

# November 2013 Newsletter



Lanark Orchid

Renals

*Perth & District  
Horticultural  
Society*

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[www.gardenontario.org](http://www.gardenontario.org)

*District #2 of the  
Ontario Horticultural  
Association*



The master of the garden  
is the one who waters it,  
trims the branches,  
plants the seeds, and  
pulls the weeds. If you  
merely stroll through  
the garden, you are  
but an acolyte.

Vera Nazarian

## Renew Your Membership Now!

Avoid the January rush at Movie Night, and renew your membership now. Look for renewal forms in the lobby of the PDCI at the break. You can also renew your membership at the upcoming Christmas Social as well.

New members are always welcome at the PDHS and they can join at any time from now on for 2014. If they join now, they are more than welcome at the Christmas Social.

Membership in the PDHS is a great bargain - speakers, friends, goodies, 10% off at local nurseries, newsletters, a lovely Yearbook and lots of fun.

We hope to see you all back in 2014.

## Christmas Potluck Social And AGM

Not in the Christmas mood? Put on your best sparkling outfit, bring your spouse or a guest and come to the PDHS Christmas Social on Tuesday, December 10, 2013 at the Perth Legion and get yourself into

the proper frame of mind.

Once again, it will be a potluck supper so cook up your famous Christmas recipe or dessert and bring it to the Legion.

We always have a wonderful array of delicious dishes to share. PDHS will supply cooked turkey.

The festivities will begin at 6:00 p.m. with appetizers. Cocktails, wine and beer can be purchased at the bar.

The Annual General Meeting will take place after dinner and the Board of Directors for 2014 will be voted in. Why not take this opportunity to enter your name and contribute to your society?

While at the Social why not avoid the January rush and renew your PDHS membership? The renewal forms will be available to fill out at a special membership table. Membership is still held at \$10 per year - the cheapest bargain in town!

If you would like to help in the preparations and set-up, contact any board member at the November 12, 2013 general meeting or show up at the Legion a little early.

Kick start your Christmas and join us on the 10th! See you there..

**President:** Madeline Archer

**Secretary:** Peggy Clark • **Newsletter:** Pam Pratt, Irene Hofmann

## Christmas Table Centrepieces

Do you enjoy having one of the winning tickets for the table centrepieces at the Christmas Social? In the past, the board members of the PDHS have made these floral arrangements but once again this year we are inviting everyone to participate. Find a small container and start designing. Collect greenery, small decorations, flowers – whatever you feel like – and make an arrangement for others to enjoy at Christmas. Let's see how many interesting and beautiful designs our members can create. The more centrepieces, the more fun! No experience is required, just give it your best shot.

## January Movie Night

We will be having our popular movie night once again at our January meeting in the Auditorium of the PDCI on Tuesday, January 14, 2014. The movie will be "A Garden For All Seasons" and is a tour of Butchart Gardens in Vancouver, one of Canada's own premier show gardens.

What a lovely break that will be from the snow that will, most likely, be on the ground.

So join us at 7:30pm. Hope to see you there!

## PDHS Board Of Directors

The PDHS is in dire need of new blood on the Board of Directors. More than five Board members are leaving this year and we need new people to fill many of the positions.

Without you volunteering, we won't be able to do as much as we have done in the past. Give it some consideration or even agree to share a position with a friend. There are many small jobs that need doing and can't be done by one person. Many hands make light work as they say and a much more enjoyable Society.

See Madeline Archer if you think you can lend a hand.

## Perth Festival Of Good Cheer

The town of Perth is gearing up for Christmas once again. Part of that program is for various service agencies in town to provide and dress their own Christmas Tree in the Crystal Palace for the Festival of Lights. PDHS is once again taking part and will decorate their tree on Wednesday, November 20, 2013. Everyone is welcome to take part. Arrive at the Crystal Palace at 9:00 am and get yourself in the Christmas mood!

## Will You Volunteer Your Garden?

We are hoping to continue our tours of PDHS members' gardens for the summer months of 2014. Are you willing to have other PDHS members come one day in the summer to see yours? If you are, please see Madeline Archer at the break. We hope 4 or 5 members volunteer for one of the following dates: July 8, 15, 29 and August 12 and 26.

It is always amazing to see the variety and types of garden our members have. From small town-living gardens, to large vegetable or herb gardens to glorious flowers gardens. All are of interest, so don't be shy.

## Mulch: Too Much or Too Little???

TOO DEEP: 4+ inches

Moisture runs off. The amount of oxygen in the soil is reduced so roots begin to rise closer to the surface.

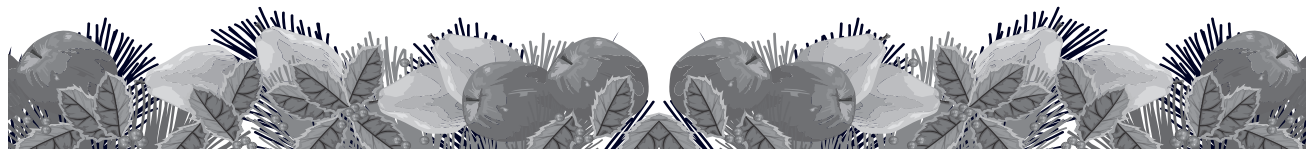
JUST RIGHT: 2-4 inches

Weeds are suppressed; moisture and oxygen are exchanged and keep roots healthy.

TOO THIN: 1-2 inches

Looks nice but allows too much sun through to suppress weeds and doesn't hold moisture in the soil as well as a deeper layer would.

*Adapted from Garden Gate: e-Notes, October, 2013*



## Leaves, Glorious Leaves!

*By Dale Odorizzi*

Leaves are truly one of nature's miracles. In the spring, they appear as a light green haze. All summer long, they make food for their trees to keep them strong and beautiful. They provide us with shade. As fall rolls around, they turn many colours, adding beauty to our landscape.

To many people, once the leaves fall to the ground, they become nothing but a big mess, a back-breaking chore. However, at this stage in leaves' progression, they become the gardener's best friend.

If you have only a few trees in your yard, you can deal with your leaves by simply mowing over them. The ground-up leaves will disappear over the winter months and provide nutrients to your lawn all year long.

If you have a lot of leaves, you will need to move the leaves from your lawn. Too many leaves piled on your lawn over the winter can kill off parts of your lawn. Once you have removed the leaves from your lawn, you can use them in a number of ways.

Many of us gardeners like to push the zone and grow plants that are just a bit too tender for this area. One way to help these tender beauties through the cold winter is to pile shredded leaves around the plants, once the ground has frozen. We wait until the ground is frozen so that the mice and voles have already found a nice warm spot to overwinter.

One year, I piled leaves around my roses in late October, as I was gathering leaves. When I removed the leaves in the spring, the bark on many of the rose bushes had been chewed off by overwintering critters. I also pile leaves 3 feet high around my Butterfly Bushes and all make them through the winter very well. Shredded leaves work best around plants, as whole leaves tend to clump into a soggy mess.

If you plant bulbs, including garlic, in the fall, covering the bulbs with a nice layer of leaves will help to keep your bulbs nice and cozy over the winter. Be sure to remove the leaves early in the spring or the leaves of your bulbs will be yellow. They quickly turn green once you remove the leaves. You might need to cover your leaves with a few branches to keep them from blowing away if you are in an exposed area.

Shredded leaves also make excellent mulch

on your flower and vegetable gardens. Using mulch during the growing season helps prevent water evaporation so you can reduce watering throughout the summer. Weeds are slower to germinate when your garden is mulched and if they do grow, the weeds are easy to pull out.

I also like to pile leaves on my vegetable garden. If I am ambitious, I will shred the leaves before putting them on the garden but if time is short, I will put the whole leaves on the garden and then dig or till the leaves into the garden. I like to make raised beds in my garden and so if any of the leaves are still whole in the spring, I simply rake them into the rows between the raised beds. The final use I make of leaves is to make compost. Again, when I am ambitious, I shred the leaves and put them in my compost bin, layering them with cow manure from the friendly dairy farmer next door. Shredding the leaves helps them to decompose more quickly, but as I read somewhere, over time everything organic will decompose. I usually stir up my compost once a year. At that time, anything that is still recognizable goes back into the working bin and anything that looks like beautiful rich, black soil goes into the "made compost" bin.

A little effort at this time of year helps your leaves to keep on giving, long after they have fallen on the ground.

## Getting Through The Winter Post-gardening Season

Canada has some pretty long winters and for gardeners those long winters can be a let-down after a glorious summer gardening season. Here are some ideas for keeping up the interest.

1. Spend some time going through gardening magazines and make plans for next summer. Do some research to find something that can nicely fill in under the pine tree or which will grow tall (and cover up) the propane tanks.
2. Many herbs do well in the house. Find some of the tougher ones, e.g. thyme, bay laurel, chives, and see if you can bring them through the winter indoors. As it is dryer indoors, remember to water plants more often.
3. Make an indoor garden. It may consist of orchids, African violets, cyclamen, ferns. I pot



up my geraniums and calla lilies and they flower for me all winter. I also save several buckets of rain water to give them an advantage.

4. Visit a local indoor "arboretum." Code's Mill is a lovely spot to have a coffee amid greenery and poinsettia's over the holiday season.

5. Force some bulbs in beautiful containers, strategically located around the house: paper whites, hyacinths, crocus are all easy to force. It is a great time for amaryllis bulbs as well. Give one as a gift.

6. Take a walk through some of the florist shops. Apropos ([aproposperth.com](http://aproposperth.com)) is a great side trip, as is Tivoli Gardens Florist Shop in Westboro, Richmond Road, in Ottawa ([tivoliFlorist.com](http://tivoliFlorist.com)). Neither will disappoint and bet you will find it difficult to walk away empty-handed.

7. Montreal ([espacepourlavie.ca/jardin-botanique](http://espacepourlavie.ca/jardin-botanique)), Toronto ([torontobotanicalgardens.ca](http://torontobotanicalgardens.ca)) and Maine ([mainegardens.org](http://mainegardens.org)) all have Botanical Gardens. Perhaps it will be time to give one of them a whirl.

*Submitted by Lynda Haddon*

## Growing Sprouts In a Jar

Are you missing your garden fresh vegetables? If you are, you might be ready to try growing sprouts. In just a few days, with minimal equipment, you can grow your own fresh and delicious sprouts that are chock full of vitamins, fiber, protein and anti-oxidants! They are great in salads, sandwiches and even stir fries. Since they are grown in your kitchen, you can't get anything grown more locally.

To grow sprouts, all you need is a 1 Quart Mason Jar (or well washed Peanut Butter jar, mayonnaise jar), sprout seeds, cheesecloth or muslin, rubber band, water, a dark place and sunlight. Your seeds must not be pretreated with anything. You can sprout many types of seeds but my favorites are alfalfa, radish, broccoli and mung beans. Mung beans make the large bean sprouts that are used in Chinese cooking.

Put 1-2 Tablespoons of sprout seeds in a glass jar. Cover the lid with cheesecloth and secure with a rubber band. Cover seeds with at least 1 inch of water. Place the jar in a dark place and

let the seeds soak for 12 hours.

After the 12 hours are up, drain the beans. Two to three times per day rinse the seeds. After rinsing, invert the jar in a bowl at an angle to allow the excess water to drain. In a couple of days, the seeds should begin to sprout. When they are sprouting, put them in a windowsill to ensure they get some light so they will turn green.

Remove the seed hulls if needed. Do this by emptying your sprouts into a colander or strainer and rinsing. If not removed, they can get moldy and ruin your sprouts. I have never done this as my sprouts are usually used as soon as they are ready.

Most sprouts are ready in 4-6 days. Taste them to see if they are still bitter. If they are, wait another day. When ready, rinse sprouts and cut off what you need. The rest can be stored in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

Feel free to combine different types of seeds in one sprouting session. Try to use seeds of about the same size. Mung beans and alfalfa seeds do not mix well as mung beans take longer to sprout. Enjoy!

*Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County  
Master Gardeners*



"It always amazes me to look at the little, wrinkled brown seeds and think of the rainbows in 'em," said Captain Jim. "When I ponder on them seeds I don't find it nowise hard to believe that we've got souls that'll live in other worlds. You couldn't hardly believe there was life in them tiny things, some no bigger than grains of dust, let alone colour and scent, if you hadn't seen the miracle, could you?"

*L.M. Montgomery, Anne's House of Dreams*