



## Message from the President

*by Malcolm Geast*

As 2007 comes to a close, we can look back on a year of enjoyable activities, accomplishments, and the odd challenge. This year we heard an interesting array of speakers, visited members gardens, expanded our planting at The Rockery, participated in community events, enjoyed a bus trip, marched in East York's Canada Day parade, picnicked in the rain, viewed and judged front gardens, and displayed the results of our efforts at flower shows and the OHA convention.

But of course, there were a few trying times. For all gardeners in East York, the lack of rain was one of the most significant problems this summer. How ironic then that 2007 was the first year in the past decade that the July potluck has had rain. And not just a few drops, but thunder and a downpour. But whether it was good luck or good planning, this year we had moved from the unsheltered expanse of Stan Wadlow Park to Veronica Callinan's garden and the protection of its covered deck. Thanks for keeping us dry, Veronica!

One of our biggest concerns at the beginning of the year centred on the effect of the skateboard park that had been built beside The Rockery. However, neither noise nor the appearance of the park have been significant problems, and we're pleased to be able to show that two organizations with such disparate activities can work together and co-exist side by side.

The credit for the successes of 2007 must go to the combined efforts of many people. The continued transformation of The Rockery has only been possible because of the work put in by volunteers who plan, clean up, weed, plant, prune, deadhead and water. Without the judges provided by our Club, the East York Blooming Contest would not take place. Our participation in the Environment Day activities in June, the Canada Day sales of plants and "attic treasures",

and the Canada Day parade could not happen without volunteers from our Club.

Once again this year, we had a fun bus tour. Credit for the day goes to Roz Regnier, who planned, scouted out, and arranged the trip. The success of our flower shows, and the enjoyment of the participants and spectators comes as a result of the work of Cristina Brown, Betty Meyers, those who clerked, and those who entered.

As our Program Coordinator, Anna Leggatt once again provided us with a slate of excellent speakers who informed and entertained all year long. And our meetings wouldn't be complete without refreshments. Thanks go to Elizabeth Malone and Brenda Mackinnon for organizing the refreshments each month (and of course, to those who supply cookies each month).

After four years as editor of the Club's newsletter, I stepped down during 2007. Susan Bartlett is your new editor. Have fun Susan, and we look forward to reading The East York Garden in 2008.

And finally, I'd like to thank all the members of the Club's Executive Board for their work during 2007. The job of President is made so much easier when working with people who are always ready to volunteer and to provide new ideas.

## Welcome New Members

Please welcome the following new members:

Jae Blue	Akemi Kobayashi
Jennifer Cruickshank	Pam McGillicuddy
Alice Carriman	Theo McLaren
Marg Downs	Marion Stephens
Lesley Grimshaw	Karen Sutor
Ase Hallgren	Lynda Tanner
Susan Hanrahan	

## Introduction

My name is Susan Bartlett and I have been on the Executive for the past four years. I have been gradually taking over the writing and editing of the newsletter from Malcolm Geast, who is still very generously assisting with the addressing, stamping & delivery of the finished product.

I live and garden in East York with my husband Paul (also an EYGC member). We have replaced our front yard lawn and a parking spot with shrubs and perennials but now we have a young daughter so any large projects are on hold and we just try to keep the weeds at bay. I still consider myself a beginning gardener.

I look forward to providing you with interesting and timely articles and updates on the club's activities and membership. If you have any questions, comments, or items you'd like to submit, please contact me at (416) 467-4945 or [susanb@stockwoods.ca](mailto:susanb@stockwoods.ca).

## “Greening” of Meetings

As gardeners, our activities and interests are inseparable from the natural environment. The Executive has been discussing ways in which our club meetings can lessen their environmental impact and we are proud to say that at the November AGM and potluck we will be providing biodegradable plates, cutlery and cups. While the monetary cost for these dishes is higher than paper and plastic, we feel it is worth it. By disposing of dishes and food scraps in the green bin, we will greatly reduce the amount of garbage sent to landfill.

Many clubs and groups have done away with providing any cups at their meetings. At this time we will continue to provide cups, but we encourage members to bring their own mug for coffee or tea.

## Important News - Downspout Disconnection

In many older homes the downspout connects directly to the sewer. During heavy rains, this can result in flooding and untreated water going

directly into the lake. For the past 10 years, through the voluntary Downspout Disconnection Program, the City paid for the cost of disconnection when feasible (and installation of a rain barrel if the homeowner wished).

However, the City is considering making downspout disconnection mandatory. If this is passed, homes that aren't disconnected within three years will face fines. The City has extended the deadline to apply for free disconnection to **November 20, 2007**. After that, homeowners will have to pay for the costs of disconnection themselves (anywhere from a few hundred dollars to a thousand dollars in more complicated cases).

If your downspout is still connected or if you are unsure as to its status, you can call 416-392-1807 by November 20 to get on the list for free inspection. For further information: [http://www.toronto.ca/water/protecting\\_quality/downspout.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/water/protecting_quality/downspout.htm)

## Final Group Rockery Day

Sunday October 14 was the last group volunteer day at the Rockery. A lot of annuals were still in bloom and the difficult decision was made to remove them before the frost could damage them and while the weather was still reasonably pleasant. The City donated several hundred bulbs and all were planted so the Rockery should look great in the early spring.

## Agnes Macphail Square

On a Sunday in September a few club members assisted Brian Green of City Parks & Recreation with sprucing up the Agnes Macphail Square. In addition to planting bulbs, some of Janet Badali's exceptional donated plants were given a second home. 10 pots of chrysanthemums donated by Cindy Townshend were placed in Agnes MacPhail Square.

The Square is located on the southwest corner of Pape and Mortimer Avenues.

## Gardening Entomology Gets a Stamp of Approval

By Malcolm Geast

Over the past few years, we've become accustomed to seeing horticultural subjects on many of the stamps that are used on our mail. In 2005, many of the regular-issue stamps (known as "definitives") took on a floral theme. The domestic rate (51¢) displayed a bright red bergamot, while the U.S. rate (89¢) had a lady's slipper, and the international rate (\$1.49) a blue poppy. In 2006, the fairy slipper was added to the \$1.05 stamp, a special issue to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Ontario Horticultural Association featured four garden stamps, and a new issue of several of the definitive stamps had a wildflower theme. And earlier this year, two lilacs developed in Canada were the subjects for another special issue.

Released on October 12, the new theme of the "low-value definitives" (1¢ to 25¢), is "beneficial insects", a theme that, while not horticultural, has a definite interest to us as gardeners. Featured are the lady beetle (eats aphids), the golden-eyed lacewing (also eats aphids), the northern bumblebee (a prolific pollinator), the Canada darter (eats mosquitoes), and the cecropia moth (this one is known for the extremely strong silk spun for its cocoon; it can, however have the bad habit of defoliating some shrubs in the late summer or fall). It's unfortunate that these are stamps are among the least-used denominations, as they are among the best looking stamps issued by Canada Post. But the good news that you can collect the entire series by visiting any post office. And it'll only cost you 44¢!



© Canada Post Corporation 2007. Reproduced with Permission

## Kudzu – “The Plant that Ate the South”

By Susan Bartlett

You may have heard of this vine, often referred to as “the plant that ate the South”. In the 1880s Kudzu was imported from Japan and China into the southern States to control erosion, where the warm, humid climate made ideal growing conditions. Kudzu thrived so well that in 1998 U.S. Congress classified it a noxious weed.

Kudzu can grow two metres a week in all directions, smothering and killing other plants, including tree seedlings. In some states such as Georgia it lines the highways and completely covers abandoned vehicles and buildings. In all it covers about 3 million hectares in the U.S.

Not only is Kudzu prolific and invasive, it has been blamed for negatively affecting air and water quality by contributing to the formation of ground-level ozone (a component of smog) and the buildup of nitrogen in rivers and lakes.

Some researchers fear that it is only a matter of time before climate change and warmer winter temperatures make it possible for Kudzu to survive in Canada. Kudzu cannot survive temperatures below -16° Celsius but in recent years has been seen as far north as New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The local media have presented an alarming picture of an unstoppable vine, unregulated by the Canadian government, marching up from the south.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Kudzu cont'd***

However, there is an alternate view of Kudzu. In China, where it's cultivated as a crop for its beneficial medicinal properties and as feed for grazing animals, it does not grow indiscriminately. Here in North America researchers feel Kudzu shows promise for treatment of alcoholism. Kudzu starch can be used in food products i.e., as a natural thickener in pastries and gravies. The starch also makes sturdy paper products. A study may be proposed to assess Kudzu's effectiveness as a fossil-fuel replacing biofuel. Studies are also underway in Kudzu's effectiveness at soil remediation and improving topsoil.

### **Photo Contest 2008**

*By Malcom Geast*

The entries are all in, and the judging has been finished. All that's left for the 2007 EYGC Photo Contest is the announcement of the winners – and that will take place at this month's Annual General Meeting. So, now it's time to start thinking about next year.

In 2008, we're planning on making a couple of more changes to the competition – changes that will add a little more opportunity for participation by all members, including those who aren't contestants.

Last year we tried a new monthly contest, known as the "People's Choice Photo Contest". In February and April, we chose a couple of unusual categories and asked you to bring in your photos for everyone else to judge. The response was positive enough for us to expand next year to include January and March as well. The rules will stay the same as they were this year (one print, no larger than 5 by 7 inches, with your name on the back, received by 7:15 p.m.) As we did in 2007 we'll be leaving it up to you to interpret the categories as you see fit. The 2008 categories will be:

- January: Christmas Flowers
- February: Red Hot
- March: March Madness
- April: Frozen

It is difficult to come to a conclusion about an invasive species when information is so mixed. The one irrefutable fact seems to be that in the right conditions and when left unattended Kudzu is unstoppable. However East Yorkers can probably afford to relax a little as Kudzu dislikes sandy soil.

1. (*Globe & Mail*, Aug. 22, 2007; *Toronto Star*, Oct. 13, 2007)

Sources:

<http://www.thestar.com/living/article/265643>

[http://www.cbc.ca/news/viewpoint/vp\\_strauss/20070904.html](http://www.cbc.ca/news/viewpoint/vp_strauss/20070904.html)

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/pumo1.htm>

<http://www.yahoolavista.com/kudzu/>

Complete rules will be in the yearbook, and in the January newsletter.

The Annual Contest will also be changing. We'd rather not describe them yet, since we're still working out some of the details, but for now we can let you know what the categories will be:

1. Captured Beauty (close-up of a single flower)
2. Black & White ( A monochrome picture with a horticultural subject)
3. Garden Baskets
4. A Bench in the Garden
5. Mellow Yellow (Yellow in the garden)
6. Anything Grows (Any horticultural subject) (Adult category)
7. Anything Grows (Any horticultural subject) (Children's Category)
8. Anything Grows (Any horticultural subject) (Youth's Category)

### Our Mistake...

In the September-October newsletter, we inadvertently left out some important text in David Brooks' article about clematis. In particular, the middle portion of a paragraph with information regarding placement of the plant and fall-to-spring care was omitted. With our apologies to David, here is the correct version of that paragraph:

As mentioned, clematis generally bloom on either new or old wood. For clematis that bloom on old wood it is important to take care of the old wood over the fall, winter and spring or the result will be very few blooms. This means the plant should be placed where people or animal damage will be minimized. Pruning usually consists of trimming above a couple of strong buds.

### Upcoming Events

**The One of a Kind Christmas Show - Thursday, November 22 - Sunday, December 2, 2007**

Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place, Toronto - Weekdays 11am - 10pm, Saturdays 10am - 9pm, Sundays 10am - 6pm. Admission Adults \$10 Seniors \$6.50 Children (12 & under) Free. Small discount available online <http://www.oneofakindshow.com/>

**Paradise Found Lecture – Toronto Botanical Gardens - November 22, 2007 - 7:30 p.m.**

John Bassett Theatre, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, North Building  
Admission \$35 - shopTBG, 777 Lawrence Ave. E., By Phone: 1-800-265-5656 ext.341  
online: <http://www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca/events/paradisefound.htm>

**Ten Thousand Villages Mennonite Christmas Festival - Fri. Nov. 30, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm; Sat. Dec. 1, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm; Sun. Dec. 2, 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm**

Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay West Toronto, free admission. Support goes to artisans from developing nations from the sale of fairly-traded handcrafted gifts. <http://www.harbourfrontcentre.com/>

**Black Creek Pioneer Village Christmas by Candlelight**

December 8, 15, 21 and 22, 2007, 6 – 9:30 p.m.

Advance reservations. Lamplight program only: \$25 (taxes included); Program with dinner: Adults \$70, Children 12 and under \$50 (taxes included). For more information call: (416) 667-6295 or see <http://www.blackcreek.ca/>

### 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.)

Membership fees are due by January of each year. Fees for 2008 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  
153 Durant Avenue  
East York, ON M4J 4W4