



the gardener

November 2016

P.O. Box 21032, Stratford, ON, N5A 7V4
<http://www.gardenontario.org/site.php/stratford>

Churchill Circle, Oct. 10, 2016



Photo by Anu MacIntosh-Murray

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President's Message

With the Annual Report and the fall newsletter coming out relatively close together, my message in the former is about 2016. With the newsletter, however, I want to give you my thoughts on our *future* as a Society.

Our Society exists because we provide value through horticultural events and projects. Traditionally this value is focused on people with horticultural interest, which makes sense. But we have opportunities to provide value to a much broader audience. Does this imply that we shift our focus away from what we are doing now? No. We need to expand our thinking in how to plan and promote what we do. Some of our Society's 140th anniversary projects (in 2018) and other events are of interest to non-

horticultural groups. A prime example is the refurbishing of the Dutch Memorial. This project will be of interest to the Legion, Dutch community, Perth Museum, Stratford Tourism, Communities in Bloom, Civic Beautification and Environmental Awareness and the community at large. We will involve sponsors to help finance this project. As we consider each event or project we are looking for ways to provide value to different segments of our community.



Planting tulip bulbs at the Dutch Memorial, November 2015
Photo Courtesy of The Beacon Herald

We also have to look at how we present ourselves electronically. Our future members are very connected electronically and we have to speak their language to make contact. We are currently using the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) web site and they are slated to release a new version soon. The version we have been using is old and does not have features and functions required to fulfill the needs of both the OHA and the societies that use it. Once the new one is available we will evaluate it based on what we want to accomplish with a web site. We also have a Facebook account which allows us to share pictures and comments. Besides the web site upgrade, the other area for improvement is that we don't have procedures to get the information to the right place on a timely fashion.

We also have an opportunity to look at member retention. The first thing we would do is see how many members do not renew over the past few years and, if the number is significant, is there anything we can do about it? It may require interviewing those who leave to identify causes which we may be able to rectify.

So far I have covered my short term view but what about 5, 10 or 15 years in the future? Obviously I can't predict the future, I don't have a place in the Bahamas, but it is critical that we take time to assess the role we play in our changing community and how best can deliver value.

Perpetuation is one of the most important issues for any organization. The OHA recognizes this as a problem but does not offer solutions simply because each society is different. It is up to us to continually explore options and come up with creative solutions. Our destiny is in our hands.

Exciting isn't it?

Mike Matthews



SDHS entry in the 2016 Canada Day parade. Thanks to Dennis Rawe and his large squad of volunteers. Photos by M. Murray

Dutch Memorial Garden Renovation

The Dutch Memorial garden is one of the Society's 140th Anniversary projects. The plan is to replace the current six annual gardens with a single garden around the monument in its current location at Huron and William streets. The old gardens will be grassed over except for the current Dutch Memorial which will be covered over by the new garden. The new garden will be the same area as the original six combined. We wanted a design that would best reflect the Netherlands.

The garden would have lights to illuminate the monument, and a raised grade to the back so the design would be more visible from the street. The back of the garden would be ironstone to support the raised portion, have an irrigation system, and an information board to display the history of the monument. We also wanted two flagpoles with illumination for the Canadian and Netherlands flags.

The concept was approved by the Society's 140th committee and the Society's Board; the next step to get city approval. We will then be in a position to determine both the initial and ongoing cost. We will investigate grants and sponsors to help with the cost. We plan to do the reconstruction in September 2017 which will give us time to plant bulbs. A rededication of the monument ceremony will take place in the spring of 2018 when the bulbs are in bloom.

At this point all we have is the concept which is shown below. It is 42 feet wide and 49 feet deep. The slope of the bed starts where the iron stone begins. The design is unique and it certainly reflects the symbol of the Netherlands. You will notice that we call the monument the Dutch memorial yet the flag is of the Netherlands. The Netherlands is made up of 12 provinces, two of which are named South Holland and North Holland.

We should soon have all the events and projects defined for the Society's 140th anniversary, and we will publish it and ask for volunteers to be on committees.



Your 140th Committee: Mike Matthews, Bernice Barratt, Doug Reberg, Marg O'Reilly, Louise Spandler and Reg White.

Society Funding: Garden Tour, July, 2016

(Editor's note: in the past three newsletters, Glen Querengesser, the Society's Treasurer, has written about different Society activities and finances. Glen has written another informative article to continue our learning about these topics.)

Over the last several years the Stratford and District Horticultural Society has had the good fortune of having many successful garden tours in July. The summer of 2016 did not disappoint, as once again we were blessed with beautiful weather. Ticket sales were excellent and as a result we had a very successful event.

While weather is a key factor in the success of the tour, there is another invaluable asset that the Horticultural Society is blessed to have. That is a tremendous planning committee. A few years back, the garden tour chair, Penny Keegan, assembled an excellent group of individuals to work with her. This committee was composed of the following:

- Sponsorship – Sharon McDonald
- Web-Site & Passes – Shelly Meyers
- Poster Design & Pass Cover – Louise Spandler
- Volunteers – Ron Nichol
- Home Owner Contact – Felicity Sutcliffe
- Advertising – Larke Turnbull
- Maps & City Hall Ticket Sales – Stella Farwell
- Garden Centre Contact – Leslye Glover

These eight members joined Co-Chairs, Glen Querengesser and Marg O'Reilly, to form a 10 member group which planned the 2016 event. The good news at this point is: Marg is stepping up to chair for 2017 and all committee members listed are staying on to work with her.

For several years now, the objective of the committee has been to sell in the range of 400 tickets and gross about \$5,000.00 in sales. Frequently we have come close to these figures but never surpassed both figures. In fact, in 2007 the records show that there were 454 tickets sold. That appears to be the top ever. This year we reached 439, so we were only 15 behind 2007. On most occasions the ticket sales have been in the 300's. From a cash-sale stand point, there was one other year that the \$5,000.00 figure was surpassed. That year tickets for sold for \$15.00 each. Now we offer them slightly cheaper by selling 2 for \$25.00. There do not appear to be any other year when our gross sales were as high as they were this year. The final figure on ticket sales was \$5,485.00. This includes 172 sales of two tickets for \$25.00; whereas had we charged \$15.00 each we would have surpassed \$6,000.00.

The last two years, we have offered advance ticket sales to our members at the general meeting in May for a discounted price of \$10.00. The first year we sold 22 tickets and in 2016 our sales increased to 48 at the May meeting. This year we also had excellent ticket sales at the garden centres with 138 tickets sold in advance at the four garden

centres. Most of the tickets are always sold on the morning of the tour at our booth in front of City Hall.

I'd want to wish Marg and the 2017 committee the very best in 2017. I hope they can once again acquire beautiful gardens and be blessed with excellent weather. In which case, I am sure the event will be a huge success. To our membership, I say, please turn out and support this event. I know that over 40 of you serve as volunteers for the event. If you are ever asked to join this planning committee, I suggest you accept because you would find the work enjoyable and very rewarding.

Good luck to Marg. and committee in 2017.

Glen Querengesser
Treasurer



Bernice Barratt's prize-winning design from the Hamilton and District Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society Annual Show, Sept 10th & 11th, 2016 held at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Burlington ON.

Photo by Bruce Wilkinson

Did you see these this summer or fall?



Boxelder bugs on Balsam impatiens
Photo by M. Murray

Boxelder Bugs

For those of you who may not know it (I did not), in Canada, the Box Elder tree (*Acer negundo*) is commonly known as the Manitoba maple. And there are certainly Manitoba maples around Stratford! So it should not be a surprise to see boxelder bugs.

The following comes from a University of Minnesota Extension article

Boxelder bugs, *Boisea trivittatus*, are familiar insects to most people. They are generally not noticed during summer, but often can become an issue when they try to move into homes during fall as they search for overwintering sites.

In Minnesota, boxelder bugs emerge from overwintering sites during spring as the weather starts to warm up. Adults feed on low vegetation and seeds on the ground during spring and early summer, and begin mating a couple weeks after they started feeding. Starting in mid-July, they move to female seed-bearing boxelder trees (fig. 3) where they lay eggs on trunks, branches, and leaves. They are rarely found on male boxelder trees. Boxelder bugs may also feed on maple or ash trees. There is no noticeable feeding injury to these trees.

Boxelder bugs are primarily a nuisance because they enter homes and other buildings, often in large numbers. Fortunately, they do not bite people and are essentially harmless to property. When abundant, they can stain walls, curtains, and other surfaces with their excrement. Occasionally some may seek moisture and may be found around houseplants, although they rarely attack them. In the few cases when they do feed, boxelder bugs are very unlikely to injure indoor plants.

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/insects/find/boxelder-bugs/>

Michael Murray
Editor



Boxelder bugs on window.
Photo by Michael Murray

Very Important Reasons Not To Clean Up A Garden In Autumn

Compiled by Leslye Glover, Master Gardener of Ontario

In the past, the idea of 'putting the garden to bed' meant cutting everything down, pulling up all the annuals, raking every leaf up and disposing of them off-site, spreading a load of compost on top of the beds, and labouring to work it into the earth.

Here's an environmentally friendly alternative: wait until April! Leave almost everything standing. Here are reasons why:

1. Insect life

Native bees need a home for winter. This can be inside a hollow stem or under a piece of bark. There are thousands of species of native bees in N.A. and they are all important pollinators. Some spend winter in the ground as an egg or larvae.

Native ladybugs over winter in groups, under a rock, in leaf litter or at the base of plants. They don't come into your home – those are the introduced Asian ladybugs. There are approximately 400 species of native ladybugs, who will spend the warm months munching pests and insect eggs.

Not all butterflies migrate like the famous monarch. Many over winter as adults or in their chrysalises, secure in leaf litter, soil, in rock fissures or under bark. Some curl up as a caterpillar in the leaf or seed pod of a host plant. Butterflies spread beauty and pollen all summer.

Predatory insects such as lacewings, assassin bugs, big-eyes bugs, ground beetles and damsel bugs spend the winter as eggs, pupae or adults. They will be ready to emerge in early spring to munch the pests, if they have not been disturbed.

2. Birds

If a garden is left intact over winter, there will be more insects to support insect-eating birds, lots of seeds for the vegetarians and berries for all.

A garden full of tall stems provides cover from predators for small birds.



*Burning Bush, Oct. 18, 2016
Photo by Anu MacIntosh-Murray*

Robins will stay year-round if there is a food source and water.

3. Soil Microbes

Healthy soil has a rich ecosystem of micro-organisms and tiny organisms. It is a complex balance. Mycorrhizal fungi attach to plant roots and find nutrients for their host. Bacteria and fungi store nutrients; protozoa eat bacteria and excrete nutrients which plants absorb. Nematodes eat bacteria, fungi and other nematodes, and also excrete nutrients which are absorbed by plants. Tilling, digging and pulling up plants destroy this system and break up the air and water passages formed by worms and other soil life.

4. Protect the Plants

Plants which are left standing will gather snow. This protects the roots of perennials (insulation) and adds moisture to the soil. It is also going to look beautiful. If we have to have winter and snow, we may as well try to enjoy it.

5. Take a Break

You have worked hard in your garden this past spring and summer. You can relax in the autumn, rest your back and plan for spring.

6. Other Wildlife

Your garden is home to spiders and toads, both of which are on the side of the 'good guys' in the fight against pests.

What should you do in the garden for winter?

- Remove/cut back diseased plants. Look for mildew and mould.
- Cut back iris leaves since iris borer overwinters there.
- Cut off the mushy leaves of hostas and other soft-leafed plants after the frost.
- Rake leaves off the grass and compost them or put them in the beds.
- Compost can be placed on top of the soil in beds. No need to till it in. Weather, worms and microbes will take it down into the earth.

Ultimately, your garden is yours to enjoy. If you cannot bear to have a messy-looking winter garden full of dead plants, clean it up. (Maybe clean up the front and leave the back 'au naturel'?)

Come to the Garden Chat in March to find out how to get started in your garden!

Sources:

Rama, Laureen "Eco-yards Simple Steps to Earth-Friendly Landscapes". New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, BC. 2011

www.savYGardening.com

www.houzz.com

Thanks from the Stratford Youth Centre

The Stratford Youth Centre would like to take this opportunity to thank you, the members of the Horticultural Society who donated your various plants, pots, and greenery that now decorate our Centre.

We were lucky enough to receive a makeover in 2015, but new floors and a coat of paint don't necessarily make a space instantly comfortable. Our new plants add colour, serenity, and an organic flourish where there was none. Most plants are placed near our front windows, making the Centre look more inviting from the outside, as well.

Most of all, the plants you have given us make the Centre look less like an institution and more like a home, a place for our kids to relax, escape, do homework, make art, and socialize in a comforting atmosphere.

We thank you!

Dan Wettlaufer
Supervisor



Social Media



Please visit the Society's Facebook page and 'like' us!



Seedy Sunday at the Local

The Local is hosting a Seedy Sunday event on Feb 12 2017.

They are seeking vendors, workshop leaders, volunteers on the day. As well, they are looking for volunteers to be on the planning committee from Nov 21.

Please contact:

Katie McLeod
Garden & Greenhouse Coordinator
The Local Community Food Centre katiemcleod@thelocalcfc.org
www.thelocalcfc.org
519-508-FOOD (3663) ext. 1

What is Seedy Saturday Anyway?

Seedy Saturdays bring together gardeners, farmers, seed growers and savers, community organizations and small businesses. They congregate in community centres, botanical gardens, and church basements, to buy, sell and swap seeds. The general premise Seedy Saturdays was founded on is seeds should be saved and shared – and grown in ways that respect the environment, too! They usually happen in February and March, when people are planning out their farms and gardens. Seeds of Diversity Canada supports and promotes these seedy events across the country. Check out their extensive list of Seedy Saturdays to find one in your area.



Churchill Circle
Photo by Anu MacIntosh-Murray

<http://usccanada.org/resources/news/item/410-what-s-a-seedy-saturday/410-what-s-a-seedy-saturday>

See also: <http://www.seeds.ca/d/?n=web/ebulletin/other/organizing-a-seedy-saturday>

Personal Reflection on a Seedy Saturday

I went to my first Seedy Saturday in Victoria, BC, many many years ago. It was great fun. There are some amazing gardens in Victoria and Seedy Saturday was an 'event' for gardeners. There were **lots** of "home grown" seeds. There were also a few local seed sellers and some light refreshments. I remember driving up with my brother and parking some distance from where the event was held because there were so many people there! Not being a gardener at the time, I was amazed at the turnout. Now I know better.

Two huge advantages of seeds obtained from a Seedy Saturday: you know that the plants they came from are probably local and will probably grow in your garden somewhere, and although there are some pretty basic plants represented, there are some wonderful heritage seeds available too.

The Victoria Seedy Saturday is a long established event, and gardeners knew to collect seeds for it. Stratford has not yet got that tradition. And it might conflict with the Society's own seed exchange. But it is worth investigating, contributing and helping out.

Michael Murray

Master Gardeners' Chats 2017 (held at 6:30 before SDHS meetings)

- January: **Seeds**. Best suppliers, what's new AND seed exchange. Bring all those seeds you saved in September, and leftovers from previous years.
- Feb: **Integrated Pest Management**. What on earth is it? How can I use it in my garden?
- March: **Getting Started in the Garden**. Hurrah! It's spring.
- April: **Xeriscaping** (landscaping and gardening that reduces or eliminates the need for supplemental water from irrigation)
- May: **Winning plants**. Come to this chat to share the names and perhaps samples/photos of your favourite plants. What has done well for you? Easy care, problem-free suggestions are welcome

Newsletter Notes

- The next newsletter is scheduled to be published just before the February 2017 meeting. Please send me anything you think would add to it...especially pictures (current or past), articles of interest to our members, plans for our gardens, announcements, requests, etc. The addition of content from you will help us reach the newsletter as being "about us, for us, by us".
- You can reach me, Michael Murray, at the newsletter's email address: SDHSthegardener@gmail.com Or by phone: ~~250-271-8888~~. Or talk to me at any of our meetings.