



The Ladyslipper



Perth & District Horticultural Society

www.perthhortsociety.com

Est. 1984

P.O. Box 494
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February 2023

President's Pen

Welcome to this new year of gardening possibilities. We are being teased with warm sunny days that get us thinking of the grand growing season ahead.

For garden enthusiasts, it feels only fitting to share Valentine's day with our green-thumbed friends. We are so fortunate to celebrate today with Paul Gellatly, better known as the tattooed gardener. Paul's 30-year history in horticulture has confirmed his stature as an important industry influencer. If you have yet to check out Paul's website, I encourage you to visit thetattooedgardener.ca. You will be inspired by Paul's selection of unusual seed offerings. Add drama to your garden this season with Columbine Black Barlow Aquilegia Vulgaris, Cardoon Seeds – a lovely thistle or other delights.

We have a stellar lineup of speakers on deck for you this year. Starting in March, we are optimistic about being able to meet in person. Please think of bringing a friend to one of our monthly meetings.

We look forward to hosting renowned gardener Ed Lawrence in June. It is not too early to formulate your questions for this local gardening guru.

Best

Jane
Co-President



PDHS Board of Directors for 2023
Richard Catchpaw, Robin McIntosh,
Linda Bartlett, Barb Smith,
D2 Director Anne Harbord,
Gerda Van Wingerden, Caroline Bolduc,
Muriel Hopper and Jane Avery

PDHS 2023 Program

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| March 14, 2023 | <i>Beware of Invasive Plants</i>
Speaker: Dale Odorizzi |
| April 11, 2023 | <i>Happy, Healthy, Hostas</i>
Speaker: Ann Frederking |
| May 9, 2023 | <i>Spring Foraging: Mushroom Hunters with Loose Morels</i>
Speaker: Tauney Stinson |
| June 13, 2023 | <i>Q & A Session with Ed Lawrence</i> , Dessert Social and Standard Flower Show |
| September 12, 2023 | <i>Promising You a Rose Garden</i>
Speaker: Judith Cox |
| October 10, 2023 | <i>Climate Change and Your Garden</i>
Speakers: Rebecca Last |
| November 21, 2023 | 2023 Annual General Meeting and Potluck Dinner
<i>New Designs</i> ; Elizabeth Hess |

Edible Landscaping - Herb Gardening Basics 101

Excerpt from The National Gardening Association
By Charlie Nardozzi

Millions of households in Canada grow herbs -- in vegetable and perennial gardens, in containers, or on windowsills. And with good reason! In addition to their obvious role in cooking, herbs are also attractive and add colour, interesting textures and forms, and rich or subtle fragrances to the home and garden.

Uses for Herbs

The most popular use for herbs is in cooking, and nearly every recipe can be enhanced by adding appropriate herbs. Can you imagine tomato sauce without oregano? Thanksgiving stuffing without sage? Some dishes are defined by the herbs they contain -- pesto without basil just isn't pesto!

Herbs have many other uses as well. Many types make wonderful teas, either individually or combined in blends. Chamomile makes a soothing tea for unwinding after a hard day.



Photo by
Lucichar
Bee Balm
(*Monarda didyma*
'Jacob Cline')

Many herbs are also believed to have medicinal properties. The echinacea that has become popular as a cold remedy is extracted from the purple coneflower, a common garden perennial.

Of course, many gardeners grow herbs simply because they are attractive and durable plants. Bee balm not only makes a tasty tea but is also a reliable perennial with lovely red, pink, or white flowers. And chamomile's daisy-like blooms brighten up any sunny border.

Where to Plant

Plant herbs where you can get to them easily for frequent harvesting, especially if you plan to use them in cooking. Consider planting a special kitchen garden near the house, so you can readily harvest herbs, greens, and other frequently used crops. You can also grow herbs in containers or even window boxes.

Most herbs prefer full sun -- at least 6 hours per day. Herbs that tolerate light shade include chives, cilantro, dill, and mint. Remember that if you plant perennial herbs in the vegetable garden, keep them in a separate section so you'll be sure to avoid them during spring and fall tilling.



Types of Herbs

Like all garden plants, herbs can be categorized as annual, perennial, or biennial. Annual plants grow for only one season and must be planted each spring. Perennials live for several years. Their foliage dies back in the fall, but the roots overwinter and resume growth the following spring. And biennials grow for two years, growing foliage the first season, overwintering, then forming seeds and dying back at the end of the second season.

Here are some examples of each type of herb.

Annual Herbs

basil, chamomile, cilantro/coriander, cumin, dill, fennel

Perennial Herbs*

catnip, chives, lavender, lemon balm, lovage, lemongrass, marjoram, mint, oregano, rosemary, sage, tarragon, thyme

**These may not be hardy in all regions of the country. Check zone ratings.*

Parsley is one of the few common herbs that is a biennial. However, unless you want to harvest the seed, you can treat it like an annual and plant new plants each season.

Herb Garden Design

Herbs can be grown with other plantings or in their garden. You can create a traditional, formal herb garden with two paths intersecting at the center to create four symmetrical gardens. Each section can feature herbs grouped by theme, such as culinary herbs, medicinal herbs, and aromatic herbs. Try to grow herbs with similar growing requirements together for easier maintenance. You can decorate the center intersection with a pot or urn filled with attractive herbs. The paths can be edged with landscape edging, bricks, stone, or even well-trimmed, woody herbs such as lavender.

Even though a formal herb garden is attractive, most gardeners would rather mix herbs in with other flower or vegetable plantings or grow them in containers. When growing herbs with other plantings, be sure they have enough room to expand and won't get shaded by tall plants.

Herbs make great container plants. To grow herbs successfully in containers or window boxes, you'll need a pot that has adequate drainage holes. Use fresh potting soil each year and keep the container well-watered and fertilized. Try different combinations such as purple-leaved basil mixed with creeping thyme, or silver-leaved sage planted with curled-leafed parsley. Large perennial herbs, such as rosemary and lavender, can have their own pot and be overwintered indoors in cold climates. You'll be amazed at how attractive and useful these potted herbs can be.

Soil Requirements

In general, herbs prefer a moderately rich soil. An overly rich soil (or excessive fertilizing) can lead to vigorous growth. However, many people find that the flavor of overfertilized herbs is bland, probably due to reduced essential oil content.

Many culinary herbs, such as thyme and oregano, are of Mediterranean heritage and are accustomed to growing in gravelly soils. The soil in your herb garden should have excellent drainage. If yours doesn't, consider growing your herbs in raised beds or containers.



Caring for Herb Plants

Most herbs will thrive with about 1 inch of water a week, similar to other vegetable plants. Herbs in raised beds and containers will dry out more quickly than those planted directly in the garden and may need more frequent watering. Keep garden beds weeded, especially early in the season as plants are getting established. If you have fertile soil, you won't need to add much fertilizer to herbs grown in the garden. For those in containers, you'll need to add a dilute, complete fertilizer such as 10-10-10 to keep the leaves green and plants growing strong.

Once established, most herb plants are remarkably resistant to insect and disease attack. The oils that give them their aroma and flavor likely evolve to repel pests. However,

keep an eye out for insects such as aphids, and diseases such as powdery mildew.

Harvesting Herbs

Harvest herbs by cutting back a shoot to just above a leaf. This will both provide you with a harvest and encourage nice, bushy growth on the remaining plant. In general, an herb's flavor is most pronounced when it is harvested just before the plant begins to flower and, in the morning, when the essential oils are most concentrated.

Tips

Heavily harvested herb plants can look untidy. Consider interplanting herb beds with annual flowers to camouflage the trimmed plants.

Herbs can provide important habitat for beneficial insects. Dill and fennel are two herbs beneficial insects particularly like.

Perennial mints, including spearmint, apple mint, and peppermint, are very vigorous and can become invasive. Rather than planting them directly in the garden, grow the plants in containers, then sink the containers into the garden. This will contain the roots and limit spreading.



Perennial herbs that are not hardy in your region can be overwintered indoors, then brought back outdoors in the spring.

Junior Gardener's Program

This program was established in 2002 and has been very popular with local schools. Each spring, we approach schools in the district to offer a gardening program geared to Grade 3, but with ministry education cuts, it is generally a split grade 2/3 or 3/4. The last year we ran the program in 2019, we had six schools participating with a total of 178 students and 21 volunteers teaching.

Over the six-week program, we cover gardening techniques, soil types and composting. The students do hands-on activities with planting seeds, potatoes, container gardens and flower arranging. Our Society supplies all supplies and materials.

Each week the children participate in a plant library in which they pick out a plant that we provide. They learn about it, make observations, take it home for a week, and then bring it back and take a new one. In the sixth week, they get to choose one of these library plants to keep.

We have been fortunate to have many community sponsors help support the program over the years, including Home Hardware, Canadian Tire, Barnabe's YIG, Metro, Sweet Pea Florist, Fashion Envy, and Images InterAlia.

Many of our members donate time and materials to help this program to flourish. Our dedicated teaching volunteers make this program come alive for the students. The commitment is about one hour per week for six weeks. This year, the program will start Thursday, April 13 and run through to Thursday, May 18.

Please consider becoming a volunteer, or if you would like to help in any way, please get in touch with one of our co-coordinators, Robin McIntosh at 613-253-5690 or Sandi Sissons at 613-267-8977.

The Thrifty Gardener

By Dale Odorizzi

If you were a thrifty gardener last fall and brought in some of your annuals, now is the time to prepare them for Spring—yes, Spring will be here soon.

Zonal Geraniums, with the large flower heads, are the most common in our containers and annual gardens. If you stored your geraniums in a cool, dark basement, trim the stems to one-third of their original height and bring the pots into a location with lots of bright sunlight. Water the plants just enough to moisten the soil and fertilize them with a water-soluble fertilizer. When new growth appears, remove the plant from its pot and shake off old soil. Repot with new potting soil. Once new shoots are 3-4 inches long, it is time to take cuttings from the old plants. If you have kept your plants blooming in a window all winter, you can take cuttings right away.

The cuttings should be 3-4 inches long. Cut with a clean, sharp knife. Cut new leaves off cleanly at the base. Dip the cut end into rooting compound, shake off excess, and plant in a good quality starter mix, vermiculite, or perlite. Using a pencil or your finger, make a hole in your planting medium and gently place your cutting into the hole. Rooting compound, vermiculite, and perlite are available at any garden centre or hardware store. Place plants in a sunny window or under a grow light and keep evenly moist. Fertilize every second week with 10-52-10 water-soluble fertilizer at half strength. Geraniums can easily rot if they are kept too wet. Because of this, you should not cover the geranium cuttings. From time to time, tug gently on the cutting. When you have resistance, your plant has roots. If you started your plant in vermiculite, transplant it into a potting mix.



Using the same process, you can also create Fuchsia, Hibiscus, Flowering Maples or Oleander plants. Your parent plants will be healthier when you cut them back at this time of year. Cover the cuttings or put them in a clear plastic bag to create a mini greenhouse.

Ivy, Coleus and Sweet Potato Vines that have been kept growing all winter can easily be rooted as above, or simply put your cuttings in a glass of water and watch the roots sprout. Be sure to keep your glass full, and once the roots have started, transplant them into potting soil.

If you saved the tuber from your tuberous begonia, start them now. Press the tuber firmly into the growing medium, hollow side up. Water the tubers once very well to wake them up, and place them in a warm, bright spot. Cover the freshly planted tubers with paper or polythene to promote growth, but remove the covering as soon as growth appears. Don't water again until you see some growth or the soil is quite dry. Some begonias will sprout right away others will take weeks. Expect to see growth shoots in five to six weeks.

Once the shoots are showing, water regularly, never allowing the soil to dry out. Give maximum light but shade from direct sun. Feed them with half-strength fertilizer when their leaves and stems are about 3 inches tall, wait two weeks, and then start a regular feeding schedule. When the shoots are 6 inches tall, the Begonias are ready to be transplanted into the garden or outdoor containers. Don't put them outdoors, though, until all danger of frost has passed, and remember to harden them off properly.

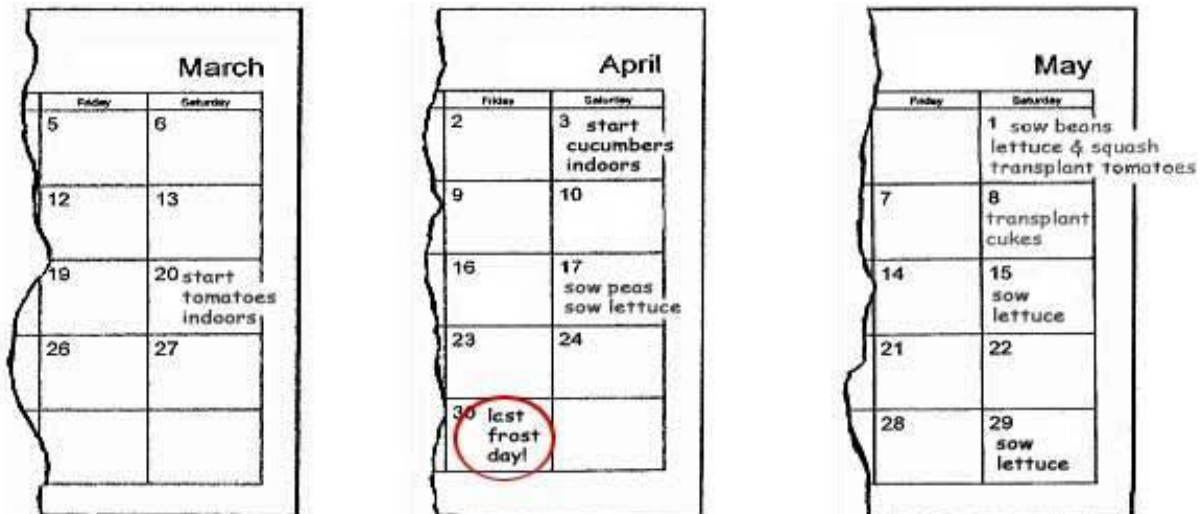
Creating a Planting Calendar

Excerpt from The National Gardening Association – By Suzanne DeJohn

Although it can be tempting to try to get a jump on the gardening season during an early warm spell, it's best to be patient and wait until the weather is right to plant. Spring weather in many parts of the country can be erratic, with unseasonably mild weather followed by a severe cold snap. To help you avoid the temptation of planting too early, make a calendar with planting times for various crops.

1. The first step is to determine your region's average last spring frost date. In the case of Perth ON, there is a date range of May 11- 20 for 2023. Since the actual last frost can occur days or weeks before or after the average, always be prepared to protect tender plants for a few weeks after this date has passed.
2. Next, open your calendar and mark the average last frost date. You'll be counting backwards from that date for cool-season crops that can be set out before the last frost date and counting forward for heat-loving crops.

Sample Planting Calendar



3. Make a list of what you'll be planting. Consult seed packets or other resources to determine whether crops should be sown directly in the garden or started indoors (or purchased as transplants). Determine the cold tolerance of the crops, too. Broccoli, for example, tolerates cool weather and can take a light frost. Tomatoes, on the other hand, need warmth.
4. Begin making notes on your calendar. Mark dates for indoor seed-starting, dates for sowing in the garden, and dates for transplanting seedlings into the garden.

The following cool-season crops can be planted a few weeks before the average last frost date:

Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Kale, Lettuce, Spinach

For the following warm-season plants, wait until after the last frost date to sow seeds in the garden or set plants outdoors:

Cucumbers, Melons, Peppers, Squash, Tomatoes

