



the gardener

November 2018

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

Winter meets Fall



Photo by Anu MacIntosh-Murray

Annual General Meeting

Social at 6:00

Potluck dinner at 6:30.

Followed by Scott Wishart, a Stratford photographer, presenting "A Snapshot of Stratford Garden Styles in 2018".

Business meeting and installation of the Board to follow speaker.

Remember to bring your plate and cutlery. And, of course, a contribution to the meal, if you can.

January 28, 2019 General Meeting

Master Gardeners' Show and Tell: *Invasive plants*

General Meeting

Topic: Cannabis the Herb — Properties and Cultivation
by Greenseal Cannabis

Chad Morphy (Master Grower)
James Eaves (Head of Innovation)

2019 SDHS MEMBERSHIPS AVAILABLE

THE 2019 yearly MEMBERSHIPS will be available at the Annual General Meeting and also the beginning of December, sold at Flowers on York 25-27 York St. and Stratford Blooms, 59 Albert St.

Consider a memberships as a gift for family and friends. Thank you for your ongoing support!

Mary C. Hoffman
Membership Convenor
email: [REDACTED]
phone: [REDACTED]



Japanese Maple
Photo by Anu MacIntosh-Murray

Why is a picture of this pile of old pavers in the newsletter? Answer later.



Ontario Horticultural Association 2019 Annual Convention

Did you know the Ontario Horticultural Association holds a Convention each year with great speakers, many bus trips to gardens, entertainment and banquet and a flower show that includes art and photographic competitions?

The 2019 Convention is in Windsor, July 19-21 2019

Theme: Come to the Deep South Where Everything Grows

The competition schedules are available here:

http://www.gardenontario.org/sho/future_conf.php

Your Board members attend to vote on Provincial issues, so there is always transport available for anyone who wants to car pool.

Information from any Board member or Maureen Cocksedge [REDACTED] or SDHS1878@outlook.com

Why should you consider going to the 2019 Convention? Read on.

OHA Convention 2018

Bernice Barratt

Kingston was the host city for the 2018 OHA Convention and what an amazing and beautiful location. The Convention is the Annual General Meeting of the Ontario Horticultural Association and gathers Horticultural Societies from all across Ontario. We, here in Stratford, are part of District 10 along with 21 other societies in Oxford, Perth, Middlesex and Elgin Counties, as well as Grand Bend in Huron County. In 2020, District 10 will be hosting the Convention and the work has begun already!

Members of every society are welcome at the convention and it is a great vacation weekend everyone should attend at least once. It has the flavour of the Stratford Garden Festival with speakers, vendors, draw-prizes, food, and displays of gorgeous plants. Convention ALSO has a Friday night theme party and dance, flower show competitions, newsletter competitions, advertising competitions with posters, bookmarks, flower show schedules, and brochure competitions. These are an opportunity to share what we do in our own society and find out what is happening elsewhere in our province. The Banquet on the Saturday night is a chance to get dressed up and enjoy a great meal and listen to an engaging speaker. Friendships are made and renewed from year to year. It is exciting to be surrounded by fellow gardeners to discuss our passion for all growing things and find out new and different ways to enhance our own piece of the earth.

There is business to be discussed, of course, and voting by delegates on many issues. You need to register in advance for workshops and bus trips to local garden tours and garden centres. There are also bus trips to historic sites to learn about the history and

highlights of the hosting district. Plenary speakers each morning inspired us with gorgeous photography, area history lessons and new insights on how we garden.

Pat Webster shared about Glen Villa, a family owned estate of 750 acres east of Montreal. It is named for a hotel that previously graced the property. The gardens help the history come alive with hints of the past grandeur of the hotel portrayed using plant material and crumbling foundations from long gone buildings. She encouraged us to "Look and really see what there is to see and then use what you see. Most importantly, don't be afraid to fail!"

Susan Suter shared her passion for art using floral elements and the contemporary artwork she sees around her. As a gold award winner at the World Association of Floral Artists (WAFA) flower show competition in Ireland, Susan is an accomplished and innovative floral artist. Her presentation was a visual feast!

Tony Spenser's presentation highlighted the garden designs of Piet Oudolf. The thread that carried his talk was a quotation from Piet stating "The future of gardening is more about succession than design". Does this sound like gardens that look good in every season? See his blog at The New Perennialist for more – mere words do not do justice to Tony's presentation.

I also attended two seminars. One was on the Maitland Garden of Hope, a garden on the Garden Regional Trail, an assortment of outstanding gardens open to the public. The second was a hands-on session on proper tree pruning.

Carson Arthur, Saturday's banquet speaker, live streamed his presentation on his blog and two thousand people logged on to hear it! He informed us that many younger people are very interested in gardening, especially growing food. They are also turning to Pinterest for gardening information; not necessarily accurate! He challenged us to "step up" and share the expertise that we have in horticultural societies. Collectively, we have a vast amount of knowledge, the question is: are we willing, and do we have the technology know-how to share it? Let's keep the conversation going



Another clue? A bit hard to read the sign though.

SDHS 2019 Program

Feb 25 Speaker: Prof. Amy Turnbull
Fanshawe College
Get the Latest Dirt on Soil
(Garden Chat: *Seed Starting*)

Mar 25 Speaker: Cheryl Losch
Gardening in Small Spaces, Balconies and Containers
(Garden Chat: *Propagation/ Cuttings*)

April 29 Volunteer Appreciation
Speaker Jacqui Empson Laporte,
Gardening for Nature – OMAFRA
(Garden Chat: *Container Gardening*)

May 27 Speaker Tina Dorrans
Garden Photography
(Garden Chat: *Milkweed and Monarchs*)

Sept 30 Speaker: Bob Wildfong, Curator
Doon Heritage Village
Saving Heritage Seeds - Doon by the Farm
(*Flower Show; No Garden Chat*)

Oct 28 Speaker: Trevor Barton
Guelph Enabling Garden: Gardens for All
(Garden Chat: *Ornamental Grasses*)

Nov 25 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Featured Speaker: Anita Jacobson
Stratford Festival Gardens



Iris Garden at Dedication Ceremony
Photo by Jane Marie Mitchell

In case you missed it...

Dahlias, by Doug Reberg *from an October Stratford Gazette article*

I have found dahlias to be some of the most rewarding garden flowers. They come in so many shapes, sizes and colours that one authority has apparently stopped counting and just says there are “thousands.” Dahlia fanciers sometimes find it difficult to leave a garden centre in the spring without buying at least one variety they haven’t seen before.



“Honka” Photo: Doug Reberg

Some dahlias are petite and others grow to impressive heights. I enjoyed a Colorado Classic this summer that topped out at nearly five feet (1.5 metres). It isn’t unusual to find blooms of different shades on the same dahlia, and I’ve grown one variety (Sainte-Saëns) which produced yellow, red and bicoloured flowers on one fairly small plant.

To make life even more interesting, dahlias are classified in 14 flower groups. For instance, “cactus” dahlias have long petals that some observers see as resembling the spikes on cactus blooms. Dahlias in another group, called “pompom”, have compact, spherical flowers which 19th century horticulturalists thought resembled pompon decorations on hats of French sailors.

It is good to report that dahlias attract bees and butterflies. I particularly enjoy “Honka” with its uncomplicated flowers of just eight separate petals. It’s not unusual to find monarch and other butterflies perched on Honka flowers, and it is a plant definitely worth considering if you’re hoping to attract more pollinators to your garden.

Spring planting is not complicated. You can often buy dahlias in pots, but the most interesting varieties are usually sold packaged as tubers. Planting simply consists of

digging a hole about 12 inches (.3 metres) deep, adding compost and bone meal, dropping in the tuber, covering with soil, watering lightly and waiting for green shoots to appear. A sturdy stake of appropriate height is necessary support for all but the smallest varieties, and it is probably an excellent idea to select and drive in the stake before planting to avoid damaging tubers.



Three shades of “Colorado Classic” Photo: Doug Reberg

Unlike tulips (which grow from bulbs) dahlia tubers will not survive winter in the ground, so this time of year you will find dahlia growers diligently lifting tubers for winter storage. There seem to be as many options about best practices for winter storage as there are dahlia growers, but it is generally agreed tubers require cool and dry conditions if they are to be in good condition for replanting. After some experimentation I found the least complicated method is simply spreading the tubers on plastic sheeting on my cool basement floor. Most dahlia tubers look alike, so good labelling is a must unless you are a gardener who loves surprises.

Small and medium-sized dahlias grow well in pots, and the portability of pots can be a bonus if you wish to add colour to garden areas. Another advantage is that winter storage may be as simple as finding a cool and dry location for the potted tubers. You may see signs of growth well before the pots can be safely moved to the garden, but green shoots in March are always welcome.

And finally, I suggest a visit to Stratford’s Public Library in the next few weeks. There are, of course, a great many reasons to visit the library at any time, but an added attraction until late November is SDHS’s garden photography display. You’ll see an outstanding exhibit that may have you thinking ahead to next year’s gardens.

Note: These photos, taken by me with my cellphone, are NOT in the same class as those on display at the Stratford Public Library. You should really see them, soon! MM



Up the Garden Path ~ Where do GMO seeds fit in?

Dennis Rawe

Some definitions.

Open Pollinated varieties are seeds produced through natural pollination, without any help from humans. Seeds saved from open pollinated plants will regrow the same plant each time.

Cultivar (cultivated variety). Propagated not from seed, but rather vegetatively (for example, via stem cuttings). With this method of propagation, you can be sure that the offspring will retain the characteristics of the parents for only that one generation.

F1 hybrid (or filial 1 hybrid) is the first filial generation of offspring from distinctly different parental types.

A hybrid plant is the result of cross pollinating two different plant varieties and growing the seed that the cross produces. The plant that grows from that seed is considered a hybrid.

Hybrid seeds come from pollen exchange within the same species, directed by human hands.

Hybrid cultivars are produced by cross-pollinating different varieties within the same species. Seeds labelled as hybrid or F1 occurred because breeders wanted plants with a desirable trait, like disease resistance. If seeds from hybrids are saved to grow again, the plants will revert back to one of the parent plants.

GMO seeds are genetically engineered by modifying genes from unrelated species in a laboratory. So far only a few species of plant have been genetically modified, particularly for the farming industry.

Heirloom seed describes open pollinated varieties that have been passed along across generations. Heirloom seeds can be saved to grow again 'true to type'.

Treated seeds are those coated with a chemical, like a fungicide or pesticide. Treated seeds are identified by their label or the colour of seeds and are not organic seeds. Some gardeners choose to plant treated seeds, like beets, so they can avoid problems due to soil borne pathogens.

Variety a rank in a biological classification

Organic seeds are those that are grown and processed following the standards set by the USDA's National Organic Program.

The 'ORGANIC' label on seed packets assures gardeners the seeds were grown without the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides or genetically engineered seeds and materials.

Organic Federation of Canada - the key players in Canada's organic industry to ensure excellent standards and regulations that stimulate the growth of Canada's organic sector.

Organic standards The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, in partnership with the Organic Federation of Canada, has developed the Organic Standards Interpretation Committee (SIC).

Note that hybrid plants are not the same as GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) plants.



Gardening 101

A series of workshops for new gardeners
Hosted by Stratford and Area Master Gardeners
March 27, April 3, 10, 17, 2019, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Stratford Public Library

Garden Basics March 27

Do you want to know more about gardening but don't know where to start? Come to this workshop to learn the basics and be ready for Spring.



Vegetable Gardening April 3

Do you want to grow your own vegetables? Come to this workshop to learn how to start a small vegetable garden. Enjoy fresh produce, straight from your own garden.

Pollinators and Native Plants April 10

A Bumble Bee's Guide to Gardening. Come to this workshop to learn how to attract pollinators such as bumble bees to your garden, using native plants that both look great and nurture nature.



Container Gardening April 17

Do you want some pots on your patio or balcony? Come to this workshop to learn how to grow flowers, herbs or vegetables in pots. What's more, you will get hands-on and take home a pot you have planted.

\$50 for the workshop series

If you have any questions email sdmgardener@gmail.com

Register IN DECEMBER when new website is active, at: <http://stratfordmastergardeners.ca/>

The Answer

Renovation of the Dutch Memorial Garden is happening now. It is one of the last SDHS 140th Celebration activities. It is mucky now, but will make the Garden more accessible.



Photos by M. Murray

Newsletter Notes

This is my last newsletter. Thank you to all my contributors; you made my job much easier and the newsletter much better. And thank you to all readers. I hope you found the newsletter interesting and useful. I am in discussions now with someone who might take over the editor's job. If you would be interested in helping, I am sure the new editor would be interested in hearing from you.



*MM at Stratford Lantern Parade, Note the Horticultural Theme in the Lanterns made by AMM.
Photo by Anu MacIntosh-Murray*

For a little while longer, you can reach me, Michael Murray, at the general society email address, the newsletter's email address: SDHSthegardener@gmail.com Or by phone: [REDACTED]. Or talk to me at any of our meetings.