



North York Blooms

For those who love gardening.

Meetings

Fourth Monday of the month at
Willowdale Presbyterian Church

38 Ellerslie Avenue, North York

Meetings begin at 7:30 pm

Our next meeting, plus Flower &
Vegetable Show, will be held
Monday, September 29, 2025.

Enjoy a "Floral Workshop for Novices"
the day before, September 28th.

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May 2025 Flower Show - Best in Show
Louise Veffers' Tree Peony Photo: Christine Pierroz

Website North York Garden Club

Facebook [North York Garden Club—Always Growing](https://www.facebook.com/North York Garden Club—Always Growing)

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Email info@northyorkgardenclub.ca



President's Message

As we pause in our club schedule to enjoy the summer and reflect on the annual Members' Garden Tour organized by Sheri Ferdinand-Brugel and made possible by our members at eight spectacular locations, I would like to thank each and every one of you for participating in the North York Garden Club in the first half of this year. Your presence has been felt in so many ways, continuing to make our club an engaging and meaningful "force of good through gardening" in our North York community and beyond.

We're in our 101st year as a horticultural society, not because we got comfortable and assumed there would always be a place for us, but because we have endeavoured to support a love of gardening and beautification in our community, even when we had to carve out that space early on. Did you know that on page 18 of THE TORONTO DAILY STAR, on Wednesday, July 4, 1928, just four years after the society's formation, then secretary Galbraith requested of the North York Township Council "...that the society be given free room rent for their meetings, pleading that they did much good in the district and were not a money-making organization. [Yet] Council pointed out that, in fairness to other such societies it would be unfair to grant the request." The reason given? "Reeve Anderson was not inclined to make such expenditure until more had been heard regarding the proposed amalgamation of the North York and Lansing horticultural societies." As a result, "Council decided to hold back the grant for the present." So ours has been a path with many turns, but never a change of course. We've simply had to be flexible in achieving our goals.

Now, as the climate crisis raises issues of invasives, the northward creep of "near native" species and the insects moving with them, the need to protect irreplaceable habitats, to support our pollinators, to enrich and increase the carbon storage capacity of our soils, and more, we continue to learn how to garden with the future in mind. Haven't our speakers been fabulous resources in illuminating solutions and ideas with respect to these topics and others? I'm sure you have some true favourites among them, remembering: "Garden Power – Creating Beautiful and Beneficial Spaces" with Sarah Coulber (February); "Tips for Top Vegetables," with Dr. Desré Kramer (March); "Soil Health – The Natural Approach," with James (Jim) Graham (April); "Little Forests, Big Results - Planting Miyawaki Mini Forests," with Ingrid Janssen (May); and "Design Your Own Native Pollinator Garden," with Blooming Boulevard's Jeanne McRight (June).

President's Message (cont'd)

Our May and June meetings also succeeded in letting our members shine, with ribbons and accolades earned at the Flower & Vegetable Shows, and training for those who volunteered as new show clerks. Thanks to all who participated. Now, if you are someone who would like to expand your horizons and venture to enter a floral design category – this is your year! We hope you'll join us for a fun and interesting floral workshop for novices on September 28th, the day before our next meeting this fall. This will allow you to create your own design to possibly enter into a novice class the next day. It will be a "BYOB" or "Bring Your Own Blooms" event, with more details and a materials list to follow.

One of the best announcements I have the privilege of sharing is that we are within reach of welcoming our 100th member! Will it be someone you introduce to the North York Garden Club? This was a goal I hoped we could achieve this year, and at the time of writing, Richard Sage informs me that we have registered our 99th member. How exciting to know that our five outreach events, three community planting events, two garden pop-up events, our attendance at the OHA District 5 Annual Meeting in Scarborough, and tours of members' gardens, as well as our bus trip to Whispering Gardens, have sparked interest and friendships that have made club membership attractive to so many. Fingers crossed that our 100th member will soon join us. What about the member who joins after them? Well that would be our 101st anniversary member, which I believe warrants a cake, so let's see how we do.

I wish you all a wonderful summer, tending your plants, in some cases harvesting, touring gardens near and far, and doing that which makes you happiest. We promise to keep you apprised of club news via email and on Instagram @northyorkgardenclub and Facebook ("North York Garden Club – Always Growing"), anytime you want to look us up.

Have a great summer, and good luck to all CNE Garden Show participants this year,

Christine

Christine Pierroz, President, North York Garden Club

Thanks to the contributors to this issue of North York Blooms:

Gloria Broks, Sheri Ferdinand-Brugel, Pat Cappelli, Tom Cloutier, Mary Ann Nelson, Christine Pierroz, and Richard Sage.

2025 Meetings

Meeting Schedule

February 24 th	Gardening for Wildlife: "Garden Power – Creating Beautiful AND Beneficial Spaces" Sarah Coulber, Gardening for Wildlife Specialist, CWF
March 24 th	Tips for Top Vegetables Dr. Desré Kramer, Toronto Master Gardeners
April 28 th	Soil Health - The Natural Approach "How to feed your soil, so your soil will feed your plants" James Graham, Etobicoke Master Gardeners
May 26 th	Miyawaki Method for Building a Mini-Forest Ingrid Janssen - Director, Little Forests Durham Flower & Vegetable Show: Nature's Beauty
June 23 rd	Design Your Own Native Pollinator Garden Jeanne McRight, Founder, Blooming Boulevards Flower & Vegetable Show: Nature's Gifts
September 29 th	Creating Your Own Terrarium Sayeh D. Beheshti Flower & Vegetable Show: Nature's Wonder ("Floral Workshop for Novices" offered September 28th)
October 27 th	Bulb Planting Speaker—TBA Photo Contest - NYGC 2026 Yearbook Cover
November 24 th	Annual General Meeting & Potluck Entertainment: Joe Thompson

Invite a guest...let your friends and neighbours know!!

Let us know if you have someone you think would enjoy the opportunity to hear interesting speakers, share gardening knowledge and learn a few things along the way.

Forward the details of an upcoming meeting to a possible new member and the first meeting is FREE.

Flower & Vegetable Shows

All shows include categories for cut plants, fruits and vegetables, houseplants and roses, as well as decorative classes.

May: Nature's Beauty

Twelve members entered 48 specimens including three floral designs. Judge Silvana Croce was pleased with the show and was assisted by members Janet Love and Sandy Cloutier acting as show clerks.

"Best in Show" was awarded to Louise Veffer for her Garden Favorite Peony in Class 14, where there were 10 entries.



June: Nature's Gifts

Ten members, including two new participants, entered 69 specimens and floral designs. Judge Rosemary Dobson was impressed with the entries, especially in light of very hot weather preceding the show.

"Best in Show" was awarded to Diane Wilton for her Modern Mass Floral Design using eggplants. There were 23 entries for Roses in seven classes, and the Judge's Choice Award went to Gloria Broks for her entry, a David Austin rose named the "Lady of Shallot."



Jump on Spring

(February 22, 2025) “Get the Jump on Spring,” the Toronto Botanical Garden’s annual horticultural open house, was the perfect venue for the North York Garden Club to help visitors shake off winter (or learn to cold stratify seeds naturally!) and kickstart their growing plans for the year ahead. In addition to conveying the outstanding benefits of club membership, our volunteers offered the gardeners they met tips for designing, planting, and renewing their space - even eating the fruits of their labour, depending on their goals.

Some fundraising was accomplished through sales of unique, floral-motif, adult colouring books, as well as floral magnets, and elegant *Deinostigma tamiana* plants. These tiny facsimiles of African violets were propagated from cuttings and donated by the talented Sayeh Beheshti. They appealed to many with their bell-shaped white flowers with purple markings.

Thank you to our volunteers, who found that working in pairs maximized their enjoyment of the event as well: Sheri Ferdinand-Brugel and Christine Pierroz, Richard Sage and Lorraine Luski, and Gloria Broks and Janet Love. Feedback showed that the hand-made newspaper carriers Sheri fashioned for the tamianas were a real hit with patrons. Thanks to Pat Cappelli for sourcing this opportunity and organizing the space, to Tom Cloutier for the supplies and attractive club information board and fillable raffle tickets, to Mary Ann Nelson for the labelled club postcards that were used to invite visitors to future meetings, and to Richard Sage for work behind-the-scenes. To Sayeh Beheshti, thank you for your support through the tamianas, which the volunteers now know much more about!

There were a total of 51 raffle entrants for two voluminous flowering plant prizes from Woodhill Garden Centre, with the white flowering peace lily going to E. Haas, and the frilled scarlet cyclamen won by P. Kole.



Spring Gardening Celebration

April 5, 2025

This was the Club’s second community outreach event of 2025. Unlike the other events in 2025, this one was fully planned and executed by the North York Garden Club, in collaboration with the North York Central Library, as part of a year-long special partnership agreement – the first of its kind for both groups. The vision was to highlight all that the Club had to offer both its members and the local community, while showcasing the Library as a rich source of content and resources on countless gardening topics, and as keeper of archival records not only of the Club, founded in 1924, but of its contemporaries and other North York stakeholders throughout history.

Approximately 100 attendees (70 adults, 30 youth) were welcomed to an immersive two-hour program in the library auditorium that saw them move freely among the activity and presentation areas of greatest interest to them. Many people tried them all!

The average stay was 1.5 hours, as 14 North York Garden Club member volunteers and two guest hosts engaged participants at popular stations, including the: Welcome table; Refreshment table; Boutonniere table; “First-Aid for Houseplants” display, with guest host and plant diagnostician Ian McCallum, Manager, Woodhill Garden Centre; “Gardening Books and Resources” display, with guest host Rosa Maria de Barros, Librarian, North York Central Library; “Award-Winning Floral Design” demonstration by Pat Cappelli, Director, Program & Publicity, North York Garden Club; Starting Vegetables from Seed table; and the Botanical Crafts table.

We could not have offered this event without our volunteers: Sheri Ferdinand-Brugel, Liz Camilleri, Pat Cappelli, Sandy Cloutier, Tom Cloutier, Lisa Forsyth, Kathie Kowal, Janet Love, Azi Margan, Mary Ann Nelson, Christine Pierroz, Gary Shorney, Ranji Sithamparapillai, and Jo-Anne Wilson. Likewise, the program calibre was super-charged by guest hosts Ian McCallum and Rosa Maria de Barros, whom we thank wholeheartedly. Special thanks also to Metro (Yonge & Church) and Shoppers Drug Mart (Yonge & Finch) for the flowers, food and beverages enjoyed by all.



Spring Eco-Fair at Willowdale Environment Day



COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT DAYS

**Sunday April 13th,
10am - 2pm**

**Earl Haig Secondary School Parking Lot
(100 Princess Ave, North York)**

- FREE COMPOST!
- ECO FAIR!
- BOOK EXCHANGE!
- SEED EXCHANGE!

Hosted by:
COUNCILLOR LILY CHENG

Drop-off items for reuse, recycling and safe disposal.

Cell phones & Small electronics	Household hazardous waste	Pesticides & Fertilizers	Used cooking oil	E-cigarettes
Paint, Solvents, Glue	Propane tanks	Unused medications	Fluorescent bulbs	Batteries

TORONTO **311** **Live green Toronto**



100th Anniversary Planting at Willowdale Presbyterian Church

The 100th Anniversary Commemorative Planting of beautiful, edible serviceberry bushes on the grounds of Willowdale Presbyterian Church was held on May 4th, 2025. It was an honour for us to help the Church celebrate a century of service in our North York community.

The planting was accomplished by the North York Garden Club through an edible garden grant provided by TreeMobile, a non-profit that funds grants based on volume of sales each spring. TreeMobile offers a wide selection of climate-appropriate food-bearing trees and plants, and can be found online at: transitiontreemobile.org.



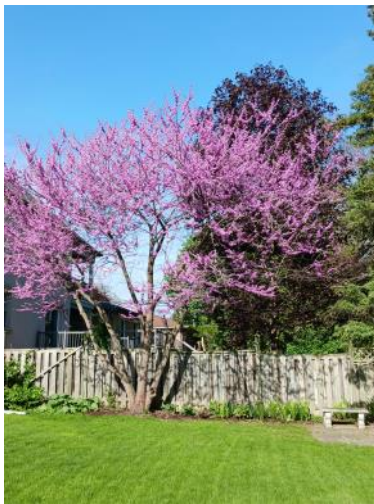
Led by Mary Ann Nelson, the church gardens continue to look amazing through the hard work of our volunteers who clean, weed, deadhead, prune and water regularly.



Pop-up Garden: Richard, Lorraine, Angela

May 16, 2025 (Photos—Angela Bontje, Richard Sage)

“One spring, about four years ago, Angela Bontje held a 'pop-up garden' featuring her magnificent, mature, Canadian Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*). The tree had produced several root 'suckers' and Angela offered them, free, to anyone who would dig them out (and save her the trouble). We excavated one, stuffed the resulting 'twig' into a bucket full of dirt, and set it against the fence behind our back garden. And then we forgot about it ... for the next 12 months. When spring rolled around again, we discovered that the twig wasn't dead. In fact, it had new growth. That sort of 'spunk' deserved a bit of TLC so we dug ourselves yet another new garden and planted the little thing out in front of the house. Four years later it's a tree (small, but growing) with wonderful pink blossoms. Angela drops by now and then to visit her 'daughter' and, presumably, report back to its Mom.” - Richard Sage



Pop-up Gardens

Pop-up Garden: Mary Ann Nelson

June 15, 2025 (Photos—Gloria Broks)

Peonies, iris, clematis, purple sage, mock orange, pansies and the neighbours' mature Beauty Bush (*Kolkwitzia amabilis*), which hangs over the fence, were in full bloom.



Taste of North York Food & Drink Festival

Mel Lastman Square - Saturday, June 7, 2025

2025 was the third year celebrating a "Taste of North York" and the first year it was held in June. June 7th was a beautiful day, drawing a large crowd. All attending enjoyed a variety of international foods, entertainment and visiting the vendors on location. Thank you to Rocco DeMiglio for opening and setting up, and for providing seeds. Also, thank you to Vicki Johnston for providing seeds to hand out to visitors. Angela Bontje, Christine Pierroz and Mary Ann Nelson donated perennials to sell at the NYGC table.

The event was very successful and June worked well for the Club to sell plants. Thank you to our volunteers for serving and enjoying themselves as they served.

NYGC in the Community



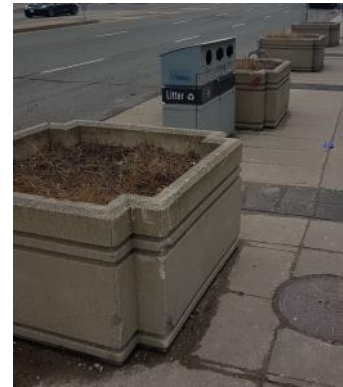
Photos: Natasha Mansouri

Yonge Street Beautification Project

In March, our local Councillor, Lily Cheng, initiated a project to try to beautify stretches of Yonge Street by replacing the tree stumps left in concrete planters situated on both sides of the street, from Finch Avenue to south of Sheppard Avenue, with hardy perennials. After asking the NYGC to consult on this project, Richard, Christine and Tom participated in a walk-through to inventory the existing planters and identify potential targets for a pilot project incorporating perennials that would not only thrive in the rather harsh conditions but would also discourage pedestrians from treating the planters as trash bins.

After several months of back-and-forth including advice from Pat Cappelli and Gail Bebee, the plant varieties were finalized. On June 9, NYGC members Jeremiah Reandino and Marietta Reviczky-Dolan, in addition to volunteer Lowell Lo, helped supervise the plantings in front of Shoppers Drug Mart (south of Finch), Del Manor Retirement Residence, McDonalds (corner of Yonge and Sheppard), and Emerald Tower (corner of Yonge and Poyntz). Christine and volunteer Johnny Choi completed two more planters on June 10, and volunteers stocked the final planter on June 12. Long-term maintenance arrangements for the planters involving adjacent tenants and property owners are being made.

Below are a few of the “before” and “after” photos - what an improvement!



Photos: Tom Cloutier, Christine Pierroz

Whistling Gardens Tour

Sunday, June 8, 2025

Thanks to @WhistlingGardens visionary Darren Heimbecker for a wonderful tour and interpretive water fountain show, and to Wanda Heimbecker, Communications and Business Development Manager, for the superb hospitality shown to our group. Many of us took home plants and trees that we consider treasures based on the fact that they have their origins with Darren and Wanda.

We had perfect weather for our bus tour. The lunch was delicious, including a wrap, dessert and three salads. Rocco kept asking, "Are you sure it's only two of you maintaining the grounds?", as we learned that, remarkably, the gardens were maintained by only two people and a few summer students. There are also societies who come to harvest seeds, at no cost to the societies. It's a very active place.

The music garden was pure mastery, with the water fountains moving in sync with the owner's music. Darren is multi-talented, and the musical score was amazing - Mozart quality, one would say.

Walter's Greenhouses and Garden Centre rounded out our day spent in the excellent company of members of the East York Garden Club, the Leaside Garden Society, and the Riverdale Horticultural Society. The large centre offered extensive plant varieties, making final shopping selections a challenge! Club members enjoyed a snack and refreshments, and were back home before dark.



Seniors' Luncheon and Community Fair

Saturday, June 21, 2025

In June, Pastor Solange Belluz invited the North York Garden Club to be an exhibitor at the People's Church (374 Sheppard Avenue E) at their Seniors' Luncheon and Community Fair. Sheri Ferdinand-Brugel enjoyed her volunteer experience as the Club's solo representative that day. It was the first such event the Church had organized, and it was attended by well over 150 seniors.

Sheri spoke with several seniors at the booth who chatted about their interest in gardening and caring for houseplants. They were enthusiastic to hear about the NYGC, including during Sheri's brief presentation about the Club onstage.

Several organizations were also exhibiting related to issues and interests of seniors. Event volunteers served a tasty international lunch to attendees and exhibitors. To top off the event, there was a six-piece band that played music and hymns.

The Gardening Community



Photo: Sheri Ferdinand-Brugel

Tour of Members' Gardens

July 13, 2025

Back by popular demand! This year's NYGC Tour of Members' Gardens was held on a beautiful Sunday in mid-July. Organized by Sheri Ferdinand-Brugel, members were invited to visit seven host gardens plus the Willowdale Presbyterian Church gardens tended by Mary Ann Nelson's volunteer team.

The day started at 10:00 a.m. and we spent about 20 minutes at each member's garden, exploring their unique plantings and gaining insight into the evolution of their garden. After each viewing, we moved on as a group to the next garden, interrupted only by a single sun shower. This approach allowed the presenting gardeners to also participate in the garden tour, as well as an opportunity to get to know one another better as we travelled from garden to garden.

When we reached the garden of Sheri and Tom, participants took a much enjoyed break to have a picnic lunch, chat with friends, and explore the garden before moving on to the final four destinations. Thanks to Natasha Mansouri for the lunchtime treats of delicious Persian saffron and rose water ice cream (called Bastani Sonnati, if you are looking for it) and faloodeh (frozen vermicelli rice noodles in a rose and lime syrup – exquisite!).

Thank you to Sheri and Tom for hosting participants with their picnic lunches, and to Sheri for organizing everything down to the last detail, including the complete itinerary and site map. Finally, thank you to all of the photographers who shared pictures of the day.

Tour itinerary:

- Garden #1: Myint Gillespie
- Garden #2: Louise Veffer
- Garden #3: Gloria Broks
- Garden #4: Sheri Ferdinand-Brugel
- Garden #5: Gary Shorney
- Garden #6: Zela Gilbert
- Garden #7: Rosemary Sheppard
- Garden #8: Willowdale Presbyterian Church



Tour of Members' Gardens - continued

Myint Gillespie



NYGC Members Garden Tour

Tour of Members' Gardens - continued

Louise Veffer

NYGC Members Garden Tour



Tour of Members' Gardens - continued

Gloria Broks

NYGC Members Garden Tour



Tour of Members' Gardens - continued

Sheri Ferdinand-Brugel



NYGC Members Garden Tour

Tour of Members' Gardens - continued

Gary Shorney



NYGC Members Garden Tour

Tour of Members' Gardens - continued

Zela Gilbert

NYGC Members Garden Tour



Tour of Members' Gardens - continued

Rosemary Sheppard

NYGC Members Garden Tour



Tour of Members' Gardens - continued

Willowdale Presbyterian Church

NYGC Members Garden Tour



District 5 Annual General Meeting

Saturday, April 26, 2025

In closing, we extend our thanks and congratulations to the Scarborough Garden & Horticultural Society, which celebrated “100 Years of Cultivation” and organized this spring’s OHA District 5 Annual General Meeting.

The AGM was held at the Qssis Banquet Centres in Scarborough, and was attended by all 14 societies in District 5. The North York Garden Club’s presence was co-ordinated by Rocco DeMiglio, and we were represented by twelve members, including two voting members and select Flower Show entrants. Captivating presentations included a deep dive into local history and landmarks with the Scarborough Historical Society, and reflections on “Wildscaping” with chronicler of the “New Perennial Movement,” Tony Spencer

2025 District 5 AGM



North York Garden Club Leads

Community Ambassador	Rocco DeMiglio
Community Outreach	Mary Ann Nelson
Members Garden Tour	Sheri Ferdinand-Brugel
Flower Shows	Gloria Broks, Lorraine Luski
Flower Show Judges	Gloria Broks
Hospitality/Raffle	Sarah Fernandes
Membership	Richard Sage
Newsletter	Tom Cloutier
Photography Contest	Tom Cloutier
Speakers Program / Publicity	Pat Cappelli
Sunshine	Mary Ann Nelson, Pat Cappelli
Web Site / Social Media	Christine Pierroz
Workshops	Pat Cappelli, Christine Pierroz
Yearbook	Tom Cloutier

2025 Institutional Members



North York Central Branch