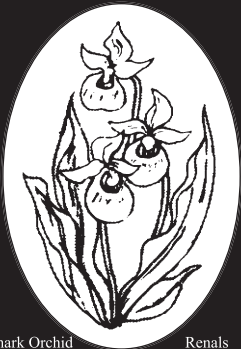


April 2014 Newsletter



Lanark Orchid Renals

Perth & District Horticultural Society

P.O. Box 494
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www.gardenontario.org

District #2 of the
Ontario Horticultural
Association

Yesterday the twig was
brown and bare;
To-day the glint of
green is there;
Tomorrow will be
leaflets spare;
I know no thing so
wondrous fair,
No miracle so
strangely rare.
I wonder what will
next be there!

L.H. Bailey



Start Planning Your Garden Containers

Planting in containers is a great way to decorate your front step, fill in empty spots in your garden and take advantage of a sunny balcony to grow vegetables. But if you have ever struggled with this practical as well as beautiful form of gardening then you are in luck. Our speaker for April is Christine Libon, who will be presenting a talk on all aspects of container gardening: plant choices, soils, and appropriate containers.

Christine has been a self-employed horticulturalist for many years, specializing in small urban gardens. Over this time she has provided her clients with many spectacular garden containers. She has many exciting and novel planting ideas to share.

Early Spring Gardening

Dale Odorizzi,
Lanark County Master Gardeners

This has been a long, cold, snowy winter and all gardeners are anxious to get outside and work in the garden instead of shovelling snow. It is too early to start to dig but what can you do? To prevent soil compaction, wait until the soggy ground of early spring has dried out before walking on lawns and flower beds.

As the days get longer, start feeding your indoor plants. They have been on a restricted diet as they have been resting for the winter indoors with not too much light. They want to start growing so now is the time to start feeding them with a fertilizer solution at half the recommended strength. Check the bottom of the pot to see if the roots are coming out. It may

President: Madeline Archer

Vice President/Secretary: Margo Fulford • **Newsletter:** Irene Hofmann

be time to re-pot these plants. It is also time to increase watering your indoor plants.

If you are a vegetable gardener, now is the time to start seeds for your tomatoes and peppers indoors. As soon as the ground is workable, plant cool weather crops such as peas, onions, cabbage, radishes and leeks in your garden. Visit our website at www.lanarkmastergardener.s.mgoi.ca on the Edible Garden page for articles on Early Planting and Starting Seeds.

Give summer flowering bulbs, such as cannas and dahlias, a head start by potting them up indoors under lights until after the last frost date. When all danger of frost has passed, plant them outdoors. Around the first of May, move them outdoors to harden off but be sure to watch the weather report and cover them or bring them in if frost is threatened.

Prune deciduous trees and shrubs (except those that flower or flow with sap in the spring). Spray scale infested trees and shrubs with dormant oil, before their leaves appear. Cut the stems of "Annabelle" hydrangea back to the ground. Apply compost or slow release fertilizer to flowering shrubs and vines, including roses, rhododendrons and clematis.

A mid spring application of fertilizer helps your lawn survive the hot summer months. If you have a bare spot in your lawn, now is also the time to overseed with grass seed. Pull out weeds when they appear in the gardens.

Spring is the most anticipated time of year. Get outside and enjoy it.

May Flower Show

Section I: Horticultural Specimen

- Class 1 Tulip – 3 stems
with leaves attached
- Class 2 Flowering Branch – no
more than 24" above
table
- Class 3 Any Iris in Bloom –
1 spike
- Class 4 Any peony – 1 stem
- Class 5 Any other spring bloom
from your garden
– named
- Class 6 Rhubarb – 3 stalks

Section II: Design

- Class 7 Novice Class: "A May
Day Celebration" – a line
design using spring plant
material
- Class 8 "Rainbow" – a miniature
design
- Class 9 "Windblown" – a kinetic
design

Pruning Time

Alexandra Wiens,

Prince Edward County Master Gardeners

This past winter has been a very challenging season for gardeners. Many of us have watched helplessly while ice, snow and wind have ravaged and damaged some of our favourite trees and shrubs. When the snow finally retreats this spring there will be plenty of debris on lawns and gardens. Many trees have broken limbs and branches that need to be removed. When bud break finally occurs we will discover how much our ornamental shrubs have died back due to our harsh winter.

It is a great idea to remind ourselves how to prune and what tools to use so that no injuries occur during spring clean-up. Remember an important rule: the branch should fit easily into the jaws of the tool you are using, if it doesn't, size up. Pruning shears are suitable for making cuts on branches up to 2 cm in diameter. Lopping shears are used when the branch is larger, up to 5 cm, or just out of reach. Pruning saws are best for larger limbs. The blade of the saw can be straight or curved but if you use a bow saw remember there should be no other obstructions within a foot of the branch you are cutting or you risk damaging other limbs on the tree or shrub. If you are using pole pruners to cut material above your head remember to wear head and eye protection.

The three-step cut is important when using a pruning saw to deal with larger limbs. If you have a damaged limb of moderate size (up to 8 cm) you can use the saw to remove it following this procedure. Make a first cut about 15-30 cm from the trunk, cut halfway through the branch. Make a second cut farther outward on the branch. The width between the two cuts should measure about the thickness of the branch. The weight of the limb will cause it to break between

the two cuts. Now that the weight is off the limb, make a third cut at the branch collar, close to the trunk of the tree. Always remember that large branches or those at dangerous heights are best left to professionals with the proper equipment.

Most of the pruning we will need to do this spring will be for sanitation purposes, also known as crown cleaning. This will involve the removal of any dead or dying branches. The heavy layer of ice we accumulated during the ice storm that swept through Ontario in December left behind damage that will make trees and shrubs prone to disease this growing season. Sanitation pruning should be done as early as possible to prevent disease. Remember that even evergreens benefit from occasional thinning to allow light into the center of the shrub. This will probably be an excellent year to do that in order to encourage new growth to replace the damage from the ice. Deciduous shrubs with coloured stems can have as much as one third their growth removed per season as the colour is nicest on young stems. So don't hesitate, particularly if it is a chore that has recently been neglected. Apply fertilizer to all damaged shrubs and trees to encourage new growth after pruning.

This spring will also be an excellent time to step back and inspect all trees and shrubs on the property for future problems that may increase damage next time we have a chaotic weather event. Examine the branches on mature trees. For greatest strength branches should form an angle of between 60-70 degrees with the trunk. Check to see if the limbs have good radial spacing. Is the trunk of the tree sound and disease free? Ask yourself if most of the tree canopy is within 66% of the height from the ground. If you see many branches that form a small angle with the trunk or the tree canopy is too low you may want to do some corrective pruning to prevent future damage from wind or ice.

PDHS 2014 Photography Competition

The classes for this year's PDHS photo competition are as follows:

- Class 1:** "Ice and Snow" – a picture of your garden in winter
Class 2: "Spring at Last" – a picture of your garden's first blooms

- Class 3:** "Midsummer Delight" – a picture of your garden all in bloom
Class 4: "The End is Approaching" – a picture of your garden in the fall
Class 5: "Who is Playing in My Garden" – a picture of life in your garden
Class 6: "An Outdoor Laugh" – a picture of your garden which puts a smile on your face
Class 7: "Bounty" – a picture of produce from your garden

Entry deadline is October 14, 2014.

The rules are basic:

- Color 4" x 6" print from film or digital picture submitted to convenor by email;
 - Photo class number and your name must be written on the back or indicated in email for digital images;
 - Only one entry per competitor per class;
 - Person entering must have taken the picture.
- When submitting your photos, keep in mind the horticultural value of the judging.

We will display the photos and ribbons (1st, 2nd, 3rd) at the annual Christmas Social in December 2014.

Convenor for the Photographic competition is Carole Anne Armour - Email: caarmour@hotmail.com

Selecting Flowering Crabapples

*Dr. Leonard Perry, Extension Professor
University of Vermont*

Few woody plants offer such value to landscapes and wildlife as do the flowering crabapples, with such variety in flowers and fruits and multi-season interest. These qualities make them one of the most popular small flowering trees. Just make sure in your selections to choose ones resistant to diseases. Newer introductions are often the best bets.

In the spring, the showy blossoms make their appearance in mid to late May before the lilacs bloom. Although actual time of bloom will vary from year to year, depending on temperature, a total bloom period of up to four weeks can be expected. The bloom period of an individual crabapple cultivar (cultivated variety) may vary from a few days to almost two weeks, depending on weather conditions.

Crabapple buds may be pink or red, and the open blossoms of the various crabapples may range from white to dark purplish red, with many variations of pink and red in between. Most crabapples have single flowers; a few have semi-double or double blossoms but bear fewer fruit.

Some good choices with white flowers include 'Adirondack', Camelot, 'Centennial', 'Dolgo', 'Donald Wyman', Guinevere, HarvestGold, Lancelot, Molten Lava, 'Professor Sprenger', 'Red Swan', Sargent, Sugar Tyme, and 'Tina'. Some good choices with pink flowers include 'Louisa', 'Robinson', and 'Strawberry Parfait'. For red flowers, consider Centurion, 'Prairifire', or 'Purple Prince'.

Most crabapples have attractive green foliage with solid margins, except for the deeply cut leaves of Golden Raindrops. Some have a distinct reddish or bronze leaf color for the first month or so of the growing season, while others retain the reddish coloration throughout the season as with 'Purple Prince'. Some crabapple cultivars even have ornamental gold to yellow fall colors as with 'Calocarpa' and Lancelot.

Crabapple fruits are two inches or less in diameter. The color ranges from bright red to purple and from bright yellow to orange, with intermediate shades and combinations. Fruits of some cultivars begin to color in August, while others do not reach their true color until September or October.

Good choices for red fruit include 'Adirondack' (orange-red), Camelot, Centurion (cherry red), 'Donald Wyman', Guinevere, Molten Lava (orange-red), 'Prairifire' (purple-red), 'Professor Sprenger' (orange-red), 'Purple Prince' (maroon), 'Red Swan', 'Robinson' (dark red), Sargent, 'Tina', and Sugar Tyme. Good choices for yellow to golden fruit include 'Centennial' (red-yellow), 'Dolgo' (red-yellow), Golden Raindrops, HarvestGold, Lancelot, 'Louisa', and 'Strawberry Parfait'.

Fruits of some cultivars ripen and drop by the end of August, while others may still be present ("persistent") in spring. If you don't want a landscape littered with fruit in the fall, look for those with persistent fruit such as 'Donald Wyman', 'Professor Sprenger', Guinevere,

Lancelot, Sugar Tyme, or 'Tina'.

When choosing crabapples, consider not only your preference for flowers and fruits, but where they'll be planted. Make sure the soil is well-drained and doesn't get waterlogged. They'll flower and fruit best in full sun, but will tolerate a few hours of shade per day only with fewer flowers (and so fewer fruits). If planted near a walk, or close to where they'll be viewed, consider ones with persistent red and small fruits, upright habit, or with fragrant flowers (such as 'Donald Wyman', 'Prairie Fire', or Sargent). If planted farther away, consider ones with larger and yellow fruits. White flowers and yellow fruits blend better with evergreens, dark stone, or red brick buildings. White flowers and red fruits blend nicely with lighter natural color backgrounds such as light brown and wood.

Flowering crabapple trees are generally 15 to 20 feet tall. The Round Table Series with names such as Camelot, Guinevere, and Lancelot, reach about 10 feet tall. Most crabapples are rounded or vase-shaped, but growth habit varies widely from columnar such as with 'Adirondack' to weeping as with 'Louisa' or 'Red Swan'.

About the only insect that might be a serious problem in some areas is the Japanese Beetle. Cultivars that have shown high resistance to this include Centurion, HarvestGold, 'Louisa', and 'Prairie Fire'.

Diseases are a much greater problem on many crabapples than insects, particularly on older cultivars. Many of the newer cultivars have been bred for resistance to the four main diseases which are the same as you'll encounter with regular apples—scab, fireblight, cedar apple rust, and powdery mildew. All the above cultivars have good to excellent disease resistance.

If diseases generally aren't a problem in your area, or you can tolerate some leaf diseases, there are many more cultivar choices. Beware of cheap trees at chain stores, as often these have few if any roots, and may only recently have been potted (basically a "bare root" plant). Visit your local nursery or full-service garden store for proven local cultivars with good disease resistance and good roots.