

# The East York Garden

Bi-monthly newsletter of the East York Garden Club

March & April, 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](http://www.eygc.ca)

President:  
Malcolm Geast

Vice-Presidents:  
Linda Boyko  
Dawn McEachern

Newsletter Editor:  
Malcolm Geast  
416-429-4719

## Thursday, March 18, 2004

**Speaker: Kim Price**

**Topic: Designing a Small Back Yard**

Kim is a Master Gardener, and has a degree in fine art. Her company, Kim Price Landscape Design has won awards from Landscape Ontario, including the 2001 Casey Van Maris Award, recognizing innovative and unique landscape design. She's also appeared on HGTV's Garden Architecture.

Members whose surnames begin with G or H are asked to bring some cookies or sweets for the evening's tea.

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## Thursday, April 15, 2004

**Speaker: Mike Maves**

**Topic: Vegetables in the Garden**

Find out the best conditions for various vegetables and when to plant and harvest them.

Mike Maves farms in Pickering where he has a herd of cows and grows organic vegetables. A past chairman of the Toronto Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society, he belongs to the Hamilton group as well as the American Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society. He also collects Salvadore Dali prints.

Members whose surnames begin with I, J, K, or L are asked to bring some cookies or sweets for the evening's tea.

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## Upcoming in May:

- Terrarium Workshop, with Barbara Twiner
- First flower show of the year
- Plant sale



## May Meeting – A Busy Affair

*Terrarium: a miniature landscape in a covered transparent container, other than a bottle. Plants must be completely contained within container. No cut plant material allowed.*

If you check on page 26 of your yearbook, you'll see that included in the August Flower Show is a category for terrariums. You've probably seen lots of terrariums, and may have even thought of making one for yourself. But how do you go about putting it together? Get the answers to all your terrarium questions at our May meeting, when we will be holding a Terrarium workshop. Barbara Twiner will demonstrate how to fill and care for a terrarium. Those who have pre-booked will be able to design a terrarium themselves. The cost for those who are actively participating will be \$15. Since we're limiting it to 15 people, we'll be sending around a sign-up sheet at the April meeting. The \$15 fee will cover soil, gravel, charcoal and three or four plants. All you have to supply is the container. (Not too big – remember that you will have to carry it when planted!) Sign up at the April meeting or contact Anna at 416 755-2325.

You don't have to be a participant to benefit from and enjoy this meeting. You'll be able to learn by watching the participants, and of course, Barbara will be explaining the procedures to everyone present.

Traditionally, the May meeting has been the time when we've had our plant sale. Last year we broke with tradition, and instead of having a sale of members plants at the May meeting, we had a sale of commercially-grown plants at the Riverdale Home and Garden Show at the East York Civic Centre. While the sale brought in some much-needed revenue (although at a cost of many, many hours of work), a number of you were quite disappointed that we weren't able to have the sale at the May meeting. This year, we'll be returning to the traditional time and format, and giving you the opportunity to purchase plants from your fellow Club members.

This meeting will also feature our first flower show of the year, so plan ahead and check the categories in your yearbook now! They're on pages 18 & 19.

And, of course, by the end of this meeting you'll be prepared to enter your terrarium in the August show.

### Community Clean-Up Day

The signs of spring – melting snow and the first shoots that pop up in the newly uncovered ground. Unfortunately as the snow melts, it also releases a lot of garbage that has been hidden from view through the winter. As we did last year, this spring we'll be doing our part to help get rid of this garbage, and to improve the appearance of our community. On **Saturday, April 24**, we'll be participating in a Toronto-wide effort known as "Community Clean-Up Day". The Rockery and surrounding areas at Stan Wadlow Park will be our target area. Come on out and help to make East York a better-looking place to live. Garbage bags, and a limited number of gloves and tools will be provided by Parks and Recreation. A sign-up sheet will be passed around at the March and April meetings. For more information, call Diane Ronan at 416-421-6631.

## Conventions, Meetings, and Flower Shows.....

In the January/February issue of *The East York Garden*, we told you about our Club's membership in the Ontario Horticultural Association, the umbrella organization representing gardening clubs across the province. Among the benefits of membership is an annual convention. As well as providing the opportunity to attend workshops and seminars about horticulture, and to meet gardeners from the rest of Ontario, the convention also includes several competitions.

Over the past several years, members of the Club have often attended the convention. However, we've rarely, if ever, participated in any of the competitions. This year we'd like to change that situation, by encouraging you to become an entrant when the convention is held in London (August 13-15). As you'd expect with an event of this kind, a flower show (including floral design) is the premier event. But for those of you with painting or drawing talents, there's also an art show. Competitions for photographic prints and slides will provide a warmup for our own photography competition in the fall. We'll have all of the categories available for you at the regular meetings of the Club. You can also find them on the convention's web page (you'll

find a link for the information on our own web site, [www.eygc.ca](http://www.eygc.ca)). And if you're interested in attending the convention, please speak to one of the members of the Club's executive, and we'll make sure that you get all the necessary information.

Closer to home, the Annual General Meeting of the OHA District 5 (York East) takes place on April 17. This year's meeting is being held at the Toronto Botanical Garden (formerly the Civic Garden Centre). There will be two engaging speakers. Larry Lougheed, a successful exhibitor as well as an accredited judge has been growing roses for nearly thirty years. He'll be speaking about *Sex in the Garden*. Come and find out the trials, tribulations, foibles, and "kinks" in the process to create the best roses. After lunch, Catherine Shaver will look at what it takes to stimulate a garden club's growth and to encourage it to thrive. As well, there will be a flower show. Cost for the day's proceedings is \$20. Complete details will be available at our March meeting. We'll be sending around a sign-up sheet at that time. If you're planning on going, please have your \$20 for your ticket with you. The flower show rules and schedule will be available at the March meeting, and can also be found on the EYGC web site.

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## 2004 Garden Tour

For the garden tour this year, we're trying something a little different. Instead of a one-day tour we're spreading it out over the spring, summer, and autumn. Every few weeks we'll be showcasing a different member's garden. It may be on a weekend or an evening during the week. As well, it'll be a tour for members of the Club. We have a few gardens already lined up for the tour, but we're still in need of several more. This is your opportunity not only to share the results of your efforts, but also to meet and

talk to other members of the Club in a leisurely setting. Pick the time and date when your garden is at its best. We'd like to know at least a month or two ahead of time, so that we can use this newsletter to let other members know. A sign-up sheet will be distributed at the next meeting so please consider signing up. We'll cheerfully ignore any weeds. For more information call Roz Regnier at 416-759-6247.

## **Gardening with Glen**

*by Glen Hutzul*

I'm learning what other members already know: it's difficult gardening when you have a disability. This is my second year with permanent medical restrictions: no working above my shoulders, no repetitive or prolonged activity and only limited lifting and carrying. I need to change my expectation of what my garden and I can produce.

The thick planting of perennials results in very few weeds. My much-loved pansies will be confined to one gorgeous pot for the patio table. I will keep my established tea and grandiflora roses, but if any bush or shrub needs to be replaced, it must be both drought tolerant and disease resistant (with the exception of my roses and planters). I will use no fertiliser. Along with infrequent watering, this should result in tougher, smaller, and more drought-resistant plants. Instead of water-loving Impatiens, I may use variegated nasturtiums and calendula and low-care climbing plants such as morning glory,

hyacinth beans and perennial sweet pea. I love self-seeding plants. It's easier to weed out a few young seedlings than it is to get down on my knees for bedding plants.

I could have lowered the hanging planters to chest-high (with 12-inch long pieces of chain), but chose to eliminate them instead. I will use only my largest planters (14-inch or more in diameter). Those made of terra cotta are lined in plastic to reduce evaporation. They will eventually be replaced by larger plastic pots that only need watering every two days. The little pots of herbs are replaced by one mixed planter. Placing the planters in half-shade reduced their watering needs. Putting them on an overturned pot raised them to waist level and made maintenance so much easier. Last of all, I bought a new tablecloth for the porch table. Bold, bright and gaudy. I smile when I see it. Hopefully, all of my guests will as well.

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## **Rejoice with Rhubarb**

*by Diane Ronan*

It's a ritual of spring. Watching for the emerging leaves: waiting to harvest the first tender shoots to make rhubarb sauce: and eating a raw stalk sprinkled with sugar for the mouth-puckering experience.

I like rhubarb. Its tartness adds zest to desserts, jams, relishes and even wine. Hernder Estates in St. Catharines, Ontario makes a delicious rhubarb dessert wine. I know. I've tasted it. Visit [www.hernder.com](http://www.hernder.com)

I think rhubarb makes a great addition to perennial beds with its bold foliage and ruby red stalks. If left to seed, it sends up tall spikes of creamy white flowers. In some

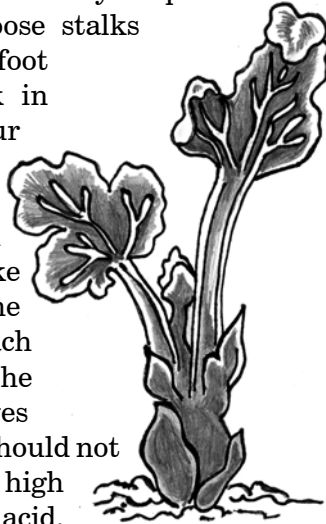
countries it is used as an ornamental. Think of clumping rhubarb with iris for an interesting combo.

Rhubarb is an ancient plant. The Chinese cultivated it in 2700BC for medicinal purposes. Our rhubarb today is a hybrid of the Chinese variety and arrived in America from Europe around 1800. People started using it to make pies and tarts and it became known as "the pie plant".

If you want to grow rhubarb, choose a sunny location and dig a hole at least 1.5 feet deep and 3 feet wide. Loosen the soil and add compost. If someone has given you

a root, plant it 1 to 2 inches below the soil surface. Place a container-grown plant level with the soil surface. Good varieties include Valentine, Canada Red and MacDonald Crimson. Keep the plant moist and mulch in spring and fall. Keep mulch away from the crown to avoid rot problems. Fertilize every year in early spring by spreading compost over the area.

Do not harvest rhubarb until your plant is two years old. Choose stalks that are at least a foot long. Grasp the stalk in your hand; slide your thumb down the inner groove as far as it will go, then twist the stalk while pulling up. Take fewer than half the stalks per plant in each picking. Trim off the leaves. Rhubarb leaves can be composted but should not be eaten – they contain high amounts of oxalic acid.



Store freshly harvested stalks in the refrigerator, unwashed and tightly wrapped in plastic, for up to two weeks.

When ready to cook your rhubarb remove any brown or scaly spots with a vegetable peeler. Peeling the entire stalk is unnecessary, simply trim the ends, wash, dry and cut into pieces. To make rhubarb sauce, put 1-inch cut pieces into a medium saucepan, add one quarter as much sugar or honey as rhubarb and a spoonful of water. Simmer for about 10 minutes or until rhubarb is tender. For additional flavour add sliced strawberries to the cooked rhubarb.

For a fun-filled weekend consider The Rosy Rhubarb Festival, held every year on the second weekend in June in Shedden, near St. Thomas. You can visit their website at [www.rosyrhubarbfestival.com](http://www.rosyrhubarbfestival.com) or call Eileen Carr @ 519-764-2620

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And from me to you, here's one of my favourite rhubarb recipes. It's easy, tasty, and taken from *The Laura Secord Canadian Cook Book*.

## **Magnetawan Rhubarb Relish**

In a large stainless steel or Teflon coated saucepan combine:

- 10 cups rhubarb chunks
- 8 cups granulated sugar
- 2 cups cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons allspice
- 1 teaspoon cloves

Bring to a boil and cook, uncovered for about 1 1/4 hours, or until thick. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking.

Pack in sterilized jars. Cool and store in refrigerator.

Serve with chicken, ham or cold meats.

Makes 3 pints. (But recipe can easily be cut in half)

## A New Way To Keep Your Lawn Weed-free

by *Malcolm Geast*

The search for a method of controlling weeds that has no adverse environmental effects may be at hand. A product that has begun to be seen in various nurseries and gardening centres is Corn Gluten Meal (CGM). CGM is quite a simple product consisting only of a by-product of the milling of corn. There are no additional chemicals that will have harmful environmental consequences. As well, it also provides most of the nitrogen needed by your lawn. Fertilizer trials at the University of Guelph gave the corn gluten turf plots the highest rating for colour and density of all products tested.

You may be wondering why you haven't heard of this product before. If it's so good and so easy to produce, it should have been front and centre in the herbicide section of every gardening centre. Unfortunately, for any product to be labelled as a pesticide in Canada, it must be tested and approved by the federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency. As a by-product of a common process, it's in the public domain. Without the guarantee of exclusive rights, no company has been willing to absorb the cost involved in obtaining that approval. There's no problem selling it, but without that approval, it can't be labelled as a pesticide. South of the border it's a little different. American patent laws have allowed it to become the exclusive domain of one company. It's been approved by the EPA, and is licenced under the name of A-Maizing Lawn.

So how does this magical product work? CGM is known as a pre-emergent herbicide, preventing the formation of roots in germinating seeds. For this reason, timing of its application is important. It must be spread in the spring, just before the annual weeds are about to germinate, followed by a second, similar application in late summer.

And, although a thorough watering at the time of application is recommended, a subsequent dry period is also necessary for it to be effective. As with any magic act, it looks great when it works, but when anything goes wrong, it's not so impressive. And what can go wrong? Again, it's all linked to the timing. Spread it at the right time and you'll stop the weeds from getting started. Spread it too early, and a heavy rain can wash it down too far in the soil to be effective. Spread it too late, and the weeds will thank you for the nitrogen that it contains.

If you are going to use CGM, it's suggested that you get rid of as many of the weeds as you can as soon as the frost is out of the ground. Do this by pulling them up or by using a weeding tool. Then aerate the lawn. The recommended "dosage" is 20 to 25 pounds (about 10 kg) for every 1000 square feet (about 30 square metres). Of course, because of the way it works, you should keep it away from flower and vegetable beds until the seedlings are showing above ground. You're also advised not to use it on the lawn when overseeding. And, since it's 10% nitrogen, you should make the necessary adjustments if you do fertilize.

You may also have to do some searching to get hold of CGM, since not all garden centres sell it. White Rose Nurseries has carried it in the past, but have told me that due to poor marketing and lack of public awareness, it's being discontinued this year. Humber Nurseries will be selling it in a 9 kg bag for \$22.39. Starting in April, you can buy it online from Wildflower Farms near Schomberg ([www.wildflowerfarm.com](http://www.wildflowerfarm.com)); it'll be available in their store in May. And, although Sheridan Nurseries doesn't sell it, Nutrilawn, their lawn-care division, does use it as part of their "Organics Plus" program.

## All you Need is a Nail

Here's a common spring scenario: You walk into your backyard, and there are your carefully-planted seedlings, laying on the ground, having been bitten off by a squirrel. This happened to me the first two years that I tried growing sunflowers.

But then one day, my next-door neighbour, Jenny Ogner, told me that I could solve my problem with some large nails. Looking at the tiny chopped-off remains, my thoughts wandered to something that the Humane Society probably wouldn't approve of. However, Jenny's solution was a little less radical, and amazingly easy. She suggested that I take long nails (at least three inches in length) and drive them about an inch into the soil, beside (almost touching) each seedling. It would keep the squirrels from biting, and allow the plant to grow to a size that would be just too big for their mouths. I've done it for three years now, and have never lost a nail-protected seedling. Last year, I had five plants and only four nails. You can guess what happened to the one without the nail.

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## New Members

These members have joined our club in the past couple of months. Please extend a warm welcome to them. Their name tags will have a blue star, to make them easier to recognize:

Carol Bouley  
Susan Ellis  
David Gould

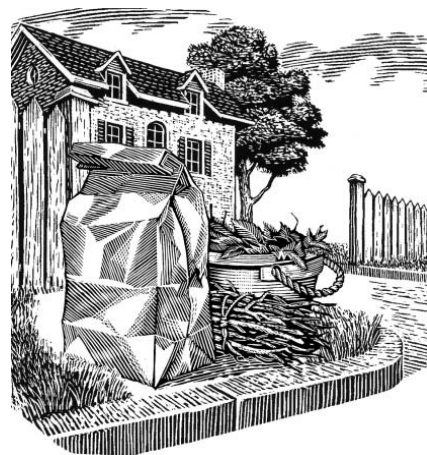
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## Special Offer...

If you're near Humber Nurseries between April 17 and 24, you can take advantage of a special offer for Garden Club members. With a coupon and your membership card, you'll get 30% off any herbs that you buy. We'll have the coupons available at the March and April meetings.

## Spring Reminder....

Don't forget that leaf and yard waste pickup resumes in April. The pickup day is the same as your regular garbage day. It's a weekly schedule until the beginning of July. At that time, it alternates with your blue box and grey box weeks.



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## Emailed Newsletters

If you're interested in having the newsletter emailed to you (instead of, or in addition to the mailed copy), drop me a line at [newsletter@eygc.ca](mailto:newsletter@eygc.ca)

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## Membership Renewal

If you haven't renewed for 2004 yet, we'd like to remind that membership in the Club is one of the best bargains around. Here's what you get:

- 10 monthly meetings
- three monthly flower shows
- an Annual Show & Competition
- six newsletters
- a yearbook
- a spring plant sale and an autumn seed exchange
- discounts and special promotions at selected nurseries (for example, 10% at Bill's and at White Rose, a spring promotion at Humber Nurseries)

Where else can you get all that for just \$10? On the other side of this page, you'll find a renewal form. You can mail it in, or bring it with you to the next regular meeting.

## Upcoming Events

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)**

March 20 & 21 (Saturday & Sunday)

**23rd Annual Orchid Show & Sale at the Royal Botanical Gardens (Burlington)** – Experience displays of thousands of beautiful orchids. Orchid-growing experts, hobbyists and volunteers will be on hand to share their knowledge and their love of orchids. Runs from noon to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is \$6 (\$5 for RBG members).

Monday, March 29

***If Trees Could Speak at the North Toronto Memorial Community Centre, 200 Eglinton West***  
Find out what you can do in your own yard to improve the situation for trees. Since 1981, Speaker Henry Kock's work at The Guelph Arboretum has ranged from planning and seed collection to managing the maturing plant collections and the Elm Recovery Project. Starts at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 1

***New Wave Natural Planting at the Toronto Botanical Garden*** – Noel Kingsbury provides an introduction to the basic principles of nature-inspired design, including the importance of selecting plants for the garden habitat, and tips on how to evoke wild places in the garden. Admission is \$12 (free for members). Starts at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 8

**April Meeting of the Leaside Garden Society at Leaside Library, 165 McRae Drive**  
Speaker Linda Ledgett speaks about *Bulbs Throughout the Year*. Starts at 7:30 p.m.

April 9 & 10 (Good Friday & Saturday)

**For the Love of Gardening at the Evinrude Centre, Peterborough**

The Peterborough & Area Master Gardeners present two days of workshops, lectures, and garden displays at their annual show. Runs from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. each day. Admission is \$4 for one day or \$6 for both. Advance tickets and information: 705-295-6118

You`ll find a complete list of events on our website ([www.eygc.ca](http://www.eygc.ca)). The list is updated at least once a week.

### 2004 Membership 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  
18 Warvet Crescent  
East York, Ontario  
M4B 1P3