



Lanark Orchid Renals

## Perth & District Horticultural Society

P.O. Box 494  
Perth, ON, K7H 3G1  
www.gardenontario.org

District #2 of the  
Ontario Horticultural  
Association

# October 2011 Newsletter

The most noteworthy thing about gardeners is that they are always optimistic, always enterprising, and never satisfied. They always look forward to doing something better than they have ever done before.  
Vita Sackville-West

## President's Pen

Evelyn Bothwell and I had the pleasure of taking in the District 2 Flower Show recently held in Smiths Falls. The day was sunny and bright and the location near the water was very pleasant indeed. There were two tents set up for the displays and both were crowded with admiring spectators. There could have been more room to move more freely around the exhibits, but nevertheless they were wonderful. In one tent was the special design class. It is not only amazing what some creative folk can do with plant material and flowers, but also how they twist and turn the elements to fit the categories. Categories such as 'Autumn Jewels,' 'Picklefest,' and 'A river runs through it...' didn't faze a lot of entrants. Our own Madeline Archer and David Archer and Linda Bartlett walked away with ribbons, and justifiably so. A second tent displayed flowers across the board from houseplants to every garden variety imaginable. It was ablaze with colour. And let's not forget the vegetables. The best of the best were on display. If you ever get a chance to take in a District 2 Flower Show, don't miss it. Attendance is free. Our District comprises 21 Societies and it is a happy and memorable occasion to take in the fruits of everyone's labour. Think about attending sometime. Bet you won't be disappointed.

See you in the garden,  
*Lynda*



### Upcoming

- **November 8:** "Simple Seasonal Designs."
- **December:** Christmas Dinner and AGM.

### "Simple Seasonal Designs" and a Silent Auction

We have an exciting and fun evening planned for our meeting on November 8, 2011. Our speaker is Cindy Zorgel who you might recognize from "Keepsakes" in Almonte whose floral arrangements are beautiful and very popular. Cindy is very well known across Ontario as a floral designer and an OHA Judge. She is also the President of the Almonte Horticultural Society. Cindy will demonstrate and produce several beautiful seasonal arrangements which you can go home and try to make

yourself or bid on in a Silent Auction at the meeting. So come and get yourself ready for Christmas decorating. As of the writing of this newsletter, there are 85 sleeps, 6 hours and 40 minutes 'til Christmas!

### PDHS Board Nominations

If you are interested in participating in the planning of PDHS activities and would like to join the board of the PDHS, there are several vacant positions available. People of all talents and all levels of experience are welcome to volunteer or nominate someone who is too shy to volunteer. You will learn a great deal about the place of the PDHS in the Ontario family of horticultural societies and have great fun planning the activities for the next year. Please contact President, Lynda Haddon or any Board Member for more information.



**President:** Lynda Haddon • 613-267-6754 • haddon@istar.ca  
**Secretary:** Pam Pratt  
**Newsletter:** Pam Pratt, Irene Hofmann

## Membership Renewal For 2012

The time is rapidly approaching for all members to consider renewing their PDHS membership for 2012. We are introducing a different renewal system for current members this year in order to avoid the January "rush and crush" at our movie night.

Renewal forms will be available at the sign-in desk which you are asked to pick up and fill out. The renewal form can also be downloaded from our website at [www.perthhortsociety.com](http://www.perthhortsociety.com). Return the form along with your cheque or cash for \$10.00. Receipts can be picked up at the following month's meeting after you have registered.

If you want to have a receipt mailed to you, please provide Aileen Conboy, our current Membership Coordinator, with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

You will also be able to pick up renewal forms or renew your membership at the Christmas Social on December 13, 2012.

Membership in the PDHS includes a beautiful Yearbook, 10% off at local nurseries, interesting meetings and speakers, June and December Socials, newsletters and lots of new friends. Encourage your friends to join, it is the best bargain in town.

## In-house Flower Show

SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER 8, 2011

### Section I: Horticultural Specimen

Class 1 - Ivy Plant

Class 2 - Cacti or succulent

### Section II: Design

Class 3 - "Christmas Sparkle" - a design using candles or lights

Class 4 - "Celestial Christmas" - an interpretative design

## Rock On At The December Christmas Social And AGM

Last year we rocked and sang along to Beatles tunes. This year we hope to have more of the same going on at our December Christmas Social and AGM.

This year the Social and AGM will take place on Tuesday, December 13, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. at the Perth Legion. We all love to eat and once again members are asked to bring their best dish for a potluck feast. This can be appetizers, a salad, a main dish, dessert or any other dish you would like to bring.

We are working on some great entertainment in the

hopes we can get you up dancing again this year. Of course we need volunteers to help with arrangements, setting up, collecting memberships, cleaning up. The more the merrier. Contact Kathy Allen at 613-264-2827 if you can help or want to "voluntell" your spouse!

The AGM is one of our most important events. Each of us, as members of the Perth and District Horticultural Society which in turn is a member of the Ontario Horticultural Association, are tasked with making important decisions regarding our society. This is the time our audited books are presented to the general membership, a wrap-up of the year's activities are given and elections held or results of elections given. Please take the time to stay for the AGM on December 13, 2011.

## Perth "Festival Of Lights"

Speaking of Christmas, the Town of Perth is gearing up for the annual "Festival of Lights" on November 25, 2011 at 6 p.m. at the Crystal Palace in the Tay Basin. This is when all the Christmas Trees decorated by businesses and clubs in Perth are lit up for public viewing. Decorating the PDHS tree is a fun event and only requires an hour or two of your time. If you would like to join the fun contact Kathy Allen at 613-264-2827. Everyone is welcome!

## Treasurer's Report

August 1 to August 31, 2011

Balance July 31, 2011 \$5,463.77

### Receipts:

Bank Interest	.03	
	\$.03	\$.03

### Expenses:

	\$.00	\$.00
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Balance August 31, 2011 \$5,463.80

Bank Balance August 31, 20110 \$2,989.11

Reserve Fund	2,500.00	
	2,500.00	\$5,489.11

\$5,489.11

Outstanding cheques	\$( 25.31)	
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\$5,463.80

## Last Call For "Trees In The Urban Landscape"

The Lanark Master Gardeners and the Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton would like to invite any interested OHA members to attend an educational event on October 15, 2011 in Carleton Place. They have put together a full day of speakers

to learn more about "Trees in the Urban Landscape". Topics include how to start your trees off right; trees for backyards; what's wrong with my tree?; nut trees; fruit trees and many more topics. The day also includes a Silent Auction. All this and lunch provided by Zone 8 Master Gardeners for only \$25! The event takes place at St. James Church (Lower Hall), 225 Edmund Street, Carleton Place and starts at 8:00 a.m. with Registration.

To get more information and fill out the Registration Form check Lanark Master Gardeners website: <http://www.lanarkmastergardeners.mgoi.ca> or call Dale at 613-264-8135.

## Fall Is The Time For Spring Bulbs

*by Ankaret Dean, Lanark County Master Gardeners*

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 "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 every 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 Ottawa 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, and scillas are a joy to behold in the early spring and well worth planting. It is worth covering them with a piece of flyscreen to keep away the predators, especially if they are 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.

All your gardening questions can be submitted and answered on our website at: [www.lanarkmastergardeners.mgoi.ca](http://www.lanarkmastergardeners.mgoi.ca).

## And Speaking Of Spring Bulbs....

How do you know if you have chosen healthy bulbs with good producing potential?

**Here are some pointers:**

- Choose bulbs that feel heavy in your hands. These bulbs are full of moisture and ready to grow now and bloom next spring.
- A few blemishes on the bulbs will not affect the quality but if they are overly nicked, don't purchase them.
- If there is mold on the surface that easily rubs off and the bulb surface looks smooth and firm, it is probably fine. If the mold won't rub off, don't buy it.
- Most bulbs have a thin, dry tunic. If it's still attached, smooth and glossy, the bulb is probably in good shape. If it is missing, the bulb still should be OK.
- Bulbs vary in size and variety, but generally the bigger the bulb, the better the flowers.
- Some bulbs are easier to tell which way is up. Plant the flat side down and the pointy end up.
- Choose a planting style: in a row; make a trench so they are laid out evenly and at the same depth; or 'stab and plant' randomly.
- To ensure bulbs come back year after year, put some fertilizer under each bulb when planting, working it into the soil before placing the bulb, otherwise the fertilizer will burn it.
- Water well to settle the pockets of air and give the bulb a chance to set down roots.
- It doesn't hurt to mulch the area to protect tender roots from the cold.
- In the spring, Enjoy!

*Adapted from Garden Gate, October, 2011, Issue 101*

## Keeping Geraniums Alive Year After Year ....

Sink a large pot into the ground where you want the geranium to grow. Place the geranium in the same-sized pot within the one sunk into the ground. This allows you to remove the geranium each year with minimum fuss and muss and overwinter in the house.

*Gardening tip from Garden Gate, October, 2011, Issue 101*

## Seeds Worth Saving

Change is inevitable, even in the gardening world. Just a few generations ago, packaged seeds were scarce and saving seeds was the only way to ensure a future harvest. Now, thanks to a variety of seed companies and well-stocked supermarkets, the need to save seeds in order to guarantee survival is a thing of the past. Yet, saving seeds remains popular with many gardeners. Not only is it a good way to stretch the gardening budget, it's also a means of preserving a family favourite or heritage variety. Some gardeners save the seeds from their best specimens each year, enabling them to cultivate plants that are specifically adapted to their region. Saving seeds can even lead to a new genetic strain that has improved characteristics - better colour or larger flowers - over the original plant.

Whatever your reasons for saving seeds, there are a few guidelines to keep in mind, as not all flowers and vegetables offer seeds that are easy to save or worth the effort.

### Hybrids vs. open-pollinated

Most catalogues list seeds as either hybrids or open-pollinated varieties. Hybrids are the result of two different parent plants crossing, and the seed saved from this type of plant does not typically come true to type. If you're unsure whether a plant is a hybrid, check the seed packet or catalogue. It may also be listed as an F1 or F2 plant, which describes types of hybrids. If so, the seed won't be suitable for saving.

Open-pollinated varieties, on the other hand, produce seeds that will reliably breed true if properly isolated from other varieties. These are sometimes called heirlooms and are non-hybridized plants.

When deciding whether to save seeds from a particular non-hybrid plant, consider how it's pollinated. Some plants are predominately self-pollinated, while others rely on the wind or insects. For a novice seed collector, seeds from self-pollinated plants are the easiest to save, as cross-pollination hasn't occurred and you can be fairly certain that the offspring will look like their parents. Self-pollinators include lettuce, peas, snap beans, endive, soybeans, sweet peas, peppers and tomatoes, although

occasionally the pollen of tomatoes and peppers can also be spread by wind and insects.

When plants are cross pollinated by wind or insects, pollen is moved from one plant to another and the seeds you collect may produce new plants that look quite different from what you expected. Although serious seed savers can control cross-pollination and produce consistent seed by hand pollinating, sometimes it's fun to just let nature take its course and surprise you.

Also, it's important to collect seed from your best specimens or those that have an improved characteristic - uniquely coloured blooms, early flowering or bushy habit, for example. Healthy, vigorous, disease-resistant plants will produce superior seeds than those that are weak or constantly battling insects or disease. Some gardeners "tag" their picks in midsummer by tying a ribbon around the stems.

### Timing

Seeds are collected "wet" or "dry" depending on the species. For example, the seeds from cucumbers, tomatoes, squash and melons are collected wet and gathered when the fruit is over-ripe. Some seeds need a warm water rinse or a brief fermenting before being dried and stored. Those from squash, pumpkins and gourds can be quickly rinsed clean, while cucumbers, tomatoes, melons and eggplant benefit from a few days of fermentation.

The seeds from annual flowers, herbs and vegetables such as peas, beans, poppies, sweet peas and nigella are ready to gather when the seed pods are completely dry, the seeds are rattling inside their capsules, or some of the pods are starting to shatter and are ejecting their seeds.

If the pods have started to shatter or split, cover them with a paper bag and cut the stem with pruning shears to avoid spilling any more seeds. Use a different bag for each type of seed. Those of some annuals, such as zinnias, hollyhock, calendula, cosmos and marigolds, are produced at the bottom of the flowers; these are ready to collect when the base and the seeds are dry.

Continue drying freshly gathered seeds in a warm, well-ventilated space for a few days before storing. Spread them on sheets of newspaper or a window screen, stirring them daily to ensure even drying. Once dry, remove any large bits of stems or leaves and place the seeds in labelled envelopes. Store the envelopes in glass jars in a dry, cool or cold place, such as a freezer.

Seeds are alive and need to be handled with care. Their viability will vary from species to species and it's best to plant your saved seeds within a year or two.

*Fall 2010, Gardenmaking magazine.*