

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, May 15, 2008

Speaker: Des Kennedy

Topic: The Ten Commandments of Gardening

Also on: Members' Plant Sale, Flower Show

Des Kennedy is an award-winning journalist, broadcaster, author and environmental activist. He has written critically acclaimed books as well as feature articles on environmental issues, gardening and rural living in a wide variety of publications.

The gardens he and his partner Sandy have created on one of British Columbia's Gulf Islands have been featured in numerous books, magazines and calendars. Des's humour, irreverence and passion for gardening and the natural world have made him a speaker in demand across the country. We expect to attract a large audience, so you may want to arrive a little early.

The members' plant sale will be held after the talk (see p. 2 for details). This will also be our first flower show of the season.

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

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Speaker: Reggie Morgan

**Topic: Daylilies, New Trends and Old Favourites
(Janet Badali Memorial Lecture)**

Reggie is a retired teacher and a member of the Ontario, Canadian and American Daylily Societies as well as The Ontario Rock and Hardy Plant Society. Reggie and her husband John, own and operate Ridley Gardens in Toronto, a mixed perennial garden with assorted flowering shrubs, hostas and dwarf conifers. Although their passion for Daylilies began just six years ago, they now specialize in growing several hundred recent Daylily Introductions from both American and Canadian Hybridizers and grow more than a thousand Daylily seedlings each year.

There will also be a flower show. Members whose surnames begin with O through R are asked to bring some cookies or sweets for the evening's tea. There will be a 50/50 draw after the meeting.

From the President's Patch

by Veronica Callinan

Despite the cooler temperatures, spring and time are marching along. Regardless of the temperatures, rain or sun conditions – spring gardening tasks are underway. It's time to prune vines, clear any cruff left over from last year, and remember where everything is supposed to be. This is the perfect time to split hostas, ornamental grasses and sedums. But, don't forget to ENJOY this season, because in only no time, the peonies will be drooping.

Just a few weeks ago, Jeff Mason gave us a brilliant talk on drought tolerant plants. Then Anna showed us many imaginative ways of hedging. Lorelei brought us very workable lawn care alternatives to chemicals. All very interesting topics, and from such knowledgeable and great speakers! Our next speaker is Des Kennedy, from Denman Island, British Columbia. His talk on "Ten Commandments of Gardening" promises to be very, very funny. If you have any comments or suggestions on the speakers, please let Anna Leggatt or myself know.

Don't forget East York's Environment Day, June 7th at the Stan Wadlow Rink parking lot. If you have any old paint cans, florescent tubes or old computers – this is a great venue to dispose of them safely, and for free. EYGC will have a table and we're hoping to sell plants - and rhubarb, which tends to sell quickly. So, if you have any to donate, just let myself or any of the board members know.

Last fall, EYGC volunteers helped the city plant new beds around the Agnes Macphail Square at the corner of Pape and Mortimer. If you get a chance to go by there, check it out! Our regular "patch of beauty" is the Stan Wadlow Park Rockery. I want to send a hearty thank you to the more than 30 people who came out for the Community Clean Up day on April 26. Many hands made very light work! The Skateboard park generated a bumper crop of young hands, too. The best part though – there was very little actual garbage compared to previous years. The emphasis on keeping the park clean has paid off. On the other hand, there

was LOTS of yard waste, so it was terrific we had all those volunteers to help. Thanks to all of you, again. (If you left a grey woman's fleece at the park, I have it but darn, it's too small!)

I also want to congratulate Paula Cameron-Meany. Paula designed our 2008 Yearbook, and it took **FIRST PRIZE** for "Yearbooks without advertising", at the District 5 AGM! Big red ribbon! Woo Hoo! Paula worked really hard to collect everything, get it all laid out, proofread and published in time for our January meeting. That was a really tough feat and she did it in style. Thank you Paula!

I hope to see you on May 15th! As always, feel free to contact me, veronica@eygc.ca, or 416-750-9758.

Members' Plant Sale – May Meeting

The annual plant sale will be held at the May meeting. This is a very popular event and for a good reason; it's a great opportunity to pick up plants that grow in our area for very reasonable prices, as well as help raise funds for the Club.

As always, we need donations to make the sale happen. Perennials, biennials, annuals, bulbs, tubers and even extra seeds are welcome. Please mark your plant's container clearly with the name and colour. Any instructions are helpful, such as time of year for blooming, sun or shade loving, etc. If your plant is rare or unusual, please indicate so and it will be priced accordingly.

We still need volunteers to assist with pricing plants before the meeting or handling the cash sales. (As a thanks, volunteers get to set aside one plant of their choice.) If you would like to help, please call Lee Pritchard at 416-467-5624.

Canada Day – Tuesday, July 1

Canada Day is still a couple of months away but we will have our usual table at Stan Wadlow Park with our plant sale and attic treasures table. This is one of the biggest fundraisers for the club so please think about donating plants or small household items such as books, kitchenware, knickknacks, etc. We will also need volunteers to work at the table for about a two hour period. There will be a sign-up sheet at the May meeting.

If enough members are interested, we will walk in the parade. The meeting point is at Dieppe Park just before 9:00 a.m. and finishing at Stan Wadlow Park about 2 hours later. The pace is not fast and there are plenty of stops, giving us time to greet and interact with the public. One doesn't have to walk the entire route either. If interested in walking the parade, there will be a sign-up sheet circulated at the May and June meetings or contact Susan Bartlett, 416-467-4945.

District 5 AGM

by Susan Bartlett

On April 19, 13 Club members attended the District 5 AGM in Holland Landing on behalf of EYGC. All in all, we had a most enjoyable day. The meeting was hosted by the Mount Albert Horticultural Society, who not only provided a delicious lunch, home baked goodies and fair trade coffee, but gave away some truly lavish raffle prize baskets.

The focus was “country gardening in the city” and speakers Martin Galloway and Marjorie Mason focused on a natural, relaxed style of gardening which omits pesticides. Indeed, Martin Galloway's view is that insects are a part of the garden and just as deserving of our admiration and photographs as flowers and plants. While Marjorie Mason currently maintains a large rural property, that wasn't always the case so she is familiar with the challenges of small spaces and she also stresses simplified methods and plant and shrub varieties which require little water.

EYGC also won several prizes for yearbook, poster and flower show entries.

East York in the Movies

The next time you rent a movie you may recognize the winner of the 2006 Blooming Contest in the commercial and community category. This low rise apartment building on Gamble Ave. (west of Donlands Ave) was recently featured in the science fiction movie “Jumper”. Apparently the film's director, Doug Liman, drove by and liked the location enough to approach the building's owner to film a key scene.

(Source: *Toronto Star*, February 18, 2008)

Flower Show Clerks

The Flower Show Committee still needs clerks for this year's shows (May, June, September and the August Annual Show). There will be a sign-up sheet at the next meeting or you can speak to Linda Boyko, incoming Chair of the Flower Show Committee.

August Flower Show

This year's Annual Flower Show and Tea will be held on Saturday, August 16. While it's not the most immediate upcoming Club event, we need to start thinking about it. We will need people to help set up before the show and to assist during the show. We also need cookies, squares and the like for the tea. A sign-up sheet will go around at the next meeting or you can speak to any member of the Executive.

Rejuvenating Tulip Bulbs

Most cultivated varieties of tulips produce fewer blooms each year and eventually stop producing flowers altogether. Tulip bulbs that have exhausted their capacity to produce flowers can be brought back in a couple of years. While this requires a bit of work (and perhaps more problematically, an empty patch of garden) it may be worthwhile for those favourite tulip varieties that are no longer available. Below are the steps:

Rejuvenating Tulip Bulbs cont'd

Year One (Mid-spring): Once the tulips start producing few or no flower buds, feed them with a water soluble fertilizer high in phosphorus such as 15-3-15, every 10 days until the foliage begins to yellow and wither.

Year One (early to mid-summer): When maturing foliage begins to turn brown, lift and inspect the bulbs. Often the "parent bulb" has shrivelled and been replaced by several smaller bulbs. At this point, discard the parent bulb and keep the smaller offspring bulbs.

These small bulbs should be collected and any remaining stems trimmed off. After rinsing the dirt off them, leave them to dry in an open airy space for one week.

You will need a separate, small dry patch in your garden to act as "nursery bed". Ideally you should be able to place bulbs 10 cm apart. Prepare the bed by digging the soil to a depth of 25 cm and adding compost. Once the nursery bed is prepared and the bulbs are completely dry, plant the bulbs 15 cm deep and water well. They do not need to be watered until autumn, rather, they require a long dry time underground. You can mulch on top of the bed or plant drought-tolerant annuals such as cosmos or marigolds, and leave it until the next year.

Year two (spring): Generally, about one-third of these bulbs should produce flower buds. Cut the buds off when they appear or as soon as they open. Then, repeat the fertilizing regime followed the first spring by feeding the bulbs with a water-soluble fertilizer high in phosphorous and letting them "bake" for a second summer.

Year two (spring): Generally, about one-third of these bulbs should produce flower buds. Cut the buds off when they appear or as soon as they open. Then, repeat the fertilizing regime followed the first spring by feeding the bulbs with a water-soluble fertilizer high in phosphorous and letting them "bake" for a second summer.

Year two (Autumn): Lift the revitalized bulbs from the nursery bed and replant them wherever you like. Or, if bulbs are still undersized, leave them for yet another season until they're large enough to be replanted.

This article has been excerpted and condensed from the *Canadian Gardening*, May 2006 issue.

East York Blooming Contest 2008

With the early appearance of warm weather, gardens across East York are greening up and in many cases, bursting with the vibrant colours of tulips and daffodils. As we see more and more of that colour as the spring progresses, it reminds us that it's time to start thinking about the East York Blooming Contest again. As we've done for the past two years, we're teaming up with the City of Toronto to find the best front gardens in our community. Over the next couple of months you're encouraged to keep an eye out for particularly attractive gardens, and to nominate them for the competition. Nominations this year will close on July 1, with judging to take place in July. Included with this newsletter, you'll find a nomination form that gives you all the details about what to look for, and how to submit a garden for the contest (it's also available from the Club's website www.eygc.ca).

Winning gardens will be announced at an awards presentation at the East York Civic Centre in September. The first-place winners in each of the categories will be entered in the 2009 city-wide contest. Last year, East York gardens won all of the first place awards in the Toronto competition. Members of our Club will once again perform the judging.

If you are interested in being a part of this process, and didn't sign up at the April meeting, please call Malcolm Geast at 416-429-4719.

OHA News

In Memoriam

Some of you may have known Viola Lunau. There has been unfortunate news that she has passed away suddenly on April 2, 2008 in her 86th year. Viola was Director of District 5 from 1976 to 1980, and President of the Mount Albert Horticultural Society for six years between 1962 and 1986. Until the early 1990s she was also a flower show judge. She will be missed by her friends in the gardening community.

Gardening Assistance from Toronto Master Gardeners

The Toronto Master Gardeners maintain a website <http://www.torontomastergardeners.ca/>. There are factsheets on a large number of garden related topics as well as a forum. If your gardening question cannot be answered by any of the factsheets, you can register and post your question to the Gardening Q&A Forum and a Master Gardener will post a response.

There is also an InfoLine: 416-397-1345 where you can leave a message and a Toronto Master Gardener will respond as soon as possible.

The Story of a Tree

by Malcolm Geast

East York has lost one of its quiet sylvan heroes. For the past couple of decades, unnoticed by most passersby, a Norway Maple has made its home in a tiny piece of land at the northwest corner of Donlands & O'Connor.



Photo: Malcolm Geast

We've all seen weeds and even a few of our prized perennials growing in cracks in the sidewalk or other inhospitable locations. But this maple's life is nothing short of amazing. In a space not much more than a foot wide, with walls on either side (allowing for only a minimal amount of sunshine during its first few years), it managed to grow from a seedling, reach above the roofs of the buildings that had made it a virtual prisoner, and eventually attain a height of nearly 30 feet.

I first noticed the growth of this remarkable tree sometime in the nineties. At that time, it had probably already been growing for over a decade. Last fall, after marvelling for so long at its ability to survive, and after visiting my local provider of fine beverages across the road (i.e., the Beer Store), and with my camera in the car, I decided I had to take some pictures. My timing was quite fortunate, for sometime during the next few months, the crown was cut down, leaving only the portion of the trunk that was lower than the neighbouring structures.



Photo: Malcolm Geast

As sad as I am to see one of my favourite maples gone, it's not difficult to see that its demise was inevitable. Growing just inches away from the walls of the buildings on either side, the roots would eventually have caused havoc with floors, basements and pipes (if they weren't already). But its ability to survive against all odds for so many years won't be forgotten.

Upcoming Events

May meeting of the Riverdale Horticultural Society at the Frankland Community Centre (Logan Ave, south of Danforth)

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Horticultural therapist Margaret Nevett speaking about Gardening for Life – tools, tips & technique for easier, life-long gardening. She'll demonstrate tools to overcome physical challenges, and give tips on how to move safely in the garden, along with techniques for making gardening easier on everyone. Meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

Toronto Botanical Gardens Plant Collectables Sale

May 14 through 18, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

This sale features rare and unusual perennials, plants found in the TBG themed gardens, native plants, heirloom and ornamental vegetables, Hot Picks for 2008, and Piet Oudolf Combinations, plus knowledgeable assistance in plant selection from the Toronto Master Gardeners. For more information on this and many other TBG events and workshops (some require registration/fees) see <http://www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca/index.htm>

Spadina Museum's Annual Plant Sale at Spadina Museum

Saturday, May 31, 2008

Be sure to be here early as this popular annual sale of heritage plants from Spadina's historic gardens always sells out very quickly! Prices as marked. Admission is free. Further information:

<http://www.toronto.ca/culture/events.htm>

Evergreen Native Plant & Gardening Fair at The Don Valley Brickworks

Saturday, June 7, 2008 – 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Native plant nurseries, seed vendors and eco-businesses will help you green your garden. There will also be workshops and demonstrations on container gardening and community plantings.

<http://evergreen.ca/rethinkspace/?p=284>

Peony Festival at the Oshawa Valley Botanical Gardens (155 Arena Street, Oshawa)

June 14 & 15, 2008 (Saturday & Sunday)

Featuring the Gilbert Peony Collection, donated by the Canadian Peony Society, and featuring over 300 peonies. Free admission to the gardens, the floral design displays. Peony advice will be available.

<http://www.ovbgoshawa.ca/special-events.html> and <http://www.peony.ca/e.html/events.htm>

Country Homes and Gardens Tour

Saturday, June 21, 2008 - 10am till 4pm

Historic and contemporary homes and gardens in and around the village of Claremont, 15 minutes north of Pickering. A light lunch in the Claremont Community Hall with live entertainment. All funds raised will be donated to the Stephen Lewis Foundation for the care and support of orphans affected by HIV/AIDS in Africa.

Tickets: \$30 per person. Phone 1-800-567-9239 for tickets. <http://www.claremontcommunity.ca/>

NOTE: You can also always check the EYGC website for an up-to-date list of events:

<http://www.eygc.ca/Dates.html>

You can also go the OHA website <http://www.gardenontario.org/eve/index.php> where you have the option of viewing events by a single district or by all districts in the province.