

# April 2015 Newsletter

"Anyone who has a bulb has Spring. Bulbs don't need much light; they don't need good soil; and they don't need cosseting. They are, in fact, the horticultural equivalent of cats; self-contained, easy-care, and supremely suited to living in New York."

- Author unknown



## From the President's Pen

April showers brings May flowers....Ready set go....time to look at your gardening tools and see what needs to be replaced or what new supplies need to be purchased. Exciting times are just around the corner. 2016 will be the 200<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary of Perth as a settlement. Our Society can make a difference in the community. So I am asking all

of you to "put your thinking caps on"! How can we make this bicentennial year special? Wouldn't it be fun to have our social in Stewart Park next year with our hats and Sunday best ensemble? Think about it. Your ideas are important so let's hear them. Collectively we can make a difference and have fun doing it. Embrace change – it will enrich our lives.

Jane Law



## Upcoming Meetings

The planned speaker for the **May 12** meeting is **Olly Chuchryk** presenting "**Dancing Dahlias**."

## Annual Plant Sale

Don't forget our annual plant sale, a major fund-raiser for our society. Donated plants and volunteers to help out are always essential ingredients to make it a success. Sale takes place May 16, 2015 from 8:00 - 10:00am, Stewart School, Sunset Blvd, Perth.

## Junior Gardeners

We are looking for more tuna cans and strawberry containers for our Junior Gardener's program. Please bring what you have and give to Nancy Wiseman.

## Rose, the Queen of the Flowers

*By Margaret Inwood,  
Lanark County Master Gardeners*

A rose is one of the most beautiful flowers in the garden and in bouquets. It is also one of



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Lanark Orchid

Renals

*Perth & District  
Horticultural  
Society*

P.O. Box 494  
Perth, ON, K7H 3G1  
[www.gardenontario.org](http://www.gardenontario.org)

*District #2 of the  
Ontario Horticultural  
Association*

the oldest plant species with fossil remains that indicate it was around in primitive form over 32 million years.

The best time to plant roses is in the spring, as early as possible and as soon as the frost is out of the ground. Roses thrive best in full sun but six hours daily is also satisfactory. The soil should be well drained, with no competition from tree roots. Roses will do well in clay soil or other types, as long as a good amount of organic matter is worked into the soil. Well-rotted manure can also improve the soil as well as peat moss and bone meal. Roses are very heavy feeders and organic matter adds to the moisture retaining quality of the soil. The holes should be dug large and deep enough so the roots can be spread out easily. The union or crown should be at or 5 cm below the surface of the ground. Plant your new rose immediately to keep it from drying out. If you must delay planting, place the rose bush in a bucket of water for a few days.

Once roses are established and growing well, top dress with compost and work some granular fertilizer into the soil. Apply liquid fertilizer mixed with water, according to package directions every week until August 1<sup>st</sup>. Prune at planting time by cutting back the tops, leaving only three strong branches 12-15 cm above the ground. Remove any broken or crossing branches. Roses that receive good nourishment and are well cared for are least prone to disease. Many varieties of roses are available in gorgeous solid and bicolours. To protect your roses in winter, mound up the soil around them. To prevent mice and rodents from overwintering around your roses, mound shredded leaves or straw around them once the ground has frozen.

There are many types of roses and an infinite number of varieties available:

### **Tender Rose Types**

(require some form of winter protection)

- Floribunda means the abundance of flowers. These roses bloom with clusters of flowers from early summer until the first killing frost. They are hardier than Hybrid Tea Roses but may still need winter protection.
- Hybrid Tea Roses have large flowers and long pointed flower buds and usually produce only one flower per stem. They have a large range of colour and bloom almost continuously, making them a valued cut flower. They require a great deal of winter protection.
- Grandiflora means large flowers. These roses

have large flower in small clusters. They are a cross between Floribunda and Hybrid Teas and are good for cutting.

- Miniature Roses look like smaller versions of hybrid teas and most varieties bloom all summer. They are ideal for containers and can be used as a house plant in a sunny window.

### **Hardy Rose Types**

(Can survive cold winters without protection)

- Explorer Series developed by Agriculture Canada to survive Canadian winters. They can be in the form of low ground covers to shrubs and climbers
- Rugosa Roses have recurrent fragrant blooms with clean healthy foliage. They are available as species and hybrids. They grow as dense shrubs and some varieties sucker to form a spreading colony. Virtually disease and pest free.
- Old Garden Roses or antique roses are known for their stunningly beautiful, fragrant flowers. This is a loose grouping that includes roses that have been cultivated for centuries. They are tough and robust.
- Parkland Series were developed by Agriculture Canada at the research station in Morden Manitoba. They were bred specifically for prairie conditions by crossing native prairie roses with hybrid tea roses. Most varieties bloom repeatedly until frost after an initial first flush.

Visit our website at [www.lanarkmg.blogspot.com](http://www.lanarkmg.blogspot.com) or contact us at [lanarkmg@gmail.com](mailto:lanarkmg@gmail.com) or call Renai at 267-7272

## **Picking Out the Good Ones**

Some ideas for checking out nursery potted plants. Don't expect the nursery staff to cheer you on should be caught trying out these techniques on their plants though.

Take your chosen plant and place one hand over the top of the container with your fingers wide to thread through the plant. Tip the plant over and gently squeeze the pot in the middle with the other hand to ease the plant out. When the plant falls out onto your hand, check the roots. They need to be visible at the end and the sides of the dirt which indicates the plant was repotted some time ago. This plant, when planted in your garden will perform quickly and well.

If the plant falls easily into your hand and you notice that there are short roots, and this plant has only recently been potted up and not yet had time to develop a strong root system in its new pot. This plant can still be put into your garden, but will take longer to flower as it needs to set a better root system to support its flowering.

If a plant falls into your hand and comes out of the pot in one large lump, has a very visible root system, perhaps even coming out of the bottom of the pot and wound around the plant (called root-bound), then this plant will need some care before it is put into your garden. You will need to cut down the sides of the plant (with a sharp knife) to encourage the roots to grow outwards and across the bottom as well to ensure that the roots do not continue to grow in a circle. This plant will still grow in the garden but take some time to perform as it will first need to work against the circling effect of being confined in too small a pot.

If you look at a plant with shrivelled leaves and a gap between the earth and the side of the pot, you may quickly ascertain that the plant is dried out and has been under-watered. Once again, this plant is still salvageable in many cases, but it will take some before it will recover, set a proper root system and flower. Look for a discount on such a plant.

*Adapted from Garden Gate  
e-magazine, April, 2015.*



## PDHS 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: "On the Tay" – a waterviewing design
- Class 8 "Haggart Island Dam" – a waterviewing design
- Class 9 "Tom Thumb" – a miniature design

## Monthly Financial Statement

February 28, 2015

Ledger Balance  
February 1, 2015 \$3,460.06

### Receipts -

Misc. Donations Gen. Fund	\$ 41.00	
Youth Activities	20.00	
Membership	130.00	
Non-members	<u>3.00</u>	
		<b>\$194.00</b>

### Expenses -

Youth Activities	\$108.00	
Meeting Expenses	24.86	
Speaker	75.00	
Miscellaneous	<u>2.50</u>	
		<b>\$210.36</b>

Ledger Balance February 28, 2015 **\$3,443.70**

Reserve fund – GIC matures July 18, 2016 -  
\$2,553.92 (invested) + interest (\$41.96 Nov. 4,  
2014)

## How to Grow Sweet Potatoes

*By Judy Wall, Lanark County Master Gardeners*

Unlike the potato, which is grown from tubers, sweet potatoes are started from "slips". To create slips, a sweet potato tuber is planted indoors in March. One tuber can produce several slips.

To start a sweet potato, you will need to obtain a sweet potato which has been stored at room temperature, not in cold storage or one which has not been treated to prevent sprouting. You can buy from sweet potato producers if you are looking for a specific variety online or if you want to experiment buy an organic sweet potato which is unlikely to have been treated.

Take the sweet potato and place the pointed end down. Poke 4 tooth picks into the sweet potato sides so that the tuber is suspended in a glass jar, where the pointed end is not touching the bottom of the glass jar. Fill the jar with water, then place in a warm place indoors. Remember to check the jar every few days and top up the water. After a few weeks you will see the tuber produce roots. After the roots grow for a couple of weeks you will notice small sprouts start to appear at the top of the tuber, which will turn into slips. Let these slips grow until



several inches long (20cm) and develop leaves. Then cut the slips where they join into the tuber and place these in a jar filled with water. Again remembering to top up the water every few days. Once these slips have roots which are a good couple of inches long, you can transplant the slips into a soilless growing media and grow them on until around early June when you can transplant them into your outdoors vegetable garden.

For the month of June initially you want to be careful and keep the soil above 15C<sup>0</sup>. On cooler days or nights cover them with thick clear plastic. Sweet potato plants are a vine, requiring full sun and a warm summer for a good yield. Before the soil goes to 12C<sup>0</sup> dig up your plants and collect the tubers. Be careful to not drop or bruise them. Keep them in a open warm place 30C<sup>0</sup> for 5 days to cure. They will grow a second skin which will seal the sweet potato. Keep a couple of tubers, so you can start your own plants for next years growing season. Sweet potatoes are best stored at room temperature. The sweet potato is tasteless fresh, the flavor improves with several months of proper room temperature storage.

Read more: <http://www.motherearthenews.com/organic-gardening/growing-sweet-potatoes-zm0z11zsto.aspx#ixzz330VnwbdX> or watch a video how to start slips.

## Proper Lifting For Gardeners

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

Back injuries are second in the number of injuries, only to fingers and hands. Most back injuries come from improper lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, and carrying—all activities we perform in the garden. Here are some basic principles which apply to any means of lifting, lowering, and carrying, whether at the gym, home, store, or in the garden. They apply whether lifting bags of fertilizer off a shelf, bags of compost, lifting rocks or pulling weeds.

- Start slowly, don't rush, don't jerk. Move weights or objects in an unhurried, controlled manner.

- Use good form, or body position. This is more important than the amount you can lift. If you have problems keeping good form, decrease the weight or get help from another person or with some aid as a dolly.

- Make sure to breathe; the tendency for some

is to hold your breath when lifting.

- Make sure to keep your feet all on the ground, don't rock back on your heels.

- Lift with your legs and not your back. Not doing so is the main cause of back injury when lifting. Lift with your knees and waist bent, not your back. Keep your back straight. Knees should be directly above your toes, your shoulders above your knees. If this isn't happening, try taking a wider stance with feet further apart, and toes pointed outward slightly.

- You can look down at the object to lift, but when lifting keep the head in a neutral position looking forward—not up, not down. This creates less stress on your neck muscles.

- Keep objects close to your body when lifting. Holding them at arm's length increases the weight on your lower spine by 15 times. Stand close to the object when squatting down to lift.

- If lifting an object, particularly if heavy, onto a shelf, keep the object close to you and walk toward the shelf rather than stretching your arms out.

- Be careful when raising objects higher than your waist, as this can throw off your balance. Standing with one foot slightly ahead of the other may help with balance. If lifting higher than your shoulders, you may need to lift less (if possible), or use a step ladder.

- Make sure you plan ahead when lifting where the object will go. This avoids twisting improperly, carrying around heavy items, or lifting too much too high.

- Make sure you have good footwear to provide solid support, and that surfaces you'll stand or walk on when lifting and carrying aren't slippery, or with hazards such as cords, ropes, or stones.

- If lifting large items that obstruct your full vision, make sure you know where you're going first; that there aren't obstructions below or above.

- Don't twist or turn at the waist while lifting; turn your whole body instead, leading with your waist and not shoulders.

- Don't ignore pain. The saying of "no pain, no gain", doesn't apply here. Take time to rest if your body calls for this.

- If you've been sitting, stretch your muscles when getting up before beginning to lift.

- As with any garden activities, do 15 repetitions or so, then rotate to another activity. Especially in the case of lifting motions, doing too many and getting tired often leads one to start using the back and lifting improperly.