

May 2015 Newsletter

*"When April steps aside for May,
Like diamonds all the rain-drops glisten;
Fresh violets open every day:
To some new bird each hour we listen."*

- Lucy Larcom



From the President's Pen

Bragging rights....

On April 25, 2015, I attended my first Annual General Meeting of the Ontario Horticultural Association, District 2, Spring Advisory Meeting. Escorted by seasoned veterans, Madeline Archer, Barbara Smith and David Archer, we made our way to Petawawa, Ontario for, I might add, a very early morning adventure. Pembroke and Petawawa were our hosts and they did a marvelous job.

To my delight I discovered a whole new world of eager beavers at our morning meeting, where I met other representatives from other Districts. I was thrown into the pond quickly, trying to understand how District business works but I had my trusted secret weapon and supporter, Madeline. Nodding when told to do so and voting on demand, I represented our society in a manner second to none.

After our Executive meeting, we joined the general meeting where the real excitement began; the AGM was already in full form. We were delighted to see Kevin Nieman making a wreath while demonstrating theories of "Sustainability". The AGM was jammed packed and I was a kid in a candy store with eyes wide open, until we were introduced to a breathtaking display of entries for the 2015 District 2 Photography Competition. Quickly I became glued to the screen and suddenly recognized a name, then two. Irene Hofmann and Lynda Haddon had represented our society with sheer artistry and professionalism. I wanted to tell everyone at our table; I know them. You go girls go! Let us all clap our hands and recognize the outstanding achievement of our Perth members, Irene and Lynda. A job well done ladies.

Jane Law



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 16, 2015 at Stewart School, Sunset Blvd, Perth.



President: Jane Law • **Newsletter:** Irene Hofmann • ihofmann812@gmail.com



Lanark Orchid

Renals

Perth & District
Horticultural
Society

P.O. Box 494
Perth, ON, K7H 3G1
www.gardenontario.org

District #2 of the
Ontario Horticultural
Association

Upcoming Meetings

The planned presentation for the **June** meeting is **Insects Good and Bad."**

Summer Garden Tours

OF PDHS MEMBERS' GARDENS

These gardens are open to PDHS Members from 6:30-8:30 pm

- **July 14, 2015** Pat Bertrim
317 Dufferin Road N, Perth
- **July 28, 2015** Tineke Doornbosch and
Dan Woods, 422 Lakewood
Road, Perth (BurgessWood)
- **July 28, 2015** Max and Janette Wood,
(organic vegetable gardens)
1380 Bathurst Con. 7, Perth
(off of Harper Road, past Kiwi
Gardens)

PDHS June Flower Show

Section I: Horticultural Specimen

- Class 1 Any poppy – 3 blooms
- Class 2 A collection of peonies
- Class 3 Bearded Iris – 1 spike
- Class 4 Siberian Iris – 1 spike
- Class 5 Any rose – 1 stem or spray
- Class 6 Daylily - 1 scape
- Class 7 Hosta – 3 leaves – same cultivar or
3 different varieties
- Class 8 Any other perennial – named –
3 stems
- Class 9 Leaf vegetable – 3 stems
- Class 10 Collection of herbs – minimum
3 – named

Section II: Design

- Class 11 Novice Class: "Shades of One" –
a monochromatic colour design
- Classes
12 & 13 "Spring and Summer" – a duo design
- Class 14 "Cheek to Cheek" – an analogous
colour design
- Class 15 "Little Oasis" – dish garden with
accessories – special exhibit

Monthly Financial Statement

March 28, 2015

Ledger Balance March 1, 2015 **\$3,443.70**

Receipts -

Grants	\$ 1,000.00
Misc. Donation Gen. Fund	60.00
Membership	<u>240.00</u>
	\$ 1,300.00

Expenses -

Youth Activities	\$ 145.95
Meeting Expenses	24.86
Speaker	100.00
Social	18.36
Office Supplies	46.60
Miscellaneous	<u>97.53</u>

\$ 433.32

Ledger Balance March 31, 2015 **\$4,310.38**

Reserve fund – GIC matures July 18, 2016 -
\$2,553.92

Assassin from Below-- Cutworms

*By Dale Odorizzi,
Lanark County Master Gardeners*

Have you ever gone out in the morning to admire the tomato plants that you planted the day before only to find one or two or more plants cut off at the soil line and lying flat on the ground? If so, your plants were visited overnight by cutworms!

Cutworms are the larvae of the family Noctuidae which is a large family of brown or gray moths. The larvae are fat, greasy-looking gray or dull brown and are 2.5-5 cm in length. At night, these caterpillars feed on stems of vegetable and flower seedlings, especially transplants, near the soil line, severing the transplants or eating the small seedlings. During the day, they rest below the soil surface, curled by the plant stems. If you do find a transplant laying on the ground, dig around the plant and you just might find a cutworm to squish.

While you can apply parasitic nematodes to your soil to get rid of cutworms, I have found the simplest and most cost-effective method for controlling cutworms is to put something between the transplant stem and the soil. There are a number of barriers you can use and I have tried most of them. My first attempt was to wrap

tinfoil loosely around each transplant stem, ensuring that the tinfoil was 2.5 cm above and below the soil line. This worked really well at preventing cutworm damage but at the end of the year, my tomato plants had tinfoil around them or my garden had tinfoil in it. Try again.

Next try, I created a collar made from toilet paper rolls. Again this prevented the damage but in the process of situating the collar at the right level, I frequently sliced the tomato plant stem, doing as much damage as a cutworm.

Not to be discouraged, further research suggested inserting a finishing nail close to the stem of each plant. I envisioned having a garden full of nails and decided to try wooden toothpicks instead. I put one on each side of the stem, as close as I can get, maybe not quite touching but almost. The toothpicks worked great. They kept the cutworms away from the plants, were quick and easy to push into the soil, close to the stem (half above and half below the soil line) and best of all, they decomposed in the garden with no need to find them at clean up time.

*Visit our website at
www.lanarkmg.blogspot.com.*

Contain Your Vegetables

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

According to the survey of the National Gardening Association, over one quarter of households are involved in some form of vegetable gardening and, of these, almost half are growing at least some vegetables in containers. If you already grow vegetables in containers, try some new varieties or crops. If you don't use containers yet, check out all the opportunities this easy type of gardening can provide.

Many garden vegetables can be grown in containers, tubs, or boxes, right on your porch, deck, or patio. They're easy to maintain, so are a good choice if you're new to gardening or pressed for time. They're a great way to get children interested in gardening. Being up off the ground, they're a good fit for older gardeners that aren't as agile as they once were. For whatever age, you'll find that harvesting some tomatoes, cucumbers and salad greens for your table becomes much more convenient than

in ground beds away from the house.

As in the garden, most vegetables "prefer" a sunny site (a minimum 6 to 8 hours direct sun a day—the more the better). A nice aspect to containers is that even if you don't have a large garden space for such, you may have a smaller sunny area for a few containers. Or you can group containers in various sites, depending on the available light.

If you only get 3 to 4 hours of sun a day, some crops that tolerate this level include arugula, chard (for its leaves), many herbs, kale, lettuce, mustard greens, scallions and spinach. Requiring even less—at least 2 hours of sun a day—are mesclun and Asian greens. These also take "dappled shade", or no direct sun but rather bright light filtered by trees. If you have, on the other hand, a bit more direct sun (4 to 5 hours a day), you should be able to grow all these plus peas, beans, and many root vegetables.

One aspect to containers that's different from ground beds is that the soil volume is of course limited, so especially when plants grow large and their roots fill the pots, they'll need more watering than if in the field. That's not so bad as it gives you an excuse every two or three days to check on your plants for water (perhaps daily during hot weather), and at the same time look for pests, watch their growth, and see if any are ready to harvest. Fertilize when watering, according to label directions on the product of your choice. Use a fertilizer for vegetables, as those with too high nitrogen will cause great leaf growth, but few if any fruits.

When potting, using an organic well-drained soil mix with lots of peat moss or compost will help reduce watering, as these hold onto lots of water. I often use one part compost to two parts of one of these soilless mixes, or equal parts bagged potting soil and compost. You also can incorporate a water-absorbing product to hold onto even more water. Don't use garden soil as it is too heavy, holds too much water in pots usually, and may introduce soil diseases. Make sure pots have drainage holes in the bottom.

Many vegetables and herbs are ornamental as well as useful. Examples that come to mind are the brightly colored stems of some Swiss chard varieties like 'Bright Lights', variously colors in peppers— both sweet and hot, and some of the newer tomatoes with different colored fruits such as gold, black, white, or green and white zebra-stripes. The ornamental cabbage and kale are often used for fall container plantings, and

last well through many heavy frosts up until heavy snow covers them. Many kale have frilled or deeply cut, attractive leaves, in purples or green and white combinations.

Vegetables that grow rampantly and large, or that must be grown in great numbers to obtain satisfactory yields, generally should not be selected for container growth. Many catalogues offer newer varieties bred to be dwarf, or smaller bush types. Look for these, or those in your garden stores labeled as good for containers. If you get large containers, consider casters for the bottom if they'll need frequent moving. Lettuces and other greens, radish, and herbs are good for smaller or shallow containers, even windowboxes.

Traditional pumpkin and squash vines and cucumbers usually are not recommended for container growth because they take up so much space. If you have a large raised bed, or large container such as a whiskey barrel half or one that holds 15 gallons or more of soil, you might consider one of the newer varieties with bush habits. Look for bush beans too, rather than the traditional vining or spreading types (unless you have a high raised bed, or container they can hang down the sides).

Other plants that may need large containers include cabbages and corn. Corn in particular can get quite large, and tip over smaller containers or dry out too often. It also needs several square feet at least of plants, or several rows in a rectangular bed, in order to get good cross pollination and so good ear development.

I like to grow potatoes in thick, black fabric gro-bags (15 gallon). Fill them one-third full when planting the tubers in May, then fill more as the potatoes sprout and grow. You can then harvest in mid to late summer. Growing in such bags is a great way to try several different varieties that you won't find in stores, and they'll grow with a half day of sun.

Even if you don't have a very large container, vining crops such as cucumbers and squash can be grown. Simply train up a trellis, around a window, or allow to cascade down a raised deck. You may even train such vines over an arch, the fruit hanging down so you can watch them develop and easily pick them when ripe. If you're growing squash with large fruit, these will need additional support later in the summer such as from a cheesecloth sling.

A common container vegetable, and one of the

most attractive, is of course the tomato. Special dwarf "bush" varieties have been bred under a foot high, with small to medium-sized fruits. Larger tomato varieties that grow to a set height (determinate) are suitable for large containers. Those that keep growing taller (indeterminate) will need taller and more elaborate staking if grown in containers. A range of fruit types are available, from the large beefsteak types, suitable for slicing, to the small grape, cherry, and pear shapes.

There are many leafy greens and lettuces you can combine in containers. Consider those with lacy or frilled leaves for fine texture, or those with colored leaves such as the red leaf lettuces. A key to lettuces is to make "successive sowings" every 3 weeks or so. This way, once you finish harvest of the first crop, you'll have another reaching harvest size. Growing in pots or windowboxes is a good way to keep your lettuces away from rabbits. If not full sun, but a choice of locations, morning sun for lettuces is better than hot afternoon sun.

Then of course you could plant just an herb container to have near the kitchen door. Tall herbs such as dill and fennel, with their attractive flowers and tall lacy foliage, might be underplanted with lower ones such as chives and parsley. Thyme may be used to hang over the sides of a pot. Chives tend to spread and seed around, so pots are great for them. Or you can plant a whole container just of various basil (they like sun) to use in Italian sauces and pestos.

Mint is great for pots, as these contain the aggressive growth and roots of this easy herb. In fact, they are so aggressive, roots will grow out of the pot holes and into the ground if touching it. Keep them raised, and repot each spring to keep them healthy. Keep a pot or two near the door so you can easily harvest for cooking or use in beverages. Look for different mints, including spearmint, peppermint, apple mint, or even chocolate mint.

•••••

Quickest way to dry herbs: Lay a sheet of newspaper on the car seat, layer the herbs. Park car in the sun, close windows and doors. Herbs dry in no time and car gets to smell great.

*~adapted from Paul James,
Master Gardener, HGTV*