



The Ladyslipper

Perth & District Horticultural Society

www.perthhortsociety.com



Est. 1984

P.O. Box 494
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May 2021


President's Pen

Welcome to the month of May!

I cannot wait for the weather to warm up so I can get outside to tend my gardens. I have been out to most of the local garden centres and purchased many new plants. I am getting my seedlings ready to harden off and plant outside come the long weekend.

I purchased a Hori Hori knife after reading about it in last month's newsletter. It is a wonderful tool to rip through plants that need to be split or removed. I removed a large clump of grasses that I have been struggling with for years within an hour or so, but I paid the price of three days of muscle pain in the shoulders. I blame it on the pitchfork and not the Hori Hori knife.

I have been out in my gardens pondering what grows there as I do not mark my plants as I always had a good memory and knew all my plants by name. I have come to a conclusion that my memory is not that good or I have too many plants.



HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY

My Mother kept a garden,
a garden of the heart,
She planted all the good things
that gave my life it's start.
She turned me to the sunshine
and encouraged me to dream,
Fostering and nurturing
the seeds of self-esteem...
And when the winds and rain came,
she protected me enough –
But not too much because she knew
I'd need to stand up strong and tough.
Her constant good example
always taught me right from wrong.
Markets for my pathway
that will last a lifetime long.
I am my Mother's garden
I am her legacy –
An I hope today she feels the love
reflected back from me!
Author Unkown



So I started naming my plants this year. I dug out some old blinds and cut them in 5 inch strips and got a label machine and some tape. By the end of the summer I will have all my plants named.

We are selling our PDHS fertilizer at a great pace. So far, we have sold 140 bags. If you haven't got yours yet, please contact us as soon as possible. Next week I plan to advertise to non-members.

Now on to the newsletter Jane has put together for us. Keep smiling and Happy Gardening!

Linda

SYLVIA'S 4TH LINE FLORALS - SPONSOR AND SPEAKER PROFILE

By Jane Avery, P&DHS Newsletter Editor



You know that Sylvia has found her calling when she describes her environment. She tells me that the fields are a big hug around her home and her home is a big hug around her flower fridge, the heart of her operation.

We look forward to touring Sylvia's three-acre flower farm on June 8 at 7 pm (depending on Covid restrictions). If we are not able to meet in person,

Sylvia will give a zoom talk.

Sylvia Van Oort is celebrating 25 years as a cut flower grower and wholesaler. Her stunning bouquets can be purchased at Food Smith's, Barnabe's, Kudrinko's in Westport and the Glebe Metro.



In early May, Sylvia's greenhouses and gardens are bursting

with promise. Her plots are planted twice each season. Sylvia tells me that flowering kale is the first to be planted and the last to be harvested. Early blooms include tulips, and ranunculus. Summer brings a bounty of sweet pea, cerinthe, calendula, stalk, zinnias, astilbe, asters, snapdragons, larkspur, and bell flower. As flowers are harvested new plants join the parade, including an incredible 20,000 sun flowers. Perennials play an important role in the mix too. Peonies are

prolific. Hawthorn and Ninebark are valued for their fabulous foliage.

Sylvia is a flower power pro. She welcomes your questions when we meet in June.



TOOL OF THE MONTH

Board member Gerda Van Wigerden swears by her Lee Valley edger to keep beds neat & tidy. Spring is a great time to redefine bed borders after amending the soil with compost and adding mulch.

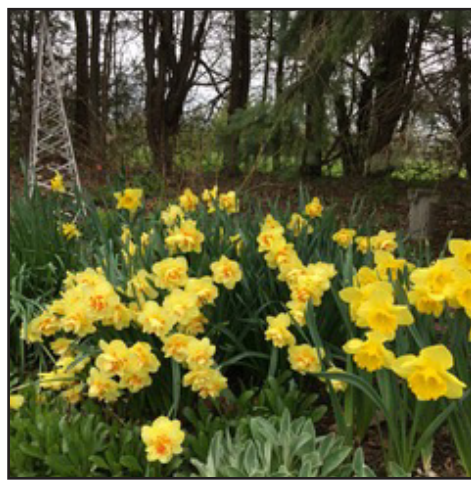


Gerda's edger from Lee Valley is an older model so it does not have the ergonomic handle as shown in this picture. Here are some pictures of Gerda's work with an edger where she edged and enlarged the bed. She loves the edger more than a spade because it can only go in so deep.

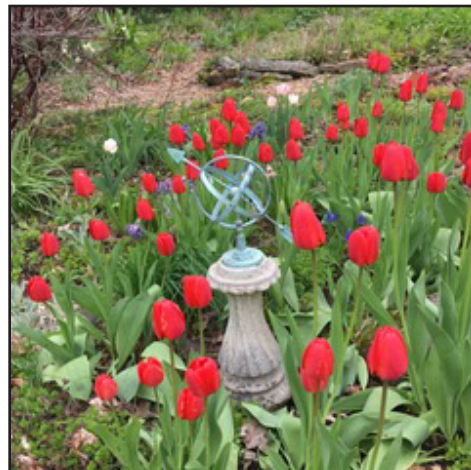
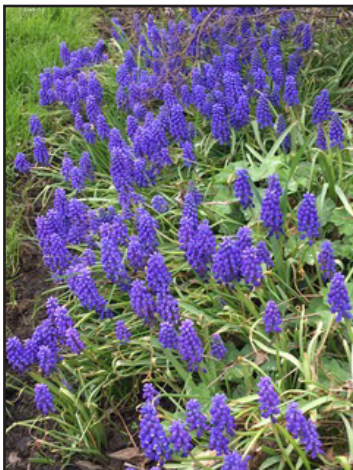
You can purchase an edger at all hardware stores as well as LeeValley.



LOOK WHAT MOTHER NATURE CAN DO



Photos submitted by
Lynda Haddon



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PERTH, SPIRITS OF PLACE BOOK

By Jane Avery, P&DHS Newsletter Editor

I would like to promote John McQuarrie's new book: Perth, Spirit of Place in our May newsletter. I have pre-viewed the book and it is spectacular. It features stunning images and extensive insights on the history of Perth and surrounding areas. I have included an excerpt titled the Merry Month of May piece by Arlene Stafford-Wilson. This excerpt from Lanark Country Calendar: Four Seasons of the Third Line is both inspiring and timely. Perth Spirit of Place will be released in June and will be available at The Book Nook and other local retailers.

PERTH
SPIRIT OF PLACE

PERTH, SPIRIT OF PLACE

MAGIC LIGHT PUBLISHING

It took only a few photos at the beginning of John McQuarrie's book to understand why his company is called 'Magic Light'. He really is able to create an image of these very familiar scenes and it's as though he's turned a dial and made the subject come to life, as though it were powered by an inner source of illumination. Wow! What a gift!

I was excited to see the beautiful, artful, photos of our former home, frozen in time, for future generations to enjoy. The landscapes around the house are captured with such blazing accuracy, as though he'd lived there himself. There is something about his photography that would lead the viewer to believe he possessed an understanding of a local subject that only a native would appreciate. Well done!

Our buildings in Perth, so familiar, places we've walked past thousands of times, now presented with his vision in such a glowing fashion, as though the old dusty structures had come to life after a long winter's hibernation.

Apart from the ones of our home that naturally are my true favourites, there were two photos that struck me as almost ethereal, almost heavenly—the one of the subtle multiple shades and tints of green at Purdon's Conservation Area, and the magnificent proud flock of our local geese. These two struck a chord with me, bringing me to tears. They are so representative of our little corner of the world, and brought to life so perfectly with John's skill and artistry.

—Arlene Stafford-Wilson

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Purdon Conservation Area is a unique wetland famous for its exceptionally large native colony of Showy Lady's Slipper Orchids. If you have never been enchanted by the 16,000 blooms there, mark your calendar for the third week of June and visit early on a sunny morning to see them adorned in dew drops. mvc.on.ca/places-to-see/purdon/

MERRY MONTH OF MAY

If the fall in Lanark County was big, bold and colourful, then spring was just the opposite. The autumn was in-your-face, unavoidable, brilliant hues in every direction: yellows, oranges, reds and greens. The soundtrack for this colourful season consisted of hunters' rifles echoing in the distance, Canada geese honking, and cottagers speeding up and down the Third Line, making their last few trips to Christie Lake before the cold weather set in for the season.

Spring was the exact opposite. Sometimes Old Man Winter just didn't want to let go, and spring came quietly, hesitating, like a shy young lady not quite sure if it was her time to come up on the stage for the show. Sometimes we'd see a sneak preview of spring, and she'd enter ever so softly into the yard, drifting along on a warm south wind, only to be turned back at the gate, as winter stubbornly hung on, refusing to leave.

With the snow finally gone, the plants began to poke their heads timidly out of the ground. First, the flowering bulbs along the sidewalk, then thin, frail strands of grass began to stand up straight and green again, and next the bashful buds on the trees slowly unfurled their pale green leaves. There was a soft green glow all through the yard, as the plants cautiously came back to life.

Just like the budding leaves around us, the earliest flowers sensed that the frost was past, and it was safe to inch their way out of the chilly ground, and show their colours. The very first flowers to bloom were always the crocuses, tulips and daffodils, and we monitored their growth like hawks. No other flowers of the summer or fall would get as much attention as those first few bulbs that bravely made their way through the cold earth each spring. Mother's bulbs were planted right along the sidewalk leading up to the old house, so there was no way we could miss their progress.

Spring may have come slowly and timidly at first, but now she confidently took her rightful place on centre stage. Over the weeks she gained determination, and brought forth a sense of optimism, along with her soft greens and her fragrant flowers. Her bright sun warmed our bones, and lingered on after supper, making our days longer and our spirits brighter. It was a time for rebirth in the barns, woods and meadows, and for planting the crops in the fields.

We stepped a little lighter, laughed a little louder, and chatted over the fences a little longer. We gathered bouquets of wildflowers, dined on fresh strawberries and began to ride our bikes up and down the Third Line again. We ran up grassy hills and rolled back down again through the young clover, feeling light and giddy, free from our boots and coats. There were trilliums to pick for Mother, and tadpoles to catch and keep in a jar. Spring had come at last to Bathurst Township, and was it ever worth the wait!

—Arlene Stafford-Wilson, excerpt from
Lanark County Calendar: Four Seasons on the Third Line
stafford-wilson.com

*"Oh, Spring is surely coming, Her couriers fill the air; Each morn are new arrivals,
Each night her ways prepare; I scent her fragrant garments, Her foot is on the stair."*

John Burroughs

WHEN DO I PRUNE MY CLEMATIS?

By Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County Master Gardeners

Few subjects in gardening are as confusing as the proper pruning of Clematis. As Yogi Berra once said, you can observe a lot by just watching. The easiest way to determine the specific pruning needs of your clematis is to watch it grow through a season. It won't harm your plant to leave it unpruned for a season.

Group A—If it blooms only in April and May, it belongs to Group A. These plants flower on old wood. To prune this group, remove any dead stems and weak growth as soon as flowering is finished.

Clematis alpine and C. macropetala hybrids only grow to about 6 feet and should not be pruned too heavily or next year's flowers may be lost. C. montana and C. armandii grow so rampantly they may need to be cut back yearly to keep growth manageable.



Group B—If a clematis blooms in May and June and again in September, it belongs to group B. This group have very large showy flowers on old wood in late spring and a smaller flush of flowers on the current season's growth in late summer. 'Nelly Moser' is a good example of this group. Remove dead and weak stems in early spring, just as the leaf buds begin to swell. The whole vine can be given a light pruning for shape then. Cut each stem separately, varying the lengths for a more natural look, rather than chopping them all off to the same height.

Group C—This group flowers in June or July and blooms almost nonstop through September. Their vines reach 3 metres tall. 'Jackmanii' is one widely grown variety. Flowers on Group C are produced only on new wood. Prune this group hard every year to stimulate fresh new growth. This means cutting back each stem to 2 strong sets of leaf buds just as they begin to swell in early spring. On established vines, prune to within 2 feet of the ground is enough. This hard pruning will guarantee flowers over the entire length of the vine. If Group C clematis is not pruned hard, it will still bloom but only on new wood which will begin growing where last year's growth ended, leaving long, bare stems.



Late Bloomers are usually classed with Group C for pruning. Most popular is the hardy golden clematis with small yellow lantern shaped flowers from

July through September, followed by attractive fluffy seed heads. These too can be left unpruned to cover a fence or sprawl across the ground.

An overgrown or neglected clematis of any type can be invigorated by pruning hard, at whatever height you like if some leaf buds remain, in early spring. New growth will appear quickly, thanks to the vines large, established root system.

Flowers may not appear until next season if it is the type to bloom only on new wood.

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SIGNS OF SPRING: BARNABE'S INDEPENDENT GROCER IN PERTH: GARDEN CENTRE NOW OPEN

Gary Wood, manager of the garden centre shared 2021 plantings insights with Jane Avery on May 3rd.

The season is off to a brisk start. Gary recommends that gardeners stock up on soil, mulch and manure, while quantities last. There are no guarantees that this stock will be replenished later in the season. Barnabe's Garden Centre opened on April 29 and plans to be in operation at 80 Dufferin St. until July 1.

The nursery is an explosion of colour, as large quantities of flowering plants are now available. Gary highlighted several irresistible options:

- ▶ New Guinea Impatiens: Once prone to a nasty blight, these colourful annuals are back and are beautiful!
- ▶ Boomerang Lilac: This dwarf shrub blooms twice a season!
- ▶ Hanging baskets: bigger & better than ever!
- ▶ Marigolds: Gary recommends planting these annuals around the edge of your beds. They act as a natural rabbit deterrent.

Gary cautions gardeners to delay planting until the weather warms. Keep in mind that last year the Perth area experienced damaging frost on the May 2-4 weekend.

BOOMERANG LILAC

Botanical Name: *Syringa x* Plant Type: deciduous shrub

Lilac lovers often feel that the bloom is just too short. Lilac bushes bloom for about two weeks in May, and before you know it, it's already over. Gardeners who cannot get enough of the looks and fragrance of lilac have the option to plant late-blooming varieties. Or, they can add a Bloomerang® lilac to their landscape or patio.

Bloomerang, first introduced in 2009, is a registered trademark hybrid, which means that its name is protected as a brand. Only the nursery that bred it is allowed to propagate the lilac and sell it under the name Bloomerang lilac.

In May, around the same time as the common lilac, Bloomerang blooms heavily. In June, the shrub takes a break before starting to bloom again in July until the first frost.

The spring bloom is different from the summer and fall bloom, when the panicles are smaller and darker in color than in the spring.

The beautiful color and fragrance of the re-blooming lilac are not just for humans—butterflies and hummingbirds will seek it out as well.

Source: www.thespruce.com/how-to-grow-and-care-for-boomerang-lilac

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PLANT HARDINESS ZONE

By Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County Master Gardeners

Just like people, plants like different things. Some thrive in bright sunshine while others love the shade. Some like to have wet feet while others prefer an arid environment. Giving a plant what it wants is the best way to have a healthy, high performing plant. Some plants survive frigid weather while others are happiest in a tropical climate.

When we are choosing a new plant for our gardens, it is important to know the conditions of your garden and your gardening zone and matching the plant you choose to those conditions.

Most gardeners know their hardiness zone. In Perth, in general it is Zone 5B. Many yards also have microclimates that make their garden space operate at a higher or lower zone. One of my gardens is strongly impacted by a North West wind that makes that garden function as if it is one Zone colder. When I select plants for that garden, I pick Zone 4 plants unless I am prepared to winterize that plant every year.

When choosing hardy plants, perennials, trees or shrubs it is best to choose one adapted to your zone or even colder (lower) zones. In our Zone 5b, you can select plants from zones 1 to 5.

The Canadian hardiness index was modeled as a function of seven climate variables that influence plant survival and growth:

- ▶ Mean minimum temperature of the coldest month.
- ▶ Frost-free period in days.
- ▶ Rainfall June through November.
- ▶ Mean maximum temperature of the warmest month.

- ▶ Rainfall in January.
- ▶ Mean maximum snow depth.
- ▶ Maximum wind gusts in 30 years.

Canada's plant hardiness zone map was updated using climate data from 1981-2010.

The Agriculture Canada hardiness zone does not quite match the hardiness zone system used in the United States. The US Garden Zones are based on minimum temperatures. For example, If the temperature dips to -15C for one night, it does not impact the plant as much as it does

if the temperature stays at -15C for a week or two. The Canadian hardiness zone index takes that into account. The resulting difference between the two systems is about one. If you are reading a US magazine or visiting a US website, add 1 to the stated Hardiness Zone.

Some Canadian Nurseries use the American hardiness zone on their plant tags

either by mistake or to exaggerate the hardiness of the plant a little. This can be misleading and result in plants that cannot survive our winters. One such plant is the beautiful Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia davidii*). It is usually labelled Zone 5b but is actually Canadian hardiness zone 6b. No wonder we have so many problems having this plant survive our winter.



Images
Inter
Alia

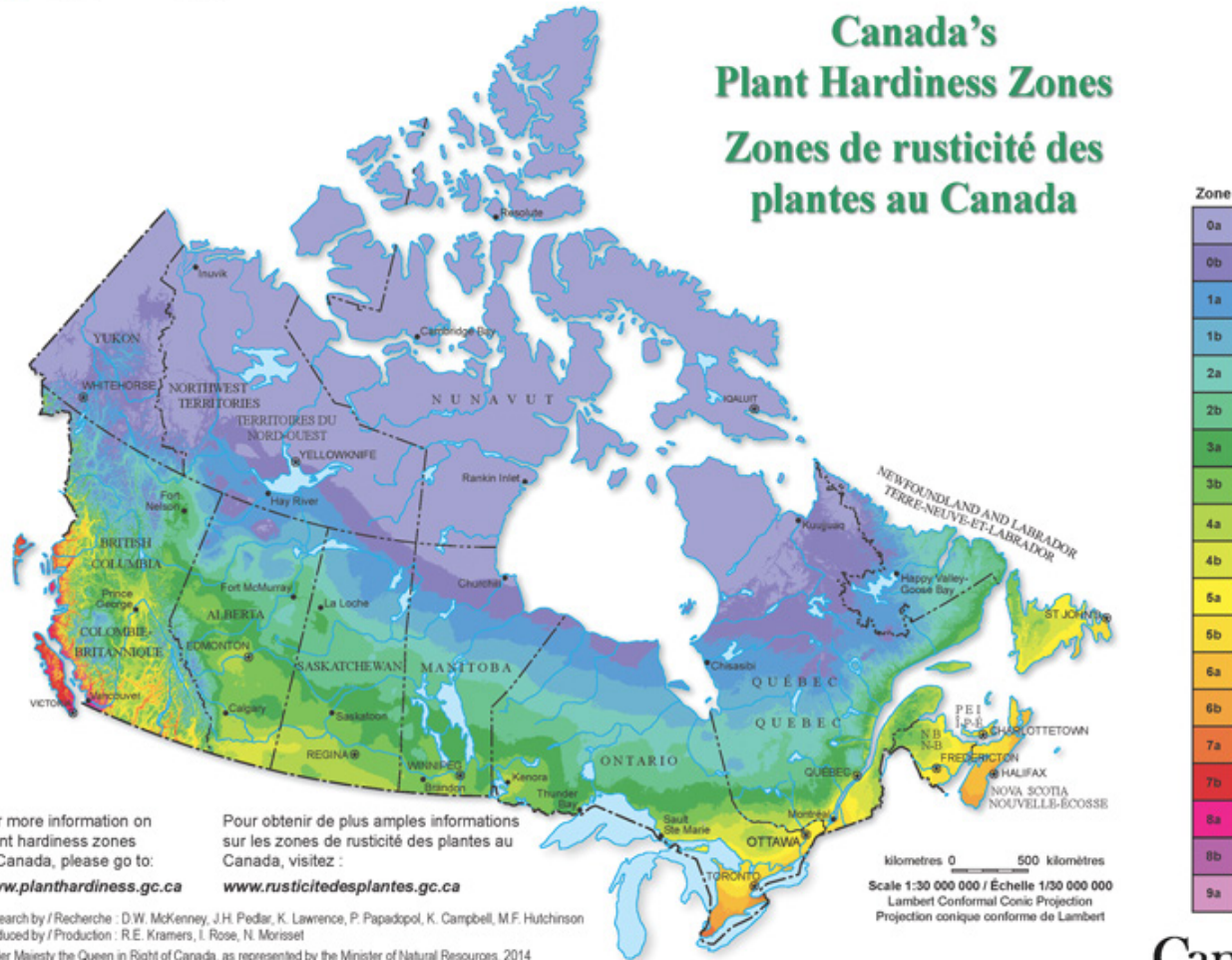
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Canada's Plant Hardiness Zones

Zones de rusticité des plantes au Canada




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NEW GUINEA IMPATIENS ARE BACK!

Botanical Name: *Impatiens hawkeri*

Plant Type: Annual

In previous years New Guinea Impatiens suffered from a blight, making the annual unsuitable for planting... fortunately, the tide has turned and healthy impatiens are back.

New Guinea impatiens are excellent long-blooming flowers for a sunny spot in your garden. Like their shade-loving cousins the common impatiens, New Guinea impatiens form small clumps and hold their many flowers above their foliage, where they make a colorful display. Planted just after the last threat of a frost, these fast growers will start to bloom early in the season. With few pests or problems, New Guinea impatiens offer low maintenance and high performance.

Their pointed oblong leaves stay attractive throughout the season and are glossy, dark green, burgundy, or variegated. Their brightly colored flowers can appear in shades of orange, pink, red, white, and purple. The blooms are similar to but larger than the flowers of common impatiens. They have five thick petals and produce lots of nectar, attracting butterflies.

Source: www.thespruce.com/care-for-new-guinea-impatiens-4122333

