



The Ladyslipper



Perth & District Horticultural Society

www.perthhortsociety.com

Est. 1984

October 2024

President's Pen

Welcome to October. The crisp fresh air in the morning, and the warmth of the sun in the afternoons. Look around and enjoy the fall colours and all Mother Nature has to offer us. It is a great time to clean up the gardens, redesign some flower beds and plant the spring bulbs.

Our November Annual Meeting will be on the third Tuesday, November 19th instead of our usual second Tuesday of the month. We will have a Potluck dinner starting at 6:00 PM and then our Annual meeting, approval of updated constitution and bylaws, election of the board, and Leah Gibson will give us a Christmas Floral Demo. We will send out more information about this meeting later this month.

Join the PDHS Board and Help Us Grow!

With the November Annual Meeting coming up, we're inviting you to consider joining the Perth & District Horticultural Society (PDHS) Board.

Curious about what the Board does? Each month, we meet to plan events, review finances, update memberships, and work on new ideas. Outside of meetings, we stay connected through email as needed. The Board is key to driving our society's activities. Directors help organize society and community events like Seedy Sunday, Earth Day, plant sales, garden tours, and more. Behind the scenes, we handle important tasks like managing speakers, social media, membership, finances, and

keeping in touch with District Two and the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA).

There's no special requirement to join—just a passion for horticulture and a willingness to contribute to our local community. Board members are committed to encouraging and supporting gardeners of all levels by promoting horticulture through our events and educational outreach. We deeply appreciate the efforts of our members and volunteers who make all of this possible.

Five current Board members are continuing next year, but we need a few more to lessen the load and keep the society going. Don't worry, returning members will guide you as you settle in. We welcome fresh faces and new ideas to keep PDHS growing strong.

Interested in joining this dynamic team? Please contact Muriel Hopper or Caroline Bolduc, who are forming the Nominating Committee for the Board.

As always, your ideas for speakers, outings, workshops and newsletter content are welcome.

Linda



Gardening for the Birds

by Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County Master Gardeners

A garden without birds is like a half-finished picture. Some people are gardeners who like to watch birds and others are Bird Watchers who garden to attract them—the end result is a garden with birds.

Like all of us, birds require:

- ▶ Food – Food for a diversity of wildlife can be provided through combinations of seed, nut or fruit producing trees, berry-producing shrubs, grasses and/or flowers. Consider food needs throughout the seasons.
- ▶ Water – If space limitations prohibit a pond, consider a bird bath or water bowl.
- ▶ Shelter – Providing evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs, snags (dead trees), brush piles, logs and rock piles gives wildlife protection from inclement weather and predators.
- ▶ Space – Birds view your property in three-dimensional terms. Including diverse layers of vegetation—tall and short trees, shrubs, wildflowers and ground cover—increases the “space” of your habitat.



Planting native plants attracts native insects which in turn attracts birds. We often think of birds as eating seeds, which they do or nectar which hummingbirds do BUT over 80% of a bird’s diet is protein which comes from insects. Just like us, birds need protein for healthy bodies. When mother birds are pregnant and when the babies are growing, they need an incredible amount of protein which comes from insects. Aphids for example are a popular treat for nestlings. So, please stop spraying every insect you see. Insecticides are bad for birds.

Native trees and shrubs provide places for shelter and food. Conifers hold onto their cones to provide seeds year-round for our overwintering birds. They also attract insects that attract birds. Deciduous trees make excellent nesting spots, and many provide seeds and attract insects and caterpillars. Maple, Oaks Cherry and Serviceberries are excellent choices.

There are many types of Viburnums but two of my favourites are the Arrowwood with its beautiful white flowers and small dark blue berries and the Nannyberry. Many, many varieties of birds flock to them.

Dogwoods are another wonderful shrub to attract birds. The Red Twigged Dogwood produces berries early in the season. The pagoda Dogwood has an interesting branching structure and berries that attract. However, the Grey Dogwood grows densely and produces incredible amounts of berries. Grey Dogwood produce their berries later in the season so they provide a dietary boost for migrating birds. We had families of Catbirds nesting in our Grey Dogwood (or as I like to call them, my Birdie Bed and Breakfast).

As well as planting trees and shrubs, there are many perennials that birds enjoy. Some just like the insects they find in your dense perennial gardens. Some love the seeds, especially seeds on perennials left on the plant over winter. Echinacea, Rudbeckia, Heliopsis, Coreopsis and Mulleins are just a few of the native perennials much loved by birds.

If you want to attract birds, earth friendly gardening is mandatory. This is really Bird friendly gardening. So, avoid herbicides, avoid pesticides and plant native plants.