



# Garden Gleanings

## Glen Morris Horticultural Society

Established 1951

Website: [www.gardenontario.org](http://www.gardenontario.org)

January 2026 - 157th Issue

### COMING EVENTS

Monday, February 2, 2026  
Glen Morris Hort. Meeting  
GM United Church, 7 p.m.  
"Rain Gardens"  
Lynn Leach & Sarah Mulder

Monday, March 2, 2026  
Glen Morris Hort. Meeting  
GM United Church, 7 p.m.  
"Herbal Folklore"  
Amy Bradley

Monday, April 13, 2026  
Glen Morris Hort. Meeting  
GM United Church, 7 p.m.  
"Kayanase Greenhouses"  
Dan Werner

Newsletter by Margaret Fleury

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## The Eight-Hooter

The Barred Owl, *Strix varia*, also known as the Striped Owl, Hoot Owl, and Eight-Hooter Owl is one of the most common owls in Ontario.

Its usual call, which gives its nickname, is a series of eight accented hoots: *hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo, too-HOO*. Its call is also described as "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you-all?" sounding from a distance like a large dog.

This medium-sized owl is brown to gray in colour with dark stripes on the underside. Its head is fairly large and rounded with dark brown eyes and no ear tufts.

Barred Owls hunt from a perch then fly silently to capture small rodents, rabbits, squirrels, birds, crayfish, and reptiles.

Owls prefer older growth forests where they claim their territories by singing from perimeter perches.

Nest sites are usually in the hollow trunk of a large tree in dark wooded areas. In March, two to five eggs are laid in 2 or 3 day intervals. Both parents feed the young which fledge at 36-39 days. Barred Owls commonly live for 10 years but the oldest recorded age was 24.



### Tip of the Month

To help birds survive winter, provide suet and fat mixes to keep them warm and energized. Keep bird feeders full and clean, and offer unsweetened cranberries, apple slices, and oranges.

## Hort. Happenings

**Jan. 1-11:** *Donate Your Tree to RBG*, [rbg.ca/donate-your-Christmas-tree](http://rbg.ca/donate-your-Christmas-tree), register

**Jan. 10:** *Creating Natural Gardens*, Kevin Kavanaugh, Brantford Public Library,

Take a pot for winter sowing, register Brant for Nature [brantfornature.ca](http://brantfornature.ca), 10 am

**Jan. 14, 17:** *Let's Go Birding*, Royal Botanical Gardens, register, 9 am, \$27 + HST

**Jan. 15, 22, 29:** *Winter Tree I.D.*, virtual, Guelph Arboretum, 7-8 pm, \$50 + HST

**Jan. 20:** *Growing Orchids*, virtual, Guelph Arboretum, 7 pm, \$10 + HST

**Jan. 24:** *Owl Prowl*, Guelph Arboretum, 6 pm. register

## Owl Symbolism

Many cultures believe owls hold special powers. Early Native Americans feared dreaming of owls predicted death, while others viewed the hoot of Great Horned Owls as the returned souls of brave warriors.

Ancient Romans viewed owls as secondary forms of evil witches, while ancient

Greeks valued owls as a symbol of victory in battle.

The early French believed owls could help unmarried women find husbands.

Today, owls are associated with wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. As nocturnal creatures, they represent the hidden,



the subconscious, and seeing beyond the surface to navigate darkness. Owls encourage inner listening and spiritual growth.

## Water For Wildlife

It is difficult for animals to stay hydrated when ponds and streams freeze solid. Snow is not an efficient water source because animals burn energy to warm it. Small animals lose water quickly and need to replace it often. Birds and squirrels can go longer without food than water, If you don't have a heated water bowl, then set out a shallow dish of warm water and fill morning and night. Add a tennis ball which will move in the wind and slow freezing.

## Soft Landings

“Soft landings” are native plants under native trees that support pollinators and beneficial insects in completing their life cycles. Wild Geranium, *Geranium maculatum*, is a ground-cover for shade or part sun. It forms attractive clumps with showy pink or magenta blooms that last from late spring through to summer. The nectar and pollen attract bees, hummingbirds, and moths. It is a host plant for Checkerspot and Gray Hairstreak caterpillars.



## Brush Piles

If you had a real tree this season, then place it outside after Christmas for the birds to enjoy. Leave it near a bird feeder where birds can hide while opening whole sunflower seeds or peanut shells. The tree can be added to a brush pile to provide a warm roosting spot at night where birds and small animals can hide from predators. Voles and small mammals will use the protected space to share warmth. Rabbits will use a brush pile as an insulated den. Brush piles work because they break the wind, trap warmth, and create a maze of hiding spaces which is exactly what small creatures need in order to survive the harshest winter nights. Winter may look silent to us, but beneath the snow, life is struggling to survive.



## Tracking Monarch Butterflies

In 2025, Birds Canada was part of *Project Monarch*, a continent-wide collaboration, that for the first time was able to follow individual monarchs from across North America and the Caribbean to their wintering sites in Mexico. Thanks to the Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO) and the Motus Wildlife Tracking System (Motus), butterflies wearing lightweight solar-powered tags could be tracked in real time. The results aided in understanding how monarchs move through the landscape, dealing with weather and other challenges while on their long journey.

## Christmas Swags



On Tuesday, December 2, 2025, Lori Stairs and Sarah Mulder held a Christmas Swag Workshop at Lori's home. It looks like the eleven ladies had an interesting time creating their door swags. Thank you, Lori and Sarah, for hosting this fun event. Pictures taken by Sarah Mulder.

Pictured from left to right: Margaret McPherson, Lori-Alyce Martin, Irene Heltner, Alison Haase, Karen Varga, Ingrid Douglas, Amy McLellan, Monica Rees, Brenda Rowley, Joan King, and Marion Morton. Beautiful work, ladies!

