

Newsletter

London Fanshawe Horticultural Society (LFHS)

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

I hope that life was kind to you and yours this summer. As Fall Equinox comes with its shorter days, we adjust to a new season --- one where Mother Earth is sleeping and quietly rejuvenating. In winter, as snow falls, I will look out the window and marvel at how nature is so perfect. I will remember the gifts She has bestowed upon me.

As I write this evening, I'm drinking hot tea by the chimnea—enjoying the warmth and flickering flames. It's quiet now; the sparrows have settled after a busy day darting between the feeders and birdbath, stocking up for the cold ahead. I'm looking at my garden, debating when to pull up the petunias I bought at our plant sale. The mix of fuchsia and bubblegum has been stunning against the dark blue SheShed, and I make a note to repeat it next year. It always seems like a plan—until other colours tempt me. I love a single-colour garden, yet I'm forever drawn to a palette.

I like to move things depending on what plants tell me. Was it happy where it was, or stretching for light? The floppy yellow yarrow beneath my neighbour's tree told me to shift it forward, where southern sun and the Veronica and Rudbeckia give it space to thrive. Paired with Russian Sage, Blanket Flower, and chartreuse Potato Vine, I can see it would make a refreshing change for the front.

The plants I potted for our sale next May have rooted well: coral bells, lady's mantle, hellebores, shastas, small pines, and ferns. I tuck them in shade for protection from summer heat, where they overwinter safely. By spring, when snow melts, I'll move them to brighter spots, fertilize, and prep them for customers. I'm always asking, "What does future Joanne need to do that can be done now?"

As you read this, give yourself a pat on the back for all YOU did in this hot, dry summer—the "SO MUCH FUN!!" shopping, planting, watering, and fertilizing. Checking for bugs. Outsmarting rabbits and groundhogs nibbling your new purchases! The audacity! The digging, trimming, and head-scratching over what's wrong with a plant. In the end, you accomplished what was most important to you!

In these troubled times, do whatever you can to bring yourself peace and joy!

Take care,

Joanne Sanborn



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<https://gardenontario.org/society-listing/entry/77/>

Email us at:
londonfanshawehortociety@gmail.com

Online store:
<https://london-fanshawe-horticultural-society.square.site/>

Like us on Facebook:
[London Fanshawe Horticultural Society](#)

COMMUNICATIONS

By Joanne Sanborn

We are looking for a new person for our **LFHS** Scrapbook. They can choose to do as they would like with the supplies that are covered by the Board. You'll receive a new book, decorative paper, glue etc. The printing of the photos can be done online or at a store that develops them. You can add your own special touch too!

"A big shoutout to Michelle for stepping up to take over the Door Prize duties. I'm very grateful and pleased and I know that she will enjoy searching out interesting items for our members."

The next **GardenOntario 50/50 Raffle** is fast approaching! This is a fun way to support our community gardening projects and get a chance to win some cash! 💰 Current Draw: \$2300 - Winner Takes Half!!

🇨🇦 Tickets: on sale now via our Rafflebox Page at <https://www.rafflebox.ca/raffle/ontario-ha>

📅 Draw Date: October 4, 2025

LFHS Meetings

LFHS meetings: 3rd Thursday in month from Sep to June, 7:00–9:00 pm Siloam United Church gym

Make sure to renew your membership early to enter the draw for 3 - \$25.00 gift cards!

Renewing is easy with one of these three options:

- at the membership table at meetings, cash or cheque only.
- pay online by Interact e-Transfer to treasurer.londonfanshawe@gmail.com
- or online at <https://london-fanshawe-horticultural-society.square.site/>

Meeting - September 18, 2025



What a great meeting. The 3p's (Plant, Produce, or Preserve) Exchange is always such a hit with members and there was quite a variety of items that were shared.



Guest Speakers

Speaker: Brenda Gallagher
Topic: Problems with Invasive Plants

Brenda Gallagher graduated from Sault College and the University of Guelph in Forestry, Fish & Wildlife, Horticulture and Agriculture. A Forestry Technician with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA), she enlightened us on invasive species threatening our region's biodiversity.



Brenda noted that non-native species arrived decades ago with European settlers, from other regions of Canada, or through soil, compost, wind, wildlife, and new plants. Many are still sold in nurseries, as no regulations exist, though some nurseries now check with UTRCA before selling new varieties—a hopeful sign.

Most non-natives co-exist with local species, but problems arise when they spread aggressively, overtaking habitats and creating monocultures that deplete native plants and disrupt ecosystems. Many invasives provide little or no value to wildlife—berries may be poisonous or inedible—and some cover native nesting sites, reducing safe habitat.

Once invasives establish, they are hard to control. Some have aggressive roots, others spread vast quantities of seed, and many lack natural enemies here. Brenda shared recent success stories and ongoing struggles, noting challenges faced by farmers.

The best prevention is avoiding invasive plants in gardens and natural areas by researching purchases with local resources. Common offenders include lily of the valley, English ivy, and periwinkle. If invasives are already present, remove them—especially near natural areas.

Control methods vary by species, location, and life cycle, often requiring persistence and a mix of approaches over several years. Strategies include pulling, cutting, girdling, smothering, chemical controls, and burning. More details are on the UTRCA website at <https://thamesriver.on.ca/>.

Members asked thoughtful questions at the end. I shared that my husband and I moved to a property bordering forest, where lily of the valley (my “dainty little devils”), periwinkle, and garlic mustard blanket much of the ground. For five years I’ve been pulling, cutting, and smothering, section by section. My progress is slow, but wildlife progresses quickly and spreads seeds again—if only I had more time!

By Linda Pistor

English Ivy
(*Hedera helix*)



Periwinkle
(*Vinca minor*)



Lily of the Valley
(*Convallaria majalis*)



Garlic Mustard
(*Alliaria petiolata*)



SPECIAL EVENTS

Speakers, Events, Trips ... and more

LFHS Annual Bus Trip

A quaint country road trip to Wroxeter, Listowel, and Brussels, Ontario on Wednesday, June 4, 2025. Once again, Bev DeMelo and her team did a fantastic job organizing this year's bus trip! Members were treated to exceptional tours, a delicious lunch, camaraderie among friends and they bought treasures for their gardens ... the bus was full! Can't wait for the 2026 itinerary!

Please enjoy my summary and the pictures below, *Bob Crowhurst*.



Riverbend Gardens & Nursery - Hosta Heaven!

We visited Allan & Shirley, two horticulture fanatics at their hidden gem of a garden nursery in Wroxeter. This couple has spent five decades on a very pretty property. Happy shopping over 1200 varieties of Hosta, 1200 varieties of daylilies, not including unregistered varieties, plus peonies and heritage perennials.

<https://riverbendgardens.net/>



A private garden walk in Listowel at home of Wayne & Marilyn Williams. This walk was chosen because of the numerous recommendations from gardening friends. It is known as a "To Die For" garden.



Lunch at Listowel Golf Club

A great time for members to rest and talk about the great morning walking through gorgeous landscapes and plants inspiring us in many ways.



Listowel Gardens.

Known for their “Gardening with Attitude.” Quality fresh plants. This family-owned business since 1990 is plant strong with over 4000 names of plants at reasonable prices. A wide selection for every enthusiast in the 30,000 sq feet of space. There is also a gift shop with a variety of items for every occasion.



Lavender Works Co.

Beginning as a test plot in 2019, a dream has grown on their farm in Huron County now that has over 2000 plants in six varieties. There are small batch hand crafted lavender products that are all made from the lavender on the farm including fresh and dried lavender body & home products. Check out the lavender bar soap, blended with Brazilian purple clay. You can also treat yourself to lavender ice cream.



An inspiring quote on their website <https://www.lavenderworks.ca/> reads as follows:

“There is just something about tending to the plants on a quiet morning, with the butterflies and bees buzzing all around and the occasional visit by a dragonfly. It’s a magical thing this connection to the land and it feeds our passion. At times this is a physically gruelling endeavour, but it’s a labour of love.



This is our happy place,
and we are pleased to be able to
share some of that with you.”



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Meet Dr. Janet Collins

Meet an inspiring woman, Dr. Janet Collins.

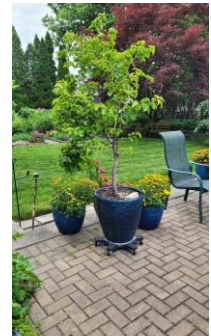
Most recently, Dr. Janet was recognized with the YWCA Women of Excellence Award for her leadership and her commitment to building a just and inclusive world. In 2012, she received the Queen's 60th Jubilee medal, another of many awards

Dr. Janet's passion for learning was evident early in her life as one of eleven children growing up in Jamaica. She studied at the University College of the West Indies, which was a College of the University of London, and graduated with First Class Honours in botany, chemistry, and zoology from the University College of the West Indies. At just 25, she earned her PhD in cell biology from Case Western Reserve University—an extraordinary achievement at a time when Black women were underrepresented in academia. Her career in higher education included research at Queen's, and Western universities and a tenured appointment at Dalhousie University. Beyond academia, Dr. Janet has been an advocate for social justice, especially for women's reproductive rights and for marginalized communities.

Truly a Renaissance woman, Dr. Janet's talents extend beyond classrooms and committees. She is also an accomplished gardener whose green thumb was recognized by our LFHS when her garden was included as a Garden of Distinction. With flair and experience, she cultivates an array of perennials—roses, clematis, and peonies among them—alongside more exotic plants such as a lemon tree and a bougainvillea.

When a few LFHS members visited her garden in June we left not only with practical gardening tips—such as how to amend soil so clematis can better absorb nutrients—but also with thoughtful life lessons.

Inside her sunroom thrives a 24-year-old geranium, stretching almost to the ceiling and blooming abundantly. It is a living metaphor for Dr. Janet herself: ever-growing, resilient, and radiant in her pursuit of excellence.



LFHS is honoured to count this accomplished gardener and remarkable woman, Dr. Janet Collins, among its members.

By Ola Nowosad



Garden Walks

Every summer, our LFHS members have the privilege of visiting gardens of fellow members. These visits are always enlightening - each garden reflects the creativity, personality, and dedication of those who nurture it into beauty. This summer we were fortunate to visit three gardens, please enjoy my summary of them below.

By Ola Nowosad

Ed and Karin Wrona's Garden

From the moment you step into this hidden gem in South London, artistry and imagination greet you at every turn. The garden is a masterclass in design where colour and texture come alive not only through plants but also through whimsical touches, spray-painted alliums and ceramic-plate flowers mounted on a wall. Ed explained how the



path of the sun shapes the plantings: sun-loving plants where the light is strongest. Among the many highlights are lovely varieties of monarda, echinacea, and Hosta.

At the centre lies a charming cutting garden, brimming with vase-friendly flowers. And not a weed in sight!

Thank you, Ed and Karin, for sharing your exquisite and joy-filled garden.



Team Tomato Garden

This is not a private backyard but a community project located behind the London Food Bank: a food bank garden where rows of tomato plants are tended by volunteers. Volunteers plant, water, stake, and harvest hundreds of tomato plants, with the goal of sharing the harvest with families in need. The straight rows are well spaced, and the ripening fruit is near perfect. Organisers had judiciously picked the right varieties for growing conditions.

As we walked through the rows, members were inspired by the sense of teamwork and purpose that fills this garden. Several volunteers were on hand to answer questions and describe the project. A big thank you to the volunteers who make this garden flourish, and to the Food Bank for showing it to us.

It should be noted that Karin Wrona is one of our members who is greatly involved with Team Tomato. The following provides a nice note of her journey.



“We are a group of volunteer home gardeners who have become urban farmers on the London Food Bank’s property immediately behind their warehouse. We grow, harvest and deliver organically grown produce picked near its peak ripeness and nutritional value. Usually, our produce is distributed to Food Bank clients within 3 to 4 hours of picking.

Team Tomato began in 2021 with a group of four volunteers who started growing tomatoes, lettuce and peppers in three beds. The team was able to donate about 250 pounds of produce that year. Four years later, the team is made up of 15 volunteers who generally meet two mornings each week, from May to October to grow and harvest eight different crops in 500 feet of raised beds. We are very excited to surpass the 3,000-pound harvest mark before the end of September this year, and we aren’t done yet!

I joined Team Tomato in 2022, looking for an opportunity to learn more about growing vegetables, and was excited about the prospect to serve my community while doing so. It has been a very rewarding experience because I have learned so much while doing something I love with people that have become very good friends. I would encourage anyone who wants to learn more about gardening, and work on a team, to join Team Tomato.

To find out more about Team Tomato, please note the link in the Podcasts section for the London Foodbank , or contact myself at kkwrona@hotmail.com.

By Karin Wrona



Louise and Brian Trapp’s Garden



If you love dahlias, this garden is for you. In a serene country setting near Dorchester, Brian cultivates more than 300 dahlias—every size, shape, and colour imaginable alongside a collection of pretty roses.



We arrived to find an oasis of vibrant colour and form. Many confessed they avoid dahlias because of the work of digging them out each fall, but Brian makes it look effortless. With industrial strength equipment from his business, he manages watering and care even through a dry summer. Another of his not-so-secret secrets, Turkey mushroom compost, which produces spectacular blooms.

What might have been an oppressive day in the city turned into a leisurely one filled with colour, conversation, and gardening inspiration.



Thank you, Brian, for welcoming us to your spectacular gardens.



ARTICLES

DALLYING IN THE DIRT

Kenneth C Brown <https://www.gardening-enjoyed.com/downtonabbey>

We are continuing with Dallying ... Now back to original story, our visit to “Fleures de Villes” at the Royal Botanical Garden in Burlington ON. As a sort of humorous aside everybody refers to RBG as being in Hamilton much to the annoyance of the smaller adjacent city of Burlington where it is technically located. “Fleures de Villes” was a floral exhibit showcasing the characters from the Downton Abbey tv series. Most of the characters were life sized dummies but the spectacular part was their costumes which were entirely created out of floral materials. These characters were distributed throughout ...

So on to my photos. The start of the exhibit was an iconic British red phone booth and the surrounding floral arrangements were a powerful indication of what we were about to see. Now I have to start choosing as there won't be room for all of them.



The first character to greet us was “Lady Mary” and we just stopped and stared. The sign beside each character named them and the florist who had created them. The outline of the materials used was never complete and left us all discussing and guessing - just what was what.

All in brilliant white was “Lady Rose”, where we saw one of the many interesting uses of floral material. The dress is mostly lace like and how did they create that? We are all familiar with how a Japanese Beetle will skeletonize our leaves, well, you can create a lacelike material by deliberately skeletonizing dozens of leaves and then colouring them white or whatever colour you desire.



Man's clothing, while not as floriferous, was equally interesting and sorting out the materials used was always a challenge. “Matthew Crawley's” military outfit is primarily made from Ti leaves with Statice and Eucalyptus used in ways that made it difficult to establish where they were from.



One of my favourite characters from the show was the “Dowager Countess” as portrayed by Maggie Smith and she appeared just as formidable in floral dress. I actually appreciated the back view more and, yes, all of the characters were dressed in 360 degrees. The large Dahlia like flowers in this dress are actually hand made flowers using the varying sized petals of other flowers. Just one of many examples of the hour's long effort required to create this amazing display.



“Lady Edith” was always an interesting character with many layers as was her outfit. There is a row of whole Roses down the front but the main component was layers of individual Rose petals with more whole Roses used as accents.

No Downton Abbey exhibit would be complete without “Lord Grantham”, the patriarch. His military uniform was primarily made with dried and dyed Bamboo leaves with an amazing collection of other interesting elements to make the trim and medals, that had us all speculating as to what they were. The hair was always interesting, and we learned that some were made with coloured corn silk.



After a couple of dazzling hours we found ourselves at the exit, where they gave us an impossible task, voting for our favourite. It would have been easier with a single dart and a large dartboard featuring all the characters.

Shared by Gigi Wong



ALSO OF INTEREST, PODCAST LINKS AND MORE

London Foodbank – Team Tomato

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS4t3o07FO0&t=28s>

Shared by Karin Wrona

Start With Soil with Juliet Sargeant | The Beet

Shared by Maureen Beamish

Juliet Sargeant is a garden designer in England. She discusses how gardeners can assess how to choose plants and amend soil according to the conditions in their own gardens. She explains recent soil research in easy-to-understand language. Her tips could be easily adapted to our gardens. [Start With Soil with Juliet Sargeant](#)

Robert Pavlis articles:

Shared by Maureen Beamish

I have been reading a lot of posts from Robert Pavlis, and he had spoken at our meeting last year. Great info about composting, soil, potting mixes etc. One suggestion was not to have bare ground, use plants to fill in spots like a living mulch. <https://www.gardenmyths.com/>
... and together with Juliet Sargeant's ideas, if a soil doesn't grow your preferred plant, try something else!

How Flowers talk to bees

Shared by Joanne Sanborn

David Attenborough explains how plants communicate with bees by creating small electric fields.

[How flowers talk to bees](#) 🐝

Heirloom Seeds: For members with Instagram

Shared by Joanne Sanborn

[Heirloom Seeds](#)

FUNDRAISERS AND INCENTIVES

Big Yellow Bag

Need garden soil? <https://www.bigyellowbag.com/orders/new>



LFHS has partnered with Big Yellow Bag in their Give & Grow fundraiser this year. Every time you or one of your contacts uses our code, they save \$5 and LFHS receives \$10.

USE OUR CODE: FANHORT25

Newsletter

Photos: Sharlene Grant, Vince Chicoine, Camillia LaRouche, Bob Crowhurst & other members – thank you

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