

# April 2018 Newsletter

"The roofs are shining from the rain, / The sparrows twitter as they fly,  
And with a windy April grace / The little clouds go by.  
Yet the back yards are bare and brown / With only one unchanging tree -  
I could not be so sure of Spring / Save that it sings in me."

- Sara Teasdale, April



## Upcoming:

**May 8:** Growing and Using Herbs. Speaker: Jean Dagley

**May 19:** ANNUAL PLANT SALE  
8:30 - 10:00 am, Stewart School,  
Sunset Blvd.

**June 12:** Master Gardeners Q & A  
Summer Social

## Plant Sale

The PDHS plant sale is a long running event held on the Saturday morning of the May holiday weekend (May 19, 2018 - 8:30 am to 10:00 am) in the gymnasium at Stewart School on Sunset Blvd.

The primary purpose of the sale is to raise funds for the running of the Society.

When dividing your plants this spring, pot up a few for the plant sale, we can't have a sale without plants!

## Organizing Your Seed Packets

If you sow only one variety of seed in a given year, setting up a sowing schedule is not that difficult. You only need to determine the best sowing date, which is probably indicated on the seed packet. For example, the packet

may indicate "sow indoors 8 weeks before the transplant date." You only have to count backwards according to this information. For example, if the date on which you plan to transplant is June 1st, you only have to remember that the contents of this packet should be sown about 8 weeks earlier, around April 1st. That's not too hard to remember.

However, when you have many seed packets you intend to sow, things can get complicated. You'll quickly learn that the needs of various seeds vary: if one variety prefers being sown 12 weeks before the last frost, another is best at 8 weeks, while yet another is best sown directly outdoors two weeks before the last frost ... and the list of possibilities goes on and on.

How can you organize things to avoid any confusion? Here's a suggestion: Prepare envelopes (no need for new ones: you can recycle used ones) ahead of time, according to the dates you've calculated: March 1st, March 15th, April 1st, April 15th, etc. A personal diary or a small binder with pockets would also be effective.

Now, as you buy seeds, simply place them in the appropriate envelope or pocket. That way, no confusion: you'll always be ready to sow the right seeds on the right date!



**President:** Robin McIntosh • **Newsletter:** Irene Hofmann



Lanark Orchid

Renals

Perth & District  
Horticultural  
Society

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www.gardenontario.org

District #2 of the  
Ontario Horticultural  
Association

## May Flower Show

### Section I: Horticultural Specimen

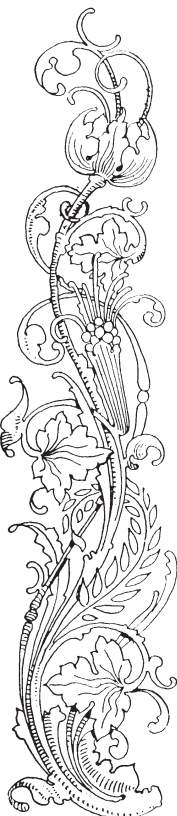
- Class 1:** African Violet – any colour – single flower
- Class 2:** Best potted plant in bloom – other than violet – named if possible
- Class 3:** Best potted foliage plant – named if possible
- Class 4:** Tulip – 3 stems with leaves attached
- Class 5:** Flowering Branch – no more than 24" above table
- Class 6:** Any Iris in Bloom – 1 spike
- Class 7:** Any peony – 1 stem
- Class 8:** Any other spring bloom from your garden – named
- Class 9:** Rhubarb – 3 stalks

### Section II: Design

- Class 10:** Spring Thaw – an underwater design
- Class 11:** Mother's Day Tea – a design in a cup and saucer
- Class 12:** Pik'n Plunk – spring flowers, branches and foliage

### SHOW RULES

- Exhibitors must be members of the Perth & District Horticultural Society.
- Only one entry per exhibitor for each Design Class.
- Maximum of two entries per exhibitor for each Horticultural Class providing specimens are of different cultivars.
- All entries in Horticultural classes must have been grown or have been in the possession of the exhibitor for 3 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 are to be placed prior to 7:00 p.m. when judging takes place.
- Once placed, entries may only be moved by the show steward.



## Sneak In Some Veggies

*Amanda Carrigan, Master Gardener*

When planning for summer, why not think about sneaking some vegetables into the flower garden? Edible landscaping is trendy. And sometimes the best area for vegetables is where you already have a perennial bed, or in front of the house, where you (or the neighbours) prefer things to be more ornamental than utilitarian. But you can put a lot of edibles in a bed and still make it pretty. Just start thinking of vegetables as, well, plants, with texture and colour.

Lettuce, kale, and chard can have gorgeous leaf textures and colours. So do dark-leaved beets like Bull's Blood. Carrots have lovely ferny foliage like yarrow, and don't take much space.

Many herbs, such as chives and thyme, have attractive flowers as well as nice leaves. Taller things like cherry tomatoes, hot peppers, or eggplants have interesting flowers and/or fruit when placed as individual specimens. Scarlet runner beans and some pea varieties can be trellised up and have showy flowers.

Of course, some things, like squash vines and corn, are hard to fit in an ornamental garden, but there are still a lot of things to try mixing into the perennial beds this year.

## Bee Line: In Praise Of Single Blooms

*Julianne Labreche*

*Master Gardener of Ottawa Carleton*

If you want to attract bees to your garden, then you need to start to think like a bee. The Honey Bee Research Centre at the University of Guelph does a lot of thinking of bees these days and so they are a useful source of advice for Ontario gardeners.

In their handout, *Creating a Bee-Friendly Garden* (easily downloaded at <http://www.uoguelph.ca/honeybee/documents/Bee-Garden-Brochure.pdf>), they offer several suggestions to create a home garden to attract bees. One suggestion is to choose single blooms rather than double blooms. This is because the showier blooms, often seen with new cultivars on the market, are not so easy for bees to access. The blooms are just



too complex. Those large, showy blooms also typically produce little nectar or pollen. When it comes to a bee garden, single blooms are best. Even though those fancier, fussy flowers might be interesting for us as gardeners, they're not so intriguing for bees.

Here are some suggestions for single bloomed flowers to attract bees. Their flowers are not just easy to access but also provide bees with the pollen and nectar that they need to survive. These flowers – purple, white, blue and yellow – are best seen by bees. Their fragrance attracts them too. Planted in clumps rather than single plants, they provide easy, one-stop shopping for bees, the gardener's ally as an important pollinator.

**Crocus** (*Crocus spp.*) - These are early spring flowers whose perfume attracts the hungry bees after the long winter months of hibernation. Crocus is planted in fall, about six to eight weeks before the first hard frost. Once established, they are easy to grow, naturalizing and coming back year after year.

**Snowdrop** (*Galanthus spp.*) - This is another early spring bulb that attracts hungry bees. This small plant has small, delicate flowers that hang downwards. They grow best in moist, cool, partially shaded areas of the garden. Their clumps grow rapidly and they should be divided every three to four years.

**Cosmos** (*Cosmos bipinnatus*) - This easy-to-grow annual can be sown as seed once the soil warms in spring. It's a tall annual that blooms in mid-summer to fall, producing large, single blooms in white, pink, red or purple. Cosmos will grow in full sun or partial shade and is a native to North America and Mexico.

**Christmas Rose** (*Helleborus niger*) - This cold hardy shrub produces lovely single blooms, often in white. Unlike many flowers that attract bees, this one grows best in partial shade. Care needs to be taken however because it is toxic to both children and pets.

**Flax** (*Linum spp.*) - This delicate blue flowered perennial blooms over about twelve weeks from early to midsummer. Flax requires well-drained soil and full sun. It is non-invasive and readily self-sows.

**Pale Purple Coneflower** (*Echinacea pallida*) - While there are many new, showy coneflowers for sale in garden centres these days, it is the old fashioned traditional pale purple ones that attract bees. This perennial also attracts other pollinators, including butterflies, and finches eat the seeds in winter.

**Sunflowers** (*Helianthus annuus*) - There are hundreds of kinds of sunflowers. This annual is typically large and showy but there are also dwarf varieties. It's not only bees that are attracted to these big, single bloomed flowers. Butterflies visit these flowers too, and so do many birds that eat the seeds come late fall and winter.

**Dahlia** (single)(*Dahlia spp.*) - These showy annuals may need staking. There are many different cultivars. The single flowered dahlias are best for bees, bearing daisy-like blooms. Typically, they are grown from tuberous bulbs that are dug up in the fall and replanted in the spring.

**Poppy** (single) - The cup-shaped Icelandic Poppy (*Papaver nudicaule*) is especially loved by the small bees that collect pollen in its stamens. It flowers in late spring to early summer.

**Black-Eyed Susan** (*Rudbeckia hirta*) - This is a bee magnet and a native North American flowering plant that grows best in full sun. It will also attract butterflies and other pollinating insects. It is a tough, winter hardy plant, and a biennial plant that self seeds.

**Aster** (*Aster novi-angliae*) - This is a tall, native wildflower, a single bloomed plant that blooms late in the gardening season. Its large blooms of blue, violet, white and pink provide a delicious end-of-season feast for the bees before winter.

## Garden Stretches

By Dr. Leonard Perry

Whether it's peak gardening season or winding down, most gardeners have a tendency to overdo, which may lead to fatigue and sore muscles. That's why, regardless of the tasks at hand, it's important to take periodic breaks when gardening – preferably before the aches begin – to rest and do some simple exercises.

Many gardening activities, such as hoeing, digging, and raking, can cause tightness in your shoulders. To relieve this, do shoulder shrugs. Simply raise your shoulders slowly towards your ears, hold a few seconds, and slowly release. Do this three or four times, resting a few seconds between each repetition.

Do neck stretches to relieve tension in your neck as soon as you start to feel tense. Place your hand on the back of your head. Slowly and gently pull your head forward and down. Do this until you feel the muscles along your neck and lower head stretch. Your profile should look like an upside down "J." Repeat a few times, resting in between. Another good neck exercise for

tightness is the head roll. Roll your left ear toward your left shoulder slowly. Then lower your chin as you roll your head down and to the right. Your right ear should then be toward your right shoulder. Then slowly move back in the same fashion. The key is not to jerk your neck, rather move it with a slow rhythm. Do not roll your head backwards as this puts stress on the disks in your spine.

To plant or weed, get down on your hands and knees, rather than bending over. Bending over for long periods and bending with your back and not your legs are the main causes of lower back problems.

When working on your hands and knees, periodically do the cat stretch. Raise your stomach and back, arching the latter like a cat does when waking from a nap. At the same time, lower your head and tuck your chin in towards your chest to avoid strain on your neck. Do this slowly, repeating the movements a few times with a rest in between.

Your fingers and wrists also need a rest and loosening up occasionally. The repetitive motion of using a trowel or long handled rake or hoe can stress your hands and wrists and may even lead to carpal tunnel syndrome. To avoid such stress on your wrists, periodically let them go floppy and limp. Then rotate them in one direction, then the other. Finally, give them a good shaking to get the circulation going. For your fingers, spread them apart as much as you can, keeping them as straight as possible. Keeping them spread, make circles with your thumbs. Then touch your thumb to each finger in turn. This will help relax the tendons in your palm.

Make a point to do these exercises whenever gardening to avoid undue stress on your body muscles and to keep gardening fun, as well as healthy exercise.

## A Little Garden History

**Elizabeth Lawrence (1904-84)  
and her Charlotte, NC Garden**

Charleston Horticultural Society, January 8,  
2018 • Speaker: Andrea Sprott, Curator  
*By Lynda Haddon*

I was one of several in the room who had (ashamedly) not heard of Elizabeth Lawrence, a dynamic plant-loving woman who used her garden as a living laboratory and gave so much back to gardening and gardeners. While gardens generally evolve over time, the garden Elizabeth left

behind, Wing Haven Gardens, is being worked on to recreate as it was when she was forced to sell the property in 1983 for health reasons.

Elizabeth is listed as one of the world's top 25 gardeners of all time. She won the Herbert medal in gardening. Only 81 medals were awarded world-wide, 7 to women and she was the first woman to receive it. She was a prolific writer, wrote over 700 columns for the Charlotte Observer, six books, numerous articles for various regional and national publications, and left behind an informative array of correspondence as well as between 15,000 and 20,000 index cards detailing the plants she used, how they were used, their success/failure and her thoughts on each plant. She just left out "Where they were planted," thereby challenging Andrea to use her wiles to figure out the locations. Elizabeth is also one of three preeminent gardeners, along with Thomas Jefferson and J.C. Ralston, credited with improving gardening in the southeastern U.S.

Andrea indicated that Elizabeth's garden was only 70x225' and marvelled at the impact she made on gardening considering not only how small her garden was but also being a landscape artist, she only ever designed her own garden. She began designing her house in 1948, which was proportionally perfect with the garden. Her motto was "Proportion is ALL" and her garden demonstrates how completely she gave herself over to proportion with plant choices and in tricking the eye into believing the walkway went on forever, for example. A photograph shows that a long pathway to the house, broken by a round, bricked pond, is 12" narrower at one end than its beginning giving the illusion of depth and length. The gardens and the few black and white photos left behind are slowly being studied and translated in an effort to identify the plants used and where they were originally located. Amazingly, some 60% of the types of plants Elizabeth worked with remain in the garden. The challenge with black and white photos, of course, is that if one also had the plant colour, it may be easier to identify a blooming plant.

Elizabeth tried new plants all the time, so her garden was constantly changing as she found what thrived and what did not in the southeast. She reportedly indicated to one visitor who effused over the peaceful and tranquil surroundings: "You have only seen it today."

The house and gardens are open to visitors and if you would like more information, their website is: <https://winghavengardens.org/elizabeth-lawrence-house-and-garden/>