



the gardener

November 2017

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

A Touch of Fabulous Fall Colour: Burning Bush



Photo by Anu MacIntosh-Murray, Nov. 2018

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President's Message

In the fall of 2014 I accepted the position of Co-President because it was an opportunity to use my skills, knowledge and work experience to contribute to the Society. In my work career there were three things I strived for, accomplish something, learn something, and have fun doing it. I wasn't successful hitting all three every day and it's been the same with the President's position. I must confess that I really don't like writing President's messages as it usually takes 2-3 hours. In my work life I always communicated with charts, graphs, overheads and bullet points on a white board which does not improve one's writing skills. On the other hand the best fun I have is at the General Meetings. I find it so invigorating when people are laughing and having a good time. Life is like that and the good news is that in volunteer organizations you can work in a team, and with the right talent mix, each member can do more of what they like and less of what they don't. The team I am a member of is the Board and I have had wonderful teammates. With the diversity of knowledge, talent and life experiences we have been able to have good discussions with opposing opinions which resulted in us coming to an informed decision.

Board membership changes from year to year but we have had enough diversity to remain effective. Our 2018 board will be without Glen Querengesser, Virginia Macdonald, Louise Spandler, and Elizabeth Ainsley. Together they represent a great number of years of board experience. I would like to commend them for their generous contribution of their time and talent as a board member and for the support they have given me during my tenure.

It has been an honor to have been President of our Society. It was a wonderful opportunity to work with Board members with various skills and knowledge but with a similar commitment to the Society. It is interesting to note that there will be only four board members in 2018 that were on the board in 2015. This represents a healthy turnover which brings new ideas, skills and energy. It also indicates the number of people who have contributed their time and talent to the workings of the board. I would like to commend them. I am looking forward to working with the Board as Past President in 2018.

Mike Matthews



Lily 'tree' with 23 blooms. From Cobe Giroux.

The Editor's Column (first editorial for me, ever)

As you've just read in Mike's piece, the Society is losing its President. I personally thank Mike for all of his efforts over the past few years; he has made my participation in the Board much more fun and productive. Few people know how very much he has contributed to the Society. We are also losing four other long-term Board members; they have contributed over 50 years of Board service! But...

We have no replacement for the President's job.

We have been without a Vice-President for years.

We recently split the Secretary's job to make it more manageable, but we do not have a Recording Secretary. I have taken on the Corresponding Secretary job.

Thankfully, we have a new Board member to take over the Treasurer's position from Glen Q. And it appears that we have two other new people who are willing to join the Board.

And it isn't as if the other Board members aren't busy. They are, on a variety of important jobs.

The Society is at a turning point; it has faced them before. At one point the Society was down to about 40 people! How we deal with these vacancies and the continuing struggle to fill Board positions will determine how healthy the Society will be in the future. We appear to find enough volunteers for lots of our activities, but mostly short-term or event-based tasks. The same people seem to be taking on the big jobs, and we can't continue to ask them over and over and over again.

We need 'new' people to step up and contribute. Even if you feel you can't help with the Board right now, you can help by telling us what prevents you from getting more involved. Later in the Volunteer Opportunities article, Maureen gives different ways to contact the Board. Please do so.

Michael Murray
Newsletter Editor & Corresponding Secretary

Annual General Meeting

Monday Nov. 27, 2018 at the Festival Inn

6:30, there will be a short "social time" with coffee/tea and sweets provided. There will be no potluck dinner. There will also be tables set up with information about our 140th activities, Society-related websites, and our "swap shop".

7:15, our speaker will be Wendy Shearer, Landscape Architect and Cultural Heritage Specialist presenting "Legacy of Ontario Garden Styles from 1840 to 1940". This is a great 'kickoff' topic for our 140th anniversary year, presented by an engaging speaker.

8:00, the AGM business meeting will start. The AGM report/agenda have been emailed.

Upcoming General Meeting Programs

January's speaker will be Lynne Taylor on behalf of the Bruce Botanical Food Garden; her presentation is titled "The Bruce Botanical Food Garden: A Rare Experience".

February will be the return of Robert Traut; he will be demonstrating "Repotting Your Bonsai".

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

- January - Care of Christmas gift plants (poinsettia, amaryllis, etc.)
- February - Name That Bug/What Plagues This Plant
- March - Sowing seeds, taking cuttings, best starting mixes
- April - All about soil. How to have it tested, how to read the report, and how to augment
- May - Show and Tell. Bring a favourite house plant. We will discuss care, how to get them ready to go outside for the summer, and how to go about bringing them in for the winter.

Volunteer Opportunities - early 2018

Position

Details

Greeters	one hour before general meetings, last Mondays
Plant of the Month	Purchase a plant and bring it to general meetings. Add a note about its Care. It is used as a door prize. The Society pays for the plant.
Publicity Coordinator	Upload details of meetings and events to local websites
Event or Bus Tour Coordinator	Arrange an event or tour for the Society
Helper at Seedy Sunday	Feb 11 2018 - 11 am to 1 pm or 1 - 3 pm shift
Helper at Garden Festival -	First weekend March - shifts

If interested, see any Director at the meetings, call Maureen Cocksedge at [REDACTED], or email Michael Murray at sdhs1878@outlook.com

Unsung Heroes

Thanks go out to those many unsung heroes who spend time anonymously weeding our garden beds, digging material for the plant sale, and helping in many other ways.

We would appreciate receiving a note about the time you spend on Hort-related activity. Our volunteer hours are reported to City, Ontario Horticultural Association, and the Province. Volunteer hours directly affect the value of grants that we may receive.

Please send a note to SDHS1878@outlook.com .



*A Very Late Blooming Clematis, Oct 29!
Photo by Anu MacIntosh-Murray*

Iris Garden Report for 2017

Our Iris Bed bloomed beyond our wildest imaginations this year, with a wide variety of irises displaying a rainbow of colour from early May to the end of June and into July. When we thought they were finished for the season, several of the re-blooming varieties thrilled us with more beauty. The additional plantings of grasses, lavender, and Autumn Joy Sedums have flourished, in spite of a loss of a few plants because of theft.

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, Virginia Macdonald, Steve and Doreen Zurbrig and Sheila Phillips we managed to keep the weeds well controlled. If anyone has an hour once per week you are welcome to join us on Wednesday, mornings between 0900 and 1200. It will be fun and you will be contributing to beautifying our city.

It has been gratifying to see the results of all of last summer's hard work and we look forward to celebrating our 140th anniversary next summer with the introduction of a new Iris cultivar called "Believe in tomorrow". We hope you will come to the celebration June 9, 2018.

Marg O'Reilly

2018 SDHS MEMBERSHIPS AVAILABLE

It is time to renew your membership.

Beginning in December, two local flower shops have once again kindly agreed to sell our 2018 yearly memberships.

FLOWERS ON YORK, 25-27 York St., Tel. (519) 273-7777, Mon. - Sat. 9am to 5pm

STRATFORD BLOOMS, 52 Albert St., Tel. (519) 814-5000, Mon. - Fri. 9am - 5pm/ Sat. 10am - 5pm

Consider memberships as a great gift or stocking stuffer for family and friends. Price remains at \$15.00 yearly.

We appreciate your support!

Mary Hoffman, Memberships Convenor, (██████████)

Social Media



Find us on
Facebook

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



Check out our new website: GardenStratford.org

Newsletter Notes

- The next newsletter is scheduled to be published just before the February 2018 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: (██████████). Or talk to me at any of our meetings.

A Deserving Student Gets SDHS Bursary

On October 6 Jinny MacDonald and Elizabeth Ainslie were thrilled to be invited to the St. Marys DCVI commencement ceremony. Why were we, as representatives of the SDHS, there, you might ask? Well, it's a simple story with a very happy ending. As you may know, one of the items mandated in our constitution states: "The objective of the Society is to encourage interest and improvement in horticulture...by encouraging young people in the study and practice of horticulture." One of the ways we do this officially is to offer a bursary in the amount of \$500.00 annually to any Grade 12 student who intends to continue their studies in horticulture or agriculture at a college or university. Unfortunately, in the last two years and three years before that, we haven't had any applicants.

What to do? Clearly, it seems that students in the five area high schools have not been made aware that our bursary exists. So, in the spring, Jinny and I decided to get the word out. We took copies of our application letter and visited Central, Northwestern, St. Michael's, Mitchell and St. Marys high schools. We talked to the Principal or Guidance Counsellors in each school and hoped that eventually we would get a response and some letters of application from interested students. Finally, in May, a student in St. Marys wrote to us. She explained her academic background including her plan to "...attend the University of Guelph's Ridgetown campus for their Associate Diploma in Agriculture." She also summarized her community involvement, including exhibiting and volunteering at the Kirkton Fair. She added, "I also work on my neighbour's dairy farm every night after school...milking, cleaning, and chasing cows."

This student sounded like a very likely candidate for our bursary, so I phoned her reference, the owner of the dairy farm. I got a glowing report and high praise for all her hard work. After sharing the letter with Jinny and Gwen Kushko to confirm our choice, we all agreed that this student, Arly Mitchell, was very deserving of our bursary. Some phone calls and emails with St. Marys DCVI staff ensured that our decision was official. Then I notified Arly and told her that she was to receive our bursary. Knowing how high tuition fees are I acknowledged that the amount we were offering wasn't huge; but that getting an award from a prestigious organization like the SDHS would be a very useful item to include on her resume. In mentioning this I hoped to promote her career goals in the future.

The commencement evening arrived. I was looking forward to meeting Arly and handing her our cheque. The donors assembled in the Library to be welcomed and thanked. Then the graduating class and guests followed a bagpiper into the gymnasium filled with family and friends. Everything went smoothly and surprisingly quickly. There were speeches from politicians and dignitaries. Each student getting an award and their donor came forward individually for handshakes and photographs. The students and their families clapped enthusiastically and cheered. I was very impressed with the school, the staff, the students, and all the awards being given out. There was no doubt that the students were being supported and encouraged as they move on.

In Arly's letter she said, "...my future goals are to get a job in the agriculture industry whether it be in working for a seed company...taking over my family's cash crop farm... (and)...I am hoping to learn how the industry is changing and eventually be able to come home and share what I have learned with the people in my community to help them better their operations."



*Elizabeth Ainslie with Arly Mitchell.
Photo by Ginny Macdonald*

Arly is a fine example of a young person who will not forget her roots and her rural values. We hope that her future is bright and rewarding. With our bursary and our best wishes we have helped to encourage a deserving young student to pursue an important and useful career. Who knows what meaningful contributions to agriculture she will make? By awarding our bursary to Arly we did fulfil our mandate – and that's a very good thing!

Elizabeth Ainslie

A Note about the Royal Botanical Gardens

"Royal Botanical Gardens is a living, interactive museum that celebrates the relationship between humanity and nature ... a natural, historic treasure".

We, as Stratford & District Horticultural Society, support RBG in Burlington by purchasing an Organization/group membership. We receive two, re-useable membership cards, free parking passes, and 10 complimentary (one time use) admission passes. These are available for all members of our society and the new passes are valid until September of 2018. Treat yourself during our anniversary year by visiting RBG once or several times!

The Rock Garden, after an extensive renovation, has once again become a jewel in RBG's collection of gardens. Once, an explosion of colour only in spring, it now boasts seasonal character and is a "must see" on each visit. Night lighting and music add to the wonder of this remarkable place.

The iris and peony gardens, upgraded several years ago, is truly a botanical treasury where you can search out named varieties of these amazing perennials along with a growing clematis collection. (No pun intended!) Nancy Lupton and I visited the lilac collection, while scouting locations for a previous bus trip; it was a "scent-sational" experience!

This year RBG has begun a renovation of the rose gardens located in Hendrie Park, across Plains Road from the Visitor's Centre. This extensive garden area also contains medicinal plantings, a nature walk, the sculpture collection, children's programming areas and perhaps Canada's oldest living specimen of a Dawn Redwood. Seeing this tree is an awe inspiring event, not to be missed.

This submission is not a commercial message but is intended to encourage all of you to read the E-mailings informing us of what's happening at RBG and plan a visit. Contact Bernice at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] to borrow "our passes" for free admission to this wonderful resource. By the way, this is just one more benefit of the 2018 SDHS membership!

Bernice Barratt

Editor's Note: The RBC does a very good social media job announcing its programs, events, stories, etc. There are far too many for us to pass on to you folks. But they would be happy to send them directly to you; check their website, www.RBG.ca. And check out their calendar of events! <https://www.rbg.ca/visitorevents>

Slug Story – A Master Gardener’s Tale.

Who knew??

As gardeners, even Master?? Gardeners we are always learning. Here is my slug story.

Of course, we all know that this year has been quite nasty for slug damage on Hostas because of the wet spring. Most of us are vigilant at the beginning of the season but less so near the end.

Just before Thanksgiving, during a nighttime walk in the garden we noticed a burgeoning slug population. We decided to hand pick what we saw in order to reduce the population for next year. So with headlamps (mine is pink), a pail of soapy water and long pointy tweezers we set out. I’m sure the neighbours were amused. It was not difficult to find many. In the first few nights we estimate we dispatched about 300. Then we considered it a challenge and most nights we were out there with our equipment and in about 3 weeks our total was 720. We also spread some slug bait which was effective, but not all the slugs were lured. Once the slugs meet their end in the soapy water, be sure not to leave them too long, (they start to smell). You can add them to your compost for a nutrient boost.

We were shocked by the consistent numbers being collected. The interesting thing was we did find many on hostas but in our garden we found more than expected on short daisies, creeping phlox, mosses, and coreopsis. The damage is not nearly as evident on these plants but seem to be yummy for the little glistening devils. A hint, when you find them on plants, shine your light on the earth around the plants and you will surely find some on their way to dinner. Another surprise was that they were not hiding. I always thought you needed to look under the leaves of the plants but these creatures were right on top and very easy to see. Timing is everything in life and in slug picking. Initially, when it was light longer, 9 or 10 o’clock yielded the biggest take, however, as the days shortened, a couple hours after sunset and beyond seemed to be the slug dinner bell.

In the spring, rest assured we will be out there at night, looking, very early in the season. In past years, I have tried the ammonia soaking just as the hostas emerge and it didn’t seem to work very well. I guess there is no substitute for good old elbow grease.....so if you are interested in a slug hunt, spread some bait, grab a flashlight, some slug grabbers and enjoy the adventure! I will keep you posted on my quest for population control.

Penny Keegan



Hosta - Revolution. Photo by Penny Keegan



Hosta - Stained Glass. Photo by Penny Keegan.

Seed Collection Workshops - by Plant Rescue Team

The Society, with master gardeners, recently held three workshops, with 30 attending and collecting over 2 dozen varieties of seeds from Shakespeare and Churchill gardens as well as "hell strips" in the downtown area. The seeds have now been cleaned and packaged. The seed list is available on request.

As well, we demonstrated stem, leaf and root cuttings including begonia, geranium, marguerite daisy, lantana and kalanchoe. We lifted (with permission of the City) limited numbers of "mother" plants - begonias, geraniums, purple shield, kalanchoe, portulaca. Seeds and cuttings are available on request or at Seedy Sunday next spring. Let us know if you'd like to repeat this next year.

Maureen Cocksedge



Plant rescue team at Richard Blackburn's garden. Photo by Susan Kurtz



Plant rescue team at Richard Blackburn's garden. Photo by Doug Reberg.

Rose Reminders

When to prune the roses? An oft asked question. There is no one way to respond to this. Much depends upon where you are, the location of the roses, the type of rose, the weather we are going to have etc.

There are a few guidelines:

- Don't prune after eight weeks before the first frost. Pruning stimulates growth and new growth in this period will be too tender to contend with winter conditions.
- In an open location roots may be damaged in the event of strong winds, some gardeners 'half' prune their roses (about knee height) so that the whipping around is minimised.
- In this part of the country there is always some winter die back, in fact some severe winters the die back is to the ground leaving little choice of how to prune since just before spring we generally cut back dead stem until the white pith shows.
- A well-known rule of thumb regarding when to prune is when the Forsythia in your area blooms.
- Prune, with sharp, sterilized 'bypass' secateurs, just above an outward facing bud, cutting at a slant, this keeps the centre of the bush open for healthy air flow.
- Roses in this part of the country should be planted with their graft just below the soil surface. In any case they should be mounded over winter with loose open soil or compost mulch; this will help in removing the mound next spring if not packed too firmly.
- Discard all foliage and stem material (do not use it in the compost heap).



Rose 'About Face' - Humboldt Botanical Garden - Eureka, California. Creative Commons License.

One neat technique with straggly shrub roses is to take the long stems and pin them to the ground in an arch. This causes new growth along their length to sprout and grow upwards giving a fine spray of bloom

I have used these techniques with success over the years – but there are as many ways of caring for roses as there are rose fanciers.

Dennis Rawe

It's mid-November, so why haven't the leaves fallen from our trees yet?!

We've had our first taste of winter here in Stratford but many trees in our neighbourhood still have their leaves and some are still green. In our garden, the three of the four Japanese maples have kept most of their scarlet leaves in spite of the blustery snow squalls. Our Chanticleer or Callery ornamental pears (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer') are full of green leaves. *What has happened?*

Well, perhaps we can blame that long spell of unseasonably warm weather that extended to the end of October. According to several helpful resources online, extended warm weather disrupts the regular process that deciduous trees go through as they slow down -- a form of hardening off to prepare for winter. Normally, as the days shorten and temperatures gradually drop, this triggers chemical and hormonal changes that wind down food production in the leaves. Photosynthesis slows to a standstill as the trees produce less and less chlorophyll. As that dominant green pigment fades, the reds, oranges and yellows we enjoy become visible. At the same time, a line of cells starts to form at the spot where the leaf stems are attached to the twigs. This abscission layer of cells cuts off the flow between the leaf and tree; when it eventually dries up, the leaf falls off.

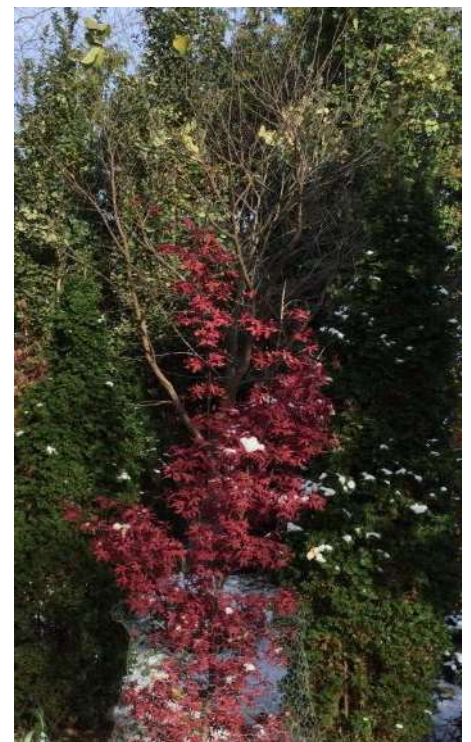
The warm autumn lulled some trees into continuing their photosynthesis/food production and delayed their winter preparations. The severe cold that we just experienced may have disrupted these incomplete processes, leaving some trees full of leaves. It may take a few good wind storms to blow the leaves down, or some may stay until the spring leaf budding cycle begins.

Some deciduous trees, such as the columnar oaks in our garden (*Quercus robur* f. *fastigiata*), keep their brown leaves all winter. This can be a useful attribute to provide a bit of privacy when most other trees are bare.

Anu MacIntosh-Murray



*Chanticleer pears. Nov 11, 2017.
Photo by Anu MacIntosh-Murray*



*Twombly's Red Sentinel Japanese maple
and columnar oaks. Nov. 11, 2017
Photo by Anu MacIntosh-Murray*

The “Green Team”

The Local Community Food Centre on Erie Street (where we've had our plant sales, donated to for planting of trees, and other activities) has a Green Team Seniors Gardening program. It is aimed at seniors (60+) and has several kinds of gardening-related activities associated with it.

See <https://www.thelocalcfc.org/green-team-seniors-gardening-1> for more information.

The Green Team *will* be running for the first two Wednesdays in December and in 2018. Please contact Katie McLeod [REDACTED] for more information.

Stratford Seedy Sunday 2018

Sunday, February 11th 2018 from 11 am to 3 pm at The Local Community Food Centre
Seedy Sunday will provide an opportunity for home gardeners, community gardeners and people who are curious about gardening to come together and buy and exchange vegetable, herb and flower seeds. Confirmed seed vendors for the event include Hawthorn Farm Organic Seeds, Anything Grows Seed Co., Urban Harvest Seeds, and Matchbox Garden & Seed Co. Silver Creek Nursery will be there selling fruit tree supplies and books.

Seedy Sunday will also include local environmental and community organizations, a café, and activities for kids and workshops on gardening. The event promises to offer a welcoming and fun atmosphere for people of all ages.

Last year we were fortunate to have the Hort Society on hand talking to attendees about all things gardening-related! [*Stratford Master Gardeners will be there too.*] Some of you may wish to volunteer at the Hort Society's table for the 2018. For more information on how to get involved, talk to a Hort Society rep.

For those of you who have experience planning events, there is an opportunity to volunteer for The Local as a Seedy Sunday Planning Committee Member. If you choose to volunteer in this capacity, you can expect to meet several times prior to the event to assist with planning and complete a variety of tasks in the interim such as contacting workshop facilitators, soliciting in-kind donations, putting up flyers, etc. If this sounds like something you'd like to do, please contact Katie McLeod, Garden & Greenhouse Coordinator at katiemcleod@thelocalcfc.org or 519-508-3663 ext. 1 to sign up.

We are also seeking volunteers for the day of the event to support with tasks like set-up, greeting attendees, coordinating kids' activities and moderating workshops. If you're interested in being an Event Day Volunteer, please contact Katie and specify what types of tasks you'd like to take on.

We hope to see you at Stratford Seedy Sunday 2018!

Katie McLeod

INVITATION - 2018

There are many opportunities to get involved with your Society. Please check all your areas of interest.

Join the Board - 9 meetings a year, first Mondays of the month

Public Gardening - Which garden? _____

Help at Events / Workshops

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seedy Sunday – Feb 11 | <input type="checkbox"/> Iris Bed Dedication - June 9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stratford Garden Festival -March 2017 | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden Tour -July 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plant Sale - last Saturday in May | <input type="checkbox"/> Canada Day Parade |

Help at Meetings

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buy Plant of the Month-Society budget | <input type="checkbox"/> Set up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shop for Door prizes | <input type="checkbox"/> Sell Draw Tickets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality | <input type="checkbox"/> Swap Table |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity - place notices online |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Display boards | |

Join an Interest Group

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Floral Design Interest Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Plant Rescue / Seed Collection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Design of the Month | |

Behind the Scenes - Join the team

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Social media / Website administration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photography | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archivist | <input type="checkbox"/> Posters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program/Education/Workshop Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden Design |

Do you have information or expertise to offer? Please explain.

What workshops / trips would you like to have?

What topic would you like at regular meetings or garden chats?

Can you recommend any speakers? Please give contact details

Would you like to car pool to nearby horticultural events? Yes / No

Any other suggestions?

Print Name: _____ Phone _____

Print Email _____

Please hand this in at the AGM Nov 27, give to any Board member or email to sdhs1878@outlook.com

Thank you for taking the time to help us learn more about member wants and needs.