



The unflower

The Smiths Falls Horticultural Society Newsletter!

Volume 18

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In this Month's Edition:

Editor's Note

Society News

Upcoming Meeting

Photo Contest

Upcoming Events

Other News

The Smiths Falls Horticultural Society meets every third Tuesday of the month through the months of February to June and From September to November. The meetings are held at the Smiths Falls Legion located on 7 Main Street East, Smiths Falls at 7:00pm.



Quote of the Month:

"Can words describe the fragrance of the very breath of spring?" Neltje Blanchan

Hi Everyone

Let's hope that since March came "in like a lion", it will go out "like a lamb". I'm sure we are all ready for the snow to disappear and the grass to turn green again. My raised veggie garden structure is still filled up to the top with snow!

It's also time to contemplate starting your seeds. It's difficult to balance the timing – to ensure the plants are sturdy enough to transplant successfully but not too overgrown and spindly. I know by the time that I transplant my seedlings outside, I'm more than ready to get them out of my house and let nature take over their care.

Here is a link to last year's "Trowel Talk" newsletter published by the Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton. <https://mgottawa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/TT-22-February.pdf> On page 4 of the newsletter is a seed starting guide, tailored to our planting zone. While visiting the website, take time to peruse past years' issues (three years worth). The newsletters are packed with lots of helpful information. The first page of each newsletter has an index with hyperlinks to the articles it contains, so it's easy to scan for articles of interest.

Last month's meeting was well attended and a great kick-off to this season. The movie "The Gardener" was shown, which walked us through Frank Cabot's development of Les Quatre Vents, a 20 acre garden in Quebec described as "the most aesthetically satisfying and horticulturally exciting landscape experience in North America". The movie only heightened our anticipation for gardening season to start.

Join us next week to hear Allan Goddard's talk on edible trees and shrubs. A potential way to help with increasing grocery costs.

Finally, check out page 4 of this newsletter for Dale Odorizzi's, comprehensive article on composting and its benefits. Thank you Dale!

Society News

T-Shirts

Back by popular demand we will be selling monogrammed t-shirts. There will be samples of various sizes available at our upcoming meeting. This will allow you to determine the size you need, and then place your order. We ask that you pay for them when ordering. They are available in a wide range of sizes – XS to XXXL. We are selling them at our cost - \$20 for XS-XL and \$25 for XXL+.

A big “thank you” to our member **Emily Morris** for her work on designing an updated monogram for our shirts. Thanks also go out to **Chris** at Grampy.ca (a local Smiths Falls company) for his advice and efforts in ordering and doing the embroidery work on the shirts.

Fall Advisory

Our Society will be hosting the District 2 Fall Advisory on October 21st at the Smiths Falls Citivan and are expecting 20 – 25 attendees from our district. We are looking for 2 volunteers to make coffee, tea, and set out the morning snacks; then clean up before lunch.

We are also looking for some donations of muffins, croissants, and squares for the morning coffee break.

Please contact Laura if you'd like to participate laurahunter611@gmail.com .

TV Interviews

Laura Hunter, Madeline Archer, Steve Svarckopf and Debra Bellevue recently sat down with Kathy Botham in two separate interviews to discuss our Society and the Foodbank Garden. Here is a link to Laura and Madeline's interview. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bzw9TdS_A6o It is also on our Facebook page (posted February 28th).

“From Beginner to Winner”

Madeline Archer, board member and avid floral designer, is once again taking on the responsibility for planning our flower shows. She is spear-heading a new initiative this season to encourage members to enter our flower shows. To help members go “from beginner to winner”, she is organizing three workshops in advance of our flower shows in May, June, and September.

The workshops will demonstrate how to meet the requirements for the design classes in each upcoming show and are open to members at all experience levels. The Society will cover the costs for the flowers needed for these workshops. Participants will be asked to help cover the travel costs of the demonstrators and will need to provide their own container. Consider joining in on the fun – it can become quite addictive! There are multiple opportunities each year to show off your talent – at the Society, District and Provincial levels.

Membership

We are working to streamline the membership administration process. As many of you know our fiscal year begins September 1. To help eliminate confusion and reduce administrative work, all renewals will now be due at the first meeting a renewing member attends after that date. The fees paid will carry the member through until the following September 1. This process will put us in-line with the rules as set out in our constitution.

Membership fees are still a reasonable – \$10 for a single and \$15 for a family. A membership application is attached to the email containing this newsletter. We are reverting to our “pre-Covid” process and are discontinuing the availability of e-transfers as a payment method. For those unable to attend the meetings to pay their fees, let **Ruth Anderson** mruth8569@gmail.com know and arrangements will be made to collect your form and fees.

New this year at our November AGM we will recognize the member who brings in the most new members. The membership form now includes a space for new members to acknowledge who encouraged them to join.

Next Meeting – March 21st, 7pm

Our speaker this month will be **Allan Goddard** who will be speaking about “**Edible Trees and Shrubs**”.

Allan was born and raised in Montreal and holds a BSc in Biology from Lakehead University and holds diplomas in Park Management and Greenhouse Management. He is now semi-retired after having completed a number of Provincial contracts, working in Saudi Arabia as a landscape Manager, and owning and operating Almonte Landscape Services from 1989 - 2015. He is still very active with various related projects and committees in Almonte, including the Horticultural Society and was recently awarded the OHA award of merit and a District 2 award of Merit.

Photo Contest:

Thanks to **Christine Nigelsky** for organizing and managing the photo contest again this year. The theme for March is “*Snow in the Forest*”. These bright days will provide a great backdrop for your spring photo. Below are the themes for remainder of the 2023 season.

Month	Theme
April	First Sign of Spring
May	A Spring Garden
June	Glorious Iris
September	Sunflowers Galore
October	An Autumn Tree

Photos must be first time entries, taken by the member, and submitted without visible ID. If you can't attend the meeting but would like to enter a photo, the entry can be submitted by a friend.

Upcoming Events

OHA 2023 Convention – “Rock Your Garden World”

Our District is hosting the upcoming OHA convention being held in Kanata at the Brookstreet Hotel July 21- 23, 2023. This is the 115th OHA convention and looks to be a fun weekend with several bus tours and other activities planned. The keynote speaker is Michael Runtz who will be speaking on “the importance of pollinators”. Check out this video outlining the weekend’s events -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8wEaeGTnPw>

Laura Hunter and Debra Bellevue will be coordinating the volunteers (thanks to them for representing our Society for this event).

Merrickville Bus Tour

The Convention offers bus tours to various destinations during the weekend. They want to offer a bus tour to Merrickville which will then proceed to Rideau Woodland Ramble. They are looking for a volunteer to lead the tour. The person would be required to ride the bus with the participants, highlight any historic locations in Merrickville and see that everyone gets back on the bus after a period of shopping in the village and then at the nursery . If you would like to help, contact Laura

laurahunter611@gmail.com .

Black Gold—Composting Made Easy

By Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County Master Gardeners

Gardeners dream about moist, well-drained loam to plant their edibles. Most of us are stuck with sandy soil that is low in nutrients and does not hold water well or heavy clay that while rich in nutrients is a muddy mess in spring and akin to concrete as the summer drought rolls around. What is a poor gardener to do? Compost!

Compost is the magic ingredient that improves your soil, regardless of soil type. Compost in sandy soil helps to build soil structure. It supplies nutrients and improves water retention. In clay soil, it does all of that and improves the friability of your soil. The beauty of compost too is that you cannot add too much. You can put it into the ground at any time. It feeds the soil not the plant!

You can purchase bags of compost or manure at garden centres or truck loads from various landscape depots or farm supply locations. The downside of this is cost and typically the commercially produced compost comes from only one source and may not have a diverse variety of nutrients.

The solution to this dilemma is to make your own. Every week bags and bins of organic material are put out to the curb and trucked away to landfill sites. It could easily be put into a compost pile to be used later in your garden.

The ideal time to create a compost pile is in the fall. As we start harvesting our crops, we are left with leaves and stems that helped our vegetables grow so well. Rather than throw them away, start your own compost pile. You will be returning nutrients to your soil that your vegetables absorbed all season. If any of your plants have evidence of disease, do not compost. Send those plants to the municipal composting site. Most of us cannot raise the temperature of our compost high enough to kill the disease spores. Leaves are another terrific source of nutrients for your garden and are readily available at this time of year.

You can be as creative as you like in creating your compost pile. Some people use the black plastic composters. These are relatively small and you will likely soon run out of space. Others use a pile method with some kind of structure to keep your compost in place. The third method is simply to pile your organic waste in a big pile and let it sit. If you choose the third method, it is wise to make two piles. One for this year's waste and one for last year's waste. In that manner, you will be able to get at your finished compost without having to move multiple years' worth of matter.

All organic matter eventually breaks down. Walk in the forest and dig down a bit and under the leaves, you will find nice black loam. Mother Nature is a great composter. While there are no hard and fast rules for making compost, there are a few guidelines. The smaller the pieces going into the pile, the quicker they will break down. Compost needs air and water to work. A dry pile of leaves remains just that without air and water. The more you turn your compost pile, the faster you get compost. I tend to turn my pile once per year and put the finished compost in its bin and unfinished compost back into its pile. Finally, do not put fats, meats and bones or diapers into your composter. This will attract animals and could cause the spread of infection as our home composters do not achieve a sufficient temperature to kill these problems.

When you are building your compost pile, the ideal combination is to have a layer of vegetative matter and then a layer of manure or soil. There are two types of vegetative matter—green and brown. Green matter can be fresh green plants such as lawn clippings, weeds that have not set seed, remains from your vegetable garden and kitchen waste. Brown matter is vegetative matter that has turned brown such as leaves in autumn. Green waste tends to decompose very rapidly but tends to smell. If you only put kitchen waste into your composter, it will stink and your compost will be a wet slimy mess. Every few buckets of kitchen waste I add to my composter, I also add a bucket of last year's leaves or shredded newspaper, another good source of "brown vegetative matter". Brown matter by itself takes a long time to break down. Brown and Green together become a decomposing machine. A shovel full of soil, manure or compost every second or third layer, add microorganisms that help activate your compost pile. Continue layering your pile as shown. There is no need to purchase compost accelerator. It is expensive, smelly and does not work as well as a bucket of kitchen waste or some grass clippings.

Other News:

Communication

Have you checked out our Facebook page "Smiths Falls Horticultural Society"? **Bonita Lucas** is taking over ownership of updating our site this year. The postings cover a wide variety of garden topics, both for "newbies" and more experienced gardeners. You can also find notifications of our monthly meetings and other events throughout the region. Be sure to "share" this information with all your Facebook friends to spread the word about our group. *(Did you know? You don't have to belong to Facebook to access the information on the site!)*

Our web site is: <https://gardenontario.org/society-listing/entry/283/> Here you can share tips on gardening, leave messages to SFHS, access our local District 2 website as well as the Ontario Horticultural Association website. Thanks to **Jess Dahl** for keeping our website up to date.

Please contact our President, **Laura Hunter** at 613-485-4206 for any information you may require about our horticultural society.

2023 Program

Month	Topic
February 21	Movie Night – <i>The Gardener</i>
March 21	Edible Trees and Shrubs
April 18	Edible Landscaping and Biological Pest Control
May 16	Summer Bulbs
June 20	Ask a Master Gardener and Summer Social
July	NO MEETING
August	NO MEETING
September 19	Bringing Your Houseplants Indoors
October 17	Scheuermann Vineyard and Winery
November 21	Annual General Meeting
December	NO MEETING
January 2024	NO MEETING

SFHS 2023 Executive

Name	Position
Laura Hunter	President
Debra Bellevue	Vice President
Debra Bellevue	Treasurer (Interim)
Ruth Anderson	Secretary/Membership
Madeline Archer	Flower Shows
Jess Dahl	Garden Ontario Website
Anita Frigan	Newsletter/Bursary
Kathleen Lang	Director
Gale McCormack	Programming
Steve Svarckopf	Foodbank Garden