



# The Ladyslipper



Perth & District Horticultural Society

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

Est. 1984

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## President's Pen

Welcome to fall 2023 and what a spectacular fall it has been to date.

We are thrilled to welcome three of our newest members to the Perth & District Horticultural Society. They are Sherry Burke, Carol Tomaszewski and Janet Walker. Our membership now exceeds 125 and is climbing. The more the merrier.

The generosity of our members continues to amaze. Caroline Bolduc is offering Siberian Iris plants free of charge while supplies last. Ute Schall has two ginormous spruces that she is planning to remove. One is a white spruce the other a blue spruce. This December Ute will schedule a tree cutting day when you can come and take bows for your holiday urns and garland. Ute would like to gauge the interest from members so that she can plan her generous give away.



Fall Flower Arrangement  
by Jane Avery

November 21 is the date for our Annual General Meeting. Please plan to attend so that you can vote in our new board for 2024. Kindly let us know if you or a friend would like to join the board. No specific experience necessary. We are a fun bunch who are committed to sustaining and improving the Perth & District Horticultural Society. Together we will move the society forward. Details on our 2023 AGM to follow.

Wishing you a Happy Halloween and a fantastic fall.

Jane and Linda

## 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.



# Seed Saving Workshop

*with Sarah of Gossamer Gardens Flower Farm and U-Pick in Port Emsley*

The late day sun cast a glow on Gossamer Gardens Flower Farm on Sept 28th, welcoming PDHS members to explore the fields of flowers, herbs and foliage as Sarah Smith and her helper Catherine Stephen-Dunn hosted an al fresco seed saving workshop.

In a few short years Sarah has turned her farm into a beautiful floral oasis. Garden plots are overflowing with dahlia, yarrow, statice, bee balm, mallow, zinnia,

salpiglossis, scabiosa, nicotiana, artemisia, sunflowers, cosmos, phlox, echinacea, rose, sweet pea, nasturtium, butterfly bush, marigold, Cerinthe, catnip, tansy, snapdragon, rudbeckia, gomphrena, asters, ageratum, amaranth, dianthus, craspedia, lisianthus, bells of Ireland, poppy, an array of herbs and more...WOW! If you are unfamiliar with any of these plant species, I encourage you to investigate these treasures and to plan on visiting Gossamer Gardens next spring/summer to

see for yourself. [www.gossamergardens.com](http://www.gossamergardens.com).

Gossamer Gardens Flower Farm and U-Pick specializes in unique, seasonal, locally grown flowers and foliage; cultivated with love and nurtured using sustainable, organic practices.

Sarah highly recommends that you consult Johnny's Selected Seeds for information on seed storage, average seed



storage life, and seed viability testing. Here is a brief seed saving (flowers) introduction from Johnny's Selected Seeds:

## Selection and Harvest

- ▶ Select healthy, disease free plants with genetic traits you'd like to keep (size/shape/colour)
- ▶ Harvest when plant has lost its petals or seed head is dry and browned.
- ▶ Allow seed heads to further dry in a warm, ventilated area.

Avoid hybrid seeds as they may not be true to mother plant.

Green seed is not yet mature and will likely not germinate.

## Threshing & Winnowing (Cleaning)

- ▶ After seed head is dried, remove seed by threshing. This can be done by simply shaking the plant into a bowl, rubbing the seed head, or placing the pods into a bag and gently hitting it.
- ▶ Cleaning the seeds (winnowing) removes dirt and chaff, and greatly reduces the space taken up prior to storage.
- ▶ Willowing can be done many ways. You may use a series of different sized strainers, or by simply placing seed on a paper plate and gently blowing the dirt and chaff, or "wind winnowing".



## Storage

- ▶ Clean, dry seed should be stored in an airtight container, in a low humidity, low temperature environment. A sealed glass jar is perfect for long term storage.

Thank you very much Sarah for your hospitality and organizing this event.

# The Kiss Principle —Winter Sowing 101

By Emma Murphy, Peterborough Master Gardeners

So how does it work? For winter sowing you use a recycled container (bonus!) to create a mini greenhouse that protects the seeds from animals, birds, and other pests, as well as from our often-variable spring weather, until they get big enough to transplant into your garden. This is one case when you actually want your seeds to be placed outdoors and exposed to the elements (including freezing temperatures, snow, and rain).

You can use any container that's deep enough to hold sufficient potting mix and has a clear or translucent covering that is tall enough to allow the transplants to grow. It must have drainage holes in the bottom as well as ventilation holes in the top. You can use perennial or annual seeds – basically anything as long as it isn't a tropical seed (for obvious reasons). Native seeds are particularly good because they need a period of cold stratification to germinate – why not take advantage of natural temperatures, rather than artificially refrigerating seeds that need this process?



You fill the container with potting mix (at least 4-5 inches), sprinkle in your seeds, make sure the mix is moist, tape or secure the top of the container in some fashion, and put it outside. It's good to check on the containers periodically so they don't dry out or become waterlogged. Then you wait – it really is that simple.

OK, I know there are questions – When do I start where I live? When do I plant x seeds? What soil do I use? Let me try and answer some of the basic ones and point you to other resources as well.

You can start winter sowing anytime after the Winter Solstice (December 21st). Perennials are generally done first, as they often require (or benefit from) cold stratification, then hardy annuals, then tender annuals. But the bottom line is that the seeds will germinate when the conditions are right for each kind of seed. That is the beauty of winter sowing! Many people winter sow their perennials in January but then wait until March to start their annuals. It really doesn't matter – do what works for you!

They are ready to plant whenever the outside temperature has sufficiently warmed, and they are the right size (2 to 3 inches or more importantly at least two sets of real leaves).

It's recommended to use a sterile potting soil mix; avoid soil bags that say they are 'weed free' because they can contain chemicals mixed into soil to prevent any weed seeds in that bag from germinating. So they will also prevent the germination of seeds you sow in that same soil! If you live in an extremely dry environment, you might want to use soil that has moisture retentive crystals – otherwise this is not necessary (and can even be a problem in wet winter regions like the U.S. Pacific Northwest). Using fertilized soil for a sowing medium is a personal preference.

Most winter sowers tend to use milk jugs for their seeds, but these are not readily available in Ontario – we still love our milk bags! But the reality is that you can use any container for winter sowing as long as it can hold at least 3 inches (7.6 cm) of potting soil. I have seen various other



things used – juice bottles, clear pop bottles, blue and green bottles, aluminum pans, salad boxes, plastic containers, pretzel barrels, cheese curl containers, ice cream buckets, nut containers, and vinegar jugs. They must be translucent (some light passes through) or transparent (all light passes through). Opaque materials will not work. Personally, I have used the large fresh spinach containers or aluminum roasting pans with clear lids.

You do need some sort of cover on your container, as it helps keep heavy rains under control (so they drip slowly into your containers), it keeps more moisture in so that you have a higher germination rate of your seeds, and it keeps weed seeds out of your containers.

Labelling is really important unless you're a genius at identifying new sprouts! I recommend putting in two labels – one on the underside of your tray and one on a popsicle stick in the container. Trudi recommends using duct tape and an industrial sharpie. Tip – place your labels before you fill the tray with soil and put them so they don't impede the water drainage holes. There is lots of discussion on the best pens to use for labelling – everything from paint pens to garden markers, livestock markers, and China/grease markers.

This will be my second-year winter sowing just north of Peterborough – I learned a lot in my first year, most importantly to transplant my seedlings before they get too big and dry out.

I hope this blog encourages you to consider winter sowing for your garden, particularly for native species to your area – seeds are so much cheaper than plants and then once they go to seed you are all set to grow even more plants, either for yourself or to share with friends!

# What to do with your pumpkin after Halloween?

Whether you bought small Sugar Pie pumpkins to decorate whole or giant Howden pumpkins to carve into Jack-o-lanterns for your front porch, the day after Halloween brings a dilemma: what to do with all the leftover pumpkin that won't result in a ton of waste.

Luckily, you can do a lot with pumpkins after Halloween. Pumpkins that you haven't cut into provide fresh pumpkin for recipes, while old, carved pumpkins can be composted or in certain cases, used as animal feed. Here are some great options...

## ***Eat Them!***

Before getting into some scrumptious (and easy) recipes, here are two points about food safety: One, use only uncarved/uncut pumpkins for food. Once you cut into a pumpkin, even to shallowly carve the surface or stick a toothpick in to hold a decoration, you start the two-hour food clock running, after which the pumpkin won't be safe to eat, even if you cook it. And, given that most cut pumpkins are used for porch decoration- where they can be covered in dirt and bugs- you should save these pumpkins for non-food use once Halloween is over.

Two, uncut/uncarved pumpkins can be used for food, but be careful what you use to draw on them. If you have used non-edible markers, wash the exterior of the pumpkin, and cut away the painted or inked sections.

### **1. Make a Pumpkin Pie**

The "meat" inside a pumpkin, once the seeds and stringy interior have been scooped out, can be made into fresh pumpkin puree, and used in a pie. Save the peel for composting. Pumpkin puree does freeze well, divide the puree into measured portions, place each portion in a bag, and freeze up to a year. Note: culinary varieties like Sugar Pie are better for pie making than larger Jack-o-lantern style pumpkins, but you can still try to use those if you wish.



### **2. Make pumpkin soup**

Try roasting the pumpkin and blending it into soup. You can find many recipes online that cover just about every dietary requirement such as vegan roasted-pumpkin soup. After removing the seeds and cutting up the pumpkin, you'll roast the sections and then peel them. (Cooking first makes the outer skin easier to remove). Even small pumpkins can produce enough meat to make a lot of soup for leftovers.

### **3. Make a pumpkin spice latte with actual pumpkin**

Most "pumpkin spice" items contain just the spices used in pumpkin pies. However, if you have a little extra puree left over after making pie or soup, use it for a latte. With milk, a little coffee, spices and a couple of tablespoons of puree, you can have a homemade pumpkin spice latte for you and a friend in a few minutes.

#### 4. Roast pumpkin seeds

Turn pumpkin seeds into a tasty snack with this easy recipe. Cumin and smoked paprika add gentle spice into toasted seeds, which turn crispy when roasted in the oven. Serve as a simple snack or scatter over salads and soup for a little extra crunch.

Method:

- ▶ Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Scoop out 80g of raw pumpkin seeds from the flesh. Remove the stringy bits from the seeds and rinse well with cold water. Pat dry with kitchen paper removing as much moisture as possible.
- ▶ Toss the seeds in a bowl with 4 tsp olive oil, 2 tsp ground cumin, 1 tsp smoked paprika, and a pinch of sea salt, until coated. Spread out on a baking tray & roast for 10 minutes. Allow to cool before serving. Makes 2 servings.

#### 5. Make vegetable stock

Most vegetable stock is of the carrots/celery/onion trimmings variety, but you can make a pumpkin-based stock, too. This is a use it all recipe in which you cut up the pumpkin and combine the whole thing, including seeds and stringy guts, with an onion and water. Boil, simmer, and strain and within minutes, you have stock you can use for soup or in place of water when making pumpkin risotto or other delicious dishes.

#### 6. Make pumpkin bread

Pumpkin bread or pumpkin muffins are some of the best recipes to use if you have any leftover Jack-o-lanterns. As those are less flavourful to begin with, the spices in the bread take centre stage. Pumpkin bread is a quick bread, as you don't have yeast rising times. Make a couple of loaves and freeze one for later; be sure to slice that loaf before freezing so you can remove slices when you want, instead of having to thaw the entire loaf.

#### 7. Make pumpkin beauty products

Oatmeal isn't the only food you can use for a face mask: pumpkin puree, honey, and milk combine to make a soothing facial treatment that is loaded with vitamins. Leave the mask on for 20 mins. Notes: the mask will be bright orange. Any pumpkin that you'll use on your skin or use with edible foods should be one of the fresh pumpkins that you didn't cut into for Halloween.

#### 8. Make a bird feeder

If you've got a small light pumpkin hallow out the pumpkin and add stick perches to create a small bird feeder. Hang it using a rope sling and monitor it so you can remove it once the pumpkin shell begins to degrade.



#### 9. Make a garden planter

Pumpkins eventually degrade, so if you want to do something with the pumpkin that won't result in debris at the end, try making a degradable green

planter. Start by filling the shell with planting mix and adding flowers or a plant that you like. When the pumpkin breaks down, plant the whole thing in the ground, where the pumpkin will act as fertilizer. Note: Cutting the pumpkin up first will help it to break down faster.

## **10. Save seeds to plant in the spring**

- ▶ First remove the seeds from inside the pumpkin. A metal spoon is great for this. You might have to scrape some flesh out with them.
- ▶ Next, put the seeds into a sieve or colander & wash them under running water. Gently rub away flesh or stringy bits off seeds as you go.
- ▶ You certainly won't want to plant every seed you harvest, or your garden will be completely overrun, so go through seeds and pick out the plumpest and healthiest. This is a bit time-consuming but its worth it to get the seeds most likely to germinate well and grow the best.
- ▶ Spread seeds out on a paper towel and make sure they don't touch each other, or they won't dry properly and they'll stick together. Put seeds somewhere warm and dry for a week.
- ▶ Once seeds are totally dry, seal the seeds in a paper envelope (plastic bags will hold moisture and could affect germination) And, don't forget to label the envelope.
- ▶ Store the envelope in a dry place. Some people like to store theirs in the fridge to simulate winter. Put the envelope in a plastic container, punch a few holes in the top to let moisture out and store the container in the back of the fridge until spring. Then simply wait until temp starts to climb and the sun makes an appearance, and you are good to go with planting another batch of pumpkins.

## **11. Feed leftover pumpkins to your chickens**

You can feed them the seeds & the flesh that you scrape out of the pumpkin when carving it, as well as the rest of the pumpkin the day after Halloween. Cutting the pumpkin in half will make it easier for the chickens to enjoy it. It is best to feed any leftover pumpkin to your chickens within a day or two of carving, before mould and bacteria build up. You should remove any leftover pumpkin from your chicken coop before dark so as not to attract pests. Note: PDHS member Caroline Bolduc feeds pumpkin to her dog. She freezes cut up pieces for future dog treats.

## **12. Donate**

Check if local farms are looking for pumpkin donations. Pumpkin can be used as animal feed. Community gardens may also accept donations for composting.

## ***Return it to Nature***

Please don't leave your pumpkins in woodland or other local green spaces. Although some wildlife may enjoy eating pumpkin, it can make other animals very sick and could spread disease.

Leaving your pumpkin in the street or in your garden until it rots will attract pests. As soon as your pumpkin starts to rot you must dispose of it properly. Composting is ideal.