

# February 2014 Newsletter



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

"A garden should make you feel you've entered privileged space -- a place not just set apart but reverberant -- and it seems to me that, to achieve this, the gardener must put some kind of twist on the existing landscape, turn its prose into something nearer poetry.

Michael Pollan,  
Second Nature:  
A Gardener's Education



## Save The Date 5th April, 2014

PDHS will be hosting the District 2 Annual General Meeting at Glad Tidings Pentecostal Church on Wayside Drive. Please support PDHS and count on joining us for a day which promises to be memorable on many levels. We will have more details for you in the near future. Join us and enjoy two exceptional speakers, Jr. Gardeners sharing, garden photo competition, a wide variety of vendors, exciting Silent Auction, door prizes, and delegate bags full of interesting offers from Perth and area's local businesses. A lunch will be included, as well as morning snacks, coffee and tea available. Spend the day improving your garden knowledge, feeding your mind, body and soul, connecting with old friends and meeting new

ones.

With your help, we can make this event a huge success!

## Seven Important Gardening Tips for a Successful Gardening Experience

- 1) Start small. You can always add to the size over time.
- 2) Choose the right spot. Does it have enough sun, shade, balance of both? There can be specific challenges when planting near an established hedge or tree as there is competition for water and sunlight.
- 3) Prepare the soil and amend if necessary. All will be for naught if the soil is not properly prepared before planting.
- 4) Choose your plants carefully. Know what the plants you are choosing can best tolerate.

**President:** Madeline Archer

**Vice President/Secretary:** Margo Fulford • **Newsletter:** Irene Hofmann

Some plants like acidic soil, some prefer dry conditions, some clay.

- 5) Mulch, mulch, mulch. Helps cut down on weeding and watering plus the garden looks great.
- 6) Water your new plants well into the ground. The mulch will help keep the soil moist and break down over time, also amending the soil.
- 7) Try to keep the area weeded. A little bit each day will help keep things under control.

*Submitted by Lynda Haddon*

## Junior Gardeners

This is another reminder to ask members to please take plant cuttings for the Junior Gardeners' "Plant Library". If you have already done so and have rooted cuttings and are unable to pot them up, then please bring them to the March meeting and I can pot them and label them with care instructions. Or call me at 613-264-1065 and I can arrange to pick them up if necessary.

Also, this will be the ninth year that I have been co-ordinator for the Junior Gardeners' program. I am looking for a replacement. I have "grown" with the program, from approximately 45 students to the current 170+. It is quite a lot of work, needing someone with good organizational skills and access to a computer. I already have one person interested in taking over, but she would like someone else to help. If there is anyone interested in helping out then please come and talk to me at the meeting on Tuesday. Thank you.

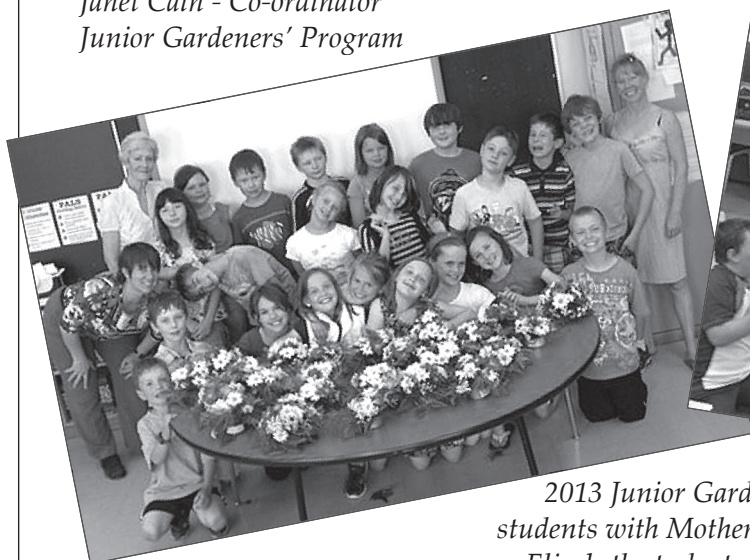
*Janet Cain - Co-ordinator  
Junior Gardeners' Program*

## Early Edibles in the Garden

*Helen Halpenny  
Lanark County Master Gardeners*

Last Sunday was Candlemas- the first day of February. Churches celebrated it and it reminds us that the light is picking up and soon we will be making plans for spring. Some passionate gardeners already have purchased seed and others are pouring over the catalogues and deciding which cultivars will ensure their 'best garden ever'.

February inspires us to take cuttings of geraniums and other garden favourites. It is also time to start various edibles. Herbs such as parsley, thyme, rosemary and basil are some herbs that grow easily from seed. Sown on a fine promix medium and kept moist, these seeds will germinate and do well if given good light. Come May, you will have good seedlings to transplant. A sunny window is okay but I find that fluorescent lights on a fourteen hour timer work best. I use one cool white and one warm white bulb in the light fixture, to give a wider spectrum of light. After the seedlings get their true leaves, a liquid fertilizer (half strength) every ten days will provide lots of nutrients. If I remember in the fall I pot up some chives, let them stay outside until Christmas to provide a dormant time. When I bring them indoors and put them in good light, they grow immediately, providing great garnishes. You can buy a bunch



*2013 Junior Gardeners: Left, St. John Elementary students with Mother's Day arrangements. Right, Queen Elizabeth students with plants from the plant library*

of basil in the grocery store. If you put some of the stocks in water, most of them will root and then they can be potted up (much faster than seed sown plants)

Mesclun, which is a mixture of lettuce, pak choi, endives, kale and other leafy greens, can be readily grown under lights, in a cool location. Crops of tender young leaves can be snipped with scissors after three weeks of growth. Most of the young plants will regrow after their 'haircut'. These micro greens are very popular in salads. Successive planting every few weeks ensure an ongoing supply.

February is also time to plant onion and leek seed. It is fun to watch the little crooked stems emerge and straighten. I marvel how each seed knows what it is to become.

If the groundhog's prediction was correct and an early spring is on the way, then before long we will be digging out those parsnips that we mulched in the soil last fall. What a treat! Then the rhubarb and asparagus will follow as soon as spring truly has arrived!

Visit our Edible Garden page on our website at [www.lanarkmastergardeners.mgoi.ca](http://www.lanarkmastergardeners.mgoi.ca) or contact us at [lanarkmg@gmail.com](mailto:lanarkmg@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

## **Gardening Courses Available At Algonquin College**

### **Seed Starting and Plant Propagation**

February 20

Time: 6-9 p.m.

Room: 115

Cost: \$28

Instructor: Master Gardeners' Club

Learn how to collect and store seeds. This includes identifying sources and equipment required. Different types of seeds have different lighting and temperature requirements. We will learn many different germination methods from easy to much more challenging. Learn to identify timing as to when to start, caring for seedlings, transplanting, transferring from indoors to outdoors.

Plant Propagation: show and discuss various methods, tips and tricks.

### **Growing Great Containers**

February 27

Time: 6-9 p.m.

Room: 115

Cost: \$28

Instructor: Master Gardeners' Club

Containers are not just for pretty flowers at your front door anymore. Learn how to start containers right and how to grow both flowers and vegetables in small places.

### **Garden for Eating**

March 6

Time: 6-9 p.m.

Room: 142

Cost: \$28

Instructor: Master Gardeners' Club

Growing vegetables is the most rewarding form of gardening. Not only does your garden look good, you can eat it after. Learn tricks to increase your gardens productivity and to extend the growing season

### **Orchids and other Houseplants**

March 13

Time: 6-9 p.m.

Room: 115

Cost: \$28

Instructor: Master Gardeners' Club

The first part of the evening is on how to propagate house plants vegetatively. We will show you how to propagate plants like African Violets, Rex Begonia, Spider Plants and Hibiscus using leaf cuttings stem cuttings and air layering.

The other half is how to grow Moth Orchids. This is the popular orchid sold in grocery stores that everyone has in their home. Topics like soil, watering and temperature will be discussed.

### **Colour in your Garden All Season**

March 20

Time: 6-9 p.m.

Room: 115

Cost: \$28

Instructor: Master Gardeners' Club

Plan your garden to add colour and interest to your vista, all year long. Learn how to match



### **Diabolical Plot:**

A garden plot  
exclusively  
planted with  
brussels sprouts.



colours for more vibrant gardens.

For course descriptions and registration, please visit us on the web:

**[algonquincollege.com/perth](http://algonquincollege.com/perth)**

Registrations can also be made at the Campus in the main office or by calling us at 613-267-2859.

## **AAS Vegetable Winners For 2014**

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

Each year, the best of the new seed-grown vegetables are chosen as winners by the All-America Selections (AAS) program after trialing across North America. They must represent either a totally new variety, or one improved in some way over an existing one. There are five winning vegetables for 2014, including a bean, pepper, and two tomatoes.

'Mascotte' bean is a good example of recent breeding of vegetables for patio containers and smaller-space gardens, as well as improved disease resistance. It is a bush type under two feet tall, with many long, slender pods held above the leaves for easy picking. The white flowers prior to the fruit make the plants ornamental as well. Sow when the soil is warm (often late May or early June in the north), and then every two weeks until July if you want multiple harvests. Fruit are produced about 50 days from sowing.

'Mama Mia Giallo' is a sweet Italian type pepper with fruit 7 to 9 inches long. It needs 85 days to harvest from transplanting, so may not produce well in colder climates with short growing seasons. The gold to yellow fruit are good fresh, grilled, or roasted.

'Chef's Choice Orange' tomato has the wonderful flavor of an orange, heirloom parent yet is earlier and with some disease resistance. The fruit color doesn't fade when cooked, or

used in soups and sauces. It matures in 75 days from transplanting, on indeterminate (vining) plants to 5 feet tall. Fruit average about three-quarters of a pound, but can be larger in a good season.

'Fantastico' is the second tomato national AAS winner for 2014. This one, however, is a grape tomato with early maturing and many fruit in long clusters. Fruit resist cracking better than many of this type. Plants have resistance to late blight disease which devastates tomatoes in some years and locations. It is another good choice for small spaces or containers, being determinate (non-vining) and two feet or more tall. Figure on 50 days to harvest from transplanting, or 90 days from sowing seeds.

In addition, for the first time this year, regional winners have been named. Although none are listed for the Northeast, most still should perform fine here, depending on conditions. 'Mountain Merit' was a winning tomato in the Heartland region. It is a medium to large beefsteak type, good for slicing, and has good resistance to diseases.

'Cinderella's Carriage' is a pumpkin with fruit reminiscent of Cinderella's carriage, up to 18 inches across and up to 20 pounds. Fruit is a reddish orange, produced about 100 days from sowing.

'Pick a Bushel' cucumber was a winner in the Midwest regions. Compact and spreading to only about two feet, it would be a good choice where space is limited or in large containers. It sets fruit early so should be good in the northeast as well. Fruit can be harvested early for pickles, or when mature at about 6-inches long for slicing.

More All-America Selections, both flowers and vegetables, can be found on their website ([www.all-americaselections.org](http://www.all-americaselections.org)). This includes the three winning vegetables for this past year-- 'Melemon' melon, 'Harvest Moon' watermelon, and the cherry tomato 'Jasper'.



### **Garden:**

One of a vast number of free outdoor restaurants operated by charity-minded individuals in an effort to provide healthful, balanced meals for insects, birds and animals.