



The Ladyslipper

Perth & District Horticultural Society

www.perthhortsociety.com



P.O. Box 494
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April 2020

President's Pen

I want to keep in touch with our members during these strange times we are going through, so Jane Avery put together this informative newsletter for you to enjoy. I hope you are all healthy and safe and staying home. Warmer weather is just around the corner so we will be able to get out in our gardens and enjoy nature at its best. Don't forget to stay in touch with friends and family as well as your gardening buddies, even if it is a joke or a photo in an email, journal your daily experiences and gratitude, learn something new, do that project you have been meaning to get done but never have the time.



Beautiful Crocus from Ute Schall

May Meeting and Plant Sale

In light of what is happening around us and on the advice of the OHA, we are cancelling our monthly May meeting. It is essential that we follow the rules of our Ontario government for no assembly of more than 5 people and the Physical Distancing of 6 metres. The Stay Home rule is in place and will be for a while. We hope to see you in June but will let you know later next month.

We are going to postpone the May Plant Sale to September/October so please keep this in mind when you are working in your gardens and see plants that could be split. Pot them up, keep in them in a cool spot and water them so they will be ready to find a new garden to thrive in.

Newsletter Name Contest

I am pleased to announce the name that was chosen for our newsletter – *The Ladyslipper*, a fitting name to go with our society. The logo for the newsletter has been redesigned with the new name. Thank you to Madeline Archer for suggesting the name. Congratulations Madeline, you are the winner of a \$25.00 Gift Certificate for Hillside Gardens.

Junior Gardeners

Robin and Sandi would like to thank all of our members who were willing to volunteer to run our Junior Gardener program this year and hopefully will join us for next year's program.

Community Gardens

Lynda Haddon, our Community Garden Chair has been advised by the Town of Perth that we will not be permitted into any of the community gardens in groups until later this Spring, maybe by July. Lynda will have access for now on her own. Thank you, Lynda for your dedication in keeping up the community gardens during this strange gardening year.

District 2 AGM & OHA Convention

On March 31, 2020, the Ontario Government issued Emergency Regulations extending the time required for non-profit organizations to hold their Annual General Meetings. As a result, the April 18, 2020 AGM for D2 is postponed until after the rescinding of the Emergency Measures related to the COVID-19 Virus. We will keep you posted as events are firmed up and a new date set.

At this time, the OHA Convention is still scheduled to be held in London from July 17-19, 2020. Please see GardenOntario.org for more information.

Happy Gardening

Linda Bartlett

Email: pdhsmembers@gmail.com

Phenology in the Garden

Source: *The Old Farmer's Almanac* website

Nature's "signs" are different in every region; however, you should still relate to these examples:

- Blooming **crocus** are your cue to plant **radishes, parsnips, and spinach**.
- When the **forsythia** is in bloom, it is safe to plant **peas, onion sets, and lettuce**.
- Half-hardy vegetables, including **beets, carrots, and chard**, can be planted when the **daffodils** blossom.
- Look for **dandelions** to bloom before planting **potatoes**.
- **Perennial flowers** can be planted when the **maple trees** begin to leaf out.
- When **quince** is blossoming, transplant **cabbage and broccoli**.
- Wait for **apple trees** to bloom before planting **bush beans**.
- When the **apple blossoms fall**, plant **pole beans and cucumbers**.
- By the time the **lilacs** are in full bloom, it will be safe to plant **tender annual flowers and squashes**.
- Transfer **tomato** transplants to the garden when **lily-of-the-valley** is in full flower.
- Full-sized **maple leaves** signal time to plant **morning glory** seeds.
- **Peppers** and **eggplant** can be transplanted when the **bearded irises** are blooming.
- When **peonies** blossom, it is safe to plant **heat-loving melons**, such as **cantaloupe**.



A Boost for Vegetable Gardening

By Beckie Fox, editor Garden Making Magazine.
Abridged version of March 2020 article

Now is a good time to revisit the concept of Victory Gardens, the vegetable plots planted in Canada during the Second World War to provide fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as demonstrate patriotism and solidarity. We could do with some solidarity.

Honestly, the one tiny bright spot in the news feeds, social media posts and messages I've read

during the past weeks is that online seed and plant ordering is strong. (But like so many of us who are coping and pivoting as best as we can, some seed houses have needed to halt online and phone orders because of high demand.) People who may have never gardened before are searching for vegetable gardening guidance through YouTube videos and Twitter chats. Maybe you have started fielding questions from neighbours, children or grandchildren with a newfound curiosity about growing food. Here's your opportunity to offer help and encouragement.

On a related note about Victory Gardens, for a personal account of how gardening helped one-woman cope with the death of her husband, I can recommend a book published last fall by a friend, Debi Goodwin, *A Victory Garden for Trying Times*.

Seed-starting advice

Depending on where you garden, it will soon be time to start seed for warm-season crops, such as tomatoes, peppers and eggplants, either indoors under lights or in a sunny window. Other vegetables, such as carrots, beets, radishes, lettuces and beans, are fine for direct sowing into prepared garden beds or large containers once the soil is warm and the threat of frost has passed.

For resources on growing from seed:

- Starting seeds indoors provides step-by-step instructions and tips for annual vegetable and flower growing.
<https://gardenmaking.com/starting-seeds-indoors/>
- Starting seeds outdoors is the companion piece with tips on sowing annual flower and vegetable seed directly into garden beds.
<https://gardenmaking.com/starting-seeds-outdoors/>
- Seeds of Diversity, a Canadian organization dedicated to conserving agricultural and horticultural biodiversity, has compiled a list of seed companies to order from.
<https://seeds.ca/sw8/web/diversity/seed-catalogue-index>.



Spring Tasks

Source: Horticulture Magazine Check List

- ❖ Inspect shrubs and trees for winter damage. Remove dead or damaged branches
- ❖ Pull protective mulch off perennials. Remove winter mulch on an overcast day.
- ❖ Plant annuals after the last frost.
- ❖ Move plants to new locations, if desired.
- ❖ Divide perennials that bloom in summer or fall.
- ❖ Prune spring-blooming shrubs, if desired, after they finish flowering.
- ❖ Top-dress gardens with compost or well-rotted manure and spread mulch to get a jump on weed control and conserve moisture.
- ❖ Set up stakes or cages for potentially floppy perennials, such as delphiniums, peonies and hollyhocks, before they reach one foot high.
- ❖ Set bamboo stakes next to gladiolus to keep them from flopping.
- ❖ Cold crops to plant in early spring include onions, broccoli, kale and spinach.
- ❖ Divide ornamental grasses in early spring. When pruning, save stems to use as stakes.
- ❖ Apply chemical-free corn gluten to lawns to stop broadleaf weeds from sprouting
- ❖ if a late frost threatens cover tender plants with a sheet or cardboard box.
- ❖ Site fragrant shrubs near a path or porch so their scent can be enjoyed.
- ❖ Plant perennials early for best root growth.
- ❖ Remove tulip flowers as soon as they start to fade.
- ❖ It's easiest to dig when the earth is damp, not dry or wet.
- ❖ Buy plants with more buds than open blooms.
- ❖ Prune roses just after their leaf buds begin to swell.
- ❖ Animal repellents need to be reapplied after a rain.
- ❖ Start summer-blooming bulbs indoors if the soil is still cold.
- ❖ Propagate shrubs by softwood cuttings in late spring.



Why Trees are the Last to Turn Green

Adapted from an article by Tom Speaks
The Ottawa Citizen, April 4th, 2020

Even though trees are seemingly behind bulbs, grass, flowers and a few other plants, in beginning to green out, nothing is further from the truth. Behind the scenes especially, deciduous trees, there is a lot of work happening to life occurring. Sally Aitken, Dean of Forestry, University of British Columbia, explains.

Unlike perennial plants which die back above the ground and remain snug and protected under the ground, trees are stuck above ground, very exposed to the cold. Evergreens have less work to begin again come springtime because their green needles can begin photosynthesis using sunlight to make food as soon as the temperatures warm up. Further evergreens grow new tips, but they are sensitive to frost, so the tree waits a bit until it is assured that the warmth will continue.

Deciduous trees, depending upon the species, relies on its wood to start to grow. The pores in each wood type are open, and are like straws, one stacked on the next. These specialized "straws" move water and not having had a drink for months, the tree needs to drink. Some tree species have larger "straws" than others for drawing water and are vulnerable to air pockets, thus preventing the movement of water. Before the tree can leaf out, it needs to wait for some accumulated warmth to produce a new set of "straws." Oaks and Black Locust are in this category.

Other species produce smaller "straws" all through the growing season and therefore suffer less damage from air pockets. They can get busy growing leaves without much delay. Examples are maple, birch, pine.

Hellebores: Stars of the Spring Garden

By Suzanne Patry of Whitehouse Perennials in Almonte



For me the first blooms of the Helleborus, commonly known as Lenten Rose, signal the beginning of a new gardening season. As the snow starts to melt, I can't resist poking around

in the old foliage looking for the tightly furled blooms that will quickly emerge with the warmth of the early spring sun. For years it was commonly believed that there was no point planting Hellebores in the Ottawa Valley because they would not survive. Every April when I went to Southern Ontario on buying trips I was enchanted by their beautiful flowers. I finally decided that the worst could happen is that the plant would die so I bought one and planted it in a sheltered part of the shade garden. Now our property contains at least fifty clumps of Hellebores. Some of the first ones I planted have made large clumps with all the seedlings that have matured around them and are producing over one hundred blooms from the investment in just one plant. Over the last twenty years plant breeders have introduced more and more Helleborus varieties giving gardeners a fantastic choice of colours from white and pastel to almost black and complex flower shapes including fully double blooms. After flowering the deeply divided, leathery foliage of Hellebores remains a lush green and provides a beautiful contrast to the more rounded leaves of hostas and other broad-leaved shade plants.

Hellebores are native to woodlands and rocky sites across central Europe to western Asia. In medieval times they were believed to have magical powers and offer protection against evil spirits. Clumps of them were planted close to the entrances to cottages and animals were decorated with garlands of blooms to keep them safe from disease. The name Hellebore comes from the Greek *hellein* (to kill) and *bora* (food) an acknowledgement of their toxic effect. Hellebores are very long lived and will frequently produce masses of seedlings under the skirt of their foliage that can be transplanted to

start new colonies. They are seldom bothered by any disease or insects and are also not favoured by deer. The blooms last for several months as they transition from coloured petals to papery bracts with attractive star shaped seed pods.

Hellebores do best in a part shade location with either morning or late afternoons sun. Soil that is suited to woodland plants with lots of organic material and good drainage is ideal. They like consistent moisture in the spring and fall when they are actively growing but dryness in late summer when they are resting will not bother them. I like to wait until the blooms are starting to unfurl and new leaves are appearing before cutting back any foliage that has been damaged over the winter. In years when snow cover has been scarce the evergreen leaves may all need to be removed but the lush new growth will replace the damaged leaves. A five-centimetre mulch of organic material like rotted leaves or aged manure applied every spring will keep the clumps growing well. Hellebores resent disturbance and can remain in the same place for many years. Propagation from self-sown seedlings is the easiest way to obtain more plants but the fearless gardener may decide to cut into an established clump and pull apart divisions to replant. We have been most successful moving and dividing Hellebores in late summer just as they begin a new flush of growth. In the fall we allow the fallen leaves to stay on the ground to protect the crowns of the plants. If you want to clean up the garden in the fall some evergreen boughs over the plants will trap the snow and provide extra protection especially for new plants.

Over the last ten years intensive plant breeding using *Helleborus Niger*, commonly known as the Christmas Rose, and *H. orientalis* with its coloured flowers has produced exquisite double flowered forms and interesting marbling in the foliage. Flowers have also become more up facing allowing gardeners to see the full bloom not the hanging bells that are typical of the older varieties. I am so glad that I ignored the advice to give these beautiful harbingers of spring a wide berth because they have proven to be some of the easiest to grow and longest-lived plants in our shade garden. I would never want to be without them.

Perth & District Garden Centres

We encourage PDHS members to support their local nurseries. Government regulations pertaining to the operation of essential services, during the Covid-19 pandemic, are subject to change.

Businesses are asked to consult the Covid-19 hotline at 1-888-444-3659 for the latest guidelines. Consumers will want to contact their local garden centres, by phone or online, to determine the status of operations. Many local garden centres are accepting phone and online orders with credit card payment. Curbside pick-up of plants and gardening supplies may be available. Please note: It may be difficult for garden centres to process your PDHS discount at this time.

- **Carlton Place Nursery Ltd.**
www.carletonplacenursery.com
613-257-8175 Dave
7164 County Road 29, Carleton Place, K7C 3P1
- **Gemmell's**
www.gemmellsgardencentre.com
613-283-6371 Rob & Liz
11862 Hwy 15 North, Smith Falls, ON K7A 4S4 (& Brockville)
- **Hillside Gardens**
www.hillsidegardensperth.com
613-267-4031 Carol & Bruce
313 Wayside Drive, Perth, ON, K7H 3C8
- **Kiwi Gardens**
www.kiwigardens.ca
613-267-7384 Paul
687 Harper Rd., Perth, ON K7H 3C9
- **Reids**
www.reidgardens.ca
613-253-3467 Chris
142 Pick Road, Carleton Place, ON, K7C 3P1
- **Stoneridge Gardens & Nursery**
www.stoneridgegardens.com
613-256-4348 Laurie & Jessica
1851 Galbraith Rd, RR #2
Clayton, ON, K0A 1P0

- **Whitehouse Perennials**
www.whitehouseperennials.com
613-256-3406 Suzanne & Bruce
594 Rae Rd., Almonte, ON K0A 1A0

For soils and aggregates:

- **Landscape Products Depot**
<http://landscapeproductsdepot.com/>
6156 County Road 43, North Elmsley, ON
613-880-0309
- **Tackaberry Sand & Stone Ltd.**
<http://www.tackaberryconstruction.com/>
16129 Highway 7, Perth, ON
613-267-1280



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Question & Answer

Q: What are the best seeds for young children to get started with gardening?

A: *Because they are easy for small hands to handle, quick to sprout and yield is reliable: peas, green and yellow beans, scarlet runner beans (needs strings or trellis) and try a tomato plant in a larger pot so they can observe how it takes shape.*



Spring Has Sprung Photo Contest

Please share your images of spring in the garden. We will create a file of inspiring shots to be circulated to PDHS members later this spring. Members will have the opportunity to choose the photo they like the best. A Gift Certificate from one of our local sponsors will be awarded to the winner. Please send one photo per member, with plant identification by email to : pdhsmembers@gmail.com

Gardening: A new Olympic Sport?

Submitted by Lynda Haddon

Mark Cullen recently shared a report from Iowa State University indicating the physical benefits of gardening as exercise. All activities are in a 30-minute time frame.

Digging: A woman burns 150 calories and a man 197.

Mowing the Lawn:

With a push-type mower: A woman burns 181 calories, a man 236.

With a rotary power mower: A woman burns 135 calories; a man 177.

Transplanting, shrubs and trees, trimming and pruning:

A woman burns 135 calories; a man burns 177.

Weeding flower/vegetable gardens:

A woman 138 calories; a man 181.

Raking the lawn: A woman 120 calories, a man 157.

What was not explained in Cullen's remarks is the reason for the difference in calories burned by men vs. women.

Cullen goes on to say that 30 minutes a day of gardening helps increase flexibility, strengthen joints, decrease blood pressure and cholesterol levels. In addition, it lowers your risk of diabetes and heart disease and slow the advance of osteoporosis. All good things.

Will gardening ever become an Olympic Sport?

Probably not but taking advantage of gardening is something that can really grow on you and improve your health.



Free Virtual Garden Tours

By Ruth Doherty of House Beautiful UK

Eight Beautiful Virtual Gardens to Enjoy While Isolating.



Features these stupendous gardens:

- Kew Gardens, Richmond, UK
- Waddesdon Manor, UK
- Chicago Botanic Garden, US
- Hawaii Tropic Botanical Garden, Papaikou, Hawaii
- Keukenhof, Amsterdam, Holland
- RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey England
- Claude Monet's Garden, Giverny, France
- US Botanic Gardens, Washington, US

www.housebeautiful.com/UK/garden/g31913008/best-virtual-tour-garedn/



Free Online Learning Galore

Chatterpack.net has an extensive list of online resources, including gardening, curated by Claire Ryan

<https://chatterpack.net/blogs/list-of-online-resources-for-everyone-who-is-isolated-at-home>

Woodlot Management through the government of Nova Scotia

<https://novascotia.ca/natr/education/woodlot/modules>

Gardening

Word Search Puzzle



- | | | |
|-------------|--------|--------------|
| CLIPPERS | RAKE | SUNSHINE |
| COMPOST | SEEDS | TILLER |
| FLOWERS | SHEARS | TROWEL |
| GARDEN HOSE | SHOVEL | VEGETABLES |
| GLOVES | SNAILS | WATER |
| HERBS | SNIPS | WATERING CAN |
| HOE | SOIL | WEEDS |
| PLANTING | SPADE | WHEELBARROW |