

# 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.eyg.ca](http://www.eyg.ca)  
President:

Veronica Callinan

Vice President:

Linda Boyko  
Susan Bartlett

Newsletter Editor:  
Susan Bartlett



**Thursday, November 20, 2008**  
**Annual General Meeting & Pot-Luck Dinner**  
**Doors open at 6:30, Dinner begins at 7:00**

This is our final meeting of the year and the Club's Annual General Meeting (members only). As usual, there will be the election of officials for 2009, and the awarding of prizes for the Flower Shows and the 2008 Photography Contest.

To make sure the evening is not all business, we will have our usual pot-luck supper and a draw for some special prizes. If you are attending, please bring a dish of food of at least six servings. It is helpful if you pre-cut items such as lasagnes or desserts, and if possible, bring an appropriate serving utensil. Please try to put your name on your serving bowl or plate, this will make clean-up much easier. The Club will be supplying dishes and cutlery. Roz's famous punch will be provided, as well as coffee and tea. Any leftover food will be donated to Touchstone at the end of the night.

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**Thursday, January 15, 2009**  
**Topic: Water Gardening: Construction and Care**  
**Speaker: Peter Gill**

Peter Gill is a founder member and Past President of the Greater Toronto Water Garden & Horticultural Society. His garden was on the 2008 pond tour for the society.

Over the past fifteen years he and his wife Christine have put in five ponds on their property ranging from a small preformed kit pond to a free form lined medium sized pond. They have experimented with various pumps and mechanical filter systems including a biological filter.

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**Book Sale – To be Announced**

The Executive are considering having a sale of some of the books in the club library. We will welcome your donations to the sale (garden-related books only). This is tentatively planned for February and we will let you know once we have ironed out the details.

*In this package you will also find: Members' survey and 2009 Membership Renewal.*



## From the President's Patch

*by Veronica Callinan*

What a fabulous fall we've had. Who wants to "put the garden to bed" when the temperature is in the double digits? Roses are still blooming and some spring flowering shrubs have had a second bloom. And the colour! Wow! Amazing. Just as we gripe about the weather when it's miserable, gardeners really appreciate the good times, too.

With November comes our Annual General Meeting and Potluck Dinner, on the 20th. Please see the information later on in The East York Garden about the event. Food safety has been in the news quite a bit. Now, it's the law that our participants are informed that the food has not been inspected (i.e., eat at your own risk). The required notice will be posted at the dinner. We are requested (not ordered) to remind folks to follow general food safety practices – wash your hands when cooking, keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot. Nothing new or unusual there. We've never had a problem. 'Nuff said, I look forward to seeing everyone there.

I hope you can take a moment to read the Rockery report. It's been a busy and beautiful year - and it's not over yet. We're still planting some last minute City donated bulbs that just showed up! I'd like to share with you something that touched me. During our Fall Bulb Fundraiser, one of our members purchased some bulbs to help out the Club. When it came time to deliver them, she donated them to the Rockery! I don't want to embarrass you, you know who you are. Thank you so much. The bulbs are already planted and will look fantastic!

This is the last newsletter this year, so if I don't see you at the potluck, thank you for your support, sweets, shoulders and shovels over this past year. We accomplished much together. Our membership has increased and unlike many countries, we're fiscally sound. And, we had fun!

The 2008 Survey results are in and are included further on. The Executive really appreciates the feedback as it helps with all the events we organize. Speaking of the Executive, the last Newsletter noted that we could use more members on the Board.

There's one spot still open. We're a jolly bunch, lots of energy and we need another member to help share our jokes. Oh yes, and to help organize things around here. If you want to help but not in a "board" capacity, there's a committee that can use your help. If you are interested, please contact me, 416-801-9659 or [veronica@eygc.ca](mailto:veronica@eygc.ca)

## Gift Ideas

- ❖ How about giving an EYGC membership this Christmas? Few \$20 gifts can give so much and are so easy to give! Send Suzanne Bond a cheque and the name of who it's for along with their address (let her know that it's a gift and she'll send you back the new membership card). Her phone # is 416-423-5857.
- ❖ Susan Banks, a Club member, runs Garden Pizzazz which features handcrafted, Canadian made garden art and home decor. All EYGC members receive a 10% discount, just use checkout code gpff10 at the website: [www.gardenpizzazz.com](http://www.gardenpizzazz.com). You can also contact Susan by telephone 416-465-6925 or email: [sbanks@gardenpizzazz.com](mailto:sbanks@gardenpizzazz.com)

## Rules for Preserves Category

*by Linda Boyko*

1. Preserves must have been made within the preceding 12 months.
2. Only jars with intact seals will be accepted.
3. Jars must be filled, allowing only a reasonable amount of headspace to facilitate proper sealing. Half-filled jars will be disqualified.
4. No unnatural or "off" odours should be detected once the jar is opened.
5. Any visible mould or blemished product will result in disqualification.
6. Judges may decline to taste a product if they have any doubt about its safety. The decision of the judge is final in this respect.

The United States Department of Agriculture produces a publication entitled "Complete Guide to Home Canning". A copy of this publication is available in the club's library. The complete publication may be viewed online at [http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/publications\\_usda.html](http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/publications_usda.html)



## Buying your 2008 Christmas Tree

by Paula Cameron

Yes it's time to start thinking about buying your Christmas tree! But there are so many kinds and what should you buy? There are a number of varieties and options!

Depending on the length of time, for instance, more than three weeks inside, you should consider an artificial tree. If less than three weeks, a fresh cut tree is an option; and if you keep a tree up for 10 days or less, you can consider a living tree. When selecting your tree variety, keep in mind which part of the house the tree will be displayed. Cooler rooms give you more choices because the needles will hold longer. Warm rooms, choose a variety with excellent needle retention as the warmth will dry out the needles quickly. Make common sense decisions when selecting your tree and you will enjoy a great holiday season.

Christmas trees can be broken down into three basic groupings: firs, spruce and pines. Pines have clusters of needles attached to the twigs while firs and spruce needles are attached to twigs individually. Here are some commonly grown Christmas trees. Happy Shopping!

### **The Frasier Fir**

It has dark green foliage with silver on the underside of the needles, and the twigs are firm for easy decorating. It has excellent needle retention with wonderful fragrance.

### **Douglas Fir**

The needles are a medium green color. This tree has good needle retention and relatively easy to decorate. It has a natural pyramid shape, fragrant, with somewhat drooping branches. In the landscape, it serves as a great screen planting when mixed with other evergreen trees. It is a very popular Christmas tree.

### **Balsam Fir**

It has good needle retention and strong twigs for an easy to decorate tree. This tree resembles the Frasier fir in appearance and endurance. It has nice, dark green foliage and is one of the common Christmas trees. It is a long lasting, fragrant fir. This evergreen is native to north-eastern US and Canada. It likes cold winter temperatures and cool summer temperatures.

### **White Spruce**

Needle retention is good, probably better than other spruce trees. However, when the needles are crushed, they have an unpleasant odour. It has short, stiff needles with a blunt tip, making them less prickly than the blue spruce. The branches are stiff making it a good choice for heavy ornaments.

### **Norway Spruce**

It has a nice dark green color but poor needle retention. It has good stiff branches, making it easy to decorate. If choosing this variety, be sure to keep it well watered in a cool room and do not keep it in the house for more than two weeks. It is conical by nature, and open in appearance if not sheared heavily.

### **Scotch Pine**

It is a very easy tree to transplant if you are considering a living tree. It was imported from Europe by the early settlers. It has longer needles, about 1"-3" in length. The needles are in clusters and a medium green color. It has fairly good needle retention when it is kept watered.

### **White Pine**

It has long, clustered needles and good needle retention. It has little fragrance, but nice blue green color. It is very soft to the touch and has flexible branches, making it a tree that cannot handle heavy ornaments.



## 2009 Blooming Contest by Malcolm Geast

Over the past several decades, our Club has held many front garden competitions. In the early days, there was often a much greater emphasis on the lawn than there is today – for many years we awarded the John Hollinger Cup for the best-kept Front Lawn in East York Township. In 1984, the first “Mayor’s Blooming Contest” was held to recognize gardens throughout the community. The City of Toronto amalgamation resulted in a name change, and unfortunately, helped bring the contest to an end in 2000. But the contest that was revived in 2006 has shown, not only that East York gardens are just as attractive as ever, but that we’ve also come a long way from thinking that a front garden had to be little more than a lawn.

In this year’s East York Blooming Contest, over 120 front gardens received nominations. To reduce that number to about a dozen, 10 teams of judges (mostly EYGC members) carefully examined all 120. At the end of July, the final judging took place. This year’s judge was Paul Zammit, one of the GTA’s most enthusiastic and knowledgeable horticulturalists.



*Judging a garden on Browning Avenue*

The first place winners from the East York contest are entered in the city-wide contest the following year. This year, in the competition’s four categories, we’re happy to let you know that East York had three firsts and a second.

### Traditional Gardens

- ❖ First Place: 227 Glebeholme Blvd.
- ❖ Second Place: 104 Glenwood Crescent
- ❖ Third Place: 69 Wiley Avenue
- ❖ Honourable Mention: 11 Airley Crescent
- ❖ Judge's Choice: 227 Glebeholme Blvd.

### Environmental & Alternative Gardens

- ❖ First Place: 45 Browning Avenue
- ❖ Second Place: 95 Arundel Avenue
- ❖ Third Place: 163 Gamble Avenue
- ❖ Honourable Mention: 352 Woodmount Avenue
- ❖ Judge's Choice: 45 Browning Avenue



*Susan Wells and Stacey Shannon (79 Oak Park Avenue) receive their First Place Award at the City of Toronto Awards from Councillors Paula Fletcher and Janet Davis*

### Gardens in Commercial & Industrial Locations

- ❖ First Place: East York Gymnastics Club, 6 Dohme Avenue
- ❖ Second Place: Rose & Company, 708 Coxwell Avenue

### Gardens in Community Locations

- ❖ First Place: Bethany Baptist Church, 1041 Pape Avenue
- ❖ Second Place: Apartment Building at 194 Rexleigh Drive
- ❖ Third Place (tie): William Burgess School, 100 Torrens Avenue
- ❖ Third Place (tie): Apartment Building at 260 Gamble Avenue
- ❖ Third Place (tie): Kimbourne Park United Church, 200 Wolverleigh Blvd.



## An Easy Way to Improve your Soil by Anna Leggatt

I was intending to buy compost this fall to improve my various flower beds. Then in the spring I would cover the garden with cedar bark mulch to lessen the need for irrigation.

I thought I could have a pile dumped into the driveway and I would hire someone to spread it or do it myself. This would mean wheel barrowing loads through the garage, via a very narrow back door and then down a steep ramp. It would also mean that we would have a messy pile in the driveway in late fall which might freeze.

Several friends recommended C J Blowers ([www.CJBlowers.com](http://www.CJBlowers.com)). This is a landscaping service that has also been blowing compost, triple mix, grobark and mulch into various properties. They will also custom mix.

They can reach over 100 metres from the truck and can get into narrow and awkward spaces. They can work around existing plants and they clean up after themselves. The job will be completed in a day!

It is, of course, expensive. However, one acquaintance factored in cheap labour for spreading the compost or mulch and found it cost the same as doing it yourself.

The minimum order is 11 cubic yards, which is too much for some properties unless you are wanting new beds. However, you might be able to join with your neighbours.

Ask me about it in the spring.

## Gardeners' Tips & Tricks

We would like to start a regular "tips & tricks from gardeners" column. Please email me at [newsletter@eygc.ca](mailto:newsletter@eygc.ca) with anything you'd like to share (one liners are fine) and I will publish it in future newsletters. As we are entering the winter season, perhaps something along the lines of how you overwinter plants inside (if you are able to successfully keep Rosemary over the winter I would very much like to hear how), or maybe you have a good method of protecting exposed shrubs, or perhaps you have found a non-toxic replacement for salt on your walkways. I look forward to hearing from you.

*This month's advice is from Glen Hutzul who has generously shared his advices for hollies.*

## The Joy of Hollies by Glen Hutzul

It has been 4 years since I sold my home (and garden) and I still miss my holly plant. It was disease and pest free, thriving with only one fertilizing a year. After 8 years, the 18 inch high bush had grown enough that I pruned it back 18 inches each Christmas season, giving me lots of branches for gifts and decorating.

**Tip #1:** Packaged, cut holly has usually been treated with an anti-desiccant (anti-drying) spray; if you put those branches in water, they usually discolour and turn black. Fresh cut holly, if put in water will keep for months. Mine was still fresh and green in March, with both small, white blossoms and fresh, green berries.

**Tip #2:** you do NOT need a male & female plant. Mine was a "self-fertilizing" plant that produced both male & female flowers and loads of small, bright red berries (after the 5th year!).

**Tip #3:** a plant purchased at Christmas can be kept out of doors and planted (in a pre-dug hole) after the holidays. IF you keep it indoors for the holidays, I would suggest that you continue to do so until winter is over

**Tip #4:** the outdoor location is VERY important. Mine was planted on the north side of the neighbour's deck where it received lots of light, some summer sun but NO sunlight in March or April. Those are the months when the leaves of many evergreens (such as rhododendrons, holly and Oregon grape) dry out and turn brown.

**Tip #5:** buy the shape of plant that you want. A low, wide bush will take a few years at least to grow into a tall, thin bush. Better to choose the shape that you want.

**Tip #6:** small, 6 inch high pots of holly are for ornament only and seldom have sufficient roots to survive the winter. Discard after 2 or 3 weeks.



## Shrubs from A to Z

by Veronica Callinan

This is the second half of the list from the September issue which featured shrubs that will grow in our zone, 6a. (Originally taken from the Kennebec County Soil & Water Conservation District website:

<http://www.kcsbcd.org/Buffer%20Plants/Small%20Shrubs.htm> )

### Evergreens

**American Yew** (*Taxus canadensis*) Grows 2 to 3 feet high with a 6 to 8 foot spread. A low, straggling shrub often growing in clumps. Dark-green needles; red, berry-like fruit with poisonous seeds. Part-sun to shade. Cool, moist soil. Found in shady, cool, damp, rocky woods under other evergreens. Good as a ground cover. Does not tolerate heat or drought. Good for birds. Zone 3 N

**Bearberry** (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) Grows to 1 foot and spreads 2 to 4 feet. A trailing shrub, good as a ground cover. Small, dark-green, shiny leaves; small, white to pink flowers in spring, followed by red berries in late summer. Red fall color. Slow growth but reliable once established. Sun to part-sun. Poor, sandy, acid, dry soil. Drought and salt tolerant. Zone 3 N

**Bog Rosemary** (*Andromeda glaucophylla* or *polifolia*) Grows 1 to 3 feet with similar spread. Forms large clumps. Each plant is sparsely branched with leathery, deep-blue-green leaves and small, white to pink flowers in spring. An interesting and beautiful plant, especially good for naturalizing. Sun to part-sun. Cool, moist, peaty soil. Found in bogs and along lake shores. Zone 3 N

**Creeping Juniper** (*Juniperus* sp.) Many species and varieties available. Grows 6 inches to 4 feet with 2 to 10 foot spreads. Upright to prostrate forms; variable foliage, from coarse and prickly to fine and lacy, and from yellow-bronze to light-green to dark-green to blue-green, depending on variety. Several produce small, bluish to silver, aromatic fruits. Slow to rapid growth but all are sturdy and long-lived once established. Most require full sun. Wide range of soil tolerances; most do well in poor, dry soil but some tolerate wetter soils. A juniper can be found for just about every sunny situation. Many are drought, heat and salt tolerant. Most are good for birds and wildlife. Zones 3 to 5 N

**Dwarf Balsam Fir** (*Abies balsamea*) Similar to standard fir but much smaller. Grows 1 to 2 feet high with a 1 to 2 foot spread. Rounded shrub with dark-green needles. Sun to part-sun. Moist soil. Used ornamentals. Zone 3

**Dwarf Cedar** (*Thuja occidentalis*) Several dwarf varieties are available. Grows 1 to 4 feet high with variable spreads, depending on variety. Dense shrubs with rounded or pyramidal forms. Rich, dark-green foliage. A golden-needed form is also available. Full sun. Moist soil. Used ornamentals and for low hedges. Zones 3 to 4

**Dwarf Hemlock** (*Tsuga canadensis*) Several varieties; some with pendulous, spreading branches. Grow from 1 to 3 feet high with 2 to 5 foot spreads. Attractive, lacy, green needles. Sun to shade. Cool, moist soil is best. Must be well-drained. Used ornamentals. Zones 3 to 4

**Leucothoe** (*Leucothoe fontanesiana*) Grows 3 to 5 feet high and 5 or more feet wide. A graceful, broad-leaved evergreen with dark, lustrous foliage and small, delicate, fragrant, white flowers in spring. Nice, purple winter color. Good in woodland settings and as a high ground cover on shady slopes. Low-maintenance, reliable plant as long as it has shade and is not allowed to dry out. Shade. Moist, acid, well-drained soil, high in organic matter. Zone 5 (N)

**Lingonberry** (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*) Also called Crowberry or Mountain Cranberry. Grows to 7 inches and spreads. Small, glossy-green, leathery foliage and small pink or white flowers, followed by small, red fruit, sour but edible. Found in bogs and wet or dry, rocky, mossy slopes. Sun to shade. Dry to moist soil. Zone 4 N



## Shrubs cont'd

**Sheep Laurel** (*Kalmia angustifolia*) Grows to 3 feet with slightly narrower spread. Slender, dense, low-growing shrub with upright stems; shiny, leathery, deep-green leaves with pale undersides; and showy clusters of deep-pink, saucer-shaped flowers in early summer. Poisonous to livestock, hence, the alternate name, Lambkill. Sun to part-sun. Poor, acid soil; wet to dry. Tolerates occasional flooding. Found in moist, open swamps, pastures and rocky slopes. Zone 3 N

**Siberian Carpet Cypress** (*Microbiota decussata*) Grows to 12 inches high and can spread up to 10 feet. Densely branched with soft-green needles that turn bronze in winter. Rapid growth. Good as an evergreen ground cover. Sun to part-sun. Moist soil. Tolerates adverse conditions. Zone 3

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## Members' Survey

If you weren't at the meeting or didn't get a chance to fill your survey, there is a copy with this newsletter. Your opinions are important to the Executive so please take a moment to let us know your thoughts. Here is what you've told us so far:

*Are there any topics and activities that you are interested in for next year?*

- Soil testing/ reparation/improving
- Maintenance
- Perennial Shade Gardening
- Nature Gardening/Organic Pesticides/herbicides – where to buy, how to avoid needing any

*What would you like to see more of in the coming year?*

- #1 answer - garden tips and tricks

*What is your preference for the July meeting?*

- #1 answer - pot-luck supper in a member's garden.

Two Gardens have been offered for next summer's Pot Luck!

*Which were your favourite programs, speakers and/or topics in 2008?*

- #1 answer - Master Gardeners Question Time

*If you don't enter the Flower Shows, tell us why not:*

- #1 answer - I'd like to, but need to learn how.

*If there was a Saturday morning Workshop on Flower Arranging:*

- Majority said yes, would pay \$25-\$30

There were many bus tour suggestions, which are being reviewed considered. Thank you to all who responded, we look forward to another beautiful, bountiful and FUN year!

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## Rockery Update by Veronica Callinan

We're done for another season! And what a beautiful year we had at the Rockery! Mother Nature watered regularly for us. Maintenance continued into the late summer and fall as efforts increased to de-weed and beautify the berm. (The berm is that mound of weedy dirt between us and the Skatepark.)

The City didn't grass over the berm and wasn't mowing the weeds. So, we decided it was in our own best interest to take it over, plant it up and mulch it properly to reduce the weed seeds blowing into the area we already maintain. Earlier in the year, EYGC applied for an OHA District 5 grant for this new project. Our application was accepted and we received \$350! Yippee! The money went toward some gorgeous shrubs, Yuccas, grasses and shrub roses.

Anna Leggatt and the City donated large clumps of ornamental grasses which were also planted at the top of the berm. Against the dark backdrop of the dark conifers, the grasses will be seen across the field. We also received hundreds and hundreds of spring bulbs from the City, which were planted throughout the Rockery. Here's to looking ahead to an amazing spring!



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, November 13, 2008, 7:30 p.m. - November Meeting of the Leaside Garden Society (Leaside Library 165 McRae Dr.)**

Guest speaker Jean Johnson will give a presentation on the History of Botanical Illustration.. Further information: <http://www.gardenontario.org/site.php/leaside/news/>

**Tuesday, November 18, 2008, 7:30 p.m. - November Meeting of the Beach Garden Society ( Adam Beck Community Centre, 79 Lawlor Avenue)**

The awards for design and horticulture for the year will be presented, followed by inspirational ideas for holiday floral decor presented by Margaret Taylor, design judge and instructor. Further information: <http://beachgs.ca/>

**Tuesday, November 25, 2008, 7:30 p.m. - Invasive Species of the Toronto Area, Toronto Botanical Garden (Lawrence & Leslie)**

The North American Native Plant Society presents the first of six talks that are part of its 2008/09 lecture series. Presenters Paul Heyon & Gavin Miller each have an extensive botanical background and knowledge of the Toronto area that will draw on for this lecture. Admission is \$5 for members, \$10 for non-members. Further information: <http://www.nanps.org/>

**January 10, 2009, The Global Gardener: Gardening in a Changing Climate at the Toronto Botanical Gardens**

Toronto Master Gardeners presents an educational day of seminars, workshops and discussions. Pre-registration is required; fee is \$30.00. Keynote presenters are Alex Henderson and Natalie Iwanycki. Seminars include, among other things, topics such as Backyard Greenhouses or water harvesting. To register please contact Linda Boyko, 416-699-4308 or [lboyko@kpmg.ca](mailto:lboyko@kpmg.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.)

Single Membership       Family Membership  
 Renewal       New Membership

Age Bracket:       Under 18       18-60       Over 60

*Note: it is strictly voluntary if you choose to check one of these boxes. The rental rate at Stan Wadlow is a lower rate for organizations with a high number of seniors (over 60) and youth (under 18) therefore it is helpful, but not necessary, for us to have this information.*

Membership fees are due by January of each year. Fees for 2009 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  
 17 Fairside Avenue  
 Toronto, ON M4C 3G8