



# The Ladyslipper

Perth & District Horticultural Society

[www.perthhortsociety.com](http://www.perthhortsociety.com)



Est. 1984

November 2023

## President's Report 2023

Here is a recap of the events of PDHS over the past year.

We started off the year in February with a Zoom meeting. Our speaker was Paul Gellately, The Tattooed Gardener and he spoke on Paul's Top 5 Plants by Category. Paul gave an excellent presentation. This was a very inspiring way to start off the new year.

Dale Odorizzi spoke to us about Invasive Plants in March. Very informative and we learned about a lot of plants that we should not be growing or bringing to plant sales.

In April we had Ann Frederking speak about her love of hostas and how to grow them.

Tauney Stinson took us through the forests foraging for mushrooms and loose morels.

We had a great Q&A session with Ed Lawrence in June along with a fabulous flower show and dessert social.

In September, Judith Cox entertained us with her knowledge on roses that grow in our area.

We had Rebecca Last speak on Climate Change and Your Garden in October. It was very enlightening and well received by our membership.

Our Membership coordinators, Muriel Hopper and Caroline Bolduc represented PDHS at Seedy Sunday in March and had a great time meeting people and getting new members to join, along with some renewals.

Earth Day in April saw our membership coordinators, Muriel and Caroline representing PDHS again. Caroline created a barn box which was raffled off to anyone who joined the society. Abby Lefebvre was the lucky winner.

Despite the rain, our host David Archer spearheaded a hugely successful plant sale at the Crystal Palace. Many junior gardeners came out to take home their own new plant specimen. Thanks to all who participated in donating plants for the sale and volunteering their services on sale day. Linda assisted with the identification of Richard's prize day lilies... wow... what an amazing collection. Once again, Caroline created a barn box which was raffled off to new members of our society. Jeela Jones was the lucky winner.

There was an organized tour of the Purdon Conservation Area on the last week of June. We are truly fortunate to have Canada's largest colony of Showy Lady Slipper orchids in our own back yard. The few members who went on the tour had a great time.

Your PDHS board also organized a tour of glorious Gossmer Gardens, Sarah Smith's new flower farm, just outside of Smiths Falls. Sarah showed a dozen members who joined the tour how to harvest flower seeds. It was an enchanting sunset evening at Gossmer. Do look for Sarah at the

Perth Farmer's Market next spring. She will dazzle you with her original bouquets.

Thanks Richard Catchpaw for all the plants he dug up from his garden over the past year. Members who were lucky enough to receive one of Richard's plants as a door prize must show us how your new plant is progressing in the new year.

Thanks Gerda Van Wingerden for her committed years of service on the Board of Directors as well as her dedication and time in setting up the meetings at the St. Paul's Church since we started having our meetings here.

Thanks Wenda Veldman for serving on the board for the past two years as a director as well as the Flower Show Coordinator. Our flower shows have been very successful since Wenda took over and hopefully our shows will continue in that manner.

Thanks to Robin McIntosh for her dedication to the society as secretary and our IT person.

Thanks to Barb Smith for keeping our books in order and always being there to handle the financials.

Linda wants to thank Jane Avery for her many years of dedication to the society as our newsletter editor and board member, and the last year as our co-president. I greatly appreciate everything she has done to improve the communications in the society. She will truly be missed. Jane is leaving us for different pastures. I wish her the best.

Again this year, Perth & District Horticultural Society has a decorated Christmas Tree at Crystal Palace for all to admire throughout the season. A huge thank you to Robin McIntosh, Catherine Stephen-Dunn and Nancy Kelly. Great job on the tree.

We appreciate our Community Garden volunteers. Over 450 hours were put into the gardens our society maintains for the Town. David Archer headed up the Flag Garden team, Cheryl Moss and Rita Gobin coordinated the schedule and volunteers at Inge Va. Robin McIntosh took care of the Cenotaph and Pollinator Gardens. Judy Buehler and Doug Smallwood lead the PDHS team at Matheson House Museum Garden. We have included Judy Buehler's report on the Museum Garden. A full report on all the gardens will be sent in an email later this week once they are completed.



Another great team of volunteers who are very much appreciated are the Junior Gardeners program volunteers. Robin McIntosh and Sandi Sissons did a great job on organizing this program for the society and the schools. I think it is one of the most important programs that our society does in our community. On that note, Robin and Sandi would like to step down as coordinators of this program and hand it over to someone new, so please consider this. We have included a description of the coordinator's functions in this newsletter. It is a great opportunity to grow and learn along with the students.

Next spring, May 4, 2024, P&DHS will be hosting the District AGM at the Glad Tidings Church on Wayside Drive (just East of Perth off Hwy 7). I will be reaching out to the membership over the winter to organize different committees to make this AGM hugely successful.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday Season!

Linda and Jane

# Matheson House Museum 2023 Gardening Report

*Prepared by Judy Buehler and Doug Smallwood*

*Photos by Rita Godin*

*Oct. 27, 2023*



Another gardening season has come to an end in the gardens of Matheson House.

The season started in early April with our very competent and talented leader, Lynda Haddon, stepping down due to health issues. Since 2012, Lynda had been garden manager, designer, administrator, plant and material purchaser and hauler, as well as coach to we volunteers. To fill these shoes was a daunting task but with the dedicated help of Tim McCullough, Christy Melvin, their young, strong and willing crew and the Perth and District Horticulture Society volunteers we had a very successful, and beautiful if I do say so, 2023 season! Judy Buehler and Doug Smallwood lead the PDHS team.

Town staff bought the requested plants and material and brought them to the gardens on the Tuesdays that we worked. This made our jobs easier and much more enjoyable as we only had to do the planting...and the weed-ing of course. long term storage.

Doug is very handy with tools and loves to use them, building two trellises for the Courtyard Garden.



Rita Godin supplied this garden with scarlet runner beans from her garden, to climb the large wire trellis wall next to the Shaw building. When they bloomed this wall was quite a lovely sight!



Visitors enjoyed strolling in these beautiful gardens. Along with thank-ing us for all our work, they often asked about the plants and history of the gardens.



The PDHS volunteers that made it all possible:  
Connie Batoff, Doug Smallwood, Elaine Scott,  
Judy Buehler, Kim McPherson, Richard Catchpaw, Rita Godin, Wenda Veldman  
Numbers of person hours : 122 approx.

# Christmas and other Forest Cacti

The Christmas Cactus and Easter Cactus, both members of the Schlumbergera family and the Orchid Cactus the Epiphyllum family are all Forest Cactus and all are worth a little effort to get them to bloom. The natural home of the Forest Cactus is rain forests and jungles. It anchors itself to a tree (epiphytic) with its roots exposed to the elements and lives off what it can collect from air and water, or a rock (epilithic), where it collects what it can from rock debris and rainwater. It is a succulent though, storing water in its leaves. It is not surprising, therefore, that their growing needs are more like orchids than like the spiny cacti that grow in the deserts.



The typical Forest Cactus has leaf like stems and a trailing growth habit that makes it suitable for hanging baskets. The flowers on a Forest Cactus are spectacular but unfortunately, they are shy bloomers and there are rules to follow if you want a good display every year.

The Forest Cacti like a well-lit area that is shaded from direct sunlight. They thrive on an East facing window sill. During the resting period, a temperature of 13-16C is ideal. For the rest of the year, 15-20C. They need regular watering during the active growing period but the compost should be allowed to dry between watering. During their rest period, water them infrequently. If your tap water is hard, use rain water to water the plants. Many of the forest cacti come from the Rain Forest. They love humidity but hate wet roots which can lead to root rot and fungal diseases. Your cactus likes



evenly moist soil but allow the top 2.5 cm (1 inch) to dry out between watering. Set it on a tray of moist pebbles and mist occasionally to provide the humidity it craves. On warm, sunny days, water every 2-3 days but if it is cool and humid, only water weekly.

Schlumbergera likes to be pot bound so don't be too generous with the pot size, but rather repot every other year or so, shortly after its flowering period. Add fresh medium when you do - a mix of three parts peat or potting mix to one part sharp sand or perlite as the Schlumbergera likes things a little on the acid side. A light orchid mix works well, too.

Once you get the hang of the treatment for your Forest Cactus, you might want to bring other Forest Cacti into your home, creating spectacular beauty virtually all year long following the steps outlined below.

	<b>Christmas Cactus</b>	<b>Easter Cactus</b>	<b>Orchid Cactus</b>
January	<b>Flowering Period</b>	Resting Period	Resting Period
February	Resting Period	Pre flowering period Keep dryish and cool until buds appear	
March			Pre flowering period Keep dryish and cool until buds appear
April	Treat normally, water well when soil begins to dry	<b>Flowering Period</b> -water normally. Minimum temp15C	Pre flowering period Keep dryish and cool until buds appear
May			<b>Flowering Period</b> -water normally. Minimum temp15C
June	Outdoors in a shady spot. Protect from Slugs	Outdoors in a shady spot. Protect from Slugs	Outdoors in a shady spot. Protect from Slugs
July			
August			
September	Pre flowering period Keep dryish and cool until buds appear	Resting Period	Treat normally, water well when soil begins to dry
October			
November			
December	<b>Flowering Period</b>		Resting Period

The easiest way to increase Schlumbergera is to take leaf cuttings - two to three segments - and stick them halfway down into a mix the same as that of the parent. You should have roots in two to three weeks. Fertilize when one new segment appears.

These are long-lived plants whose lifespan is measured in decades. As the cactus gets old, the branches near the roots will appear to become woody and tough. If your forest cactus is ill, first take stem cuttings to salvage an offspring in case the remedies don't work. If the leaves are limp and the soil dry, soak in water for a few hours. If the soil is wet and the leaves are limp, wash off the soil and repot in an evenly moist medium. If there are white spots on the leaves, use a fungicide. If the roots are rotted, start over.

Dale Odorizzi  
Lanark County Master Gardeners



## JUNIOR GARDENER COORDINATOR

- ▶ Set up and organize the Jr. Gardener program in area schools on behalf of the Perth & District Horticultural Society (PDHS)
- ▶ This includes coordinating with participating schools and PDHS volunteers.
- ▶ Collecting and organizing program supplies and distributing to volunteers.
- ▶ Ensure all volunteers have current Society memberships and valid criminal record checks.

Please contact Robin McIntosh by email at [robinmcintosh435@gmail.com](mailto:robinmcintosh435@gmail.com) if you would like more information.

## 2024 District 2 AGM

The Perth & District Horticultural Society will be celebrating 40 years in 2024 and we will be hosting the District 2 AGM in Perth on May 4, 2024 at Glad Tidings Church on Wayside Drive. We are in the planning stages and will look to all members of our society to help organize and create an extraordinary day for all societies in our District. If you have any ideas for this event, please let us know by email at [pdhsmembers@gmail.com](mailto:pdhsmembers@gmail.com) or talking to any of our board members at our meetings. Stay tuned for more information in the coming months.

# Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Please enjoy your special treat from the Board of Directors.

Some of the directors got together at Caroline's place and created these Christmas ornaments. Caroline is a wonderful addition to our Board. She is very enthusiastic and always coming up with some great ideas for our society.



Wishing you all the best for a wonderful holiday season and see you next year!