



Lanark Orchid

Renals

Perth & District Horticultural Society

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District #2 of the
Ontario Horticultural
Association

September 2010 Newsletter

There is always
Music amongst
the trees in the
Garden, but our
hearts must be very
quiet to hear it.

Minnie Aumonier

President's Pen, September 2010

The other evening a truck drove by our property, doubled backed and parked. A young woman got out and said, "I saw you in your garden and I would really like to look around, may I?" There is no greater compliment to a gardener than to be able to show off the patch of land they have lovingly toiled to create a colourful and peaceful sanctuary. She said that she was a beginner gardener and knew very little about gardening. She shared she was shy to join the Hort Society as we were all "experts" and she felt she would stand out in the crowd. I reassured her that as there is so much to learn about gardening, in truth, not many of us would consider ourselves "experts" but rather "gardeners in training."

Several times I have heard people say that they are torn about joining the Hort Society because they know nothing about gardening. In such cases, I quickly try to reinforce that Hort Society members all have the same base, i.e. a love of plants, gardening and talking about their gardens. We have all experienced challenges and disappointments along with the successes which occur just often enough to encourage us to keep going. It is the ebb and flow of having a garden. In that spirit, we come together several times a year to expand our knowledge, to share, to teach, to connect and dare I say it, to bloom. A look around the room doesn't divulge the Master Gardener from someone who recently purchased their first home and is looking to improve their landscape. What we do see are interesting people sharing a common passion. You may even see the telltale signs of dirt under the fingernails, worn with pride!

If you come across someone who would like to come out to a meeting but who is timid due to a lack of gardening knowledge, please reach out and encourage them to give us a try. We are here to support those very people who would like some successes for their own gardens. After all, we were all novices once and gardeners, in particular, get such a kick out of sharing what worked or didn't work for them. I think it is called *Growing Together*.

See you in the garden,
Lynda



Fall Horticultural Seminars

Once again this fall, the Perth Campus of Algonquin College and Lanark County Master Gardeners are conducting a series of 3-hour Horticultural Seminars. Unlike previous years, this year you will be able to register for just one of the seminars for \$35 or for all six for \$180. The seminars cover the following topics:

Putting Your Garden to Bed – Learn what steps to take now to ensure that your garden is ready to thrive next year. *September 23.*

Bulbs – Plan for Spring Now – This

is the time of year to plan your spring blossoms. This seminar provides you with the information required to plant bulbs that will thrive. *September 30.*

Rock Gardening – Learn how to build, plant and maintain a rock garden. This seminar will provide you with information about choosing both construction materials and suitable plants for a rock garden. *October 7.*

Designing and Planting a Cutting Garden – Do you wish you had cut flowers to brighten the indoors all summer? Learn which plants to select for a cutting garden and how to maintain the garden to ensure that you will have cuttings throughout the season. *October 14.*



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Lawn Care – Looking for techniques to maintain an attractive lawn while avoiding chemical applications? This seminar will provide you with some strategies for keeping your lawn healthy. *October 21.*

Pruning – Your trees and shrubs will benefit from judicious pruning. This seminar provides you with a chance to observe various specimens and then learn how, where and when to prune them. *October 28.*

The seminars run from 6:30-6:30. Check in on our website www.lanarkmastergardeners.mgoi.ca for the most current information or contact Dale at 264-8135 or Algonquin College, Perth Campus.

Camera Buffs

Don't forget Perth's photo competition. Here is a list of the classes.

- Class 1: Winter Joy - A picture of your garden in the winter.
- Class 2: Up Close and Personal - A close-up of your favourite spring flower or flowers.
- Class 3: Garden View - A picture showing a summer garden landscape, either looking into or out of a garden.
- Class 4: Now you Sedum, Now you don't - Your favourite sedum in bloom.
- Class 5: Food for the Table - Vegetables or fruit

growing in your garden, allotment or landshare site.

- Class 6: Wildlife in the Garden - A picture of insects, birds, or creatures found wild in the garden (this does not include domestic pets).

Deadline October 12, 2010

October Flower Show

1. Asters - 1 spray
2. Last Rose of Summer
3. Any other perennial
4. "Self Preservation" - a mass design using dried flowers
5. "Fall Colours" - a line design

Dividing Plants In The Fall

By Valerie E. Liney, Lake Simcoe South Master Gardener

Dividing plants in the fall is a preferred time for some plants like Poppies, Peonies and Iris. Division renews plant vigour, is the best time to move plants as daytime temperatures are cooler, the newly divided plant roots have a chance to become established before the frost arrives, dividing reduces the size

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:

At the Plant Sale, I bought Dahlias for the first time. They bloomed beautifully. I think I have to do something with them in the Fall so I can have them again next year. What do I do?

Dazzled by Dahlias.

Dear Dazzled by Dahlias: Dahlias are tender bulbs. They need to be lifted and stored in a cool dry place for the winter. After they have frozen and turned black, dig up the tubers. There will be more than you planted. Cut the stems off about 6 inches above the tuber and turn upside down for an hour or so. A lot of water will come out. Put them in a dry spot so they can dry. If the days are frost free, I like to put them outside where they can sit in the sun to dry. Try to remove as much soil as possible. Let them dry for 1-2 weeks and then put them in a cardboard box and put in a cool dark place. Some people bury them in perlite or vermiculite or peat moss. I have a nice cold room that keeps them happy. In the spring, I use May 1, plant them in your garden. Some people pot them up earlier to get a jump on the season. If you do so, do not put them out until the risk of frost has passed. Good luck!

Signed, 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.

of plants that have outgrown their bounds in the garden, is a way of acquiring more plants that will be exactly like their parents, is a way to increase supply by adding to new beds by moving plants from place to place and planting up new pots for friends and plant sale offerings. Some plants need to be divided up every few years, especially, some grasses or plants that die out in the centre and only have healthy stems around the outside of the clump.

To prepare your plants for division water well the day before. A good time to divide plants is on an overcast day. This reduces stress on the roots. If the plant has a lot of top growth, cut the plant back by a third. Cut off any flower stems.

Decide where your plant is going to be replanted. Prepare the area. This is to reduce the time the rootball is out of the soil. If you are going to be potting up your divisions in containers, have on hand a bag of good potting soil and the proper size of container.

One way to divide plants is to take the whole plant out of the ground. Use a sharp spade to dig the rootball up, taking care that you do not disturb the roots. Watering the day before should make this chore easier. Discard any dead parts and take out any weeds or grass. With Iris, wash off the rhizomes and inspect to see if any of the root area is diseased or mushy. Iris can be cut into sections with a sharp knife. Throw out any diseased plant material in the trash. Do not compost. Cut the foliage to 6 inches or 15cm tall. Iris rhizomes are planted just under the surface of the soil. The tops would be at surface of the soil.

For Peonies, wash off the dirt around the roots so that you can see the eyes. Section each division with a sharp knife into a few eyes each. Plant the peonies 1-3 inches or 2-5 cm deep. This is important for bloom.

Plants such as daylilies and hosta can be divided without taking the plant out of the soil. Take two garden forks back to back and push them into the plant where you want to divide the sections. Gently rock back and forth until they can be pried apart. You can do this a few times if the parent plant is fairly large.

Grasses will need a sharp spade, axe or saw to separate if the parent is a good size. Divide into several clumps. Take out all the dead growth and weeds. Dig a hole big enough for future growth of the clump.

To prepare the hole to receive your new plant, add some good compost to the hole. I add a handful of MYKE*, a natural mycorrhizae product that benefits the root system for better plant growth, to the bottom of the hole and work it into the soil a bit. MYKE can be found at garden centres. Spread the roots over a little mound in the bottom of the hole and backfill to the level that the plant originally sat in the soil. Tamp gently to seat the plant into the hole and then water really well. Water often and deeply to get the plant established. A layer of mulch would be beneficial to

keep weeds out and moisture in.

For those plants that you wish to pot up in containers do it as quickly as possible and water well. If you cannot pot them up right away soak the roots in a pail of water. Place the containers in the shade for at least a week to give the plant time to recover. Label your new potted plants with the name and cultivar if you know it and even whether it grows in sun or shade.

**Note the recommendation to add MYKE raised a lot of controversy with Master Gardeners across Ontario. Some indicated that mycorrhizae is a living organism and many packages of MYKE contain organisms that are dead and provide no value except as compost. I personally like compost but others have great success with MYKE. Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County Master Gardeners.*

The top 10 apple varieties

By Heather Apple, Canadian Gardening online

If you're like most Canadians, you consume apples more often than any other fruit. And with the availability of dwarf trees and cultivars that are very hardy - some to Zone 1 - many Canadians can grow their own.

Buy your trees from a local nursery or from one in a similar climate zone so you'll have specimens suited to your growing conditions. Two different apple varieties that flower at the same time are needed for cross-pollination; a crabapple will also do the job.

Commercially grown trees have two parts: The root portion - or rootstock - determines the ultimate size of the tree and the time until the tree reaches fruit-bearing age, as well as influences its hardiness and productivity. Grafted onto the rootstock is the specific variety, which determines the colour, taste, quality, season of maturity and disease resistance of the fruit.

Choose a site in full sun that has good drainage and air circulation, and is protected from strong winds. Avoid low-lying areas or frost pockets, where cold air settles. A slight slope is ideal so cold air can flow away from the trees.

When planting, dig a hole for the tree twice as deep and wide as the rootball. Fill the bottom with a mix of soil and compost so the hole becomes as deep as the root ball. Don't add any fertilizer. Position the tree so the graft union (the swollen area several centimetres above the roots) is five to 10 centimetres above the soil line. Then fill in with soil, pressing it down gently but firmly; water the tree well. Spread a two-centimetre layer of compost in a one-metre circle around the trunk and sprinkle with organic fertilizer. Cover with 10 centimetres of wood chips, keeping the chips away from the trunk of the tree. This will help conserve moisture and keep weeds and grass from competing with the tree. Dwarf specimens should be staked permanently, while full-size ones benefit from being staked for the first few years.

During the growing season, make sure the trees have at least 2.5 centimetres of water each week (whether from rainfall or irrigation), from May through August. Pull out any weeds that grow through the mulch. Each spring, pull back the mulch, spread a 2.5-centimetre-thick layer of compost over the soil under the canopy and dig in organic fertilizer before replacing the mulch.

Some years, trees will set too much fruit, which can result in small apples, a poor crop the following year and a heavy weight that could damage branches. When fruits are marble-sized, thin to one fruit per cluster; for large apples of optimal quality and size, thin to 20 centimetres between fruits on a branch.

If you buy a one-year-old whip without branches, prune back to 1.2 metres to encourage side limbs. For a two-year-old branched tree, thin side limbs to 20 centimetres apart. The second year, remove main lateral ones that are too crowded and any that cross other ones, and prune out dead or weak growth. In subsequent years, prune to develop an open tree where all branches receive light and good air circulation.

Diseases and Pests

To prevent disease, plant resistant varieties, practise good garden sanitation and improve the quality of your soil. When the tree has no leaves and before the buds start to open in spring, spray with dormant oil, which contains lime sulfur, to kill overwintering insects and fungal diseases. Ideally apply two or three times. However, trees must not be treated or be wet with dormant oil when the temperature is below freezing. On the West Coast, treat trees after the leaves fall, in mid-winter and before the buds start to open in spring. In colder areas, spray only when temperatures allow.

Protect against sun scald and damage by small mammals by installing tree guards on young trees, but not too tightly, as they can inhibit growth and cause the bark to stay moist, encouraging disease. It's best to put guards on in fall and remove them for the growing season. Once the tree bark is rough, guards are no longer necessary.

Apple Maggot: The adult fly lays its eggs on the fruit and the larvae tunnel into the apple. To prevent these pests from overwintering, pick up and dispose of fruit as soon as possible after it drops. During the growing season, trap adults by hanging sticky red sphere traps (available at garden centres). Put in place three weeks after petal fall.

Codling Moth: The adult moth lays its eggs on the leaves and twigs, and the larvae soon move to the fruit and tunnel inside. As long as there are no untended fruit trees within 90 metres, trees can be effectively protected with codling moth traps, which are available at garden centres. Place in the trees as soon as bloom begins. For serious infestations, spray with *Bacillus thuringiensis* 15 days after petal fall begins, then five days later and once again after another

five days.

Curculio: The tiny adult beetle lays its eggs on the fruit and the larvae tunnel into the apple. When the larvae start feeding, the fruit drops and the larvae crawl out and burrow into the soil. Rake up leaves in fall and remove brush piles and other debris near the trees. If curculios are a serious problem, spread a sheet under the tree each morning for three weeks after petal fall and shake the tree. The adults, which play dead when alarmed, will fall onto the sheet.

Scab: A fungal disease resulting in olive-coloured spots on leaves and fruit; spots darken over time. Leaves may drop off, and lesions on fruit turn hard and corky. Spores overwinter on infected leaves, so do a good fall cleanup. Plant disease-resistant varieties such as 'Liberty', 'Freedom' and 'Novamac'.

Cedar Apple Rust: Small, rust-coloured pustules form on the undersides of leaves. Control with a sulfur spray when the buds have a pinkish tinge and again three weeks after petal fall.

Modern Varieties

'Cortland' Great flavour; uses: fresh, baking. Stores very well. Late; Zone 4

'Empire' Dark red, high quality; uses: fresh, baking. Late; Zone 4b

'Freedom' Large, red; immune to many fungal diseases; uses: fresh, baking. Late; Zone 4b

'Golden Delicious' Sweet, high quality; uses: fresh, baking. Late; Zone 5

'Greensleeves' Has the green skin and crisp tartness of 'Granny Smith', but greater hardiness; uses: fresh, baking. Late; Zone 4b

'Liberty' Juicy, red; very disease-resistant; uses: fresh, baking. Stores well; highly recommended. Late; Zone 4

'Lodi' An improvement on 'Yellow Transparent', green-yellow; use: baking. Doesn't store well. Early; Zone 4

'Novamac' Red, high quality; good disease resistance; use: fresh. Late; Zone 4b

'Paulared' Flavour is similar to 'McIntosh'; use: fresh. Early to midseason; Zone 4

'Spartan' Quite scab-resistant; uses: fresh, baking. Stores well. Late; Zone 4

Heritage Varieties

'Cox's Orange Pippin' Exceptional quality, orange-red; use: fresh. Late; Zone 5b

'Duchess of Oldenburg' Green-yellow splashed with red; use: cooking. Scab-resistant. Early; Zone 3

'Golden Russet' Uniquely flavoured, aromatic, golden brown skin; uses: fresh, cider. Stores well. Late; Zone 4

'Snow' (a.k.a. 'Fameuse') 300-year-old Canadian variety; aromatic, sweet; use: fresh. Midseason, Zone 4

'Wealthy' Juicy, aromatic, red with white flesh tinged with red; scab-resistant; uses: fresh, baking. Midseason; Zone 3

'Wolf River' Huge, hardy and healthy; uses: baking, fair for fresh. Late; Zone 3

'Yellow Transparent' Yellow; uses: long-time favourite for baking and sauces; somewhat scab resistant. Earliest apple; Zone 3