

Flamborough Horticultural Society

January 2026 Newsletter



President's Message

Greetings FHS Members

I hope everyone had a great Christmas and holiday. As I write this, I was pleased to see the days slowly getting longer with Sunrise at 7:52am, Sunset: at 4:50 pm with a minute or two added to each day length (8:58 hrs. as of Jan. 1). The birds in my backyard have had voracious appetites these past few days especially during the freezing rain, winds and recent snowfall.

In this issue Liz notes it's time to cold stratify seeds. Seed dormancy includes barriers (chemical and physical) that inhibit the seed in the embryo from germinating before growing conditions are ideal for seedling development. We break dormancy through scarification and stratification which mimic what the seed normally goes through outdoors. Scarification causes the breakdown of the seed coat, e.g., soaking seeds in boiling water, letting seeds soak in water for >24 hrs. treating seeds with a weak acid, or scratching them with sandpaper. Many seeds need about 30-60 days of warm stratification before the final stage of cold stratification. This mimics the early fall temperatures, and then the 120-day cold stratification period that follows, similar to our winter. The 15 and 25 litre water containers make great outdoor planters to stratify your perennial seeds. As always read the package label to see the germination codes and the stratification times.

If you did not get a chance to do any cold frame winter gardening and would like to prepare for next year here is a good reference [to help you](#).

I hope some of you were able to save some seeds this fall so that we can contribute to the Feb. 7 Seedy Saturday at the Hamilton Public Library. Please let me know if you can spare some time to be at the table we have rented to promote membership in the FHS or a sister society depending on where the visitor lives. We also hand out free seeds. There will be lots of vendors there, seminars and a prize table. One or two hours at the table from 10:00-3:00 will be appreciated. Or why not also plan to attend one of the seminars?

A link will go out to the sign up sheet soon by a separate email.

Thanks to everyone who sent in their volunteer hours so that I can submit our year-end reports to the Ministry(OMAFRA) and the OHA in preparation for receiving our grant in 2026.

Best Wishes
Susan MacMillan

Upcoming Events

Flamborough Horticultural Society

Meeting

Date: Wed., Jan. 21

Time: 7:30pm

Speaker: Helen Battersby

Topic: Chateaux Gardens of the Loire Valley

Note: Meeting will be held online on Zoom

Flower Show: Email a photo of your winter garden to flamhort@hotmail.com by Jan 19.

Seedy Saturday

Hamilton's Annual Seedy Saturday, hosted by Green Venture and Hamilton Public Library will be held on **February 7th from 10 AM to 3 PM at the Central Library (55 York Blvd)**. Some of the many features of this event will include: many tables with free seeds including native plants, vendors and exhibits, workshops and demos, many networking opportunities and children's activities. Admission is free.

[Seedy Saturday](#)

Reading Corner

OHA News and Trillium Newsletter



Link to latest newsletter and past editions

[Trillium](#)

Halton Master Gardeners

Peruse their website which also includes a link to their many informative newsletters.

[Halton Master Gardeners](#)

January Gardening “to do” List

- Consider placing a live, cut Christmas tree outdoors to provide shelter for birds and protection near feeders.
- Potted Christmas trees should be planted outdoors in pre dug holes.
- Order and begin to browse seed catalogues.
- While it may be too early to start seeds indoors, it's not too early to purchase or to order seeds
- Check indoor plants for insects such as mealy bugs, scale and spider mites.
- Mites and scale can also live on ledges and windowsills, so
- wipe them down with soapy water.
- Look for bud swell on early spring flowering shrubs such as spicebush, willow and cherries. These branches can be cut and brought indoors to force bloom
- Start cold stratifying perennial seeds that require this treatment (outdoors) to break their dormancy. It's not too late!

Top Native Berry-Producing Shrubs

These shrubs feed birds during their fall migrations as well as the birds that remain in our area during the winter. Native berries have a high fat content which birds need to survive the cold as opposed to non native invasive shrubs such as Buckthorn and European Barberry. Invasive shrubs also reduce the habitat for native plants. Incorporating native berry producing shrubs into gardens is very beneficial. Read more here: [Top Native Shrubs](#)

A FIELD GUIDE TO
TREES of ONTARIO

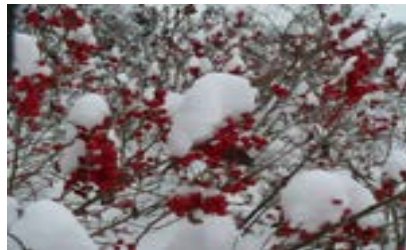


JAMES E. ECKENWALDER
DEBORAH A. METSGER
TIMOTHY J. DICKINSON
SARAH H. HODGES

Want to learn more about the trees growing in Ontario? It contains contributions from our very own local Master Gardener Kevin Kavanagh! Authors: James E. Eckenwalder, Deborah A. Metsger, and Sarah H. Hodges.

A comprehensive guide to Ontario trees. Featuring more than 1,400 vibrant photographs and illustrations, this visually rich and inviting field guide describes the trees likely to be encountered in Ontario. Covering both naturally occurring and cultivated species, this book features an illustrated glossary of botanical terms, distribution maps, and photographs depicting distinctive characteristics of individual tree species. With diagnostic descriptions for quick recognition of trees by their component parts, and easy-to-use identification keys covering summer and winter conditions, A Field Guide to Trees of Ontario is a must-have for tree enthusiasts.

Consider Growing Winterberry Holly (*Ilex verticillata*)



Sometimes called the “Canadian Holly”, this is a stand out, native plant that holds its berries throughout the winter season. Many wild animals depend on these berries to survive Canadian winters, including early spring arrivals. Birds such as robins, cardinals, grouse, bluebirds, thrushes, waxwings, white-throated sparrows, northern flickers and gray catbirds which all feast on winterberries.

This plant thrives in full sun to partly shady areas. It's slow-growing in medium to wet conditions and tolerates wet soil, clay soil and air pollution. This is a great native plant to consider for our gardens. In order to get berries, though, both a male and a female plant are necessary. However one male plant is sufficient to pollinate up to 20 female plants when planted within 40 feet.

Donate Your Christmas Tree

The annual tree collection returns! **RBG needs a maximum of 3,000 trees** in order to strategically place them in critical zones. Community members are asked to pre-register their donation(s) ahead of their drop-off to ensure the desired amount for the project at hand. **Drop off dates will be from December 29 to January 11 at the following locations:** Arboretum (16 Old Guelph Rd. Hamilton) Grindstone Marshes Trailhead at Spring Gardens Rd. (Burlington)

[Register to donate](#)

Perennial Plant of the Year

Andropogon gerardii 'Blackhawks'

The Perennial Plant Association (PPA) has announced the 2026 Perennial Plant of the Year as *Andropogon gerardii* 'Blackhawks'. Selected by PPA members, this cultivar, commonly known as Blackhawks big bluestem, stands out for its striking appearance and resilience once established. More compact than other big bluestem varieties, Blackhawks reach a height of five feet and a width of two feet. Its near-black colour and strong, upright growth habit create a dramatic presence in fall gardens. The dark green leaves emerge in spring, gradually turning to reddish-purple tips as summer progresses. By August, the characteristic three-part "turkeyfoot" inflorescences appear, and by September, the entire plant takes on a deep purple hue. Beyond its ornamental appeal, Blackhawks big bluestem provides vital habitat. Its dense foliage and sturdy stems offer nesting sites and cover for birds, while also serving as a larval food source for several skipper butterfly species. Though it forms a single clump, it may reseed in the garden. This cultivar is remarkably low-maintenance, with no major pest or disease concerns. The only required care is cutting it back to the ground in late winter or early spring. Like other ornamental grasses. Once established, a process that may take a few years, Blackhawks become very drought tolerant.

Read more here and view photos: [Blackhawk](#)

Members June Garden Walk

Winter seemed to arrive early this year with several snowfalls before the end of November unlike the last few mild, late fall seasons. As we enter the new year, memories of our green gardens and blooms recede more and more. Thus we will revisit our garden walk with photos from one of the large country properties in West Flamborough. What gracious hosts they were. A forty plus year project that began with a flat, empty country lot!



Northland Nursery :

Family run nursery in Millgrove Ontario (722 Concession 5 W Northland Let them know you are an FHS member for our Society year-end rebate for any online orders. **(Closes Oct. 31, weather depending)**

Wild Birds Unlimited offers a 10% discount when you mention that you are a Horticultural Society member.

[Wild Birds Unlimited](#)

How to Reach Us: Please email your comments, suggestions, corrections or submissions. If you wish to submit an article questions or tips, contact:

flamhort@hotmail.com

PO Box 902 Waterdown L0R 2H0

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[Flamborough Horticultural Society Group](#)

[Garden Ontario Group District Six](#)

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MISSION

The mission of the Flamborough Horticultural Society is to encourage interest and involvement in horticulture through civic improvement, preservation, exhibitions, the distribution of plant materials and regular instruction pertaining to the theory and practice of horticulture.

Directors for 2024/25

President – Susan MacMillan

Past Co-President - Trudy Bliedung

Vice President - Open

Treasurer - Trudy Bliedung

Recording Secretary - Tessa Morris

Publicity - Shared by VP and President

Facebook Admin. - Liz Visentin

Newsletter Editor - Liz Visentin

Membership Director - Harbir Hundal

Director, Flower Show - Ann Cochren

Director at large - Christine Rowe

Director at large - Verna Scovell

Director at large - Sharon Hall

Committee Chairpersons

Caring - Susan MacMillan

Nominating Committee - Trudy Bliedung

Civic Improvement – Jan Bignell

Communications Copywriter – Jennifer Godyn

Garden Walk – Open

Meeting Hospitality – Open

Membership – Harbir Hundal

OHA Website Monitor – Phil

Longstaff

Spring Plant Sale Co-chairs –

Connie Godyn and Sharon Hall

Speakers and Programs – Connie Godyn & Roxanne Riley

Our Society is one of 21 Societies/ Clubs that make up District 6 of the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA). Each Society has a representative in the District (Assistant District Director who represents the District Director), The ADD attends the Society AGM, installs officers and brings news from the OHA and the District. The ADD (or District Secretary) is also the contact between the District and the Society for questions that may arise: [Events Link](#)