

The East York Garden

Bi-monthly newsletter of the East York Garden Club

January & February, 2004

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. The Clubhouse is wheelchair-accessible. Visitors are always welcome.

Yearly membership fees are \$10 for a single, and \$15 for a family. To inquire about membership, contact Denise Alexander at 416-759-5736.

Visit us on the web at www.eygc.ca

President:
Malcolm Geast

Vice-Presidents:
Linda Boyko
Dawn McEachern

Newsletter Editor:
Malcolm Geast
416-429-4719

Thursday, January 15, 2004

Speaker: Joan Hodges

Topic: Helpful Hints for Seed Starting

Joan is a Master Gardener, a school teacher and an enthusiastic seed starter. Every year she fills her garden with plants that she has started herself. She will share her seed-starting techniques and show us useful gadgets.

Following the meeting will be a question and answer period. We also expect to have a well-stocked draw table.

Members whose surnames begin with A, B, or C are asked to bring some cookies or sweets for the evening's tea.

Thursday, February 19, 2004

Speaker: Bill Andrews

Topic: Flower Photography - Hints & Travels

Bill is an Emeritus Professor of Ecology at the University of Toronto. He hikes alone in the mountains each year, carrying a three-week supply of food and his photographic equipment. He will help us to improve our flower photography. Even if you don't possess a camera, you'll find his talk to be interesting and fun.

Following the meeting will be another question and answer period and another well-stocked draw table.

Members whose surnames begin with D, E, or F are asked to bring some cookies or sweets for the evening's tea.



Upcoming in March: Designing a Small Backyard
with Kim Price

From the Editor's Desk....

With the cold air that has descended on Southern Ontario this January, and with the ground covered in snow, it might be a little difficult to think about getting out in the garden. However, over the next couple of months there are a number of events that will get you ready for that day when the snow finally stops flying. Our January meeting starts it off, with Master Gardener Joan Hodges speaking about *Helpful Hints for Seed Starting*. If we can't have plants and flowers growing outside, Joan will at least help us have them indoors. In February, you can get ready for our annual photography contest, with Bill Andrews's talk about *Flower Photography*. February is also the time for the annual *Getting the Jump on Spring* show at the Toronto Botanical Garden (formerly the Civic Garden Centre). In past years, the two largest annual shows, *Canada Blooms* and *The Success with Gardening Show* have been held at the same time. This year they're separated by two weeks, making it easier to go to both shows. *Canada Blooms* runs from March 3 to 7, and *Success with Gardening* from March 18 to 21.

Many of you have asked about our plans for a garden tour in 2004. This year we've decided not to have a large tour open to the general public. Instead we're hoping to hold that kind of event in 2005, and to do something a little different this summer. One of the problems with the tour is that it can sometimes get a little hectic. Visiting a dozen gardens in one afternoon often means that two or three of them have to be missed, or given little more than a quick look. To remedy this, this year we're going to spread the tour out over the entire summer. Every couple of weeks, we'll have a garden for an evening or afternoon of viewing by the membership. One of the other advantages of this arrangement will be that gardens can be open when they're at their seasonal best. So, if your clematis pops open the second week of July, if your tulips, baby's breath and azaleas take over during the first week of June, or if your garden looks best in fall, spring or summer, we'd love to see your garden at that time. Members only will be invited and probably a guest or two and a

donation of a toonie will be accepted for the club. If you'd like to open your garden, or if you have any questions, phone Rosalind Regnier at 416-759-6247. She'd love to hear from you.

Over the past few years we've had mixed success with bus tours. We've had a couple that were a resounding success, but there were also a couple of others that had to be cancelled because we couldn't sell enough tickets. With the hope that we can have one of those successful outings, we're going to try again this year. A destination or date have not yet been decided, so we're open to your suggestions. Among the ideas that we have had are a tour of some out-of-the-way nurseries, the butterfly conservatory in Cambridge, or even an apple-picking and winery tour in the fall. Dawn McEachern (416-429-4719) is looking after the arrangements. She'd also love to hear from you.

This year we'll be continuing to work on **The Rockery** in Stan Wadlow Park, a long-term community project begun last year. The 200 bulbs that we planted in the fall will be coming up in the spring. And of course, work will continue on design, weed-clearing, and planting through the year. If you're not already a volunteer, and would like to participate in the project, please give Diane Ronan a call (416-421-6631).

Volunteers for other club activities are always welcomed. If you're interested in the flower shows, you might like to start by clerking for one or two shows. It's not an onerous task (recording winners' names or placing the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd-place stickers on the entry tags), but it'll give you a taste of what goes on "behind the scenes". We're also still looking for a secretary to take the minutes at the Executive Committee meetings. We meet once a month, on the Thursday following the regular meeting. If you have a few hours to spare each month, please consider volunteering – we need you!

Malcolm Geast

2004 Meeting Schedule

January 15	Joan Hodges	Helpful Hints for Seed Starting
February 19	Bill Andrews	Flower Photography
March 18	Kim Price	Designing a Small Backyard
April 15	Mike Mavis	Vegetables in the Garden
May 20	Doris Brownleigh	Terrarium Workshop
June 17	Jack Kent	Hostas and Daylilies
July 15	Pot-luck Supper at The Rockery in Stan Wadlow Park	
August 28 (Saturday)	Annual Flower Show & Tea	
September 16	David Naylor	Cacti Inside and Out
October 21	Ontario Master Gardeners	Round Table Discussions: Forcing Bulbs for Winter Bloom Last-minute planting Care of Christmas plants EYGC in 2005
November 18	Annual General Meeting, Awards Presentation, & Pot-luck Supper	

Workshops?

Thank you for the excellent suggestions for our 2004 program. I wish we could fulfil all your wishes! We try to vary the program from year to year and to follow current trends.

Many of you would like workshops on a number of topics. Unfortunately, there is not enough time on our regular meeting nights.

Would you be willing to pay for a room and a leader, perhaps on a Saturday or another evening? If we had a maximum of 20 people, the cost would be around \$20 plus materials.

Please phone me, or let me know at the January meeting - I will send round a comment sheet.

Anna Leggatt - Program Director
416-755-2325

Thanks.....

The success of a club such as ours depends almost entirely on the efforts of volunteers. Many of these people work behind the scenes, and rarely receive much in the way of thanks. We'd like to correct that situation and give a Thank-You to some people who play a critical, but sometimes unsung part:

Telephone Committee:

Maxine Cashore	Sheila Clarke
Mary Culver	Irene Dersay
Barb Foster	Elizabeth Malone
Janice McCrickard	Colleen McKay
Jean Quinn	Debbie Reesor
Leslie Steinberg	Wini Stoddart
Janet Wilson	

A special thanks goes to Elizabeth Malone and Brenda MacKinnon, who arrive early, leave late, and usually miss the last few minutes of the presentation. The tea and coffee that's served at the end of every meeting would not be possible without their efforts.

The Garden in 2004

By Glen Hutzul

Make it easier - make it nicer - make it yours!

A new year - the time for resolutions. Here's a list of possibilities to increase the enjoyment of your home and garden:

- Re-landscape! Have you longed for a sunny garden and all it brings, while dwelling in a shady glen? Have the trees trimmed, and cut down the overgrown evergreens. Are your hands too arthritic to look after the 200 perennials you've collected? Replace them, and put in ground covers or shrubs that look great year-round. Make sure that the garden still suits you and your capabilities.
- Renovate! Are you tired of trudging out the side door to the back of the house while juggling a tray? Is the best view of the garden through a window in the bathroom? It's time to put in a door or windows that let you see the glory of your garden that provides easy, quick access from the house.
- Splurge! How about buying some furniture that doesn't blow away in the wind. Or rain-proof cushions that still feel soft. If you love to nap outside, buy a lounge. Want more privacy? Put in a new fence, and make sure that it's one that looks great, because you're not going to come inside once you install the fireplace. I'm sure that you get the idea.
- Hire a designer! If the garden is the same every year, utterly predictable, more backyard than outdoor room, you could use a designer. The best of them will translate your personality and life-style into an outdoor dream room.
- Move! If the garden and house is just too much work, an apartment or condo just may be the answer. You could have a stunning balcony or terrace garden with less maintenance than your lawns require now.
- Pretend you've moved! If you just can't leave the old homestead, consider letting someone else use the gardens. Maybe you could keep the front and they could take the back. It's one way of keeping the weeds at bay while still watching plants grow. Remember though, doing what you want in a garden is a hobby. Doing what someone else wants is labour, and you usually pay someone for that.
- Change your soil! If you're someone who grouches about your lousy soil (too sandy, too

heavy, quick draining, slow draining), do something about it. Get two, four, or even 10 cubic yards of the kind you want. It will last your lifetime if you take care of it.

- Make changes to your neighbourhood! Make a list of what you'd like to see, and then do one of them. If you want more trees, plant one! If more houses need front gardens, offer to give some of your extra plants and experience. If a neighbour can't take care of their place, help out by occasionally cutting the lawn, or pruning. It really will help to make the street look better.
- Build a cottage! If you spend all year in the city, build a cabin or tea room. Maybe just modify your shed, but have a place outdoors dedicated to yourself and your favourite outdoor activity. Maybe it's at the back of your property, so you can see your beautiful home and all the work that you've done on it. How about a cabin with a porch and deck chairs, lighting for nighttime, and a screen door to keep the bugs out. A table and chairs for dining, and a fridge, reduce travel back to the house.

Remember to make your life easier and nicer.

Gardening with Glen

A regular column of gardening hints by Glen Hutzul

- Check your bulbs in storage. Move them if the temperature drops below freezing. Discard soft or mouldy ones.
- Check your seeds as well. If mouldy, they need more air.
- If you still have perennials or shrubs in pots above ground, move them to a shady spot, grouped close together. Cover the pots with leaves and/or evergreen branches. As the snow lands, it will be caught and will help to keep the soil frozen until spring.
- If you have a holly shrub in a pot and it's been living in your house, keep it there until spring. Putting it outside now will probably cause severe damage or kill it.
- Looking through the new crop of plant catalogues? Check what size of plant is being sold. I'd love a Sambucus "Black Beauty" (an elder shrub with burgundy leaves), but it's sold in a 3½-inch pot. It's better to wait until spring, and purchase a much bigger shrub.

Perennial Plant of the Year

For the first time the Perennial Plant Association has named a fern as the Perennial Plant of the Year. The Japanese Painted Fern 'Pictum' (*Athyrium niponicum*) is one of the showiest ferns for shade gardens. Hardy to zone 3, it grows up to 18 inches (45 cm) tall, and two feet (60 cm) wide.



The Professional Plant Association is a mostly-American trade organization, but does include Canadian members. In fact, the Association's next President will be Janet Anderson, from JEA Perennials, in Strathroy. The Canadian Regional Director is Paul Zammit.

This is the 15th year that a Plant of the Year has been designated by the Association. Previous "winners" were:

- 2003 Leucanthemum 'Becky'
- 2002 Phlox 'David'
- 2001 Calamagrostis xacutiflora 'Karl Foerster'
- 2000 Scabiosa columbaria 'Butterfly Blue'
- 1999 Rudbeckia fulgida var. sullivantii 'Goldsturm'
- 1998 Echinacea purpurea 'Magnus'
- 1997 Salvia 'Mainacht' (May Night)
- 1996 Penstemon digitalis 'Husker Red'
- 1995 Perovskia atriplicifolia
- 1994 Astilbe 'Sprite'
- 1993 Veronica 'Sunny Border Blue'
- 1992 Coreopsis verticillata 'Moonbeam'
- 1991 Heuchera micrantha 'Palace Purple'
- 1990 Phlox stolonifera

You Say Tomato...

by Malcolm Geast

If you've ever uttered the words "Cotton Easter", wondered where the name *Hosta* came from, or given up in frustration when trying to pronounce *leucanthemifolius*, I have just the book for you. This Christmas, I received *A Gardener's Handbook of Plant Names: Their Meanings and Origins*. First published in 1963 (a year after the death of its author, Archibald Smith) this was the first dictionary to combine definitions of botanical names in general usage with derivation, facts and lore, and guides to pronunciation.

Packed into just a little over 400 pages are the proper pronunciations of every plant that you'll find in any garden that you're likely to visit. Each name is accompanied by a short description of its meaning and/or derivation. As well, many of them include a short history of the cultivation and propagation of the plant. A cross-reference to more than 1,800 common names is included, as is a discussion of the botanical naming convention and how it came about. In the Introduction, Smith tells us why

the botanical names are important, noting that they "cut across all local preferences They are precise, in that they fix the plant exactly without possibility of doubt." However, he doesn't take an unbending approach to pronunciation: "Within reasonable limits, nobody need be too disturbed about pronunciation. The important thing is to be intelligible." For example, although most of us incorrectly put the accent on the second syllable in *Anemone* none of us seem to have any problem understanding which plant we're talking about (the accent is actually on the "o", so that the word rhymes with "alimony").

As someone who manages to mangle the pronunciation of almost every plant I see, this book will become an indispensable aid. (And if you're still wondering about the origin of the word *Hosta*, it was named for Nicholas Thomas Host, a physician to the Emperor of Austria. As for the tomato, it looks like it's a case of "You say tomato, I say *Lycopersicon*".)

Hockey & Horticulture

Some things never change. When I was in my teens, the OHA was an important part of my life. Back then its meaning to me was the Ontario Hockey Association. I still watch hockey, but now the “H” in OHA stands for horticulture.

Hockey has had a long and storied history in Canada, but agricultural and horticultural societies have had an even longer history. A short-lived Agricultural Society was formed in 1792 at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Although it only lasted until 1805, you could say that the seed had been sown. During the 1820s numerous agricultural societies were formed, prompting the Upper Canada government to pass an act in 1830 to grant societies 100 pounds for the encouragement of agriculture. Four years later, Sir John Colborne founded the Toronto Horticultural Society, the first horticultural society in Upper Canada. To encourage members in their practice of horticulture, garden competitions were organized in July 1834. As a result of the proliferation of garden clubs through the rest of the 19th century, in 1906 the provincial government passed an act that placed agricultural and horticultural societies under different regulations. At the same time it created the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA), our parent organization.

Since its founding, the OHA has grown to become an organization of 280 clubs, and almost 40,000 members. During the First World War, OHA members helped to grow food for troops overseas. In the thirties, thousands of families in the Prairies were provided with food, seeds and tree rootstock. When the Netherlands were reclaiming more land from the sea in the early fifties, the OHA helped out with a donation of 2000 young Ontario trees. More recently, the Association provided thousands of trees for replanting after the particularly destructive tornadoes of the mid-eighties. But the most visible, and long-lasting accomplishment, came in 1937 when, upon the recommendation of a committee of the OHA, the *Trillium Grandiflorum* became Ontario’s official floral emblem.

The OHA is organized into 19 districts, with an average of 15 clubs per district. East York is one of 16 based clubs in District 5, which extends from Yonge Street to the eastern edge of Toronto, and north to Lake Simcoe. Also included in District 5 are two clubs that are based on horticultural expertise as well as their geography, the Toronto Rhododendron Society and the Greater Toronto Rose & Garden Society.

By now you may be thinking “History and organisation are fine, but what does the OHA do for us (or anybody else) today?”

One of the greatest benefits of being a part of the OHA is the sharing of information with other gardeners. The OHA holds an annual convention which not only features an array of speakers and workshops, but gives members the opportunity to meet gardeners from across the province. Last year’s convention was held in Windsor. This year it will be in London, and next year in North Bay. Each district holds an annual general meeting, at which time members from nearby clubs can get to meet each other. This year’s District 5 AGM will be held on April 17, at the Toronto Botanical Garden. The 2005 AGM will be co-hosted by East York and Leaside (you’ll be hearing a lot more about this through the course of the next 16 months). A district may also sponsor a special meeting, such as the flower show workshop put on by District 5 this past November. The OHA also sends a newsletter to all 280 clubs four times a year and distributes information through its website.

Services that we need in order to function effectively are also supplied by the OHA. Liability insurance and Treasurer bonding are provided at a low rate through the Association. The flower shows that are an essential part of the program of every club, are only possible with the standards, judging courses and certification that the OHA furnishes.

As well, the OHA supports the Master Gardener Program by participating in the funding of the Master Gardener education program and providing members for the Steering Committee of the Program.

The interaction between the OHA and its member clubs is primarily at the District level. As one might expect, it would be impractical for Wilma Wood (the current President, from Thunder Bay) to visit 280 clubs. Instead each club has a District Director (in our district, it’s Nikola Warnock) who oversees communication between the clubs and the OHA. As a testament to the commitment to the organization, it should be noted that Wilma, Nikola, and all the other District Directors and committee leaders are volunteers. The Association has only one paid employee.

There’s actually not that much of a difference between the OHA of my youth and the OHA that I’m part of now. After all, the team I watched forty years ago played its games in the Gardens.

Recycle, Reuse and Revel in Your Creativity

The holidays are over, and for some perverse reason, the minute January rolls around, Canadians can't wait for spring — even though we know it's a good four months away. The only way we can rush the season of renewal is to treat ourselves to pots of tulips, hyacinths, crocus, muscari and a whole lot of other potted bulb flowers that appear in supermarkets, garden centre and corner stores at the very beginning of January.

But those little plastic pots the bulbs are sold in, are just too dreary for words.

If you feel the same way about the plastic pots, there's a quick, funky way to dress them up in a second or two.

Consider this

Are you one of those people who carefully smooths and stores the used Christmas wrap? If you're anything like me, when the next holiday season comes around, I root through the mountains of used wrapping paper, but, either the colour's wrong, or it's just a smidgen too small, whatever the issue, it's never just right.

Well, here's a solution.

Take that piece of shiny red paper and wrap it around the pot of red tulips you've just bought. Secure the paper with a piece of ribbon or raffia, fold in the top edges (so the white underside of the paper is concealed), and all of a sudden you've bumped the aesthetic appeal of the potted plant up, oh, about, a thousand percent.

Try to match the colour of the paper to the colour of the blossoms to be. If it's five little pots of yellow and purple crocuses, the midnight blue paper with gold stars on it will be perfect.

Tissue paper works, as do gift bags, and it is greatly satisfying to know that for once, you've actually put some of that paper to use.

You gotta have faith, faith, faith

If you are a regular flower buyer, do something a little different this winter. Try a few pots of flowers instead. They last so much longer than cut flowers which are, in fact, already at the end of their life span the minute they are cut off their 'mother' plant.

Buying potted bulb flowers is an act of faith, especially if you buy them when there is little else to see in the pot other than a few leaves

and green-sheathed buds. This is the best state in which to buy them, as you, rather than the grower or florist, will get all the enjoyment of watching them grow to maturity and blossom before your very eyes.

For example, if you buy yourself one pot containing three barely sprouted Hyacinth bulbs, you've got about three weeks of enjoyment ahead of you.

Slowly the flower bud will emerge from the leaves. Each Hyacinth flower contains about 50 florets which start out rather pale, and then mature into their true colours.

Hyacinth fragrance research

From January to March potted Hyacinths are available in all their colours: pink, blue, purple, white and more recently a pale yellow and even red. They are all different, some have taller flowers, others stay short, but common to all Hyacinths is their embodiment-of-spring fragrance.

For some, the scent of Hyacinths is a wonderful thing. For others, well, it isn't.

Recently, growers in the Netherlands have been working on a fragrance code so that people can select their Hyacinths not just for their colours, but also for their potency of the fragrance. There are three categories of fragrance: strong, medium and light, with most varieties belonging in the 'medium' group.

Preliminary research results have yielded the following examples:

Hyacinths with a Light Fragrance

'Pink Pearl' (bubble gum pink), 'White Pearl' (snowy white), 'Blue Jacket' (dark blue with purple stripe on each petal) and 'City of Haarlem' (soft, primrose yellow).

Hyacinths with a Medium Fragrance

'Atlantic' (amethyst-violet), 'Jan Bos' (fuchsia-red) and 'Anne Marie' (pale pink).

Hyacinths with a Strong Fragrance

'Delft Blue' (soft, lilac-blue)

If the program is a success, Canadians can most likely look forward to finding fragrance information printed on the sleeves of potted Hyacinths in about three years.

Information from the Netherlands Flower Bulb Information Centre

Reprinted from the Ontario Horticultural Association Newsletter, Spring 2003

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, January 28

Toronto Wildflower Society Meeting at the Beaches Recreation Centre, 6 Williamson Road
Landscape Designer Victor Feodorov will explore Basic Concepts in Garden Design. Starts at 7:30 p.m.
Further Information: Contact Carolyn King at 416-222-5736 or cking@yorku.ca

Thursday, January 29

Influential Garden Designers of the 20th Century at the Toronto Botanical Garden
Through engaging profiles of 56 garden stars, Andrew Wilson (Director of Garden Design Studies at Inchbald School of Design in London, England) will show how the innovators of 20th-century garden design shaped gardening taste. Admission is \$12, (free for members). Starts at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 11

Your House, Your Garden: A Foolproof Approach to Good Garden Design at the Toronto Botanical Garden – In this lecture illustrated by 80 pairs of slides, Gordon Hayward shows how your house can help you design your gardens . Admission is \$12 (free for members). Starts at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 12

February Meeting of the Leaside Garden Society at Leaside Library, 165 McRae Drive
Speakers Charmiene Montgomery & Margaret Nevett will be speaking about Winter Pruning

Sunday, February 22

Getting the Jump on Spring at the Toronto Botanical Garden – For the 8th year, the Toronto Botanical Garden will bring together garden experts and vendors under one roof. Spend the day there and soak in all of the information you'll need to prepare for the coming spring. Runs from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission and parking are free.

March 3-7 (Wednesday to Sunday)

Canada Blooms at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre

March 18-21 (Thursday to Sunday)

The International Home & Garden Show and The Success with Gardening Show at the International Centre (Airport Road & Derry Road)

2004 Membership Renewal Form

Name

Address

.....

Postal Code Phone #

email:

Fees: Single \$10.00 Family \$15.00

Membership fees are due by January of each year. Fees can be paid in person at the next monthly meeting, or by mailing this form and a cheque (payable to "The East York Garden Club") to:

East York Garden Club
10 Dustan Crescent
East York, Ontario
M4J 4G5