



the gardener Spring 2011

**“To plant a garden,
is to believe in tomorrow.”**

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<http://www.gardenontario.org/site.php/stratford>

President's Message

It is a truism that when you've been waiting and waiting for good weather, the first warm, dry, glorious day will coincide with the District Annual General Meeting! Only briefly did we Stratford representatives (Dorell Brightwell, Dennis Rawe, Jinny Macdonald, Henry McVey and myself) consider calling in with spring fever. Instead, we gladly joined a wonderful crowd of 181 District 10 members representing 24 horticultural societies. The meeting was hosted by members of the Thorndale & Area Society who did a superb job and attended to every detail. This group is used to working well together, as evidenced by the 1500 volunteer hours the 75-member society gave to their community last year. It was a great day to make and renew friendships, and to hear the creative ideas that our neighbouring societies were so willing to share. Keynote speaker was John Drummond of Greenbelt Farms. As usual, listening to John was like sitting in on a university lecture—so much information and some challenging comments. How about, **“Horticulture has become a fashion industry, marketed to women”**? I now open a gardening magazine with a more questioning mindset. Thanks, John! Henry, Bernice Barratt and I entered designs in the flower show. As usual, St. Marys won the most points! Among we three, we received one blue ribbon (2nd place), but Henry's design was surely the most talked about! The class title was 'Dynamic Earth', and his design was fabulous – as you can see for yourself. The new District Board was elected; Roland Craig is District Director and the Assistant Director for Perth County is Elaine Stephens from Kirkton. Thanks to them for taking on these responsibilities, and also to Past Director, Anna Peterson, who never says “No” to our requests. At the end of the meeting, we decided we'd all had a good day, especially Dennis, who won a lovely orchid floral design. We came home pleased with how much we learned, the nice people we met, and the good ideas we hope to implement for our own society.



Henry McVey's Outstanding Design

Darlene Irwin, President



BAKE SALE at the Plant Sale!

As in years past we would like to have a bake sale table at the plant sale, however we need help. If you are able to donate items,

please call Louise Spandler at [REDACTED],

or if you would like to help at the bake sale table throughout the day (although a lot of items sell out quickly-prior to 10 a.m.!).

Bake sale items should be:

* Delivered to Wanda's house the day/evening before the sale so that she can refrigerate if needed, or to the sale table early on in the day.

- Clearly marked if the item(s) contain nuts.

- **Already wrapped and priced- DO NOT bring**

in containers unless you are selling the item in the container. For example if you wish to sell individual muffins I suggest putting it in a sandwich bag with 50 cent price tag. Half a dozen muffins or squares on a foil pie plate in a larger baggie might be priced at \$2.50 to \$3.00. A whole large pie might be priced at \$5 to \$7 depending on type, smaller ones \$2 to \$2.50. Loaves, depending on size - \$1.50 to \$4.00. Butter tarts - individual 75 cents, half a dozen \$4.00 to \$4.50. Generally smaller items reasonably priced sell out quickly! Muffins and tarts go well as I sell coffee by the cup and people(often us workers) get snack to go with it!

June Flower Show and LUNCH

Once again Mildred and I would like some helpers for the lunch room which runs during the flower show from approximately 11:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. We need people to serve the lunches- this also involves setting up the tables prior to the start and clearing things away at the end of lunch. Kitchen helpers are needed to wash the dishes, plate the food, etc. We aim to be out of the kitchen by 3 to 3:30 p.m. so it is an almost full day commitment. The menu will be similar to what we have had in the past i.e. a cold salad plate with dainties and fruit for dessert and tea or cold drink, but we rely on members to donate the dainties- so if you are able to donate dainties (to be brought to the Kiwanis Centre by 10:30 a.m the morning of the show) please call **Mildred Rose** or sign up at the May General Meeting.

Calling all Cookie Makers or Buyers!

This year as part of our annual Garden Tour we will be having an Event Garden (on the grounds of the White House on St. David Street). We would like people to linger at this garden to take in some of the special displays, silent auction items, etc. that will be there. We would also like to provide some "free" light refreshments such as (small) cookies and lemonade. Why cookies? Well since the tour day is usually a very hot one and we won't be able to keep them cool on the day, and people can walk and munch at the same time. So, if you are able to contribute 2 or 3 dozen melt-proof cookies that you can deliver to the event garden at any of these times; 12 noon, 1:30 p.m, or 3 p.m. in a non-returnable container,

please call Louise Spandler ([REDACTED]) prior to June 1st.





Youth Garden Club

One dozen junior gardeners attended the meeting in April and had a grand time decorating giant spring flower pots! The next meeting will be Saturday, May 28th, from 10:00 to 11:30 am, at Central United Church.

Nancy Lupton welcomes your young ones to join in.

Nancy Lupton [REDACTED]

Gardener's Thank You

This summer you'll notice several gardens displaying an iris sign, a Thank You from our Society to the resident gardener. Each member of the Board has one sign to deliver to the garden of their choice. The garden can be magnificent or modest; there are no requirements to be met other than it sparks the appreciation of the viewer. It is a very interesting exercise to decide what garden you would choose and why!



District 10 Judges Update 18 August 2011

This one-day event will appeal to anyone interested in learning more about horticulture & design. All are welcome. You need not be a registered judge. The topics include Ornamental Grasses, Photography, Using Armatures (the mechanics of a floral design), and Synergistic Design. All this in the morning followed by your own yummy bagged lunch and then you can participate in or watch designs being made based on the morning's design topics. The instructors then will make comments. Following that, a session on judging grains and vegetables. You will learn a lot about horticultural excellence in growing and exhibiting your produce! 9:00am-4:30pm.

Call Anna Peterson to register 519-284-0179

Horticultural...edible...cultural...Hosta !!!

In Japan you can buy *Hosta* or *Giboshi* at a grocery store.

Japan is a country blessed with useful wild plants. Japanese people do not miss opportunities to taste edible wild plants - from bamboo shoots and fiddleheads in the spring to mushrooms in the fall,... and if you guess *giboshi* is one of them, you are right! *Giboshi* is called "urui" and sold at grocery stores in the spring. It is prepared like asparagus when it comes out of the ground early in the spring, or like spinach when the leaves are just about to unfurl. Even buds can be cooked for *tempura*. Shown here is a bundled *giboshi* (or "urui") purchased at a grocery store as a vegetable.



It is said that a resident of Sagae City in Japan found a variegated sport in his garden where he was growing *giboshi* for food. Since it was so pretty, he potted it up and kept it in front of the house. A plantsman happened to see it and that's how this *giboshi* debuted in the limelight. I am talking about, of course, '**H.sagae**' that is always ranked high in the popularity polls. Aren't we glad that they decided not to eat 'Sagae'!

Hosta, **H. montana** to be exact, is called "urui" (u - ru - i) and consumed by Japanese people as a delicacy in the spring. They move the hostas to a greenhouse late in the fall, and keep the dormant hostas covered in the winter. This way, the hostas emerge white and very tender.



Urui with Vinegar Mustard Miso Dressing

Ingredients:

Hosta (*H. montana* or whatever hosta you'd like to try)
White *miso* (bean paste), Sugar, *Sake* (Japanese rice wine) or *mirin* (sweet cooking rice wine),
Rice vinegar, Mustard.

Prepare hosta; cut off fresh leaves of hosta (preferably *H. montana*) just above the crown. Wash them well, and cook in boiling water with a little salt for 1/2 minute to 1-1/2 minutes. Drain well in a colander. Cut the leaves into

1 to 2 inches. Serve them with mayonnaise, your favorite salad dressing or serve with **VMM Dressing** (Recipe below).

VMM Dressing Place 1/2 cup white *miso* and 1/3 cup sugar in a small sauce pan. Add some *sake* or *mirin*, just enough so it is easy to mix. Cook over low heat stirring constantly with a wooden spoon. It is done when it turns creamy. Cool the *miso* mixture. Add vinegar to thin the *miso* mixture and mix well with a whisk. Prepare mustard if you use dry powder. Luke-warm water makes the mustard spicier. Add the mustard, to your taste, to the *miso* mixture, and mix more with a whisk. Serve the cooked hosta with the dressing.

Visit this link for more information http://www.giboshiarekore.com/hosta_giboshi.html



In Memoriam

Claire Cameron passed away April 22, 2011.

A longstanding member and former Director, she was a very successful exhibitor and an OHA certified judge. She loved floral design, particularly design with a sleek, modern twist. Claire was a smart, classy woman who will be missed by many.

Coming Events

SDHS Annual Plant Sale

Saturday, May 14th, from 8 am, 4140 Quinlan Road. Plants dug and donated by our members, featuring a "collector's corner" of hard- to-find cultivars.

Bake Sale too!!

Call **Vivien Harding** [REDACTED] regarding drop off times for your own plant donations.

St. Marys Garden Fair & Iris Show

Saturday, June 4th, 8:30 am -1:00 pm at the Flats.

"For the Love of Flowers" is the theme for the 2011 flower shows. The first show is on May 30th in the Spruce Lodge conference room. June 25th is the Summer Show, held at the Kiwanis Centre. In addition to Design & Cultural competitions you can enjoy Lunch, draw prizes, an exhibition by the Stratford Camera Club and gardening help from Master Gardeners. For your copy of Show Schedules, call **Bernice Barratt** [REDACTED].

The Stratford & District Horticultural Society invites you to a...

Garden Tour

Sunday, July 3rd, 2011
Noon - 5 pm

EIGHT PRIVATE GARDENS
PASSES \$15.00
(Children under 12 are free)

After June 1st, Passes available at:
~Anything Grows ~ Tom's Eldon Landscaping ~ Klomps Garden Centre
~Cozyn's Garden Gallery ~ Sebringville Garden Centre

The day of the Garden Tour, passes at City Hall from 10 am til 2 pm

www.gardenontario.org

Sponsors



Notes from Tree (and Shrubs) Talk by John Drummond

at the OHA District 10 Annual Meeting hosted by Thorndale on the 9th April 2011.

John's business, Greenbelt Nursery, has been in operation for 22 years.

- For various reasons, trees have become harder to establish over the last few years. Not only from human activity and pollution but natural causes too. Less than 1% of a crop of tree seeds germinate. Photo synthesis energy, ie: from the sun, accounts for 50% of the world's energy. It is therefore imperative that 'energy efficient' landscaping is adopted; this would have a huge impact on our problems.
- Trees and their wood are an inspiration for many art forms.
- To solve the dust storm problems of early Ontario the government paid farmers 25 cents per tree that they planted along roadsides, legislating a 40' space between trees. These trees are old now and over mature, and a re-treeing program is urgently needed. However, such a program needs to be in the hands of the public.
- De-forestation exceeds everything else in wasting the ecology of the world. The immediate solution here is for we individuals to plant trees and hope for a 'ripple effect' reaching the nation(s).
- An old fashioned rule of thumb was to plant bare-root six weeks in the spring and six weeks in the fall. Nowadays we extend the planting season using containers and balling as well as bare root.
- One of the most important factors in tree planting is the site. Of equal importance is the variety and the source of the material. Many nurseries sell plant material as a fashion statement; names and varieties are offered because of their name or mythology.
- The buyer needs to be sure of what is wanted from a tree, such as shade, flower, fruit or harvest, protection etc.
- Frequently these days the newly built home will not only have most of the good soil removed but the remaining sub-soil will be mixed with builders' debris and compacted by heavy machinery. An immediate remedy for this is to plant a tree 'high' or slightly above grade using high quality soil, the drainage will give the young roots a chance to get vital oxygen, not be stifled when waterlogged. It takes around ten years of annual soil improvement to recover from lack of top soil. Better still, the impoverished compacted ground should be scarified before any top soil is replaced.
- With 'new' ground the choice of species and variety is especially important.
- A troubled tree on clay may be 'jacked up' on blocks in situ and good soil placed around the root system.
- New plantings may need 'stage' planting, a series of species with tallest at the back.
- Nurse trees may also help, that is, precious ornamental trees are sheltered by fast growing short lived trees.
- Drainage is the first consideration. Re. choice of material, nurseries have access to a wide range of trees to suit many situations, plants grown in local environment. Even so be buyer wary - take a look at the roots, you need visible fresh white roots.

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• **“What’s the difference between a bagpipe and an onion? Nobody cries when you cut up a bagpipe.”**

- Some popular trees fall into this category - Norway maples for instance, easily supplanted by a new introduction Red Point Maple.
- It is important to dig a custom size hole to accommodate bare rooted trees, not clipping or bending the roots. Properly grown nursery stock will have a good root system whereas trees taken from a natural growth area may well have a ‘wild’ arrangement of roots or damaged or clipped roots.
- Bare roots must be kept moist or wet. Fifteen minutes of dryness can damage roots severely.
- Trees in containers need to be handled with extra care, small ones may slide out easily, larger containers should be removed, always be sure that the root ball is firm enough so as not to disturb any, ie firm. Fibre containers no longer rot in the ground, and they should be removed. Slit the pot side in two or three places, alongside the hole lay the pot down and remove the bottom, place the pot and plant in the hole and check it’s depth and orientation, carefully cut the top rim of the pot and remove, supporting the plant with back fill soil. Old style bushel baskets do rot, they give good aeration but the bottom may still be removed if firm.
- The second year in a pot may cause a root to circle around. If the root is planted in this way the plant will suffer. The offending root may be re-directed, even partially cut to straighten out or removed altogether.
- Check your selected plants, the plant may have been potted speedily and crudely.
- Ball and burlap is usually used for better quality plants or plants moved later in the spring.
- Balled and Burlaped material needs especial care when un-wrapping in the hole. Gentle leaning is possible to remove rope or string and, if the ball is firm, the burlap. Do not disturb the soil ball.
- Don’t ‘kill with kindness’. A highly porous backfill (eg black earth) will hold water long enough to cause root rot or oxygen starvation.
- Birch Borer- Choose your variety carefully, European White Birch is susceptible. River Birch, *betula nigra*, is more hardy.
- Black knot fungus on Prunus sp. Will spore onto fruit trees easily.
- Nectrea Kanker. Comes from poor pruning cuts - tools should be sterilised constantly.
- White spots are caused by slugs and snails feeding on algae, do not be concerned.
- Generally speaking do not clean off lichen, moss, moulds etc. they are a natural part of ecology and only a small part of the tree’s co-habitants.

These notes are submitted by **Dennis Rawe**.

Stratford & District Horticultural Society Board of Directors 2011

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Membership Renewal and/or Request to E-mail “the gardener”
I hereby give my permission for the Stratford & District Horticultural Society to send the newsletter with full colour photos and other information of horticultural interest to my e-mail address. It is clearly understood that this address will not be shared or used for any other purpose.
Name:
Address:
E-mail address:
Signature:

Please clip and mail this to the Society or bring to a general meeting and give to a Board member.
You may also **RENEW** by mailing this form with your payment (\$15) to the address on page 1.