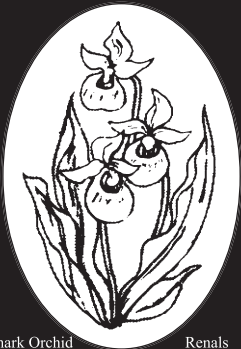


April 2013 Newsletter



First a howling
blizzard woke us,
Then the rain
came down to
soak us,
And now before
the eye can focus -
Crocus.

Lilja Rogers



Lanark Orchid

Renals

Perth & District
Horticultural
Society

P.O. Box 494
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District #2 of the
Ontario Horticultural
Association



March Meeting That Wasn't...

Many apologies to those of you who came to the doors of the PDCI for our March 19, 2013 meeting expecting to hear Neil Ritchie talk about new seeds and trends for this year and found the meeting cancelled.

We have since discovered that the School Board policy for school closures is that once the buses are cancelled, the school is not available for interest groups for that day or evening.

The snow flurries in the morning of March 19 forced the cancellation of the buses and by the time we were informed of the policy and that the school would not be available, it was too late to advise the general public and all members.

So the next time snow flurries and bus cancellations are announced on the morning of one of our scheduled meetings you will know our meeting is cancelled at the school. Hopefully there will be time for us to get the news out so no one is left standing at the door!

SNOW + NO BUSES = NO MEETING!

PDHS May Great Perennial Plant Sale

Soon we will all be mowing the lawn, planting our annuals and thinning out our perennials. Sounds too good to be true doesn't it?

As you know, our annual Great Perennial Plant Sale is one of our major fundraisers and we depend

on all members to get into their gardens, split some of those prolific plants, pot them up and bring them to the sale the evening before the event.

Perennials are the most popular offerings for the public but trees, shrubs, herbs, vegetables and houseplants are also welcome.

This is our largest fundraiser of the year and two factors are critical to the value of the plants that we sell. First is condition of the plant. If it is potted up early enough for new roots and foliage to be produced it will be more attractive and increase its value. The second factor is labelling. Included could be size of plant, habit (e.g. spreading), flowering period, flower colour, sun or shade, etc.

This year's sale is scheduled for Saturday, May 18, 2013 at Stewart School Gym from 8 am - 10 am. and collection of plants will be on Friday, May 17, 2013 from 4 - 7 p.m.

Not only do we need your plants, potted up and labelled, but we need your assistance in telling your friends and bringing your relatives!

Of course, we also need volunteers to help. Please contact David Archer during the break to offer your assistance or "voluntell" your spouse.

Library News

by Kevin Long, Librarian

Mary Vandenhoff of Nature Lover's Bookshop has given us a number of books, for which we are



President: Madeline Archer

Secretary: Peggy Clark • **Newsletter:** Pam Pratt, Irene Hofmann

most appreciative. We will introduce these books bit by bit, including this month's featured book *Small Space Gardening* (635.986 Mye) by Melinda Myers. If you want to create an exciting garden in a small space this spring, then this book may give you some great ideas. Learn more about vertical gardening, layering, use of dwarf plants, and using containers for maximum effect.

We have a few more magazine issues available. The April edition of Canadian Gardening is here, along with the April and June issues of Fine Gardening.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, May 14, 2013 in the PDCI Library. We are hoping there won't be any snow flurries and bus cancellations! Our meeting will feature Elizabeth Schleicher and "ROSAFRICA".

Not sure what Rosafrica is? It's a world wide Rose Show and Convention. So if you love roses you will love this meeting. Join us at 7:30pm for this exciting presentation.

May In-House Flower Show

Our own in-house flower shows are starting again. This is the schedule for our May 14, 2013 meeting:

Section 1: Horticultural Specimen

Class 1: Tulip - 1 stem with leaves attached

Class 2: Tulips - 3 stems with leaves attached of one cultivar

Class 3: Flowering branch no more than 24" above table

Class 4: Any Iris in bloom - 1 spike

Class 5: Bearded Iris dwarf - 1 spike

Vegetables in Containers or Square Foot

Asparagus, Artichoke and Rhubarb not suitable for Square Foot Gardening or Container Gardening.

		Minimum Depth	Distance Apart Seeds	Seed Depth	Distance Apart after Thinning	Square Ft Garden Veg per foot
Bush Beans	Warm	10-15"	1 ½-2"	1-1 ½"	4"	9
Pole Beans	Warm	12-18"	2-3"	1-1 ½"	6"	8
Beets	Cool	8-12"	1"	½-1"	2-3"	9
Carrot	Cool	6-9" Short 12-16" Long	½"	¼-½ "	2-3"	16
Swiss Chard	Cool	10-12"	1-2"	1"	6-10"	
Cucumber	Warm	12-18"	3"	1"	4-8"	2
Leaf Lettuce	Cool	8-12"	1"	¼"	6-8"	4
Onion Storage	Cool	8-12"	3"	¼"	3-4"	9
Onion Green	Cool	8-12"	3"	¼"	3-4"	16
Peas	Cool	12-14"	1"	1-2"	2-4"	8
Peppers	Warm	15-18"	2"	¼"	15-24"	1
Potato	Cool	12-18"	8-10"	4"	8-10"	1
Pumpkin	Warm	16-18"	2"	1-1 ½ "	24"	2 Squares with Trellis
Radish	Cool	6-8"	1"	½"	1-2"	16
Spinach	Cool	8-12"	1"	½ "	3-4"	9
Squash, summer	Warm	16-18"	3"	1"	18-24"	4 Squares
Tomato	Warm	15-24"	1-2"	½ "	15-20"	1 with Stake 4 squares with cage

- Class 6: Tree Peony - 1 stem
 Class 7: Allium over 4" bloom - 1 stem
 Class 8: Allium under 3" bloom - 3 stems
 Class 9: Asparagus - 3 stalks

Section II: Design

- Class 10: "Strong & Tall" - a vertical design
 Class 11: "Wedding Shower" - a small design
 Class 12: "Pageboy" - a miniature design

Never entered before? Why not give it a try? You may win. Consult your Yearbook for descriptions of classes.

District 2 Summer Flower & Vegetable Show

It's great to be writing about summer and flower shows at last. District 2 will be holding their Summer Flower & Vegetable Show on Saturday, August 10, 2013 in the Beachburg Hall, 1767 Beachburg Road. We will provide more information at a later date or you can access the Beachburg Horticultural Society's website to find more details.

Preventing Damping Off

from about.com/gardening

Damping off is a term used for seedling death by any of a handful of fungal diseases, including several root rots (Pythium, Phytophthora) and molds (Sclerotinia or white mold, Botrytis or gray mold).

Damping off can be very frustrating to deal with. You meticulously plant your seeds, and then begins the daily wait to watch them emerge. Sometimes, they don't germinate. Sometimes, they do, but they look yellowish, sickly, and weak. Or, perhaps most heartbreaking of all, they look perfect, until all of a sudden, they fall over. The base of the stem will look shrivelled and discoloured. This is damping off, and it is a pain.

How to Prevent Damping Off

Use a sterile potting mix, rather than soil from your garden. Outdoor soil can harbor fungus spores. Start with clean pots. If reusing pots, sterilize in 1 part bleach to 10 parts water.

Plant your seeds at the proper depth. Don't bury the plant's crown.

Don't crowd your seedlings. Be sure to leave room between them for air circulation. Water

seedlings from the bottom.

Top potting mix with a thin coating of sand or gravel, to keep the surface relatively dry.

Don't over water your seedlings or leave them sitting in water.

If possible, create a breeze by placing a small fan nearby and turning it on periodically each day.

Give your seedlings plenty of heat and light, so they germinate and grow quickly. Damping off only affects seedlings.

Remove any affected plants or trays of plants immediately.

Sterilize Your Own Soil

Sterilize small quantities of soil by heating it. Doing this in the oven gives off an unpleasant odor, but microwaves don't seem to produce the same problem. Place dampened potting mix in a microwave-safe container and cover loosely. Microwave on high for 8 - 10 minutes, until you see condensation under the lid. Close the lid and let the potting mix cool on its own. .

Make your own Organic Fungicide.

A weak solution of chamomile tea, misted onto the soil surface with a spray bottle two to three times per week, will help protect seedlings from damping off. Chamomile tea contains anti-fungal properties that offset any pathogens in the soil. Brew a weak batch of chamomile tea, one tea bag to two cups of boiling water. Allow the infusion to cool, then dilute it so that it is a pale yellowish color. Add the cooled, diluted tea to a spray bottle and use as needed. This mixture will be good for about a week. Spray the seedlings regularly until they are planted out into the garden to ensure that you don't have any problems with damping off.

Other options include using a splash (1 tablespoon) of 3% solution of hydrogen peroxide per quart of water as a seedling mist.

A dusting of cinnamon on the soil surface.

A strong, commercial fungicide is a last resort for controlling damping off.

Penny-pinching Gardens

by Helen Halpenny

Lanark County Master Gardeners

Today I went to a nursery and saw a herbaceous peony priced at \$99.00 – Yes, it was rather a rare plant. That made me remember my visit to a lovely garden a couple of years ago,

whose owner told me she had a \$200.00 budget for the entire gardening year. I was amazed at the time that her frugality could produce such a wonderful collection of plants and I asked her how she acquired such variety.

If you are beginning to garden and have limited money, some of her ideas may be helpful. First of all, start a compost pile. In the fall there will be lots of leaves and garden waste. You don't need any fancy equipment, just make a heap, and turn it to speed the rotting process. Soon you won't need to buy the store-bought products. Compost that is ready can be spread onto perennial beds in the fall after cleanup and it will help the plants get through winter, and will provide nutrients next spring.

Save seeds. Both vegetable and flower seeds can easily be saved, providing they are not hybrids. All open pollinated varieties will come true. Let the seed pods ripen on the plant and just before they split and spill their contents, collect the seeds and store in paper sacks until you are ready to plant. Seed collection is best done on the dry day. They should be stored in a cool, dark location. If you are collecting from the wild, never take more than 10% of the available seeds, thus making sure the species will continue in that location.

Trade plants with your neighbours and friends. An established garden always has clumps that need dividing and volunteer plants that pop up in unexpected places. Become a member of the local horticultural society and you will have access to plant sales, and group orders. And, you will meet other gardeners who will give you cuttings and seeds when you admire their gardens.

Start seedlings in early spring. Bright windowsills or grow lights will give the necessary light to raise healthy plants. Annuals bring fast results, but perennials, too, are well worth growing. Even trees can be grown from seed. They just need a little more patience. For the price of a packet of seed you can have dozens or maybe hundreds of plants. Furthermore, nurturing the little plants will give you a great feeling of accomplishment.

Start small. As your clumps of perennials get big enough to divide, your flower beds can expand to accommodate the extras. By

starting with a manageable area, you will not get discouraged with the weeding and other maintenance. As you get more proficient, you will enjoy a larger garden.

Visit other gardens and use ideas that you admire. Thoughtful design goes a long way in designing a successful garden. Collect ideas from many sources and during the long winter months do your planning. Some of the prettiest gardens are full of common plants used in distinctive and creative settings. A gardening friend says never to plant just one plant – always a grouping of at least three. Five is better. Of course everyone is tempted by the glorious selection of plant material at nurseries, and we should treat ourselves to special plants from time to time. But there is real satisfaction from 'gardening from scratch.' By economizing on some aspects of gardening we can save up for that coveted plant we long for.

Maybe I should go back and consider that peony again.

— It's a Snap! —

A series of tips on garden photography.

Follow the Lines

Garden paths give the viewer an opportunity to join you on garden walks. Flower beds and rows of colors can also offer visual lines to lead you into the garden. Look for them for added interest to help lead the viewer's eye into your photograph. Lines leading into the picture help create an illusion of depth to direct the viewer's attention to the main subject of the photograph. Remember, good composition begins with the way you arrange the visual elements of design; line, shape, color, light, texture and pattern. Look for, and emphasize them whenever you take a photograph.

Lines and paths into photos can be actual or implied. The eye follows either one with equal ease. Paths and visual stepping stones can lead the eye into the composition. Good composition is essential to interesting photographs.