

# The East York Garden

Bi-monthly newsletter of the East York Garden Club

May & June, 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, May 20, 2004

**Speaker: Barbara Twiner**

**Topic: Terrarium Workshop**

Barbara Twiner is a long-time horticulturalist and a flower show judge. As a member of the Pickering Horticultural Society, where an award named in her honour is presented each year, she is a consistent high-placing contributor to the Society's shows. You'll find more information about the workshop inside, on page 3.

This meeting will also feature our first flower show of the year, as well as our annual Members' Plant Sale. Details on the plant sale can also be found on page 3.

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

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## Thursday, June 17, 2004

**Speaker: Jack Kent**

**Topic: Hostas and Daylilies**

Jack Kent is an enthusiastic hybridizer of daylilies, which he sells at The Potting Shed, his home-based nursery, in Cayuga. In addition, his colourful display gardens and extensive selection of Hosta and peony cultivars and ornamental grasses are well worth a garden visit, especially in July, when the daylilies are in bloom.

This meeting will also feature our second flower show of the year, as well as our draw table.

Members whose surnames begin with N, O, P, or Q are asked to bring some cookies or sweets for the evening's tea.

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## Upcoming in July:

Pot-luck supper at The Rockery, in Stan Wadlow Park



## From the President's Desk....

Membership in the Garden Club brings with it several benefits: monthly meetings, flower shows, newsletters and a yearbook, plant sales and seed exchanges, as well as the advice and camaraderie of fellow gardeners. But how much does it cost to run the Club, and to make all of that possible? Well, for every member in the Club, the following expenses are paid:

Speakers	\$5.44
Rental of Stan Wadlow C.C.	\$7.86
OHA Membership Fees	\$1.35
Yearbook (approximately)	\$2.50
Newsletter (approximately)	\$4.50
Judges for Shows	\$1.79
Annual Show expenses	\$1.46
Prizes	\$5.71
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$30.61</b>

As well, there are a few other expenses that vary from year to year (advertising, the Annual Meeting, civic improvement), and add another few dollars to the total. In all, with 140 members, it costs anywhere from \$4,000 to \$5,000 a year to run the Club.

In practical terms, most of this cost is exceedingly difficult to control. Expenses for many of these items could be trimmed, but not without a price. The end result would be sub-standard speakers, reduced participation in the flower shows, a less-frequent newsletter, and a less-informative yearbook. The largest expense, the rental of Stan Wadlow Community Centre, is one for which there is no reasonable alternative. Up until the late nineties, as a community organization, we were able to use the Centre for no charge. However, as the City of Toronto began to experience financial problems, fees were levied on all groups using these kinds of facilities. This year, we will be paying \$1100 to hold our meetings at Stan Wadlow – that alone uses up almost all of the cost of membership. Unfortunately, there are no alternatives that are significantly cheaper. Church basements are about the same price, and schools and commercial facilities are more expensive.

So, now you've seen what our expenses are. But what are our sources of revenue? Depending on the size of the membership, annual fees usually account for a little over \$1,000. A grant from the provincial government gives us another \$1,000; with the current fiscal pressures on Queen's Park, it's somewhat uncertain how much longer the grant will continue. The rest of our money must all come from fund raising. Our three biggest fund raising efforts are the May Plant Sale, the Canada Day Sale, and garden tours. The first two of those bring in about \$500 each. The "profit" from a garden tour is usually about \$500 to \$1,000. Our 2002 garden tour brought in a little over \$3,000. However, that was largely due to exceptional efforts by a few individuals, and could not be sustained on an annual, or even a biennial basis.

By now, you've probably realized what I'm leading up to here. Currently your \$10 membership fee covers less than a third of the cost of membership. While that may be one of the best bargains around, one of the results is that our expenses exceed our receipts by a substantial margin. In order to survive, a fee increase appears to be a necessity.

A look at the Club's financial statement for 1997 (the last year that fees were increased) shows revenues that are just \$50 lower than in 2003. Expenses, however, were over \$1600 lower. During that time the increase in costs for speakers, printing, and facility rental have far outstripped the rate of inflation.

During the next couple of months, the Club's Executive will be discussing the matter at some length. In July, I hope to be able to tell you the outcome of those discussions.. If you have any comments or questions feel free to discuss it with me at the Club's May or June meeting. You can also call me at 416-429-4719, or send an email to [malcolm@eastyork.net](mailto:malcolm@eastyork.net).

*Malcolm Geast*

## Spring Plant Sale

It's our Annual Plant Sale again in May, and it's going to be great! Most of you know the routine: you bring in your extra perennials, biennials, annuals, bulbs, tubers, and corms, and we sell them. You can even bring in your extra seeds. If you can plant it in the ground, we'll accept it as a donation!

You can help us make the sale easier by bringing in your plants in containers, with their names and colours identified. If your plant is unusual or rare, please suggest a price. This is a great opportunity to purchase East York plants, those that grow well in our district – and at a very reasonable price!

We really need your help as this is one of only two fund raisers this year. That's why we're encouraging you to tell your friends and neighbours to come along or even to buy some plants for them.

The sale begins when the terrarium workshop ends, likely between 8:30 and 8:45. We'll be cutting the prices near the

end of the sale, but to make sure you get the plant you really want, make sure you buy it early. There are usually incredible bargains for the beginning gardener. With a central cashier and colour-coded price stickers, on every plant, it should be easy and quick to pick up and pay for your treasures!

### *Garden Treasures*

This one evening only, along with the plants, we'll be selling garden treasures. All the accessories that go with gardening: garden books, pots & planters, tools, lanterns, candle holders, anything and everything that you would use in the garden. We welcome your donations. These items go on sale at 7:00 p.m, so the earlier you get there, the better the selection.

If you have any questions, call Glen at 416-423-8173. See you at the sale.

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## More on the May Meeting.....

As well as the annual Member's Plant Sale, and the first flower show of the year, May's meeting will feature a terrarium workshop with Barbara Twiner. Up to 15 participants will have a hands-on experience, learning how to plant and maintain a terrarium. **However, that doesn't mean that you have to be one of the 15 to benefit from and enjoy this meeting. Barbara will be demonstrating and explaining the procedures to everyone present, so that when you leave you'll be able to work on your own terrarium at home.**

If you'd like to be one of the participants, but didn't sign up at the April meeting, there are still some spaces left. A \$15 fee will cover soil, gravel, charcoal and three or four plants. Call Anna Leggatt at 416-755-2325 or Malcolm Geast at 416-429-4719.

Several people have expressed concern about the cost of the container. Please note that it doesn't have to be expensive. You can pay \$200 or more, but you can also pay as little as \$10 (including tax). An 8-inch goldfish bowl usually costs no more than \$9. A Saran Wrap top will keep the moisture in. Other suitable (and reasonably-priced) containers can be found at White Rose's bankruptcy sale. Remember that you don't want one that's too big – you'll have to carry it when it's planted!

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## Emailed Newsletters

If you're interested getting your 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).

## A Celebration....

On April 17, over 200 enthusiastic gardening club and horticultural society members gathered together for the Ontario Horticultural Society District 5's Annual General Meeting at the Toronto Botanical Garden. Included in that group were nine members of the East York Garden Club. Along with the opportunity to listen to two speakers, the day included a flower show with 292 entries, a more-than-ample lunch, and the opportunity to meet with gardeners from the Beaches to Lake Simcoe. Our club did particularly well, winning the Poster Competition (thanks to the efforts of Peter Ronan), taking a second place in the newsletter competition and seven first places in the flower show. With a myriad of entries from Anna Leggatt and Diane Ronan, we also received the award for the most improved club (the second time we've won in the past three years). We're not sure if the trophy will be on hand at the May meeting (it's currently out for engraving), but we will have the poster available for viewing.

There are 16 clubs and societies in District 5, and each year either one or two of them host the District's Annual General Meeting. In 2005, we're teaming up with the Leaside Garden Society to hold the event. Nine members from the two clubs have been working on the preliminary plans since last September. The major focus until now has been procuring a facility. As you may know, the massive renovation that the Toronto Botanical Garden will be undergoing next year will result in a temporary closure of the facility, making it unavailable for meetings for most of the year. After some considerable searching and discussion, we've decided to hold it at St. Bonaventure's Church, immediately south of the TBG.

Now that we have a facility in which to hold the meeting, it's time to start thinking about the meeting itself. Over the next few months, we'll be putting together committees to handle the all the details.



Among others, we'll have committees for shows, programming, catering and facilities. This is an opportunity for you to be part of one of the most enjoyable gardening events of 2005. With anniversaries for both of this year's host clubs, the theme for the 2004 AGM was *It's a Celebration*. We're hoping to give next year's meeting a similarly enjoyable atmosphere. In September we'll be asking for volunteers to be committee members. If you'd like to be part of this event, you can sign up at that time. You can also speak to Malcolm Geast (416-429-4719, malcolm@eastyork.net).

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## Bus Tour?

Some of you may be wondering, what happened to the bus tour that we had talked about a couple of months ago? Unfortunately, experience has shown us that there aren't a lot of people who are asking that question. Enthusiasm for spring and early summer bus trips has been weak over the past few years, and there was no sign that it's any stronger this year. As a result, we've decided not to hold one this spring. However, that doesn't mean that we've given up altogether. We're currently looking into a bus tour sometime in the late summer or fall, probably in September. More information will be available in the summer.

## Members' Garden Tour

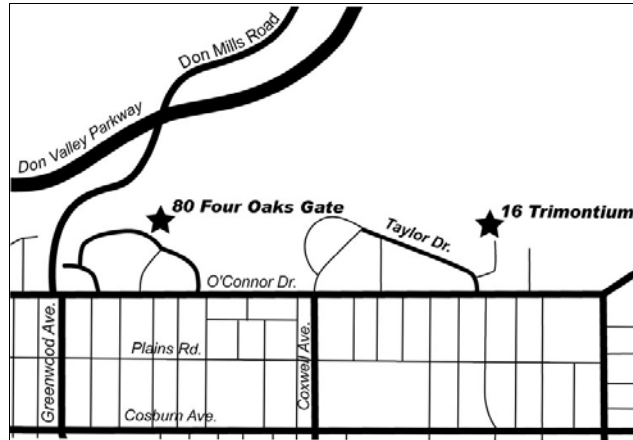
As mentioned in previous issues of **The Garden**, this year we're trying something a little different with the garden tour. Instead of a one-day tour we're spreading it out over the whole growing season. Every few weeks we'll be showcasing a different member's garden.

At the present time we have seven gardens scheduled for June and July. On this page are the June gardens, and the first two in July.

**Sunday, June 6**  
**1:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

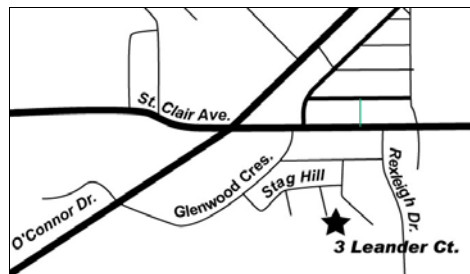
80 Four Oaks Gate  
Glenna Duguid and Brian Rowe

16 Trimontium Crescent  
Lucie Simons



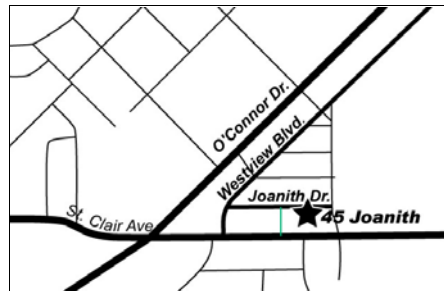
**Saturday, June 26**  
**1:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

3 Leander Court  
Mary Jean Joys



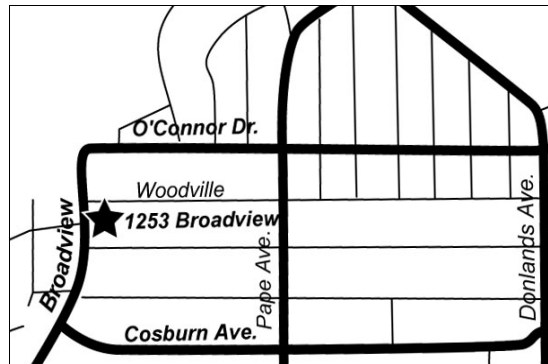
**Tuesday, July 6**  
**4:00 to 8:00 p.m.**

45 Joanith Drive  
Betty Meyers



**Saturday, July 10**  
**1:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

1253 Broadview Avenue  
Margaret McRae



On July 17, the gardens of Thelma Sookman (678 Milverton Blvd), and Rosalind Regnier (82 Presley Avenue) will also be open. We'll have maps for you in the July issue of **The Garden**.

## A world beneath your feet

It's springtime. As you dig into the earth to plant those seedlings that you've been nurturing indoors, you find the ground is already alive, with worms. Had you dug into the same earth 500 years ago, it would have been a different story. As hard to believe as it may seem, most of Canada was devoid of earthworms.

While most of them can live through a normal Canadian winter, several thousand years without a summer during the last ice age (not to mention the suffocating weight of the glaciers) was too much to endure. When the ice retreated, there was nary an earthworm to be found. It was not until a few hundred years ago that worm population began its revival. Arriving in the rootstock of plants brought over with the European colonists, they soon spread across the country, following the routes of settlement. As well, ships from Europe frequently used soil for ballast. Releasing the ballast in Canadian harbours also released the earthworms or their cocoons. However their travels have not taken them everywhere, and there are parts of the country that have almost no worms.

The results are readily apparent. Creating as much arable soil in five years that would otherwise take 500 to 1000 years, Canadian agriculture owes much to these creatures. In fact, it's not an exaggeration to suggest that the credit for farming successes extends around the globe. After the last ice age, *Lumbricus terrestris* (one of the more commonly seen varieties) was found principally in the deltas of the Indus, Euphrates, and Nile. It's no coincidence that all three of these areas developed rich soils and strong agricultural economies. In Egypt, Cleopatra decreed that earthworms were to be revered and protected by all her subjects.

How is that an animal that's only a few inches long can have such an effect? How do they do it?

First of all earthworms are exceedingly good at digging and moving soil. As they tunnel, they mix the soil, breaking up large pieces and carrying down organic material. Surface soil and organic material from the surface is moved to the lower levels, resulting in a more uniform distribution of nutrients. Night crawlers get

their name from crawling on the surface at night and dragging leaves into their burrows; they may have tiny brains, but they're still smart enough to drag them in by the narrow end.

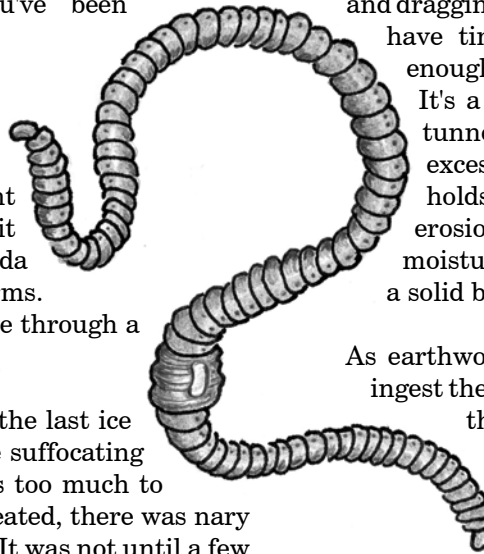
It's a best-of-both-words situation as the tunnels that worms create help drain off excessive water, while the mucus that holds the tunnels together prevents erosion and also promotes the retention of moisture in the soil, without turning it into a solid block.

As earthworms pass through the ground, they ingest the soil particles and organic material in their path, passing it out in a different, more usable format. It's estimated that, in an orchard, earthworms can dispose of 90% of fallen leaves.

Worm castings – the material that comes out of the back end of the worm – are rich in nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium – the same elements that you're used to buying in plastic bags at the garden centre. A thin layer of oil is deposited on organic matter as it progresses through an earthworm's alimentary canal. Since it can take up to two months for this layer to completely disappear, the nutrients become available on a gradual basis – a little like a natural slow-release fertilizer. In addition, carbonate of lime is added by calciferous glands inside the worm, reducing the acidity of the soil it leaves behind.

How do you know if you have enough worms in your soil? While it's usually a case of "the more the better", anything less than ten per cubic foot is usually considered to be a little too low. The population is often determined by the amount and the character of food available. Soils with low nitrogen levels will have low densities. In contrast, manure will increase the numbers.

An examination of many eastern North American forests will frequently turn up only a small number of worms – a result of the acidity of the soil. However, this is slowly changing, as those European species that are so essential to agriculture are reaching the forests and turning into foreign invaders. As they gobble down the leaf litter on the forest floors, they're also changing the ecosystems. Trees that have evolved to live in soils that are high-acid and low-nutrient are now having to compete with plant species that hitherto had been unable to survive on the forest floor.



## Spring Cleaning

Sunshine and 10 degrees -- not too cold, and not too hot. Perfect weather for a day in the garden. On April 24, 25 members of the Garden Club, along with 11 members of the community and several local politicians, came out to clean up The Rockery and the nearby sections of Stan Wadlow Park. The turnout and the amount of garbage collected were each among the biggest in East York. We're still trying to decide if collecting a huge amount of garbage was a good or a bad sign.



Among those in attendance were Jean Quinn, Darina Quinn, Grace Masterton, Glen Hutzul, Karen Bell, Wini Stoddart, Sheila Clarke, Silvano Segas, Christina Staios, Helen Linzer, Veronica Callinan, Suzanne Bond, Debbie Reesor, Diane Brockman, Ruby Brett, Bruce Arkwright, Barbara Foster, Diane & Peter Ronan, Susan Bartlett, Betty Goldring, Dawn McEachern, Malcolm Geast, and Roz Regnier. (Apologies to those whose names we've missed here.)

In the next couple of weeks, we'll be making some decisions regarding the future planting and design of The Rockery. If you'd like to be involved, please speak to Diane Ronan or Malcolm Geast.

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Always remember that, despite all of its sophistication, mankind owes its very existence to four inches of top soil and the fact that it rains.

## Get out your cameras

Now that the spring weather is finally upon us, it's time to bring out the camera to start taking pictures of the spring blossoms that we've waited so long for. By happy coincidence, Spring Blossoms is one of the categories in this year's Photography Contest. You'll find all the classes on page 10 of your yearbook. The deadline for entries is October 16 (entry forms will be available in September and October), so you've still got plenty of time to take those pictures.

We're also encouraging you to enter the photography contests at the OHA's annual convention. The deadline for entries is June 1 (you don't have to attend the convention to enter). There are two competitions, slide and print, with 10 categories in each. We'll have copies of the category lists at the May meeting, or you can get them from the OHA's website (there's a link on our site, [www.eygc.ca](http://www.eygc.ca)). You can also give us a call at 416-429-4719.

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## July Meeting

The July meeting will be a pot-luck supper held in Stan Wadlow Park, right next to The Rockery. Last year's meeting at the same location went quite well, but with one hitch. Handicapped access was more difficult than we would have liked, and as a result, there were a few members who were unable to enjoy the evening. However, we're happy to tell you that full handicapped access will be available this year, through the use of a lane way we recently discovered, and which provides access to the picnic area at the top of the Rockery.

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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:

Karl Barmania	Veronica Callinan
Denise Chong	Roberta McArthur
Thelma Sookman	

## Upcoming Events

May 22 to 24, and May 29 to 30

**Lilac Festival at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Burlington** – The world’s largest collection of lilacs provides a stunning landscape and beautiful fragrances during this three-day celebration.

Wednesday, May 26

**Contain Yourself: Avant Garde Gardening at the Toronto Botanical Garden** – Kerstin P. Ouellet, American author, will share with you her latest designs using many new and underused plants. Learn how to enhance your container gardens with perennial and ornamental grasses and how to make the most out of your container garden program. Starts at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$12, free for members.

Thursday, May 27

**Pond Life Awakens at the Don Valley Brick Works, Pottery Road** – Discover the great diversity of pond life as it emerges from winter. Watch red-winged blackbirds fly over rushes and cattails, listen for frogs calling out for mates and survey the insects skating across the water. Conservation staff will provide guidance and equipment. Runs from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 30

**Toronto African Violet Society Annual Show and Plant Sale at the Toronto Botanical Garden, Lawrence & Leslie** – On display will be prize winning violets in each category. Check out the educational exhibit and ask questions of other growers, their secrets and find the answer to your problems of growing violets. Along with a plant sale for those wishing to add to their collections, there will be a supplies table with pots, soil, fertilizers and starting mix. Doors open at 11:00 a.m.

Sunday, June 6

**Canadian Iris Society Show and Canadian Peony Society Show at the Royal Botanical Gardens** – Runs from noon to 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, June 10

**June Meeting of the Leaside Garden Society at Trace Manes Community Centre, 110 Rumsey Road**  
Speaker Sandy Carlton speaks about *Daylilies*. Starts at 7:30 p.m.

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