

April 2016 Newsletter

"In the sheltered heart of the clumps, last year's foliage still clings to the lower branches, tatters of orange that mutter with the passage of the wind, the talk of old women warning the green generation of what they, too, must come to when the sap runs back."

- Jacquetta Hawkes



From the President's Pen

Well we finally made it! Winter is pretty much over. There only remains the remnants of snow which covers our garden. Now it's time to take an inventory of what we all need to open our gardens in a few weeks. Do we need to sharpen our gardening tools or buy new gloves for digging in the garden? Lots to think about in the next few weeks.

Personally, I can hardly wait to plant my 9 huge amaryllis plants which are consuming my basement windows and growing at a rate where they are continually flopping over and need to be tied up regularly.

Soon we will be asking you to start splitting some of your

plants and potting them for our annual plant sale on May 21, 2016 at Stewart Public School. Try to imagine how large your plants were last fall and think about splitting them in half. Your plants will actually do better. One of the things I have learned is you continually need to look at the growth rate of your plants and move them around as they become too large for the area where they were originally placed.

Lots to think about, but I am excited to start playing in the dirt. We will all too soon be experiencing the colour and beauty of Mother Nature and what a gift. Bring it on!

Jane Law



Upcoming

May 10, 2016 - Tick-Proofing Your Property, presented by Dr. Riddick

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 21, 2016, 8:30 - 10:00am, Stewart School, Sunset Blvd, Perth**



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Lanark Orchid

Renals

Perth & District
Horticultural
Society

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www.gardenontario.org

District #2 of the
Ontario Horticultural
Association

Junior Gardeners

We are looking for more strawberry containers for our Junior Gardener's program. We need them to use as little greenhouses for each student to start their tomato and marigold seeds.

Thanks for your continued support, *Robin McIntosh and Karen Kristine.*

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 Green with Envy – a design using fresh material in shades of green
- Class 8 Small Pleasures – a miniature design
- Class 9 History Buff – a design using heritage flowers and foliage
- Class 10 Pik'n Plunk – a centrepiece using foliage

Show Rules

- Exhibitors must be members of the Perth & District Horticultural Society.
- Maximum of one entry per exhibitor for each Design Class.
- Maximum of two entries per exhibitor for each Horticultural Class providing specimens are of different cultivars.
- Once placed, entries may only be moved by the show steward.
- All entries in cultural classes must have been grown or have been in the possession of the exhibitor for three months.
- Entry tag must be completed and remain with the entry.
- The decision of the judge is final.
- No exhibit will receive a prize, even though it is the only one in the class, unless judged to have sufficient merit.
- No exhibit may be moved before the specified closing time.
- All shows will take place during regular meetings.

- Entries to be placed prior to scheduled meeting opening time of 7p.m.

Ottawa Orchid Society Show

April 16 and 17

The Ottawa Orchid Society is pleased to announce that its 35th annual show will be held on April 16 and 17, 2016 at our new location at the RA Centre, 2451 Riverside Drive in Ottawa.

This show is one of Eastern Ontario's largest annual floral events with more than 35 displays of live plants and over 600 different orchids from around the world. It's the best opportunity in the region to experience the colour, fragrance and beauty of the world's most exotic flower. It brings together growers and hobbyists from Eastern Ontario, as well as from the U.S., Quebec and throughout Ontario.

Besides the many orchid exhibits, there are Ikebana floral arrangements, a gallery of orchid-inspired artworks, crafts and photography. Volunteers will host educational tours; expert growers from the Society will be on hand to diagnose pests and diseases and provide advice on growing healthy plants. The sales area will feature more than 25 vendors, including international orchid breeders offering a range of outstanding plants and supplies. Orchids are a preferred subject for many photographers. Tripods are welcome on Sunday morning of the show, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Show hours are 12-5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday 9-5 p.m. Admission is \$12 for adults; seniors and children over 12 are \$10. Admission will be reduced by \$2 on presentation of the discount coupon at the door. The RA cafeteria is open during the event.

More information on the show and extra discount coupons can be found on our web site at www.ottawaorchidsociety.com.

Pruning Evergreens In The Landscape

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

Proper pruning is important for good plant health. Pruning at the wrong time, or the wrong way, can result in leaf and plant injury. A University of New Hampshire publication

(extension.unh.edu/resources) on this same topic gives some excellent tips.

Thoughts of pruning really should begin when buying and placing plants. If you want a plant with a certain shape, try to find a selection that will grow into that shape. This will save you having to prune it at all, or mean pruning it minimally. Place plants with enough room to grow as they mature. Often we don't, and so pruning is needed to keep crowded plants within bounds. This is most common with foundation plantings, placed too close to buildings for future growth, or that grow too tall and block windows.

Not all evergreen landscape plants are pruned the same way. Evergreens are those that keep their foliage year round. Narrowleaf species are just that – they have narrow needle-like leaves. Ones such as pine, spruce, and fir only grow in the spring and early summer, so don't need yearly pruning. Others such as arborvitae, juniper, yew, and hemlock grow through the season, so may need yearly pruning.

Broadleaf species have, as the name indicates, broad leaves. They are more subject to winter injury than the narrowleaf species, so are less common in the far north. The most common is the rhododendron, while farther south one sees holly, mountain laurel, and boxwood. Broadleaf species may need little pruning if sited properly, or every three years at most.

Early spring is the best time to prune the species with needle leaves, after the ground has thawed, but before roughly the middle of June. Pines on the other hand ooze sap, or "bleed", when cut in early spring while the sap is flowing more. Prune pines in late spring to minimize such bleeding. Prune broadleaf evergreens in spring after bloom, but if blooms are not an issue then you can prune in early spring. Avoid pruning any evergreens, except to remove injured branches, in late summer or fall. The wounds won't heal as readily, and new growth may be stimulated. Such tender growth may not harden properly before winter and be injured.

If you have overgrown established plants, do not try to correct years of neglect in one pruning or season. The plants will be unsightly, and may take years to recover if they do at all. Evergreens also should be pruned less than deciduous trees and shrubs, as they grow slower. Yews, hemlock, and arborvitae can be pruned harder (more growth taken off) than juniper, spruce, pine, and fir. This is because they can grow from dormant

buds on older wood.

Especially with the narrowleaf evergreens, many gardeners prune them yearly by trimming the outer edges, removing a uniform amount from all branches. This actually is not pruning but is termed "shearing", just as one would shear a sheep. It has several disadvantages including loss of the natural shape, reducing the total leaf area, preventing sunlight from reaching the inside and so creating a "dead" zone, creating a less structurally strong plant, removing new growth while keeping the older and less vigorous branches, and creating stale air inside the shrub which is conducive for insects.

Instead of shearing, thinning and renewal techniques should be used. These promote more internal growth, reduce winter injury, and promote the natural form of plants. Selectively removing certain branches will result in air and sunlight being able to reach the centre of the plant.

To shape a shrub, first envision, or mark with string, a perimeter line. This is the line branches shouldn't cross. The line should create a shape wider at the bottom than the top for the most light to all branches. Then reach into the shrub and remove at a node where branches join:

- any branches that extend beyond this perimeter line
- no more than one of every four shoots on average
- competing upright vertical shoots, or leaders (upright branches competing to be the main trunk), and crossing or rubbing branches.
- a shoot that has another nearby that can grow to fill the space
- branches that are growing sideways or towards the shrub centre, and
- club-like growth that has resulted from years of shearing.

If you have an evergreen tree, such as a large pine or spruce, that has gotten too tall or large for its space, you might consider taking it down and replacing with a small tree or planting. If a small tree, you might be able to cut it down yourself, otherwise seriously consider hiring an arborist. This is especially true if the tree is near power lines.

If cutting down a tree, make sure it will fall the direction you want, and won't harm nearby buildings. If you're merely removing some branches that have died, are crossing and rubbing, are in the way, or just to let more light in, do so safely. Use a pole saw for high

branches, use proper protection such as for head and eyes, and use particular caution if working from a ladder.

Finally when pruning, make sure to use sharp tools to avoid tearing the bark. Sharp cuts will heal more quickly. Invest in a good file (ones with diamond bits are excellent), available online or at complete garden stores, for quickly and regularly sharpening the blades of pruning tools.

Crazy for Kale

Judith Cox , Master Gardener of Ottawa

Kale (*Brassica oleracea*) comes in many shapes, sizes and colours. It is extremely nutritious and makes a stunning addition to an autumn garden.

Kale has been shown to be high in vitamin K and vitamin C as well as iron and magnesium. One cup of kale can be a very healthy addition to your diet. Based on the nutrients found in kale, a lot of claims have been made about its health benefits. Kale contains an antioxidant known as alpha-lipoic acid which has been shown to lower glucose levels in diabetics, kale might be a new way to help control diabetes. It is also very high in fiber which is a definite way to improve insulin levels.

One cup of chopped fresh kale provides 329 milligrams of potassium, good food if you have high blood pressure. This same cup of kale also contains 550 micrograms of vitamin K which helps improve calcium absorption.

Kale is delicious as well as being nutritious. It can be added to smoothies and salads. It can be boiled and added to supper dishes or baked into kale chips for a crisp snack. Kale is a very versatile plant; I have grown kale in a vegetable garden, in pots and in flower beds. There are highly decorative kales that shine like roses with the sedum and rudbeckia in a fall garden

but they are not as tender for the table. There are dwarf blue kales that sparkle in a salad and larger leafy kales that add lots of nutrients to a smoothie. Kale is easily grown from seed. It can be started early under lights before the growing season, allowing you to harvest fresh kale for your recipes. Kale needs cooler weather to germinate and their strong colours show in the cooler temperatures of autumn. To maximize bright colours in your fall flower garden it is better to direct sow your kale near the end of May. The most commonly grown kale is Scotch or Scotch curled which resembles cabbage. The Siberian kale (*Brassica napus*) is closer to rutabagas. The beautiful ornamental kales are not as tasty.

Flowering or Ornamental kale is best grown in pots or featured in a flower bed. They are large and frilly in colours of yellow, cream, white, rose and lavender. Plant kale seeds in a large planter with pansies and nasturtiums and see how they come into their own later in the season. Kale looks amazing when it's mass planted in a flower bed or when their purple hues are focused as an edging for golden rudbeckia; a stunning contrast.

While the crisp leaves of Scotch blue kale are familiar to those using fresh kale in the kitchen and the frilly rosettes of kale are welcome in the fall garden, why not try some of the heritage varieties? One of my favourites is Black Tuscan Palm Tree kale (*Lacinato*, *Dinosaur*). It is spectacular, growing up to 3 feet in height. It has really dark leaves but they are not frilly like the ornamental kale and it tastes delicious. This would be a good year to try a row of nutritious kale and perhaps add a few bursts of colour into your flower bed.

RECIPE FOR KALE CHIPS

Remove the rib or spine of the kale
Toss in olive oil
Sprinkle with your favourite spice
Bake at 275°C for 15 to 30 minutes or until desired consistency