



the gardener

May 2017

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

Glorious Spring!



Eastern Redbud (Cercis canadensis), Photo by Anu MacIntosh-Murray

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President's Message

Mike Matthews

What a gorgeous show of spring flowers that declared the end of winter. The Dutch memorial, Churchill circle and many private gardens are a welcome sight as you travel around town and the cooler weather allowed the blooms to stay for an extended period of time. This is the best my spring bulbs have performed and by the time you get this message we will have moved.

In my last message I informed you of a project to document what we are doing and how it is being done. The team has developed short documents that describe 31 SDHS positions and committees and they have created "How To" documents where the information is available. We are in the process of documenting who is currently filling these 31 positions and determining which positions need to be held by a board member. We will make this list available to you which will include contact information. This will enable you to contact the person directly for any information you require in their area of responsibility. I would like to express my gratitude to the team of Michael Murray, Maureen Cocksedge and Doug Reberg who spent many hours in a short period of time to complete this assignment and it will result in saving us all time in the long run.



We are well into developing a database which holds our membership based data. The information you provide us in the volunteer survey is entered into the database and the appropriate person then gets a list of all their volunteers and contact information. It also stores historical information for future reference. It will also contain the names of the person who filled the positions/committee chairs which we can use to recognise those that have made a significant contribution to the society. Donald Cocksedge has spent many hours in developing the database and it is another foundation stone in utilizing technology to be more productive. I would like to thank Don for sharing his knowledge and expertise to enable us to be more efficient.

We have started to look at social networking capabilities. All OHA Societies have a web site within the OHA site which, by its nature, does not allow society specific modifications. Some societies have opted to develop their own web sites and have it tailored to their specific needs and some of these are very good. Seaforth has an interesting site at <http://www.seaforthdhs.org/tips.html> . We are also on Facebook which currently requires someone to enter information which is then available for others

to view. There is an application which allows you to build a schedule and the information is released to another application, such as Facebook, according to the schedule. This would allow us to create the schedule that we have in our pamphlet for the year and it would automatically send it out to the designated application on a specific date. The same event can have multiple release dates each with a different message. It is interesting to note that Facebook seems to be used by people 40 years and up which is our primary target age. The team is Susan Kurtz and Patricia Anderson. Between the two of them they are more than capable of the task.

We will be seeking at least four new board members for 2018. Glen Querengesser, 11 years on the board, Jinny Macdonald, 15 years, Louise Spandler, 11 years and Elizabeth Ainslie, 3 years, have decided to step down at the end of this year. They have contributed a great deal to the society and deserve a rest. We also have a vacancy for the Vice President position. If you have an interest in any of these positions please contact me or any board member.

If I you are unable to attend the May meeting I wish you have a pleasant summer and don't forget to take the time to sit back and enjoy your garden.

SDHS May Meeting Presentation

Presentation about Floral Collage Design by Irina Code and Jean Anne Coldrick of London Garden Club.

Garden Chat by Master Gardeners, "Winners in My Garden" at 6:30.

Excerpt from Stratford Gazette

Doug Reberg

Spring seemed to arrive very slowly this year didn't it? Although that's true enough, Ontario has endured far colder spring seasons. Consider the spring of 1832, when one of Stratford's early residents tried to plant a vegetable garden. Thelma Coleman's history of the Stratford and District Horticultural Society describes the situation this way: "It was the middle of June. The weather was cold. Mrs. Sargint planted her garden, undaunted that the severe frosts of late spring had blackened the seedlings of two previous plantings."

I hope the third planting did well, because Mrs. Sargint's family must have relied heavily on the food her garden produced. There were also late spring and early summer frosts in 1833 and 1834, so those must have been times of great uncertainty.

Fortunately, gardens have a pleasant way of prospering even in what seem to be unseasonable temperatures. This spring is a fine example of that resilience, and if you haven't already done so, do try to enjoy the beautiful tulips and other spring flowers currently blooming in Stratford's public gardens. You will find it time well spent.

SDHS Plant Sale

Maureen Cocksedge

When: May 27 2017 8 am to 2 pm –
Where: The Local 612 Erie St Stratford

It's hard to believe but this year's plant sale is days away! We are INDOORS at the Local Community Food Center, so come, rain or shine.

We need from you

Please consider donating plants – we absolutely rely on members to provide the bulk of the plant material available for sale. Please drop off potted-up plants at The Local Friday May 26 after 3 pm until 8 pm. 612 Erie St.

If you are able to - provide the name, flower color, height and sun requirement. This is much appreciated. Please point out rare or unique cultivars, when you drop off the plants.

Members are asked to bring spare seeds, especially vegetable seeds, to the Local for their seed lending library

We offer you

This year there is an especially fine selection of mature perennials, dug up by member volunteers, from three notable gardens. Also on offer are many pollinator plants.

You will find special ordered scented geraniums including Ginger and Lemon Rose. As well, look for special ordered, hard-to-find limited quantities of herbs including Lemon Verbena, Zorba Red Oregano, French Tarragon, Silver Sage, Syrian Oregano 'Cleopatra zaatar' and Rosemary "Goriza" and "Santa Barbara". Try the EDIBLE yellow marigold or grow some GojiBerry!

Plant Sale!



Member Grown Plants

- Perennials
- Annuals Herbs
- Pollinator plants
- Free Seeds (The Local)
- Demonstrations
- Free advice from Master Gardeners



Syrian Oregano 'Cleopatra zaatar'

By Davidbena at en.wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=47491565>

Once again there will be a varied selection of vegetable seedlings for sale.

Do remember to pick up your **Advanced Compost** order. Please bring your receipt. Didn't place an order? Never fear - There will be some compost available on a first - come - first - served basis.

Experienced members and Master Gardeners will be on hand to provide planting advice.

Volunteers are always welcome the day of the Plant Sale. If you can only come for an hour or two, that's great; the more the merrier.

Contact: [REDACTED] (Maureen)

Changing Direction with Bus Trip

Nancy Lupton

Due to insufficient interest the trip to Toronto is canceled. We are offering a one-day bus trip on June 10th to Huron County Gardens. Tour of Canada Banana Farm (Terry Brook was our speaker at March 27 General Meeting), Lunch, Garden Centre, and lots of fun.

Come join us!

Leaving at 8am and returning by supper time.

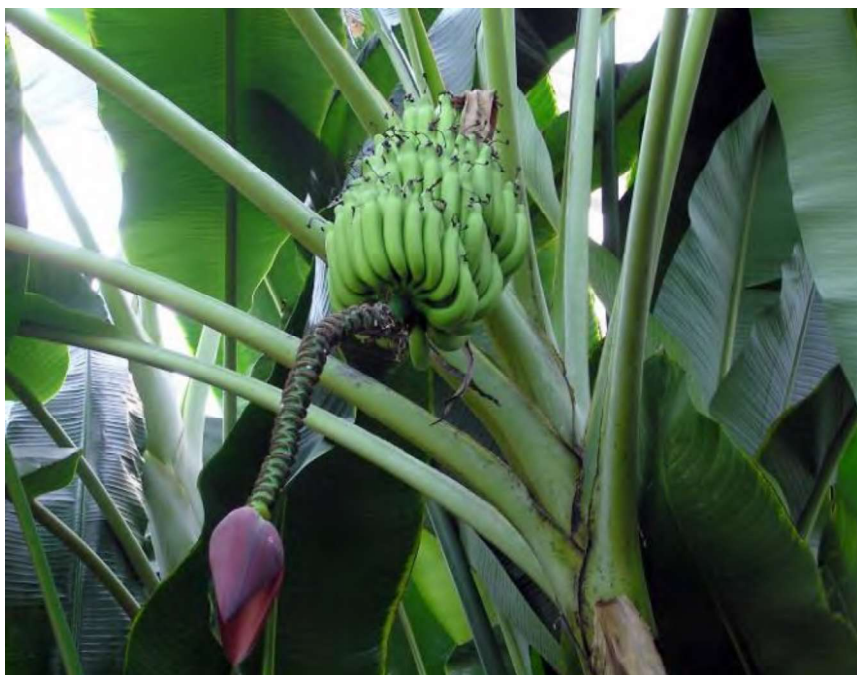
Cost \$50 per person. Non-members pay an additional \$15 for membership.

Come see how the only banana farm in Canada can grow bananas, wander through tranquil gardens, enjoy a delicious lunch and do a little shopping. Hope you can join us.

Please contact

[REDACTED]

or call [REDACTED]



Banana Plant at Kew Gardens

By Adrian Pingstone (Own work) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

St. Marys Annual Garden Fair

Ann Pedley

St. Marys 20th Annual Garden Fair - Saturday June 3, 2017 from 8:30 AM to 1 PM. Location Milt Dunnell Field (The Flats) St. Marys, ON. - There will be over 20 garden related vendors, free admission and free parking. As well we will be selling 15 different varieties of our popular heirloom tomatoes, grown by our members.



Previous Garden Fair - Photo from Ann Pedley

2017 Membership Renewal Reminder

It is time to renew your yearly memberships if you haven't already. The fee remains the same at \$15.00. Discounts at 9 local merchants. Memberships can be purchased at General Meetings, at Flowers on York and Stratford Blooms, or by Mail. Cheques payable to: SDHS c/o P.O. Box 21032, Stratford, N5A 7V4. Memberships are a great extra gift for family and friends.

Mary Hoffman / Membership Convenor / [REDACTED]

Memberships available at Two Locations

FLOWERS ON YORK, 25-27 York St.

Hours: Mon. to Sat. 9am-5pm

STRATFORD BLOOMS, 52 Albert St. NEW

Hours: Mon. to Fri. 9am-5pm

Sat. 10am-5pm

Please renew your membership; your support is appreciated!

Bugs! Not your usual Request

Maureen Cocksedge

Organizers of *The Big Bug Hunt* are inviting gardeners from across the country to report sightings of bugs as they appear. Now in its second year, the project has already found patterns of when and how key pests spread – but more reports will speed up development of the final pest-alert system. Reports can be made via The Big Bug Hunt website:

BigBugHunt.com.

(Editor: Extracted from BigBugHunt.com Press Information)

The Big Bug Hunt is a new citizen science project collecting information about pest behaviour with the aim of notifying gardeners when pests are heading their way.

The Big Bug Hunt is possibly the largest citizen science project of its kind, ever! Working with leading gardening companies and publications around the world, Growing Interactive are reaching out to millions of gardeners, asking them to submit a report whenever they spot a bug in their garden.

If you're a gardener who sees the value in a pest alert service you can report your bug sightings at BigBugHunt.com.



Waiting for Warmer Weather

Photo by
Susan Kurtz



SDHS Public Gardens – The Iris Garden

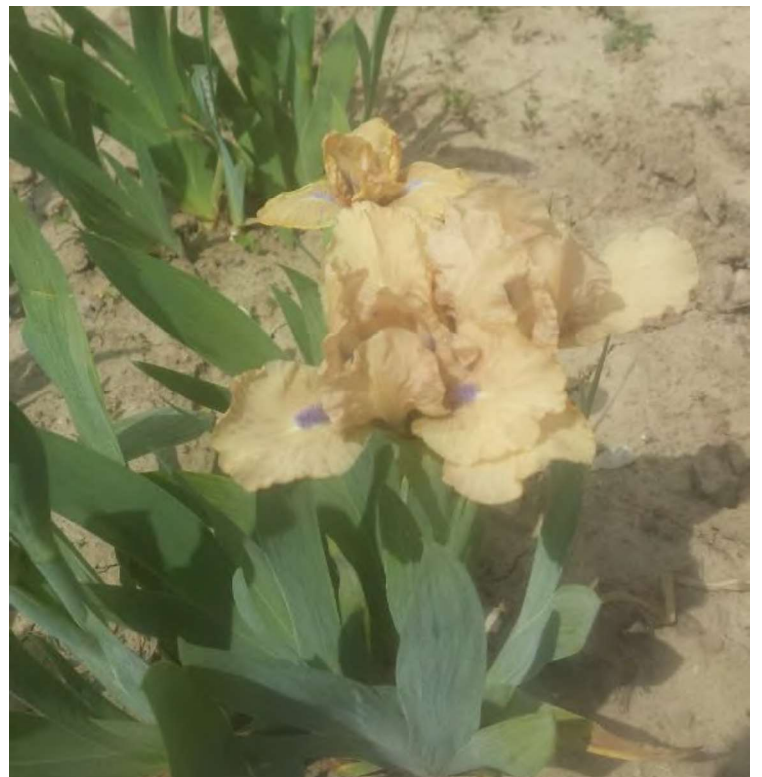
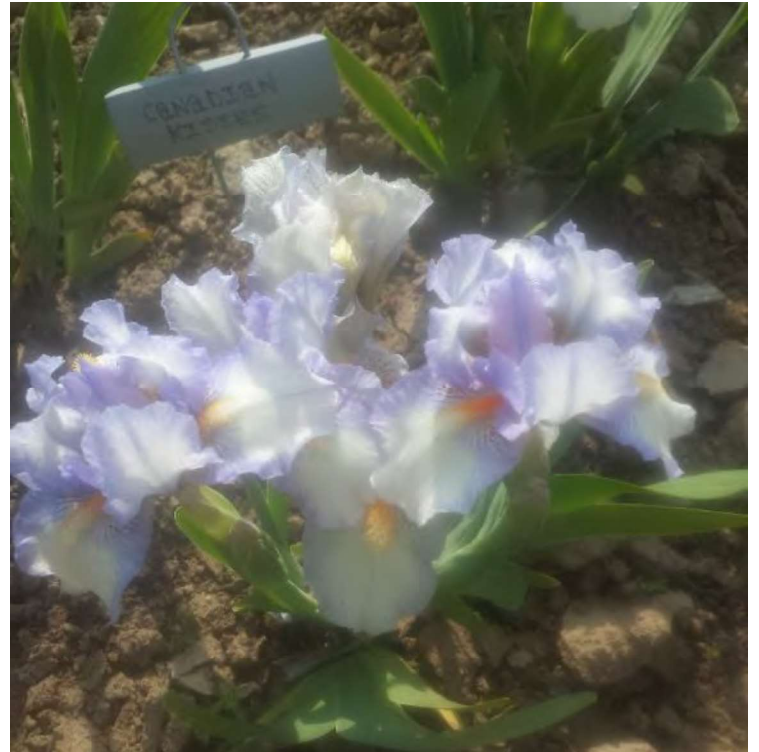
Marg O'Reilly

We have been so excited to discover many of the first blooming, Standard Dwarf Irises are showing off their beautiful colours with more bursting into bloom daily.

We have been busy weeding, edging and getting ready to plant some auxiliary plants.

Thanks to Steven and Doreen Zurbrigg, Ginny MacDonald, Sheila Phillips and Cobe Giroux, and some family members who are dedicated, dependable, hardworking and cheerful volunteers. We also want to acknowledge Bob and Ann Granatier, the designers and providers of many of the Iris, and all of the horticulture members who came last August to help us plant the bed.

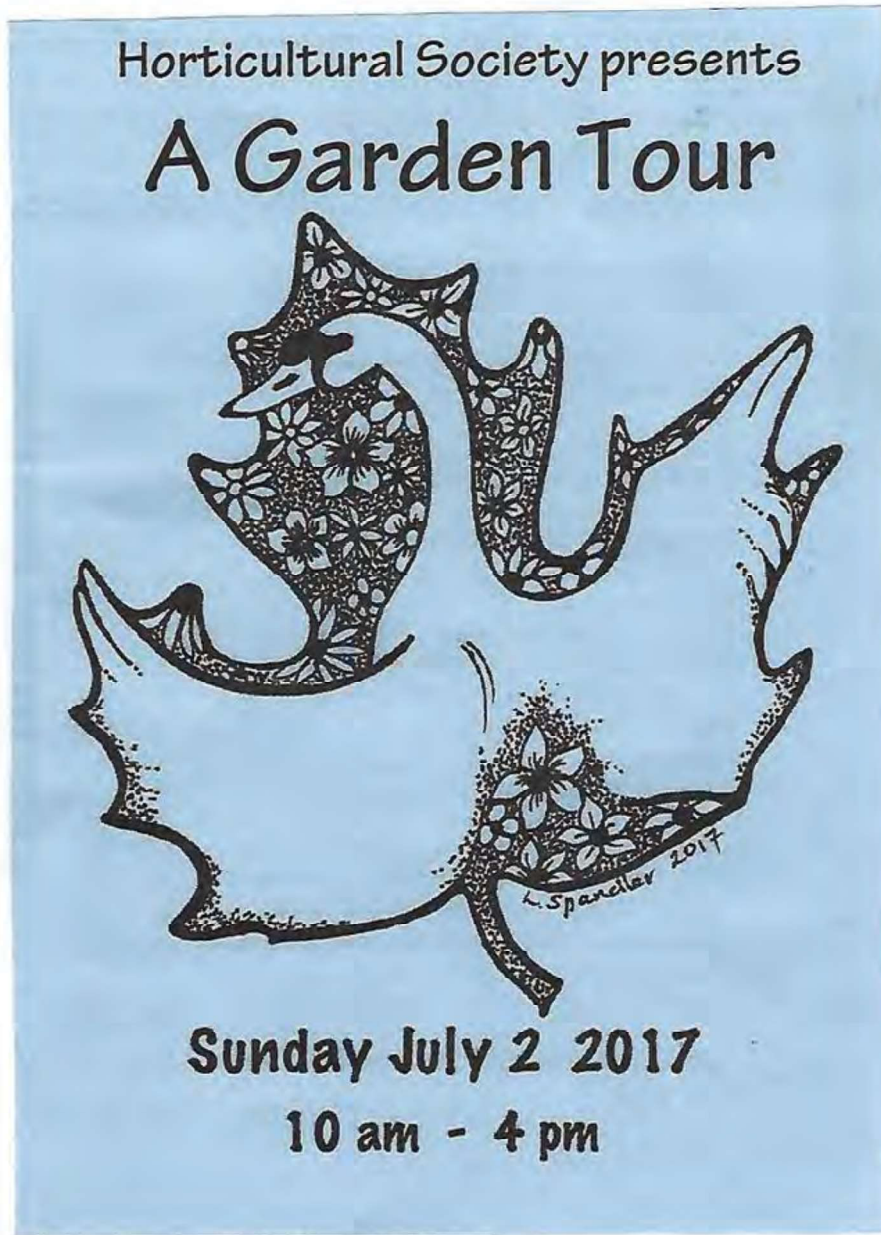
We welcome new volunteers. If you have an hour or two we can be found most Wednesday mornings on McLagan Drive weeding or planting. You may call me at [REDACTED] or e-mail me at [REDACTED] if you would like to join us.



Iris Photos provided by Marg O'Reilly

SDHS Garden Tour

Marg O'Reilly



STRATFORD & DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

**ANNUAL GARDEN TOUR
SUNDAY, JULY 2, 2017
10 am - 4 pm**

*Come and enjoy 8 beautiful and
distinctly different private gardens.*

**Passes are available beginning
June 5th at**

Tom's Eldon Landscaping
& Garden Centre,
The Sebringville Garden Centre
Cozyn's Garden Gallery
and on the day of the Garden Tour
at City Hall
from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm.

**PASSES \$15.00 EACH
OR 2 FOR \$25.00**

The Tour includes a
perennial challenge
(there's a prize for the winner!)

Sponsors

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**Tom's
TREE CARE**

**Tom's
Eldon Landscaping**

**TRI-COUNTY
BRICK COMPANY**

**Bosco
Pool & Spa**



Give yourself and a friend a gift on July 2, 2017.

What better way to spend a Sunday afternoon than strolling through eight beautiful and diverse gardens?

Refreshments will be served and you will have a chance to win prizes.

Lakeside Daisy (*Tetraneuris herbacia*)

Anu MacIntosh-Murray



Lakeside Daisy Photo by Anu MacIntosh-Murray

No, these are not dandelions! *Tetraneuris herbacea*, or lakeside daisy, is a native plant that is globally rare and 95% of the world's population of this plant is located on Manitoulin Island and northern Bruce Peninsula (and small populations are found in a few states around the Great Lakes). Their habitat is alvar, a limestone plain with little if any soil, so ours grow in a bit of garden soil heavily amended with grit and gravel. We bought our original plant from a reputable native plant nursery; those in the wild are protected. I love the bright yellow flowers which appear in early May, but I have to admit they look dandelionish!

See Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Lakeside daisy. Retrieved on 2017 05 22 from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/lakeside-daisy>

Social Media



Find us on

Facebook

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



Garden Tools, Part 2

Denis Rawe

Edging

(1) Sometimes the crust is too hard for a hoe. The edging tool, which also needs to be sharp, cuts only a short distance into the soil, it is light weight and the semi-circular blade shape enables you to get fairly close to the plants without disturbing their roots. For these reasons the edger is useful for breaking the hard surface found on some soils. (2) The edger also has another use, that of trimming the grass around the bed and keeping a distinct line between lawn and garden. The edger goes in vertically and a small piece is removed ready for the compost; a "V" margin. Once the edge and the line of the bed margin is established only occasional tidying up is needed. The "V" cut allows a separation between the grass roots and the bed, this aids drainage, keeps the grass back, sometimes keeps the ground cover from the lawn and gives the bed an attractive clearly defined shape that is long lasting.

Remember practice not only makes perfect it makes muscle with a rewarding result. If the hoed weeds are small they may be left to desiccate, in any case it is essential to crop the weeds before they go into seed. Seemingly within hours of your work,



from Preen website, Creative Commons license

Sharpening

The spade, the hoe and the edger need to be honed regularly. Each must be held firmly, clamped down on the work bench so that the sharpening is at a good working height and the file angle is natural for a slope on one side of the blade only. A new eight inch file will cut well but you should have gloves to protect your hands. New tools are sold deliberately blunt (for customer safety) so they take a lot of work to shape up. Hardened metal needs a stone for honing. A sharp tool means the sooner the job is done.

Points to keep in mind when buying

- A good solid blade which maintains a good edge weighs more but a thin blade bends.
- Check the point where the blade joins the handle shaft, this can be weak and the first to go.
- The edger blade lines up with the shaft of the tool but the spade and hoe have a working angle that should suit you , check your position when standing normally slightly crouched, Could you keep this stance for an hour or so?
- A traditional "D" handle gives better control, a straight round shaft needs to be gripped more firmly.
- A long handle is useful for placing a load – not tossing it.
- Many tools have the blade turned to give a tread surface, make sure the turn is forward, the reverse turn catches on trees fences and legs.
- Ash wood handles are traditionally the better.
- Most tools are sold blunt, once sharpened watch your toes.
- Rakes do not need sharp tines but long handles
- The "D" or Dutch push hoe is easier to use than a draw hoe.

Some casual notes on growing Dahlias

Dennis Rawe

These notes were 'hastily' made from a talk at the OHA District Ten convention 22 April 2017.

Dahlias can survive drought.

The soil should be loose and light.

Occasionally water well and deep especially when buds form.

Containers should be relative to the Dahlia size.

Always use fresh soil for containers.

Plant tubers with a small part of the old stem showing.

Cover no deeper than 1" – let the oxygen in.

Pinch out the growing tip at about 12" high.

Stake the taller Dahlias.

Remove faded blooms at once or the plant will fail.

Use hardly any fertilizer – liquid fertilizer is preferred.

Some Dahlias like full sun, but some prefer a little shade.

Seeds germinate around 65 degrees, plus or minus 5

Treat insects with soapy water.

Dig up aged tubers 2 days after a hard frost.

Divide your dahlia tubers - it is best to plant a single tuber.

Divided tubers must have an eye

Before storing ~ invert the tuber to drain the remaining stem.

Burying tubers, unwashed, in peat moss is an old fashioned technique. The new way – wash well, dip in a 1 tsp to 1 gallon bleach solution, to kill bacteria.

Wrap tightly with Saran to keep the air out.

When showing, keep the stems long >20", take off the two side buds.

Be cautious with Epsom salts – use once only.



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The Garden Path ~ A Pumpkin on a stick?

Dennis Rawe

A strange descriptive name but what is it? Look carefully, there are thorns on the leaves and stems, it is tall but not a vine, it is not hardy, the orange colour approaches tomato red, the several fruits are borne in clusters,

No, it is not a pumpkin, it's too small anyway. It's an ornamental eggplant! *Solanum integrifolium*. In our climate we treat it as an annual. It doesn't grow too high here anyway it will grow in full sun and produce its fruit within 75 days of transplanting after the last frost. It is excellent for fall displays and dries well. Mind the thorns!

Asian cultures eat the fruit in Asian stir fries. Home gardeners show it off as a unique, conversation piece. Ornamental Eggplant is grown from seed indoors for transplanting later. Sow seeds early in the season and cover lightly with 1/4" or less of fine garden or seed starting soil. Some garden centres carry them too.



The Garden Diaries Blog, Creative Commons License

Ornamental Eggplant is easy to grow. It likes full sun, but will tolerate partial shade. The soil should be rich, and drain well. Mix compost into the soil, prior to planting.

These plants like a lot of water and nutrients. While they like lots of water, they do not like wet soil. Keep soil moist, not wet. Add fertilizer when planting, and every month during the season. Early in the season, add mulch around the plants to keep the weeds down. Small flowers will begin to develop from the main stem in mid summer. Three to four flowers will form in a cluster, followed by small green fruit. The Eggplant ripens to a deep, red-orange color. Plants, may require staking, as the fruit develops. Otherwise, the weight of many growing fruit will cause the plant to droop, and the brittle stems may break.

Treat Pumpkin on a stick as an annual that is susceptible to frost. Cover them up whenever cold temperatures are expected.

Caution: Be careful when working with this plant. It has many long, sharp thorns on both the stems and the leaves. Compost as you would (or wouldn't) tomato and potato plants. Save some fruits for seed, they take a long time to mature.

Drought-resistant Gardening

Notes from Garden Chat

Leslye Glover

A quote from Pam Penick's excellent book 'The Water-Saving Garden': "... we design our homes and grade our property to shed water and then pay to pipe it back in and spray it across our yards when rainfall is scarce - and often even when it isn't. With a heedlessness born of cheap, plentiful water - a supply many regions can no longer count on - we run our sprinklers automatically and excessively ... and let rainwater and irrigation run off our yards and driveways into the street. This is madness. We must stop treating water as a disposable commodity in our landscapes and gardens and conserve it as the precious, limited resource it is." (p. 1)

Why a drought-resistant garden?

- Water is a precious and diminishing resource (as above)
- Watering with city water is expensive
- Using excessive city water puts a strain on water services
- Treated water is not needed for plants, even harmful to them
- Climate change patterns indicate hotter, dryer weather to come

A xeriscape garden doesn't mean gravel, two boulders, and a bare obelisk. It means using drought-resistant plants; plants with long taproots to obtain water (dandelions never seems to suffer when dry); or plants which can retain water - waxy leaves, fuzzy leaves slow transpiration. It also means landscaping to maximize the use of the rainfall you receive.

Landscaping ideas to save water:

- Use rain barrels to catch water from your roof. Plants prefer rain water over treated water, in any case.
- Mulch with natural products to slow drying
- Add humus to your soil to retain water
- If you must water, use drip hoses. The water can be directed to where it is needed, and there is little loss due to evaporation.
- Irrigate less often and deeply. This encourages roots to grow further down.
- Terraces, berms, retaining walls and raised beds all catch rain and give it a chance to soak in, rather than running off immediately.
- Plant 'thirsty' plants all in one area.
- Reduce lawn area and replace it with beds or ground covers which need less water, no fertilizer and no mowing.
- Use permeable surfaces such as gravel on driveways and paths.
- Choose plants well-adapted to our climate and to your particular garden
- Plant trees, build arbours and pergolas for shade.
- Use containers made of wood, metal or glazed material. Terra cotta dries rapidly. Use coir (coconut fiber) in your potting mix to hold water.
- Under plant your specimen plants with lower growing or ground cover plants

Plant Choices

There is no one 'right way' to plant a garden that uses less water than a conventional one. Plant thoughtfully and be willing to change plants and/or hardscape as needed. Plants native to your area typically require little watering beyond rainfall since they are accustomed to the local climate.

References

On-line:

www.landscapeontario.com "Xeriscaping, not zeroscaping" by Marjorie Mason

www.lawnreform.org

www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/livehere/fs-lowwaterusegardens.asp

www.ontariograsses.org

Books from the Stratford Public Library

Hadden, Evelyn J. "Beautiful no-mow Yards - 50 amazing lawn alternatives" 635.9PEN

Johnson, Lorraine. "Grow Wild - Native Plant Gardening in Canada" 635.95171JOH

Ogen, Lauren Springer. "The Undaunted Garden Planting for Weather Resilient Beauty" 635.950GD

Penick, Pam. "The Water Saving Garden. How to Grow a Gorgeous Garden with a Lot Less Water" 635.9PEN

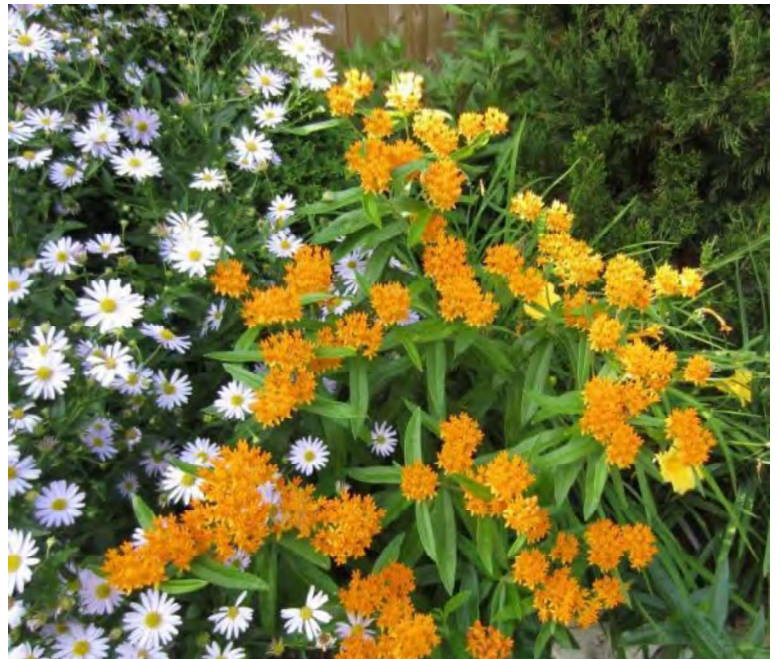
Rice, Graham. "Planting in the Dry Shade Garden" 635.9543RIC



Lavender
Lavandula angustifolia

New England asters
Symphotrichum novae-angliae

Butterfly milkweed
Asclepias tuberosa



Churchill Circle: How far we've come.

Photos by Louise Spandler

July, 2015



Oct. 2016



SDHS Job Description Committee Final Report

Michael Murray, Maureen Cocksedge, Doug Reberg

At the Jan. 9, 2017 SDHS Board meeting, a committee (DR, MC, MM) was struck to continue Maureen's work developing "job descriptions" for various SDHS functions and "terms of references" for committees. Job descriptions have been developed in the past, but not taking quite the same form. Or for as many positions. The Committee has developed short documents that describe 31 SDHS positions and committees.

Our goal was to develop documents that describe in broad terms the goal of the job or committee and its main objectives and activities. We attempted to not make this a detailed "to do" list of activities and tasks. Although we now have many job descriptions, we did not attempt to write one for every single job in the Society. What we have included are "mandatory" positions, such as President, and major activities, such as Public Gardens and Garden Tours. There are also some new positions, such as Photographer and Database Manager that we feel that the Society should have. Exclusion from the list is not a judgement about the importance of an activity, but rather a statement about which positions the Society, and in particular the Board, should expect to have these positions filled.



*Echinacea, drought tolerant
by Anu MacIntosh-Murray*

Both job descriptions and accompanying "how to" documents are not final, set-in-stone documents. The job descriptions will need to be revisited and reworked over time, especially as they are used for various purposes, such as job recruitment. The "how to" documents should become working documents maintained by job incumbents as a means of both documenting what is done but more importantly as a reference for new people coming into the job.

The job descriptions and "how to" documents will be made available online and directly to SDHS members electronically or in printed form when requested.

List of Available Job Descriptions

President	Newsletter Editor	Finance
VP(s)	Membership Convenor	Garden Captain
Treasurer	Plant Sale Chair	Garden Festival
Secretary - Corresponding	Program Coordinator	Garden Tour
Secretary - Recording	Web Master	Hospitality / Social
Past-President	Nominating Committee	Public Gardening
Annual Task for Executive	Exhibit and Floral Design	Public Gardens
Database Administrator	Social Media	Publicity/ Media/
Greeter	Board Member	Communication
Public Floral Design	Education/Workshops/Special	

Pot Garden

Anu MacIntosh-Murray



Canada to pass legislation to legalize pot. ("But I didn't know that frost protection was against the law!! Oh... they don't mean this kind of pot garden?")

Newsletter Notes

- **The next newsletter is will be published in the fall.** 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: [REDACTED]. Or talk to me at any of our meetings