



The Ladyslipper



Perth & District Horticultural Society

www.perthhortsociety.com

Est. 1984

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President's Message

As I write this article, I'm reminded of how often I've written a president's message over the years; this time, however, it is my last. After serving as president or co-president since 2019, I will be stepping down at the end of this year.

Looking back, I am deeply grateful for the journey we've shared. Together, we navigated some truly unexpected times. When the world shifted during the COVID pandemic, we adapted—welcoming speakers who were comfortable with the Zoom platform and keeping our society active and connected. In the years since, it has been a pleasure to return to in-person meetings and to continue finding engaging speakers for our programs.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our board members and volunteers over the years. Your time, energy, and willingness to help have kept this society thriving. Thank you for everything you have done.

To our members who renew year after year—your support is the foundation of our society. We appreciate your commitment and your enthusiasm for gardening, learning, and community.

It has been an honour to serve as your president. Thank you for your trust, your support, and the wonderful memories. I look forward to remaining part of the society—and to seeing where the next chapter takes us.

Warm regards,

Linda

PDHS 2025 In Review

We started off in February with a Zoom meeting. Our speaker was Ron Lewis from Sudbury. He gave us an interesting talk on fruits of all kinds.

March rolled in. Our Membership coordinators, Caroline Bolduc and Muriel Hopper, organized a PDHS table at the Perth Farmers' Market's annual Seedy Sunday. We had a few other volunteers on hand to help them greet people and get new members to join, along with some renewals. At this event, Linda Bartlett, with the help of the Lanark County Master Gardeners, gave a presentation on "How to Grow Potatoes" as part of our community endeavor for the Perth Farmers' Market.

At our first in-person meeting in March, we had Elizabeth Salter from Ramsey Creek Greenhouse give a presentation titled "What's New for 2025 – Annuals & Planter Trends."

In April, Lee Ann Smith, an Ottawa Master Gardener, gave a presentation on wildscaping. She spoke about how to get colour and blooms through the season with native plants.

At our May meeting, Dr. Sean Murphy, a Chiropractor, presented on "Roots, Shoots, Fruits and Poots: A Garden Reflects the Health of the Gardener." He spoke to us about the benefits of warm-up exercises, which he demonstrated, before we headed out to work in our gardens.

We held our annual plant sale at the Crystal Palace on May 17. Richard Catchpaw and Robin McIntosh spearheaded the successful plant sale. It raised over \$2,000.00 for the society. Thanks to all who donated plants for the sale and volunteered on sale day.

For our June meeting, Dale Odorizzi gave a presentation on Good Bugs/Bad Bugs, and a great Q&A session with the Lanark Master Gardeners followed this. We also had a fabulous flower show and dessert social.

In July, we had a tour of Pam Newton's gardens. A huge thank you to Pam for opening her gardens to our membership. About 30-40 members enjoyed the tour.

Then Chloe Hurst spoke on Goth Gardening at our September meeting. Unfortunately, we had technical issues, so Chloe had to give her presentation on her laptop. It was decided at that meeting that we might need some updated equipment.

We had Gerda Franssen from the Lanark County Master Gardeners give a talk on preparing your garden tools for winter. We also had a mini flower show.

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

We will conclude the year with our Annual Potluck and Meeting with the elections of our new board and a floral demonstration by Cindy Zorgel, a well-versed florist, as well as the representative for District 2.

We appreciate our Community Garden volunteers. Over 500 hours were put into the gardens our society maintains for the Town. Kim McPherson 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. Elaine Scott led the PDHS team at Matheson House Museum Garden. Please read the report on the Flag Garden. Other reports will follow by email. Both the Flag Garden and Museum celebrated their 100-year anniversaries this past summer, so thank you to our members who participated in those events.

With all of the activities that the society did for the past year, we have over 1200 volunteer hours to report to the Ontario Horticultural Association.

Reminder: As we plan for the future, we must address the increasing costs. Our donations have remained steady, but expenses continue to rise. Beginning in 2026, membership fees will increase to \$20.00. This adjustment will help ensure that we can continue offering quality programming and opportunities that our members enjoy.

Linda Bartlett
President



PDHS Xmas Tree at Crystal Palace
Catherine, Robin, Sandi and Nancy,
photo by Robin McIntosh

*May each and everyone of you, have a blessed
and joyour holiday season!*

Flag Garden 2025 Report

Prepared by Kim McPherson. All photos submitted by Kim McPherson.

2025 was a big year for the Perth Flag Garden, as we celebrated its 100th anniversary. It was also a challenging year! We began the season a little later than normal, as David Archer (who grows both the alyssum and the ageratum) had some very rare germination issues, and the garden form itself was in dire need of repair and repainting. The Union Jack flag, in particular, was crumbling due to water damage. Previously glued cement had loosened again, and this time there was no chance of gluing the pieces back together.

The garden was planted on June 9th with



In the midst of all this and before the Anniversary Celebration on the 3rd of July, Ed McPherson got busy and, without going into too much detail, sourced the proper cement and flag colors, scraped the garden form and repaired the “Union Jack”. Then every bit of the garden was repaired /sealed and repainted in an attempt to minimize further water damage. Everything was looking nice for the celebration.

It’s hard to believe this garden is 100 years old. The Horticultural Society has been a huge help in reaching that goal. Many Perthites and Visitors alike have enjoyed taking photos of the garden and viewing it from the bridge above. It is a beautiful memorial to the soldiers of the First World War and an important part of the history of the Tay Canal and Basin.

This year ends with a little mystery. A nice sign indicating “Flag Garden Lane” was placed, and I haven’t been able to find out who donated it. ??

Thank you to Richard Catchpaw and Doug Smallwood for cleaning up the garden this fall.

Thank you to all who came to help with planting this season, and to Mary Dixon and Ed McPherson for all their help with the garden and with watering.



many hands showing up to help with the work. It was a pleasant morning, and everything went well until it was time to give the garden a good watering in. It was then that we discovered that the tap was broken! Perhaps damaged over the winter. This was going to present a difficult issue for a few days, which stretched to more than a month. We carried water in our vehicles and attempted a pulley system to get water from the Tay. The town provided a pump and set it up to supply enough water for the garden, but it was in a tricky location. The town staff who watered the uptown flowers also came on board and watered through the week as they were able. It was certainly nice for everyone when the original tap was working again, and we could all go back to our normal routine.



Sow in Sorrow Reap in Joy – The Mystery of Winter Sowing

Prepared by Katrina Boguski, Lanark County Master Gardeners

Winter can be one of the hardest times for gardeners. Spring brings with it the joy of a garden's rebirth; summer sets fields aglow with sunlight and colour and fall ushers in the bounty of the garden's harvest, but winter on the surface seems to offer nothing to the garden or the gardener. Nevertheless, every year, the garden and the gardener must endure the winter season. Instead of regretting this time, gardeners can turn winter into an opportunity to get a head start on the year and to contemplate the mysteries of gardening that remain unexplained. One of these mysteries is how, in nature, a tiny seed exposed to the winter can develop into a full-grown plant according to some rhythm which it senses. The seeds that nature sows grow heartier and freer than any of the ones we grow inside ourselves or purchase from a nursery's hothouse. Winter sowing allows gardeners the opportunity to plant seeds outside and to watch them grow according to nature's rhythm, even if we cannot explain or even sense that rhythm ourselves.

To sow seeds in winter, use either plastic containers, such as water jugs, or plastic bags. You can also use seed trays covered with plastic domes purchased for this purpose or made from clear plastic packages, such as those containing salad mixes sold in many produce departments. With any of these materials, you are effectively creating a small greenhouse in which the seedlings can get a head start. The seeds will be exposed to nature's rhythm and will emerge as strong and healthy as any other plants that spring up in your garden on their own without your intervention.

Cut drainage holes in the bottoms of the containers to allow excess water to run off. Failure to complete this step can lead to freezing or fungus growth. An electric drill can make light work of this step, just be sure to follow proper safety protocols. Some plastic containers have very smooth surfaces, which may cause the drill bit to slip off, and others may bend when under pressure. If the plastic is soft enough, you can make holes by using scissors or a sharp knife. There also needs to be an opening at the top of the container so that precipitation can get in to water the seeds. If using a water jug, simply leave off the lid.

Jugs can be cut in half and then taped back together to keep the top and bottom together. Before taping, fill the containers partway with potting soil and plant seeds at a depth that is appropriate for them. Cover the top portion with the lid. It is best to use seeds that will mature in 90 days or less, and ones from plants that can be easily transported. There is no need to harden off seeds grown by this method.

Place the containers in an area where they can get some sun but are sheltered a bit from harsh winds, then wait. You will not know exactly how long you will have to wait, but at about the same time the rest of your garden starts waking up from its winter slumber, the seeds you sowed in the dead of winter will start to emerge. At this point, you will need to watch them a little more closely but nowhere near as attentively as you would seeds sown indoors under grow lights. The seedlings may need a little extra water if there hasn't been much rain or snow, or they may need the tops of the containers opened periodically to let some excess heat escape, but largely they will be independent from your care.

The experience of seeing the seedlings emerge may provide both a great sense of joy and a great sense of disappointment as you realize how little you had to do with the simple task of winter sowing. All you needed to do was put some seeds and soil in containers and leave them outside exposed to nature's timing.

There are many excellent videos online showing more details about each step required, but really, the process is as simple as it sounds. The hard part is believing it works. Those who take the risk and try it will be blessed with a head start on the spring. Gardeners will also be left with a sense of wonder as to how it all happened without much help from them.

As the saying goes, "those who sow in sorrow, shall reap in joy." If you are sad because it is winter, or for any other reason, do some winter sowing. You can water the seeds with your tears, and in spring, you can stand in awe at how everything worked out. You will not be able to understand how it all happened, but you will be glad that it did.