers. Despite the long delayed start due to COVID, and a dry summer leading to a lot of water hauling and hand watering to keep the beds looking good we succeeded! Ongoing encouraging feedback and appreciation from the local community rewarded our efforts.

Come out on Thursday evenings to help with planting, weeding and trimming. Enjoy the camaraderie of your fellow gardeners and bask in the glow of the beauty of our Garden and appreciation from our local neighbours. The Garden is huge, so no problem with physical distancing and staying safe.

We will meet up Thursdays at 6:00pm for up to 2 hours, with a couple of Saturday mornings for planting, and clean-up early and late in the season. Come out regularly, or just when you can - your support is most welcome (and truly needed). We even offer on-the-job training. PUT US ON YOUR CALENDAR starting in mid-April. ROLL ON SPRING!!!!

Brian Gower (apprentice to the Mad Gardener - Faye)

Park of Reflection

I will be replacing Kathy Allam as Coordinator as she has moved to Fenelon Falls. We usually meet at the Park on Mondays, at 9am for 1 hour and this year our first day will be on April 12, 2021 good weather permitting. We have five regular volunteers and hope others will join us. Our first tasks will be cleaning up after the winter and checking on the new plants we planted last fall.

The Park is situated at Taunton Rd and Cochrane St. To join us, please bring along your gloves, hoes and buckets. Come enjoy a beautiful setting of greenery and fresh air. You can contact me at (905) 404-9893 or email: rahe.richards@yahoo.com.

Rahe Richards

Virtual Spring Floral Design and Photo Show

HEY, YOU SHOW OFFS out there, join us for our first ever *virtual* floral design and photo show. While we continue on-line zoom meetings, we will not be hosting our typical 'live' horticultural and design shows. To celebrate our 100th anniversary the show committee has come up with some fun activities to help you show off your growing, designing, and photography skills. Our first virtual show will highlight our spring gardens. All the information for our Spring Virtual Show is included at the end of this newsletter, along with names of contacts should you have questions. **Photos are due May 29, 2021.**



Do you plan all winter on creating the *ultimate outdoor planter*? We want to see that creation! Have you always wanted to make a *floral mandala*? Well, this is the year to make one. Take lots of pictures. We want you to show off those creations in our *end of summer virtual show*. Stay tuned for more info!

Sherry Howard



Mandala beauties from Sherry Howard (left) and Barb Panowyk (right).

What's New for the 2021 Garden?

Year after year, avid gardeners research and make plans for what they would like to grow in their gardens in the upcoming growing season. Many of us have favourites that are 'tried and true' and we often repeat flowers, vegetables and other plants that have been successful in our gardens. Expanding upon our typical repertoire of plants can be very exciting, in fact, it can be downright exhilarating to find some new cultivars to add to our gardens! If you are anything like me, I can't wait for the 2021 gardening season to begin and I hope that we will be able to get to our favourite garden centres to purchase everything, including some of the hot new plants for 2021, that we need to beautify our yards and fill our plates with healthy, home grown food!

During our first official Brooklin-Whitby Garden Club virtual meeting on February 24, Tracey and Kelly from Sheridan Nursery presented "2021 Gardening Trends". Tracey indicated that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, growers were not able to produce a lot of new plants for 2021 so we will see many repeats of the plants that were new for 2020. The colour of the year for 2021 is "Illuminating yellow and grey".

If you have some free time on your hands this spring and you are curious to see 'What's New in 2021', a quick google search will take you on a colourful tour of annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees for this year. The following websites are full of gardening inspiration....enjoy! www.landscapeontario.com, www.greenhousecanada.com, www.homes.winnipegfreepress.com (re new Petunias), www.provenwinners.com, www.savvygardening.com

Barb Panowyk

Where were you in the 80s?

- ◆ In 1980 civic beautification included 17 plantings such as gardens in Grass Park, the Brooklin post office, Brooklin United church, Brooklin arena, Meadowcrest school, and 22 hanging baskets planted and hung on Baldwin
- ◆ The Aug 27 Annuals Show of 1980 took on a 'Star Trek' theme with 196 entries and design classes titled "lunar Loveliness" and "Blast Off". The speaker of the evening was Beverly Brook from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food who spoke on "Freezing and Storing of Vegetables"
- ◆ In 1981 BHS was awarded by Town of Whitby an Achievement Award for Community Contribution
- ◆ At the June 24 Rose Show in 1981, members were thanked for helping to make corsages and boutonnieres for the graduating class of Meadowcrest public school
- ◆ In 1983 the Junior Garden club, established in 1981, had 28 members with a 2 divisions of children up to 9 yr of age and children 10 yr and older. Throughout the year they visited a local orchid grower and various rose gardens, planted trees at Grass Park and Meadowcrest school on Arbour Day and showed 51 entries at the Chrysanthemum and Vegetable Show held at Fairview Lodge.
- ◆ In 1983 Ken Brown became the president and was known to lead horticultural quizzes during the monthly meetings
- ◆ It was reported in the local paper in 1984 that the hanging basket potted by the BHS civic beautification team, in front of the Bank of Commerce, "...takes a walk....Anyone knowing its present whereabouts or can offer any clues, please phone Betty at"

Let's ZOOM

Join our monthly virtual meetings via Zoom. BWGC members will be included in the monthly email notification of the meeting which provides the required information to participate. Our exciting line up of speakers follows:

- Mar 24** Paul Gellatly "Paul's Top Five"
- Apr 28** Conrad Richter "Some Amazing Herbs You May Not Know About but Should"
- May 26** Ben Cullen "Beyond Beefsteak"
- Jun 9** Lorraine Johnson "Victory Gardens"
- Jun 30** Sylvia Keesmat "Forage Farming"
- Aug 25** Joanne Shaw "The Importance of Landscaping"
- Sept 22** Sara Ferencz "Whitby Gardens of Yesteryear"
- Oct 27** Denis Flanagan "A Hundred Years of Horticulture in Ontario"

Rain Barrels For Sale

The BWGC has partnered again with Rainbarrel.ca to host a rain barrel fundraiser. Each rain barrel includes a leaf and mosquito filter basket, an overflow adaptor, a spigot, and an overflow hose. Rain barrels are \$65 each, including delivery to your home and **must be pre-ordered online** at rainbarrel.ca/brooklinwhitby starting Mar 22. Delivery will be mid-May. For more information, contact **Jane Austin** at janeaustin000@msn.com, or 905-668-1054.

Remember When....



Civic Beautification Encouraged by the Brooklin Horticultural Society

In 1972 my father Cyril G. Wick was serving his second term as President of Brooklin Horticultural Society (BHS) and I was a board member. While my father was on the board and as President he had promoted a greater level of dedication to the civic planting responsibilities of our Society and to the educational programs related to both monthly meetings and the flower shows.

In 1970 BHS planted annuals in the roadside bed on Baldwin Street and in the planter boxes at the front of the Brooklin Branch of the Whitby Library. That fall Cyril Wick as chair of civic projects, purchased and planted 200 daffodil and narcissus bulbs in the newly enlarged centre bed in Grass Park. The society participated in a Civic Beautification challenge from the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) and the Netherland Bulb Growers to showcase use of spring flowering bulbs and so we submitted photos of the garden. BHS won the 1st prize of 1,000 spring flowering bulbs! Cyril, his wife Margaret, and BHS secretary Margaret Davis took on the task of elevating the bed, preparing the soil and planting tulips in the Baldwin Street garden at Grass Park in the fall of 1971.

We were also able to plant about 300 tulips in the crescent bed created at the Brooklin Memorial Arena after it was approved by the Town of Whitby as part of a landscaping plan for the front of the updated arena complex. The plans for that work had been drawn up and submitted by myself and my father as a multi-year project. The arena was chosen as our major landscaping project for 1971-72 with an additional new raised bed created close to Winchester Road in front of the arena.

We also started another planting project in front of the Brooklin Legion where we also added tulips. Before planting the library planters we added solid foam insulation behind the brickwork to reduce heat buildup and we amended the soil so it would retain moisture more effectively. The results were gratifying and the planters drew much praise.

In June 1972 at the OHA Convention in Kingston we learned we had won a further civic beautification prize for a society of under 100 members and we were awarded another 1,000 bulbs in October 1972. So once again volunteers helped Cyril prepare the beds and plant tulips at the Baldwin St. garden in Grass Park for bloom in May 1973. In 1972 we also added 3 new planters in Grass Park and a garden bed on Baldwin Street between the Harris' Brooklin Bake Shop and the IDA Drug store. We also planted annuals and tulips in beds at the Whitby Centennial Building.

On April 29, 1973 we held a very extensively publicized tree planting at the Brooklin Memorial Arena in memory of our late Councillor Heber Down, an agriculturist, who had been a supporting member of the society. In addition to planting a Sunburst Locust we placed a memorial dedication plaque and later in the year added a memorial bench to the parkette area by the tree. In the same year a further section of the landscaping, including shrubs, evergreens and annuals, was also added on the west end of the arena. We also added a small garden area at the Ashburn Community Centre but due to poor soil, the garden did not do well.

In 1974 we added two planters at the entrance to the Heydenshore Pavillion by the lake in Whitby. After procuring customized hanging brackets to use on the concrete light standards, we planted hanging baskets in the downtown areas on Baldwin Street in Brooklin and at Brock and Dundas Streets in Whitby. We even supervised 2 students to maintain the planters.

In 1975 during my 3rd and final term as President we added a landscape project at the Brooklin Post Office and completed another enduring project in Grass Park by installing the drinking fountain which provided both a source for water to look after the plantings and drinking water for residents and tourists enjoying the park. The fountain also provided storage space for small tools to work on the gardens. This was also the year our community hosted the International Plowing Match and we were asked by the OHA and Ministry of Agriculture to provide landscaping for the Administration building for the Plowing Match.

All those projects were effectively completed and I believe they led the municipality and other parties to prioritize continued planting and beautification in front of buildings in the years since.

Gordon D Wick, Past President of the Brooklin Horticultural Society



L to R: Cyril and Margaret Wick planting tulips in Grass Park; two BHS youth members posing in front of the tulips which lead to the civic beautification prize of 1000 bulbs; tulip bed at Baldwin street side of Grass park

My Favourite Native Plants by Ingrid Janssen

A 2018 study done at the University of Illinois revealed that gardens that are planted with 70% or more native plants support greater populations of native pollinators and insects and bird populations when compared to gardens which are dominated by non-native plants and monocultures i.e. lawns. We can all increase both the biodiversity and the number of native plants in our gardens and work towards that 70% goal to provide food for our declining insect and bird populations.

My garden has evolved over the last 20 or more years from one dominated by non-native plants to a biodiverse habitat that supports lots of wildlife from insects to amphibians and lots of birds. Each year I evaluate the plants, not just from the perspective of ease of maintenance but also the ecosystem services they provide, especially in support of our native pollinators and song-birds. Here are some of my favourite native plants.



Eastern Redbud

Trees and Shrubs - If I could have only one tree in my garden I would choose an **Eastern Redbud**, *Cercis canadensis*. This is one of the first trees to bloom in spring with bright pink flowers along the twigs and branches before the leaves appear. The large heart-shaped leaves are often used by Leaf-cutter bees to create the leaf cylinders in hollowed stems or cavities in which they deposit their eggs.

My favourite native shrub is without a doubt the **Northern Spicebush**, *Lindera benzoin*, a welcome replacement for the Asian Forsythia. The small yellow flowers appear in early spring before the leaves emerge, feeding a variety of insects including small bees and pollinating flies. The Spicebush is also the larval food source for the Spicebush Swallowtail butterfly, the Eastern Swallowtail butterfly and the Promethea moth. The female shrubs produce bright red berries in the fall which are a favourite food for migrating birds.

Woodland Plants - Along with spring bulbs, woodland spring ephemerals provide early colour in the garden. I know that spring has truly arrived when the **Bloodroot**, *Sanguinaria canadensis*,

flowers open on stems tightly wrapped by the deeply loved leaves. Flies and bees will visit the flowers looking in vain for nectar which the bloodroot does not offer. The seeds are coated in a protein rich substance called *elaiosome* which attracts ants that carry the seeds back to their nests dispersing the seeds away from the parent plant.

Dutchman's Breeches, *Dicentra cucullaria*, is also a very early bloomer. The flowering of this little cousin to the Asian Bleeding-heart coincides with the emergence of over-wintering queen bumble bees providing an important nectar source for the queens as they begin to provision their nests.

Wild Geranium, *Geranium maculatum*, is an excellent plant to mass under trees along with ferns and late-flowering woodland natives. The dark lines on the flowers act as nectar guides to visiting insects. The foliage turns bright red in fall for another season of interest in the garden.



Bloodroot

Perennials – Prairie/Meadow - **Prairie Smoke**, *Geum triflorum*, is named for its pink feathery seed heads that flutter in the wind and is perfect for dry sunny spots along the front of a border. This is another favourite of those early emerging queen bumble bees who use a technique called buzz pollination to shake the pollen from the anthers inside the flowers.

Smooth Beard Tongue, *Penstemon digitalis*, is a tall upright perennial with tubular white to pinkish flowers that provide nectar and pollen to a variety of small and medium sized bees as well as long-tongued bees and hummingbirds. I value it for the glossy green foliage which is rabbit resistant and its adaptability to different soil types.

Butterfly Milkweed, *Asclepias tuberosa*, will brighten up any border with its bright orange sprays of flowers. This plant attracts a host of butterflies as well as bees, wasps and beetles. It is of course best known as one of the host plants for the Monarch caterpillar. It prefers loose soil for its large taproot and will be drought tolerant once established.

Great Blue Lobelia, *Lobelia siphilitica*, is a short-lived perennial which will grow in sun or partial shade. Bumble bees are the primary pollinator of the Great Blue lobelia's flowers which can bloom from August until the end of September, providing important nectar resources for bumble bee queens preparing for winter. Great Blue Lobelia prefers consistently moist soil and may need to be watered occasionally.



Butterfly milkweed

Continued next page.....

My Favourite Native Plants by Ingrid Janssen - continued

Ground Covers & Grasses

Wild Ginger, *Asarum canadense*, is a great groundcover for shady areas and under trees. It spreads rapidly to form low growing colonies of heart-shaped leaves. The solitary red-brown flowers which bloom at ground level resemble little jugs or urns and are pollinated by ants.

Foamflower, *Tiarella cordifolia*, makes a great companion plant to Wild Ginger but is also great planted in masses on its own. The white to pink-tinged flowers pike rise about maple-like leaves creating a wonderful airy effect in the garden. A wide range of insects, including bees, butterflies and flies frequent the flowers in spring.

Prairie Dropseed, *Sporobolus heterolepis*, is definitely one of my favourite native grass species. In some parts of my garden I use it as an ornamental edging plant where it grows in fine textured clumps which turn a wonderful rose-gold to bronze colour in fall. It is a deep-rooted prairie plant that provides both food and cover for small birds and insects.



Foamflower

BHS Civic Beautification - A Proud Past



L to R: 1975 - new water fountain at Grass Park; 1971 - new raised bed at Brooklin Memorial Arena; 1973 - tree planting and plaque honouring councillor Heber Down

Asclepias syriaca



*By day I mark no living thing
which rests
On thee, save butterflies of
gold and brown,
Who turn from flowers that
are more fair, more sweet,
And, crowding eagerly, sink
fluttering down,
And hang like jewels in the
flashing heat,
Upon thy splendid rounded
purple breasts.*

Do you recognize the plant that 19th century poet, Helen Hunt Jackson, is describing in the above excerpt from her sonnet? If you guessed milkweed, then you can also guess the title of the poem, and you are probably familiar with this humble plant that is the main food source for the beautiful Monarch butterfly caterpillar. In fact, the leaves of the milkweed plant are the only food that Monarch caterpillars are able to eat. But there are a few more surprising things to learn about this plant that might earn it newfound respect.

The common milkweed plant is also known as *Asclepias syriaca*, and if you remember studying ancient Greek mythology then

you would recognize *Asclepias* as the god of healing. According to Almanac.com, parts of the Common Milkweed have long been used by Indigenous people to treat warts, cure dysentery, suppress coughs, treat typhus fever and asthma. Fourteen species of milkweed grow in Canada, but *Asclepias syriaca* is the most far ranging, growing naturally in 8 provinces. Besides its healing powers, the common milkweed has served some other surprising functions. In WWII school children were asked to collect milkweed because the downy part of the seeds from the milkweed could be used to stuff lifejackets when the material usually used for this purpose was in short supply. The downy floss is also being used today by a Canadian company producing winter coats because they recognized the insulating properties of the milkweed down. Milkweed has also been researched for use in paper-making, textiles, and lubricants. In Quebec, milkweed is now being produced as a crop.

The next time you see this “common” plant growing along a ditch, remember that surprising and useful things can come from the humblest of origins. If you would like to learn more about milkweed check The Canadian Wildlife Federation’s excellent article *Milkweed* (cwf-fcf.org) or The Old Farmer’s Almanac article, *Common Milkweed: Uses and Natural Remedies* (almanac.com).

Mary Kadey

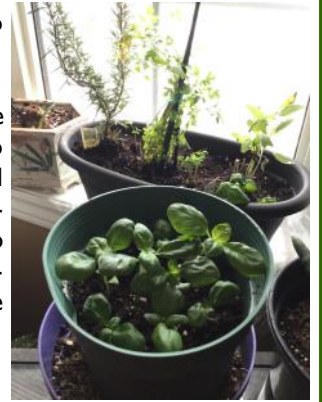
Stop and Smell the Rosemary

How could such sweet and wholesome hours be reckoned, but in herbs and flowers? (Andrew Marvell)

While many gardeners find their passion fulfilled by the abundant colour and variety of annual and perennial flowers, many gardeners also delight in producing plants that nourish and tickle the tastebuds. Do you grow and harvest herbs to use medicinally, create teas, or to flavor foods? What else might we do with herbs? Several members were happy to answer these questions.

Joyce Reid grows chives and parsley and freezes what is not used fresh in order to add them to soups in the cool weather.

Rahe Richards says, "I add herbs to everything I cook, even vegetables. Not only does this make the food tastier, but it also minimizes the use of salt." Rahe grows basil, sage, rosemary, mint, oregano (regular and Greek), and parsley (curly and Italian). They're grown in pots as well as in her raised vegetable bed. After the growing season the pots come inside to a windowsill where they are rotated to provide even light intake and kept on the dry side. Once harvested, Rahe uses two methods to preserve the herbs if not used right away. She cuts the herbs, stem and all, and ties them with a rubber band before placing the labelled bundles in a colander on top of the fridge. The dried herbs are stored in labelled containers. She also freezes some to use in recipes that call for fresh herbs.



Rahe's windowsill herbs

Pat Evans also grows herbs, stating, "I grow summer savoury and winter savoury. Both of these I use in winter soups so I tend to use a lot. They are the more expensive of the dried herbs to buy." She also grows cilantro, flat and curly parsley, chives, and basil. The summer and winter savoury and chives grow well in the sun, but the parsley and basil do better in a situation that is not too hot with morning sun, yes, and keep them watered. Pat clips the herbs back once a week to promote growth and keep a ready supply when cooking. At the end of the growing season Pat says, "I dry them all in the microwave starting in September until they have finished."



Marion Thomas' dill fed caterpillars.

"I love growing herbs; it's wonderful to be able to walk around the garden to touch and smell all the varieties," says **Marion Thomas**. Marion has a favourite herb and a unique way of using it. "Dill is a favourite of mine for salads and pickles, but also I love it when the black swallowtail butterfly lays eggs and eventually I can bring the caterpillars inside and watch them feed on the dill and eventually develop into the beautiful butterfly." Marion also favours chives because it's great for chopping up to sprinkle on salads or soups and they "have the benefit of a beautiful purple inflorescence that attracts a variety of bees of different sizes."

Lisa Ruck grows her herbs right in the kitchen. "I love to grow herbs with my AeroGarden. I can harvest all year long and it is very convenient having it in the kitchen!"

Gini Sage grows a lot of herbs for a variety of purposes and was happy to provide a few tips on harvesting them. "My tried and true method of drying herbs is to harvest them in the morning after any dew is gone. I spread the herbs, including stems, in a single layer on old window screens that I saved when I had my old windows replaced. I leave the screens in a cool spot, out of sunlight, until the herbs have dried. If I only need the leaves or blossoms, I remove those from the stems after drying. I find this a much quicker way to dry the herbs and prevent any mold or mildew that can sometimes occur when hanging bunches of herbs."



Lisa Ruck's Aerogarden herb grower.

One of the things Gini uses herbs for is to make sachets to protect woolens. "I do a lot of different fibre arts, including spinning and knitting, and make sachets to protect the wool from woollen moths. I also give these as gifts to family and friends. This is the enclosure card that shows the herb blend that I use:

*Place with your woolens to protect them from moths
Southernwood, Mint, Rosemary, Lavender, Thyme, Cinnamon*

Continued next page.....

Stop and Smell the Rosemary - continued

This past year **Trudy Stevens** grew parsley, rosemary, oregano, sage, and mint. "We had a planter herb garden. It was on my patio in a sunny spot and did very well and we made use of it all summer." When fall arrived, Trudy harvested, washed and dried the herbs, then put them between paper towels in plastic zip bags ready to freeze. She has been using them all winter and reports that this method works great. She is hoping that the three different varieties of oregano she planted will turn out to be perennial; each variety grew a different colour flower, white, purple and yellow. "We'll see in the spring," she stated. And isn't that part of the fun of gardening?

Although herbs are not a forte of **Valerie Skinner**, she does grow several and enjoys using them in dressings and baking. "Last year I purchased a package of summer savoury seeds on a whim and the flavour was a hit with friends and family. It's described as having notes of marjoram, thyme and mint. Speaking of marjoram, I was inspired to grow the herb, after trying Jamie Oliver's Proper Tomato Salad recipe (mixed home-grown tomatoes, garlic, a chili, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, salt, pepper, basil and marjoram). Delish! Both these plants were easy to grow from seed and I'm sure they will have self-sown." This coming season, Valerie plans to add spearmint to the plot. "Peppermint can always be found lurking but my mum believed that spearmint is best and she was a wonderful cook. She would slather new potatoes in melted butter and mint and pair them with cold ham to make the perfect summer meal. Very English."

A few years ago Valerie received an herb grinder as a gift which she uses to freeze basil in the fall. Then just before serving pasta and other dishes, she grates a few leaves over the plates and, "instantly they smell and taste fabulous. So easy! The trouble is that the product is nowhere to be found. Perhaps the same results can be achieved with a plastic bag. The trick is to move very fast to avoid allowing the delicate leaves to thaw before returning the container to the freezer." Valerie believes that herbs taste and often look great in the garden but scent may be their supreme quality. "The fragrance of gardens does seem underrated. Perhaps we should stop and smell the rosemary more often."



Valerie's herb grinder.

So if you haven't yet tried your hand at growing herbs, why not give it a go this year? A good place to investigate and learn about herbs is from Richters Herbs for locally grown herbs from the specialists. They have been the experts for over 50 years! Stay tuned for our upcoming Zoom presentation from Richters.

Mary Kadey

DIVIDING BEGONIA TUBERS

Every March/April I eagerly pull back the layers of newspaper to see if there are any eyes staring at me....tuberous begonia eyes, that is. If no growth yet, I simply leave them for a few days at room temperature out of direct sun, and eyes/growth start to poke up out of the concave or cupped side of the fleshy roots. If a tuber is bigger than three or four inches and there are two or more eyes, I will assess whether I can cut the tuber so that there is at least one eye growing from each piece. A clean sharp knife easily slices the tuber. Before potting up, I allow the cut tuber pieces to dry for a day. Once the cut surface is dry, the tuber is placed in a pot (I love recycling the clear plastic fruit and vegetable containers) with potting soil so

that the eyes are exposed or just poking above the soil. They are kept moist at room temperature in indirect sunlight. Once danger of frost has passed, they are transplanted to my outdoor containers

or directly to the ground where they are exposed to partial shade or morning sun. They are watered when soil is dry and fertilized every couple of weeks with an all-purpose liquid fertilizer. Wind damage can occur as plants can grow large with thick, heavy, fleshy stems. The tubers will last many years if they are overwintered indoors in a cool dry place. My orange blooming cultivar has been around for over 10 years and I've lost count of how many plants I've created from the 2 or 3 original tubers. It's a stunner when it gets to almost 2 ft tall with big gorgeous, serrated, triangular shaped leaves.

Sherry Howard



Each slice of tuber has at least one eye.

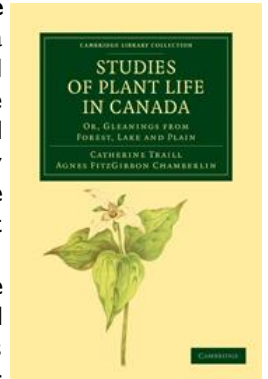


One Hundred Years (and More) of Gardening Influences and Influencers

Part Two: Early Canadian Gardening Influencers

Throughout Canada's history there have been gardeners who have been hugely influential to the world of gardening. Some are well known, whereas others worked diligently in the background to benefit the gardening community. If you were to ask any gardener their favourite "garden" author, essayist or blogger they would likely be able to provide a list of 2 or 3 people they like to follow. The early gardeners were really no different, often recording their observations and opinions as well as conveying their knowledge. What is of particular interest, is that many were women, at a time when women were often not given their due.

Driven by the dire circumstances forced upon them by the deaths of their husbands, **Catherine Parr Trail** (sister of Susanna Moodie - "Roughing it in the Bush") and Agnes Fitzgibbon (Susanna Moodie's daughter) worked together to compile "Canadian Wildflowers". Catherine's writing included descriptions of 21 wildflowers, complete with their Latin, common and Indigenous names. The Indigenous women taught Catherine the medicinal and food value of the plants that she collected and pressed in her herbarium. Poetry and personal anecdotes accompanied the illustrations created by Agnes from plates that she and her children etched and hand-coloured from her original drawings. The book sold for \$5.00 and was reprinted 4 times. "Studies of Plant Life in Canada" was Catherine's last book published in 1885 when she was 83.



Canada's first professional garden writer was **Annie L. (Hayr) Jack**. Originally from England, she moved to Troy, New York where she continued her education. Annie was known for her poetry and social commentary. Annie and her husband Robert ran a fruit farm in Chateauguay, Quebec known as "Hillside" where they raised 12 children. Annie grew a variety of plants - fruit, flowers, and vegetables for money and research on an acre of their property set aside specifically for her use. Annie's garden became a magnet for other gardeners to visit. In 1903 she wrote "*The Canadian Garden: A Pocket Help for the Amateur*". Her book provided practical information presented in the language of the times "*In every garden the rose is queen...for it is the flower of our desires and yet so often the flower of our failures,*" and to make a rose bed "*five feet wide if it is to hold three rows and let the distance between the roses be twenty-four to twenty-six inches.*" and was the only gardening manual until after WWI.

Canadian Homes and Gardens provided stories and illustrations about designs and developments in household items to members of the Canadian upper-middle classes from 1925 to 1962 (followed by Canadian Homes from 1963 to 1978). **Lorrie Alfreda Dunnington-Grubb** wrote prolifically on garden design for the magazine as well as for other Canadian publications.

Lorrie Dunnington studied garden design in England. When she married her husband Howard Grubb they adopted Dunnington-Grubb as their surname. They moved to Canada, worked together and helped start Sheridan Nurseries. Lorrie was one of the first women to practice Landscape Architecture in Canada and was a founding member of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects in 1934, becoming the Society president ten years later. She was known in urban planning circles and worked with artists and sculptors to create unique public and private garden spaces. Her use of perennials and rock garden plants to emphasize colours and textures were strongly influenced by Gertrude Jekyll.



Syringa x prestoniae 'Isabella'

Canadian farmers and gardeners were always interested in increasing their crop output and varieties of species. Much of this work was initially carried out at the Ontario Agriculture College (OAC) in Guelph and the Ottawa Experimental Farm. Hybridization of grains, fruits and vegetables became an important part of the war effort to produce food for the troops and general population during WWI. **Isabella Preston** came to Canada in 1912 and began studies at OAC but soon gave up her official studies to work with Professor J.W. Crow. Within 3 years she became Canada's first female professional hybridist. In addition to her work on food crops, Isabella Preston began to hybridize lilies producing the acclaimed George C. Creelman trumpet lily, a 6 foot tall lily with fragrant, white blooms named after the president of the OAC. In 1920, Preston moved to the Central Experimental Farm (CEF) in Ottawa where she worked to develop over 200 disease resistant hybrids (roses, lilacs, columbines, crab apples and lilies were specialties) suitable for the Canadian climate.

Garnet Johnston, another lesser-known Canadian hybridist, along with Geoff Rowberry from U of Guelph, developed the Yukon Gold potato (*solanum tuberosa*), a very popular addition to the Canadian dinner table. The cross was officially created in 1966 but not released until 1980.

These are just a few of those who have influenced Canadian gardening in the past and there will be many more in the future.

Debi Foster

Resources:

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/annie-l-jack>; *Catherine Parr Traill, Canada's Pioneer Botanist* By John Napes, *Watershed, Summer 2020* p.36-38; *Canadian Homes and Gardens - Wikipedia*; *Lorrie Alfreda Dunnington-Grubb | The Canadian Encyclopedia*; *Isabella Preston - Wikipedia*; <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/isabella-preston>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yukon_Gold_potato

BWGC Spring Virtual Design and Photo Show

Entries to be received by May 29, 2021

A. General Information

1. By submitting your entries to this show, you are agreeing to have your design published on BWGC social media with your name, unless otherwise specified.
2. To enter a class you will submit only ONE front facing photograph of the design that shows off the arrangement to its best advantage. The entire design (no edges cut off) must be included. The quality of your photograph is important. Please send in the highest resolution possible so the judges can see as much detail as possible.
3. There should be no identifying marks on the photograph so the judging is "blind".
4. All entries must be emailed to the convenor named in each class by May 29, 2021. Include the **Class Title** in the subject line of the email. The convenor will forward the photograph to the judges without any personal information.
5. All designs and photos will be judged by a team of judges.
6. Results of the show will be posted on the BWGC website and facebook page by June 13, 2021
7. A list of tips for photographing the designs is included in this document.

B. Rules

1. Exhibitors must be members of the Brooklin-Whitby Garden Club.
2. All designs entered in the show should be your original work completed specifically for this show.
3. **Exhibitors may only submit one photograph entry per class.**
4. All design classes must contain fresh plant material, unless otherwise stated in the show schedule.
5. All shows follow the rules and regulations in the **Ontario Judging and Exhibiting Standards (OJES 2019)** unless specifically exempted.
6. All entries in the photo classes must incorporate some horticultural content. Discretion is advised regarding the inclusion of people and pets in photographs submitted.
7. Decisions of the judges are final.

C. Awards

1. Awards given will include First, Second, Third and Honorable Mentions.
2. Best In Show Design will be awarded.
3. Best In Show Photography will be awarded.

D. Contacts Show Co-chairs:

Sherry Howard howard21@rogers.com, Judi Denny mjdenny@sympatico.ca

E. Show Schedule

Division I FLORAL DESIGN

1. "Celebration".....a Design of Choice, Accessories Allowed
 ACCESSORIES: An accessory is an inorganic object used in a subordinate manner to enhance a design of plant material. Organic objects such as fungi, decorative wood, etc. are NOT considered accessories.
Email entry photo to: Lynda Chapman at lynken@bell.net
2. "Lush".....A Small Design
 SMALL DESIGN: A design from 14 cm to 25.4 cm (5-1/2 x 10") and **which must NOT exceed 25.4 cm / 10"** in any direction (height, width, depth).
Email entry photo to: Barb Panowyk at bpnowyk@rogers.com
3. PICK & PLUNK up to 12 inches / 30 cm
 Pick & Plunk: Seasonal, garden grown plant material picked and artfully plunked into a container of your choice: "Keep it Simple".
Email entry photo to: Eileen Humphries at nanah@sympatico.ca

BWGC Spring Virtual Design and Photo Show - cont'd

Entries to be received by May 29, 2021

Division II PHOTOGRAPHY

1. "Promise of Spring"
Email entry photo to: Lynda Chapman at lynken@bell.net
2. "Winter Garden"
Email entry photo to: Barb Panowyk at bpanowyk@rogers.com
3. "Blossoming"
Email entry photo to: Eileen Humphries at nanah@sympatico.ca

F. Tips For Photographing Your Floral Designs To Enter In A Virtual Show

When you are photographing your floral design for a virtual show you want to capture your design in a photograph showing it off in all its glory. Hopefully, these tips will help.

1. BACKGROUND

- i) Consider the background (what is behind your design). You don't want the picture of your design cluttered with salt shakers or other distracting paraphernalia that might be beside the design or behind it in the distance.
- ii) A simple background will allow the details of the design to be seen. A tri-fold cardboard display board, like those students use for projects, or something such as a plain wall will work well.
- iii) Try to avoid backgrounds with loud colours, textures, reflective surfaces or patterns and if you are using a fabric backdrop make sure it is free of wrinkles and creases as these may distract the judge/viewer from the design.

2. LIGHTING

- i) The best colour balance is provided by natural light. This doesn't mean in bright sun as that would cause heavy shadowing. Soft, even shade, early morning light or evening light all work well. If using artificial light, remember that different light sources have different colours (i.e lightbulbs in soft white or daylight, tungsten or fluorescent).
- ii) Using a direct flash will result in strong shadows which can detract from the design. If necessary, the flash can be reflected upwards either by angling the flash or using a white card held just below the flash. The light from the flash can also be softened by taping tissue paper over the flash.
- iii) Photographing with a window or bright light behind the design will likely result in the design appearing too dark, making it difficult to judge.

3. TAKING THE PHOTOGRAPH

- i) It is easiest to take the photograph if the design is placed on a table or similar work surface. Make sure the design is exactly the way you want it; no dirt, falling petals or leaves and positioned correctly, with suitable background.
- ii) Set the camera's resolution at the highest possible setting to get the most detail. Make sure your lens is clean and free dust.
- iii) The photograph should be taken from directly in front of the arrangement with the lens in line with the centre of the design and focussing on the arrangement itself, not the background or container.
- iv) The stability of a tripod will help get the sharpest detail, but if you don't have a tripod, the camera can be stabilized by resting it on a flat surface or simply bringing your elbows in tight against your sides will help, if none is available.
- v) You want to minimize excess background showing around the arrangement without cutting off any part of the design or container. This can be done by zooming in with the lens or often by changing the distance between the camera and the design. If you choose to reduce the background after the picture is taken, it can be done by cropping, but cropping can also change the detail level of the picture, so it is best to do the majority of the framing before you take the picture.
- vi) Look carefully at your photograph to make sure it shows what you want and if not, try taking the photograph again before dismantling your "studio setting".

4. SUBMITTING YOUR PHOTO

Please email your photos at full size rather than allowing the email to compress them which will reduce the detail. Photos are due May 29, 2021. **Have fun and good luck!**

This newsletter is published quarterly - February, May, August and October. However, due to COVID19, the newsletter is planned to be issued in Mar and Nov of 2021. **All photos courtesy of BHS members.** You are invited to submit articles, questions and comments about the newsletter to the **Editors: Sherry Howard at howard21@rogers.com, Mary Kadey at memkadey@gmail.com, Barb Panowyk at bpanowyk@rogers.com**