

THE EAST YORK GARDEN

NEWSLETTER OF THE EAST YORK GARDEN CLUB



The East York Garden Club is a member of the Ontario Horticultural Association, District 5.

Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month (except August and December) in the Stan Wadlow Clubhouse, 373 Cedarvale Avenue at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments are available at 7:00 p.m. The Clubhouse is wheelchair-accessible. Visitors are always welcome.

Yearly membership fees are \$20 for a single, and \$30 for a family. To inquire about membership, please contact Suzanne Boyd at 416-423-5857.

Visit us on the web at www.eygc.ca

President:

Veronica Callinan

Vice President:

Linda Boyko
Susan Bartlett

Newsletter Editor:

Susan Bartlett



Thursday, January 15, 2009

Topic: Water Gardening: Construction and Care
Speaker: Peter Gill

Peter Gill is a founder member and Past President of the Greater Toronto Water Garden & Horticultural Society. His garden was on the 2008 pond tour for the Society.

Over the past fifteen years he and his wife Christine have put in five ponds on their property ranging from a small pre-formed kit pond to a free form lined medium sized pond. They have experimented with various pumps and mechanical filter systems including a biological filter.

This is first People's Choice photo contest of the year. The category is "fake flowers" - entries must be in by 7:15. Following the meeting there will be a draw table.

Members with surnames beginning with "A" and "B" are asked to bring in some cookies or squares for the refreshment table.

Thursday, February 19, 2009

Topic: Seed Starting
Speaker: Susan Dolbey

Susan Dolbey has been a Toronto Master Gardener for 20 years and has been the area representative for the Toronto Master Gardeners. She has helped to run the seedex for a number of years and is on the planning committee for the TBG gardens. In addition to being a member at the East York Garden Club, she belongs to the North Toronto Horticultural Society, Lakefield Horticultural Society, the North American Native Plant Society and the Ontario Rock Garden and Hardy Plant Society (where she served as co-chair). Each year she grows "far too many plants" from seed.

This is the second People's Choice photo contest. The category is "round" (entries in by 7:15 please). Following the meeting there will be a 50/50 draw. Members with surnames beginning with "C" to "D" are asked to bring in some cookies or squares.

We will also be holding a book sale after the speaker! Books from the Club's library will be available for bargain prices. If you would like to donate some of your garden-related books, see p. 5 for details.

Our regular monthly meetings resume in January. Doors open at 7:00 for coffee (please bring your own mug), refreshments and a chance to mingle with other members.



The Winter edition of the OHA's newsletter, the Trillium, is now available. Included in this issue are items about the upcoming 2009 OHA convention in Peterborough, rain-gardening, the demise of Gardening Life magazine, and garden clubs and hort societies around the province. You can find it at www.gardenontario.org/gar/news1.php?news=163. To make it easier, you'll find a link on the home page of our own site (www.eygc.ca).

And if you'd like to have the Trillium emailed to you as soon as it's available, it's as easy as sending your email address to the editor, Linda Hugli, with a request to be added to the emailing list. Linda's address is editor@gardenontario.org.

Websites for Winter Reading

By Susan Bartlett

Since active outdoor gardening is on hold for the next while, here are some websites which I find useful or interesting:

<http://www.eygc.ca/> for upcoming events and information on things like the Blooming Contest, or meetings or events held by other clubs like Leaside or the Beach.

<http://www.torontomastergardeners.ca/> The Toronto Master Gardeners site has information sheets and forums where your questions will be answered by a Master Gardener, with the added benefit that they have knowledge of our zone and local conditions.

<http://www.gardenontario.org/index.php> Maintained by the Ontario Horticultural Association. This site has links to the 287 various garden clubs in the OHA, as well as upcoming activities and conventions. The OHA newsletter *The Trillium* is also available at the site.

<http://www.gardenweb.com/> is a large site which has expanded to include home and nature forums as well as gardening. The site has a U.S. focus, but there is a Canadian forums section.

<http://www.gardengreen.ca/> was started by a Toronto gardener with the goal of focusing on urban gardening and eco gardening. As well as being a website, Garden Green is a community group (focused around ward 21) with regular meetings and events.

<http://www.yougrowgirl.com/> is another local site with a focus on gardening in apartments and small spaces, DIY projects and guerilla gardening.

<http://myfolia.com/> lets you organize, track and share your gardening adventures. Contributors from around the world publish gardening journals and interactive forums answer your questions.

www.torontobalconiesbloom.ca "A hub for Toronto balcony gardening enthusiasts" Features helpful (local!) gardening resources for the novice or seasoned gardener, inspirational pictures and stories to help you create a personal urban oasis and grow your own vegetables. Referral to free gardening expertise.

2009 Photo Contest

by Malcolm Geast

January - a new year on the calendar, a new year for resolutions, and a new year for our photo contest. Two years ago we decided to try something new, and introduced a People's Choice Contest in February & March. Members were asked to bring in their photos before the meeting, with judging being done by those in attendance, and the winners announced at the end of the meeting. After expanded it last year to January to April, we'll be adding another month in 2009.

As we've done in the past, we've come up with some unusual categories that we hope will inspire your "photographic interpretation":

- ✿ January - Fake Flowers
- ✿ February - Round
- ✿ March - Square
- ✿ April - Tiny
- ✿ November - Yearbook Cover

The November contest, to be held at our AGM, is new this year. For this one, you're asked to bring in your favourite horticultural photo from 2008 or 2009. The winning entry will be used for the cover of the 2010 yearbook.

There will be no entry forms for these competitions. Instead, you'll bring in your photo, with your name on the back (please don't put any identifying marks on the front). We'll have all the photos laid out on a table, and will ask the membership to vote for the best picture. Ballots will be available for all members. It will be done on the honour system, so please take only one ballot.

Of course, with every contest, we have to have some rules. And here they are:

- Members may submit one print, no larger than 5 by 7 inches (approx 13 by 18 cm)
- The member's name must be printed on the back of the photo. (Note: Press lightly when writing, so as not to make an impression on the front of the photo.)

- The photo must fit with the category for that month's contest. Ballots will be provided for those attending to vote for the photo of their choice, one vote per member.
- First, Second, and Third Prize winners will receive ribbons and points to be counted toward the awarding of the annual trophy.
- Photographs are to be produced from any still-camera (film or digital), and must have been taken by the entrant in 2008 or 2009.

But above all remember that this competition is meant to be a light-hearted event to be enjoyed by all.

Get The Jump on Spring

Yes, there **will** be a *Get the Jump on Spring* this winter. A February fixture at the Toronto Botanical Garden, it had appeared that there would be no show this year. However, in the December, volunteers at the TBG teamed up with the Ontario Horticultural Association, District 5, to revive the event. The first garden show of the season, *Get the Jump on Spring* is a "horticultural open house", that features speakers, Master Gardeners seminars, vendors, horticultural societies and specialty societies from across the GTA, and a reason to start thinking about the upcoming gardening season. The show will take place on Saturday, February 21, at the Toronto Botanical Garden (southwest corner of Leslie & Lawrence). Admission and parking are free.

Thank you from Touchstone Youth Centre

Cain at Touchstone wanted to thank the garden club for its help in the drive towards assisting Touchstone. In particular thanks go to Irene Derzay, Suzanne Bond, Malcolm Geast and Veronica Callinan.

EYGC 2009 PROGRAM

- Jan. 15** *Water Gardening, Construction and Care*
Speaker: Peter Gill
- Feb. 19** *Seed Starting*
Speaker: Susan Dolbey
Book Sale
- Mar. 19** *Unusual Vegetables*
Speaker: Inge Poot
- April 16** *Perennials both New and Old, for Sun or Shade*
Speaker: Belinda Gallagher
- May 21** *Creating Garden Ornaments*
Speakers: Gary Diane and Westlake
Flower Show, Plant Sale
- June 18** *Your Questions answered*
Master Gardeners Panel
Flower Show
- July 16** *Members' Pot-Luck Dinner (location to be announced)*
- Aug. 22** *Annual Flower Show & Tea (Sat)*
- Sept. 17** *Ornamental Grasses*
Speaker: Donna Robbins
Flower Show
- Oct. 15** *Environmental Gardening*
Speaker: Patricia Landrey
Seed Exchange
- Nov. 19** *Members' Pot-Luck Dinner & AGM*

From The City to the Garden

by Malcolm Geast

It's hard to miss the gloom-and-doom tone that accompanies every story about the economy in the news these days. But some of us might suggest that the dark clouds come with a silver lining for those in London's financial section. The *Telegraph* recently reported that, "it appears gardening is the preferred option for disillusioned financiers." A combination of an increased concern about quality of life and the rising popularity of vegetable gardening (due to climbing food prices) seem to be factors in the heightened profile of the horticultural sector. With house prices dropping, people are becoming less able to sell, and move up; as a result, any garden makeovers are likely to be less extravagant, with the home owners turning to smaller companies or individuals. At Capel Manor College, one of the country's leading horticultural schools, new courses have been scheduled to accommodate corporate executives who are fearing imminent unemployment.

This won't be the first time that some have taken advantage of an economic downturn to change to a more "down to earth" career. At Hever Castle (Ann Boleyn's childhood home), the head gardener, Neil Miller, was a broker for Lloyds until the recession of the early 90s. Now, he says that "When I look back I realise that had it not been for redundancy I would not be here, working as head gardener at Hever Castle and loving every minute of it."

But Miller says it best when he declares that "Horticulture salaries are not that appealing but there's more to life than slogging your whats-its off trekking to the City."

Were you the kind soul who...collected the floral tablecloths from the Annual Flower Show and Tea, for washing? Thank you, thank you! Please let me know who you are. Veronica Callinan 416-801-9659.

Director Position Available:

Wanted: Enthusiastic gardeners who would like to be involved at the decision making level for the Club and help plan activities such as Canada Day, the Annual Flower Show, etc.

Duties: Attend a monthly meeting with the Board; serve on a committee such as fundraising, publicity, membership, etc.; assist in coordinating and planning various aspects of how the Garden Club is run. No previous experience is necessary, your ideas and unique contributions will help us continue to keep the Club running smoothly and an enjoyable experience for all members. Please speak to Malcolm Geast or anyone on the Executive.



District 5 AGM

The 2009 District 5 AGM will take place on April 25 at the Toronto Botanical Garden. This year's meeting, co-hosted by the Riverdale Horticultural Society and the Agincourt Garden Club, will have as its theme "Blooms in the City". Speakers will be Cristina da Silva, the garden writer for the Toronto Star, and Christina Sharma, from Project C.H.I.R.P. (Creating Habitat In Residential areas and Parkland) – C.H.I.R.P. is a songbird conservation initiative which certifies songbird habitats on residential properties.

As well, there'll be a flower show, a design competition, raffle and door prizes. As always, this is a great opportunity to meet other gardeners from around the GTA. And of course, lunch is included. Admission will be \$25.

You can find out more about Project C.H.I.R.P. at www.projectchirp.com, and you can read some of Cristina da Silva's columns at www.thestar.com/comment/columnists/188112

Open Gardens

The Club alternates yearly between an organized garden tour open to the public, and a more informal showing of some of our member's gardens, available to members only. This year is an open gardens year. It's a good chance to see what other members are doing with their gardens in a setting that is more relaxed and informal than a tour.

If you are interested in opening your garden to members for an evening or afternoon, please contact Roz Regnier (416-759-6247) or Lee Prichard (416-467-5624).

February Book Sale

This sale will work similar to the plant sale. Please bring your books before the meeting begins and they will be priced accordingly. If you have a large number of books to donate and need assistance with pick-up, please speak to any Executive member or call Carol Bouley (416-698-8672) or Karen Bell (416-429-3032).

Tips & Tricks

From Toronto Master Gardeners Fact Sheet

Growing African Violets (Saintpaulia)

African violets are members of the Gesneriad family which is quite different from the violets that belong to the Violaceae family. The many thousands of cultivars available today have been developed from plants originally gathered by Baron Walter von St. Paul-Illaire in 1892 in east Africa.

How to Grow Them:

The right light: African violets are particularly sensitive to quality and quantity of light. Windows with morning sun but protected from hot afternoon sun are good. A north window is good, particularly in summer. They do well under fluorescent light 6 - 12 inches from the tubes which are on 12 -14 hours per day. Too little light causes long leggy stems and no bloom.

Ideal temperature: 18 to 26 degrees C. is an ideal range. They don't do well below 15 degrees at night and don't like extreme changes in temperature or drafts. They will tolerate lower temperatures better by having a drier soil.

Keep them moist: They prefer a humid environment. They benefit from pebble trays and need moist not soggy soil as plants that are kept too wet can rot. Use tepid water and don't water the leaves because spotting can occur.

A recipe for good soil: Potting soils should be well drained. Use a soil mix containing one part soil, two parts peat moss and one part perlite or vermiculite or coarse sand. Plant roots are tender and juicy and have difficulty pushing through heavy soil. Pots should be small as roots should be pot bound for the plants to produce bloom.

Feed them with fertilizer: Use a soluble fertilizer with a ratio of 1-1-1 or 1-2-1. Feed with 1/4 strength at every watering or use full strength once a month. Do not over fertilize.

What's bugging your African violet?

Insects are not usually a problem. Dab mealy bugs with alcohol. With thrips or cyclamen mites it is best to get rid of the plant. Forcefully spray white flies with tepid tap water and dry the leaves ... or get rid of the plant. With Botrytis or powdery mildew pick off and destroy the diseased parts.

Propagation

Propagation is either by suckers removed from the mother plant or by leaf cuttings. Insert both suckers and leaves into moistened vermiculite. Check to see when roots have developed from rootless suckers or watch for new leaves emerging from leaf cuttings. Pot into 2 inch pots. Propagation is more successful when carried out in spring or summer with the increase of hours of light and warmth.

Read more about African violets:

- *African Violets: The Complete Guide*. Joan Hill and Gwen Goodship

- *African Violets*. Tony Clements

<http://www.torontomastergardeners.ca>

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, January 20, 2009 - January Meeting of the Beach Garden Society at the Adam Beck Community Centre, 79 Lawlor Avenue. Anna Leggatt will be speaking on Wildflowers of Australia. Begins at 7:30 p.m. Guests are welcome. <http://beachgs.ca/>

Tuesday, January 27, 2009 - The Six Stages of Gardening: Where do you fit in? at the Toronto Botanical Garden (Lawrence & Leslie). Noted Canadian gardening writer Liz Primeau will explore that stages that all gardeners go through as they gain experience. Begins at 7:30 p.m. Admission \$5 for members, \$10 for non-members. Further information: <http://www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca/>

Saturday, February 21, 2009 - Get the Jump on Spring at the Toronto Botanical Garden. Spend the day (10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) at the Toronto Botanical Garden and soak up all of the information you'll need to prepare for the coming spring. Admission and parking are free. Further information will be available early February

Sunday, February 22, 2009 - Ontario Hosta Society Winter Meeting at 6435 Edwards Blvd, Mississauga. Guest speaker will be Chris Wilson of Hallson Gardens, in Michigan. Chris will be talking about Hosta Virus X and the need to educate the public about this continuing threat to the Hosta world. The meeting runs from 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. New members are welcome. Further Information: call 1-866-742-7155 or <http://www.ontariohostasociety.com/>

March 5 to 8, 2009 (Thursday to Sunday) - Stratford Garden Festival at the Stratford Coliseum in Stratford. Special theme gardens, a marketplace and four days of interesting presentations on various gardening topics. Admission is only \$8.00 per person. Further information: <http://www.stratfordgardenfestival.com/>

East York Garden Club Membership Renewal Form

Name

Address

Postal Code Phone #.....

email.....

(Note that we will only use your email address to send you EYGC information. We do not distribute it to anyone else.)

- Single Membership Family Membership
- Renewal New Membership

- Age Bracket: Under 18 18-60 Over 60

Note: it is strictly voluntary if you choose to check one of these boxes. The rental rate at Stan Wadlow is a lower rate for organizations with a high number of seniors (over 60) and youth (under 18) therefore it is helpful, but not necessary, for us to have this information.

Membership fees are due by January of each year. Fees for 2009 are \$20 for a single, and \$30 for a family membership. Fees can be paid in person at a regular meeting of the Club or by mailing this form and a cheque (payable to "East York Garden Club") to:

East York Garden Club
17 Fairside Avenue
Toronto, ON M4C 3G8