



Lanark Orchid

Renais

Perth & District Horticultural Society

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District #2 of the
Ontario Horticultural
Association

October 2010 Newsletter

I would rather
sit on a pumpkin
and have it all
to myself, than
be crowded on a
velvet cushion.

- Henry David Thoreau

President's Pen, October, 2010

Recently I was at my sister's "new" house near Coburg helping her with her gardens. She has already planted 450 trees she bought from the Forestry Dept. and we planted three 15-foot maple trees in a gentle curve along her winding driveway. It was an interesting experience working in the gardens around the house as she has a pretty well clean garden slate.

She bought at auction an 1860 log building which was once a post office and had it moved to a piece of land in the middle of a corn field. The house was chinked, rooms divided and two more sections of logs placed on top to create a full second floor.

This was her second year with her gardens, and soil amendment has helped considerably seeing as she has extremely sandy soil. Needless to say, her crop of carrots this year was extraordinary. Usually I find myself working on established gardens (e.g.

my own is about 40 years along and Inge Va which has been gardened for maybe 100+ years) and it was a different experience as we worked on plant placement, colours, how much sun/shade and shape of the beds around the house. "Not too big!" she kept saying as we edged and extended some beds - as if any garden could ever be too large!

It was a different experience mapping out beds and moving waaaaay back to see what the impact would be as we worked. It is written that it takes 5 years from start to finish - and when is a garden every finished? - to see a new garden move into its mature state. Nonetheless, if a plant just "doesn't look right" in its current location, there is a wrong colour grouping or something is too tall/too short, it can be moved. That is the beauty of working in any garden.

See you in the garden.....

Lynda

Gardening Workshops

There is still time to register for the last 3 Gardening Workshops put on by Perth Algonquin College and Master Gardeners. The remaining workshops are:

- Designing and Planting a Cutting Garden—October 14
- Lawn Care—October 21
- Pruning—October 28

All workshops cost \$35 and are held in Room 17 at the Perth Campus of Algonquin College. Call Algonquin at 613-267-2859

Notable Mentions

Several PDHS members made impressive showings at OHA Conferences and Shows and we are very proud indeed!

At the D2 Spring Show 2010

Madeline Archer won ribbons in the following classes:

- Class 30 Parkdale Market 3rd
- Class 33 Victoria Island 2nd
- Class 36a mini fresh 3rd
- Class 36b mini dried 1st

Linda Bartlett won in two design classes:

- Class 31 - On The Hill, Tall Vase, 1st place
 - Class 36a - Mini Fresh - 2nd place
- David Archer won:
- Class 32 - Corktown bridge 1st

District 2 Summer Show held at Elmwood School in Rockcliff

David Archer won the highest points aggregate in Section A. David was also Best in Show for Roses (hybrid tea). As well, David took home the Pewter jug for highest point aggregate in flowers/foliage in Sections A-E. Madeline Archer was awarded a

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Botanical watercolour picture for Best Design in Show.

At the 2010 OHA Convention held in Barrie, the awards kept coming for our Junior Gardeners:

Kyle Major took 1st in 12 and over category
Taylor Dunlop took 2nd in 12 and over category
Keeden Fisher took 2nd in the Under 12 category
Emma Lackey placed 5th in the Under 12 category
Also entered were Hannah Briar Delion, Austin Ritz and Emily Pettigrew. All of these Junior Gardeners were prize winners from the District 2 Spring Show as well.

The PDHS first annual Yeabook cover illustrations primarily photographic place 3rd overall.

Madeline Archer entered 2 design classes, coming 1st in one of them, David Archer won numerous ribbons in horticultural classes.

Congratulations to all of members for a job well done!

November Flower Show

1. A Christmas design for a buffet table
2. A Christmas design for a hostess gift
3. A Christmas centrepiece - a round design

Thanksgiving

Let us give thanks for a bounty of people:
For children who are our second planting, and,
though they grow like weeds and the wind too soon

blows them away, may they forgive us our cultivation and remember fondly where their roots are;

For generous friends...with hearts as big as hubbards and smiles as bright as their blossoms;

For feisty friends as tart as apples;

For continuous friends, who, like scallions and cucumbers, keep reminding us that we've had them;

For crotchety friends, as sour as rhubarb and as indestructible;

For handsome friends, as gorgeous as eggplants and as elegant as rows of corn, and the others, as plain as potatoes, who are so good for you;

For funny friends, who are as silly as Brussels sprouts and as amusing as Jerusalem artichokes, and serious friends, as complex as cauliflowers and as intricate as onions;

For friends as unpretentious as cabbages, as subtle as summer squash, as persistent as parsley, as delightful as dill, as endless as zucchini, and who, like parsnips, can be counted on to see you through the winter;

For old friends, nodding like sunflowers in the evening-time and young friends coming on as fast as radishes;

For loving friends, who wind around us like tendrils and hold us, despite our blights, wilts, and witherings;

And, finally, for those friends now gone, like gardens past that have been harvested, but who fed us in their times that we might have life thereafter.

For all these we give thanks.

Author Unknown

Ask A Master Gardener

Do you have a gardening question that you would like to ask someone about? If you do, consider asking a Master Gardener. Our Horticultural Society has 3 active Master Gardeners who always welcome questions. We also have a Master Gardener email address (lanarkmg@gmail.com) set up to receive questions. Each month, we will publish a question or two that might have wider interest in our newsletter. Of course, we will get back to you individually more promptly than once per month.

Dear Master Gardeners

This year, my potatoes grew well, but when I cut into them, they were hollow. What went wrong?

Thank you, Puzzled by Potatoes

Dear Puzzled:

Hollow heart is an abiotic disorder (caused by growing conditions or mechanical injury, not by a pest or disease) that can affect large potato tubers. When cut in half, the centre of the tuber shows an irregular hollow area. The hole is usually outlined in brown. As a rule, there is no decay involved and the tuber may be used with a little extra trimming. This may be caused by over-fertilizing which causes oversized potatoes with a hollow heart. Overwatering when the potatoes are sizing may also be a cause. Your hollow heart was likely caused by our overabundance of rain at the wrong time of year. Enjoy your spuds!

Lanark County Master Gardeners

If you have any questions, send an email to lanarkmg@gmail.com or call Dale 264-8135, Renai 267-7272 or Kevin 279-2098.

The 'No-Dig' Approach to Creating Garden Beds

If a new bed is in your plan, now is the time of year to put your plan into action. If this new bed is presently planted in lawn, you probably think that you will have to dig up all that sod. The saying, "No pain, no gain" is not for gardeners. Besides being very difficult and hard on the back, digging or rototilling will also churn up thousands of dormant weed seeds. Finally, being exposed to light and air will result in an eternity of weeding. Instead, follow these simple steps.

1. Mark the edge of your new bed with a hose. Play with the hose until you are satisfied with the size and shape of the bed.

2. Drop your mower bed down as low as it will go and cut turf as short as possible inside this edge. One can cut a small v-shaped wedge along the edge or just use vinyl edging or a bit of plastic fencing pegged in place along the edge. This edging is temporary to hold in your mulch.

3. Pile all your leaves (and your neighbour's leaves) inside this edging over the old turf. Chewing up the leaves first with the lawn mower or mulcher is nice but not absolutely necessary. The leaves should be at least six to eight inches thick, and wetted down. If you are creating a bed in the spring or summer, newspaper, four sheets thick and wet, will do the same thing for you. This mulch will smother the old turf and weeds keeping them from growing up through your new bed. Cover your mulch with a nice mix of topsoil, peat and compost to a depth of 4 to 6 inches.

4. Over the winter, the old turf and mulch will compost themselves. Your new bed will be ready for planting in the spring.

*Kathleen Lang,
Lanark County Master Gardeners*

The Joy of Spring Bulbs

by Ankarët Dean

One of the miracles of gardening is found in spring bulbs. WE buy them in the fall, plant them before freeze up and then, in the spring, there are our beautiful colourful flowers. No weeding, no watering, no fertilizing. Up they come ready to welcome spring. There are a few tricks to the trade, but essentially they are foolproof.

Choosing bulbs is the first step, and here a little knowledge can help.

Firstly one thinks of daffodils. These come in a huge variety of sizes, shapes and types. There are small dwarf daffodils for small gardens and rockeries, these usually bloom early. There are daffodils which have a lovely fragrance, like narcissi, and daffodils which

are very traditional like the 'King Alfred', and then there are some which are multi-flowered and even some that are pink. Some varieties are suitable for naturalizing. These are like old friends reappearing very year and multiplying. It is essential not to cut back the leaves until they have died back naturally, thus restoring energy to the bulb. I also fertilize these bulbs before they die back, using a water soluble fertilizer on a damp day. They must be planted deep, 5-6" down, and may be planted in a treed area before the leaves come out, but they hate to be in a wet area as the bulbs will rot. The greatest advantage of daffodils is that the bulbs are poisonous as are the leaves, so no problems with deer and small animals like chipmunks and squirrels.

The next spring favourite are probably tulips in all their glory. These will also multiply when left undisturbed and may even need to be dug up and divided after several years, Tulips come in a huge variety of colours and sizes, and also have a range of blooming times. The Ottawas Tulip Festival will plant a succession of blooming times so that they are ensured of a long, showy period of bloom. Tulip bulbs are tasty to some animals and rabbits enjoy chewing through the stalks and leaving the tulip beheaded.

Small spring bulbs, such as crocus, snowdrops, scillas etc., are a joy to behold in the early spring and well worth planting. It is worth covering them with a piece of fly screen to keep away the predators, especially if planted close to the house.

Visit the garden centres early to find the best selection and remember to look for them as the snow melts away in the spring.



It must be the same in Canada.....

When a home is properly landscaped it can increase its value by 14% and may speed up the sale of a home by as much as 6 weeks.

~Associated Landscape Contractors of America

Lifting and Storing Dahlia Tubers

Sensitive beauties that they are, dahlias blacken at the first frost. If left in the ground, the tubers will likely rot over winter, so lifting and storing is the way to go. Cut off the blackened tops, leaving a six-inch (15 cm) stem stub (move any labels you may have to the stem stub). Leave in the ground for about five days to allow new eyes to develop. Then gently loosen the soil and carefully lift out the clumps of tubers.

Wash off the soil, cut off the stalk at the base close to the tubers, and set the clumps upside down on sheets of cardboard in the basement or on a greenhouse bench. You want them to dry but not shrivel; it could take three hours or three days, depending on conditions. Affix any labels to the clumps or write on the tubers with an indelible marker.

Divide the clumps of tubers in fall or spring. Either way, look for tubers with eyes (the growth points where next year's stems will come from). The eyes

are at the ends of the tubers near the crown. With a sharp, clean knife, cut the tubers off the stem, making sure each has at least one eye. Discard tubers with no eyes or with long, thin necks. The "mother" tuber is unlikely to produce again so it can be discarded. Trim long "tails" off the tubers and any excess material around the eyes. Lightly dust cut surfaces with powdered sulfur to prevent fungal disease.

It seems there are many "best" ways to store dahlia tubers, depending on whom you ask. No method is foolproof and even professional growers lose up to 20 per cent, according to grower Barry Willoughby of Saanichton, B.C. Key is keeping the tubers dry (but not too dry), in the dark, at between 4 and 8 degrees C. Commonly, four or five tubers are put in a plastic bag (pierced with small holes) with peat, vermiculite or sawdust, and the bags are stored in cardboard or plastic boxes loosely packed with crumpled paper. Some growers wrap each tuber in plastic wrap and store them all together in boxes. If the temperature is constant, condensation doesn't seem to be a problem.

Whatever storage method you use, check the tubers monthly, toss out any with signs of rot, and give a spritz of water to any that seem to be drying out.

5 Steps to Saving Heirloom Tomato Seeds

Heirloom tomatoes are more popular than ever, and because they're open pollinated, their seeds can be saved from year to year. Saving the seeds of heirloom tomatoes is a great way to produce plants adapted to your local climate. Keep a distance of at least 33 feet (10 metres) between varieties to avoid accidental cross-pollination by wind or insects, or toss a row cover over individual varieties of plants if space is an issue. Fermenting the tomato seeds before drying them is also recommended. The fermentation dissolves the gel coat covering the seeds and inoculates them against bacterial infection, replicating what happens in nature when the fruit falls to the ground.

1. Pick a slightly overripe tomato and squeeze the seeds and pulp into a labelled cup.

2. Place the cup in a warm area to ferment. Be prepared for the possibility of fruit flies and an unpleasant smell.

3. After three or four days, a white fungus will develop on the top of the pulp. Put the contents of the cup in a fine sieve and run it under cold water to remove the pulp.

4. Scrape the seeds onto a labelled plastic or ceramic plate to dry. Avoid paper plates as the seeds may stick.

5. The seeds will be ready to store when you can break them between your finger and thumb (about five days). Place them in labelled Mason jars and store at room temperature or in the freezer. Tomato seeds remain viable for 10 to 15 years.

Gardenmaking, Fall 2010

Treasurer's Reports

June 1 to June 30 2010

Balance May 31, 2010 \$5,252.42

Receipts:

Membership	\$260.00	
Plant Sales	117.00	
Bank Interest	.02	
Miscellaneous	<u>10.35</u>	
	387.37	\$387.37

Expenses:

Youth Activities	\$ 95.00	
Community Projects	278.17	
Speaker Fees	75.00	
Socials	13.56	
Meeting Expenses	25.31	
Library	37.95	
Plant Sales	267.25	
Miscellaneous	<u>66.67</u>	
	\$858.91	\$858.91

Balance June 30, 2010 \$4,780.88

Bank Balance June 30, 2010 \$2,347.55

Reserve Fund 2,500.00

\$4,847.55

Outstanding cheques (66.67)

\$4,780.88

July 1 to July 31, 2010

Balance June 30, 2010 \$4,780.88

Receipts:

Bank Interest	<u>4.97</u>	
	4.97	\$4.97

Expenses:

Flower Shows	\$ 64.33	
Speaker Fees	75.00	
Donations	40.00	
Miscellaneous	<u>104.06</u>	
	\$283.39	\$283.39

Balance June 30, 2010 \$4,502.46

Bank Balance July 31, 2010 \$2,106.79

Reserve Fund 2,500.00

\$4,606.79

Outstanding cheques (64.33)

(40.00)

\$4,502.46

August 1 to August 31, 2010

Balance July 31, 2010 \$4,502.46

Receipts:

Plant Sale	93.28	
Bank Interest	.01	
Miscellaneous	<u>75.00</u>	
	168.29	\$168.29

Expenses:

Speaker Fees	75.00	
Advertising	<u>28.18</u>	
	\$103.18	\$103.18

Balance August 31, 2010 \$4,567.57

Bank Balance August 31, 2010 \$2,067.57

Reserve Fund 2,500.00

\$4,567.57