

A WORMS EYE VIEW  
FERGUS AND DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
MAY 2019



Are Your Flowers Springing to life?

Monthly Meeting  
Wednesday May 15

Victoria Park Senior Centre  
7:30 p.m. Doors open at 7 p.m.

Please join us for a night of fellowship and fun  
For more info please contact Connie Di Pisa at 519-843-4866

## President's Message May 2019

It seems to me that its been an awfully long wait for spring but its finally here and I see signs of “Spring Fever” everywhere. The nurseries, big box stores and even grocery stores are bursting with new plants arriving daily. Gardens are finally starting to come alive and our work in the gardens is in full tilt and things are looking great. Thank you to everyone who donated plants and to those who helped with potting up and at our “Best Bloomin’Plant Sale”. I hope that those who attended found just the right plants to add to their gardens. Thank you for your support of our only fund raiser.

Now that we are able to concentrate on our gardens, keep in mind that this month is our first flower show. Please consider entering your spring flowers or perhaps doing a design. You can find all the info you need on our new webpage, [fergushorticulture.ca](http://fergushorticulture.ca) or in your yearbook. Hopefully the weather cooperates and we have lots of spring flowers ready to show. Don’t forget to take a look at what classes there are for the photo competition as well while you’re out and about with your camera.

Mark your calendars for our Garden Tour on June 23 and our Bus Tour on July 11. See Bernie or Karen for bus tour tickets. It will be a fun day!

Our brand new “Grand Gardens” program is up and running. We need your nominations for beautiful gardens in your neighbourhood to consider as a “Grand Garden” of Fergus. Please contact Ken Johnston at [kenjohnstonjohncie@gmail.com](mailto:kenjohnstonjohncie@gmail.com) or [fergushorticulture@gmail.ca](mailto:fergushorticulture@gmail.ca)

I’m looking forward to our guest speaker, Jenn McPhee from Ontario Invasive Plants Council and to seeing all of you at our meeting on May 15. As always, any suggestions or ideas you may have for your board are very welcome.

Enjoy getting out in the garden and the beautiful longer days and hopefully some sunshine.

Happy May!

Connie

## Our Guest Speaker for May

Our guest speaker for the May, 2019, meeting is Jennifer McPhee, representing the Ontario Invasive Plant Council (OIPC). You may recognise her as the representative for the Invasive Plant Council at our past three Seedy Saturday events.

Jenn grew up in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, where she discovered a love of plants while working to help restore strip-mine sites that were used for extracting coal. She worked on projects to test a variety of methods to determine which was more effective at quickly revegetating the land and which would work best to get the communities back to a functioning ecosystem.

She completed a Master of Science degree at Western University. For her M.Sc., she studied the impacts of global change, specifically increased nitrogen deposition, on the success of Tallgrass Prairie restoration efforts.

Jenn volunteered while in grad school and that's when she first heard of the Ontario Invasive Plant Council. She has since been volunteering for outreach events such as presentations, native plant sales, workshops, and tradeshow to help raise awareness of the problems associated with invasive species. She is also a member of the Horticultural Outreach Committee, which is responsible for creating the "Grow Me Instead" guide.

Her current employment position as Ecologist, Botanist, and ISA Certified Arborist at WSP Canada Group allows her to work on a variety of interesting projects that include restoration, invasive species control, species-at-risk surveys, botanical inventories, ecological land classification, arborist work, and wildlife surveys.

Please come along to welcome Jenn as she speaks about the OIPC "Grow Me Instead" program.

## July 11<sup>th</sup> 2019 Bus Trip. Still a dozen or so seats left!



We'll be leaving at 8am sharp from Centre Wellington Sportsplex and returning around 6pm. All Ontario Horticultural Society members are welcome. Cost for the trip is \$45, add \$20 for buffet lunch, payable when you reserve your spot. Your cheques will be deposited on July 1st.

First stop will be Riverwood Gardens not far from Durham and Hanover followed by a coffee break at Tim Hortons in Durham. Continuing north on Hwy. 6 to Blossom Hills near Holland Centre.

The Falls Inn at Walters Falls is our buffet lunch destination, you may opt in or out for the buffet. Be sure to wander over and view the river and falls. Then eastward to Willow Farm Grasses near Walters Falls. From there we head to Kimberley and Artemesia Daylilies.

Last stop, Froggies Song in Flesherton. To see pictures and learn a bit more about the gardens, visit [www.ruralgardens.ca](http://www.ruralgardens.ca) Please contact either Karen Eddie at 519-856-9881 [kareneddie22@gmail.com](mailto:kareneddie22@gmail.com) or Bernie Siegmund at 519-843-6870 [bernie.siegmund@everus.ca](mailto:bernie.siegmund@everus.ca), for more info or to book your tour.

Hope you'll join us!

## **Diggin' the Dirt**

The Diggin' Group started in the Gardens April 16th. We worked in the Gardens in the Downtown area to get them cleaned up for Easter.

The following Tuesdays, many of the Group edged all of the Gardens and others were busy cleaning up the rest of the Gardens.

The Fergusson Bed was finally ready for plants after the Bridge opened. We started replanting that bed May 4th.

There is going to be some work done at the Post Office in the coming weeks. The ramp and the retaining wall are to be replaced. We spent Tuesday morning digging out the plants we wanted to save and relocated them. Some of the plants from the Post Office went to the Plant Sale as well as some plants from the Market Garden.

In the coming weeks we will be getting ready to plant annuals.

Happy Gardening.

Doreen and Julie

## **Flower Shows**

### May Horticulture and Design Show

Everyone who wants to enter in the May show is hoping for some warmer weather to help the perennials bloom. Daffodils are starting to bloom as well as the Tulips and the Muscari is not far behind. We are also asking for flowering branches, as yet I haven't seen too many flowering branches. If all else fails we are asking for house plants. Bring your best blooming or a house plant not grown for blooming.

Don't forget the Design Category. We are asking for three designs in the Novice Class and three in the Experienced Class. Special Award for May is the Pioneer Trophy. Rienk and Roberta Vlietstra donated the Pioneer Trophy to be awarded to Best in Show in the May Show. Check your gardens and bring an entry to the first Show of the year.

See you there.

Sue, Liz and Doreen.

## Early blossoms celebrate the arrival of spring

Ron Stevenson, Fergus Horticultural Society

A spring stroll through the garden behind the Fergus Public Library reveals a stunning ornamental. It is amassed with clusters of white blossoms. So glorious, many visitors inquire its nursery name. This specimen is best known by its common name "serviceberry". When it is in full bloom, it truly is magnificent. Serviceberry (Amelanchier) is native to North America.

This hardy beauty is available as a tree or shrub. It requires very little maintenance. Gardeners choose this wildlife-friendly dazzler because of its lacy blooms in early spring, red berries in summer and colourful fall foliage.

Also known as the Saskatoon berry, Juneberry, shadbush, shadblow, shadwood, bilberry, sugar or wild plum and wild or Indian pear, it can be found in many areas of North America. The deciduous small tree has 20 other species in the group and is a member of the rose family. Trees can grow up to 10m (32'). Shrubs grow 2 - 3m (6 - 10'). These extremely hardy bushes prefer full sun. Aside from an occasional pruning, a good watering in prolonged dry periods, they require minimal attention.

Both the tree and shrub have blue-green foliage, delicate 2" flower clusters in early spring and brilliant yellow, orange and shades of red foliage in the fall. Once the blossoms are pollinated, edible sour tasting berries follow. These berries will ripen to a reddish-purple that are sweet. The variety (genus) of Amelanchier alnifolia is best known for fruit production.

Similar in appearance to small crab apples, the ripened fruit is very delectable when eaten raw or cooked to make pies, jams, jellies, chutneys and preserves. The taste resembles blueberries, with a dry grainy texture. Cookbooks suggest baking them into puddings and muffins. They can be dehydrated similar to raisins. A juice similar to cranberry can be made. It makes an unique refreshing mixer. Vintners also enjoy the pungent fermented taste of the fruit. The seeds have an almond flavour.

Wildlife, especially birds are fond of this native. It is not uncommon for vast numbers birds to quickly devour the ripe fruit. The Saskatoon berry is harvested commercially. Historically, pemmican was flavoured by the serviceberry by mixing it with minced dried meat and fat.

In the home landscape, gardeners can choose to grow this dual-purpose tree or shrub. Like any other shrub, it can be pruned to fit a particular growing space. Left unchecked, the shrub will grow fairly large and be somewhat unruly. Depending on specific varieties and growing conditions, the eye-catching flowers and berries will vary greatly..

Growing specifications suggest that the plant requires full sun (but will survive in partial shade) and a moderate amount of moisture to bear fruit.

It has been reported that both the tree and shrub varieties will grow relatively easily from seed if the berries are crushed and planted while fresh (germination takes place the following spring).

There are many different members of the Genus Amelanchier. Along with serviceberry, some cherries, many hawthorns and crab apples are included in this group.

The appeal of the fruit is its natural sweetness. Not only do humans enjoy eating the fruit but so does wildlife.

Birds are the largest threat to the serviceberry crop. It is suggested that the use of a cloth netting to cover the tree is a good way to protect ripening fruit. A careful daily watch to see when the fruit is fully ripened is the best method of protection.

Aside from its natural ornamental beauty, a serviceberry will provide some shade and wind protection. Its smaller size is an appropriate choice for a small yard to have a full-featured tree. Gardeners with smaller growing spaces may be interested in obtaining the dwarf .75m (2') bush variety

## **Grand Gardens Program launches.**

Finally plants and flowers are breaking ground and spring is on its way. The Grand Gardens program is also in full swing. The purpose of the Grand Garden program is to recognize up to six amazing gardens in Fergus. This is another of our many initiatives that brings horticulture to the front of people's minds and through education and exposure will hopefully result in even more homes improving their gardens and making our great town even more beautiful.

We ask that you send us the address of homes especially in your neighbourhood, that you feel are special and should be nominated as a Grand Garden in Fergus. Please send your nominations to [kenjohnstonjohncie@gmail.com](mailto:kenjohnstonjohncie@gmail.com). We appreciate your help.

We are assessing gardens based on these criteria.

### Curb Appeal.

Curb appeal; the attractiveness of the property from the street. There is a good first impression that catches your attention. The exterior looks inviting and welcoming.

### Visual Appeal and Impact.

Visual appeal and impact is usually your initial reaction to the overall garden and/or yard. A good example is if you are driving by a house and see a garden that leaves an impression on you before you have noted the different aspects of the garden. These different aspects might include:

1. Colour interest – Garden has complementary colours, including those of rocks, mulch and other non-plant materials. These colours work together.
2. Interest in texture – This includes texture of plants (hairy, waxy, feathery, spikes, etc.) and landscape materials. Lighting and presence of shade also bring out the interesting textures in the garden.
3. Unique features – Decorative materials that can capture the eye such as pieces of art, water fountains, architectural features and hanging baskets are part of the overall effect a garden has.

### Design.

Design considers the different aspects of the garden that contribute to its whole. It's a longer observation. Choice and placement of plants and other materials are two important factors. Multifunctional gardens also represent good design. They integrate balance, composition and creativity with ecological function.

1. A downspout directed to a dry creek bed leading to a raingarden can be aesthetically pleasing and is multifunctional.

2. Balance – There is fluidity and symmetry in the design. There is also a variety of height and shape among the plants.

3. Composition – The layout complements the surroundings including the house and neighbourhood. For example the colours of the plants blend with or accentuate the colour of the house. This also includes placement of plants and objects in relation to each other.

4. Creativity – Some of the features have never been tried or seen before or are used in new ways. They cause some element of awe in the observer. This could be a unique choice of plants or decorative materials.

5. Seasonal interest – This can be described as interest throughout the growing season. We can only view the current stage of the growing season but there may be indication of a succession of blooms and other elements that keep the garden interesting and beautiful at all times.

#### Maintenance.

Dedicated maintenance is the key to a beautiful and healthy garden.

1. Appropriately deadheaded – We prefer deadheads are left alone if they provide food and habitat for wildlife. Some dried plants provide seasonal interest throughout the winter. Other plants such as hostas don't provide forage and are just unattractive unless the dead material is removed.

2. Appropriately mulched – freshly mulched in bare areas; mulch may not be necessary if the garden is thickly covered with plants. Mulch coverage should not be too thin or thick.

3. No standing water (unless rain in the last 48 hours). If there is standing water the raingarden is not functioning properly.

#### Environmental Stewardship.

Environmental stewardship takes responsibility over the care of our natural resources to ensure they are sustainably managed. It includes conservation of biological diversity, forest ecosystem health and vitality plus sustainable maintenance of soil and water.

1. Conserve inputs – The garden minimizes the need for water, fertilizer, herbicide and pesticide. For water use some ways to tell the homeowner is minimizing inputs includes the appropriate placement of native perennials, the presence of rain barrels, redirected downspouts and soaker hoses. Trees provide canopy in a yard. They conserve inputs and are an excellent stormwater feature.

2. Concave Boulevard – Garden is shaped to allow water to flow into the boulevard and to infiltrate the ground. There is no sign of erosion from the boulevard.

So if you know or see a home with a garden you feel should get recognition as a Grand Garden, please let us know.

## **More than just a "Best Bloomin' Plant Sale"**

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you all! What a plant sale it was! I am writing this just post sale so I do not know the total yet but it looks to be good considering maybe a few less plants than last year due to the cooler spring. At the meeting the total will be revealed. As mentioned before it is a lot of work to put on one of these sales in fact over 40 people helped out for a total of 216 volunteer hours not including the work the digging in the group did!

I must say this has been one efficient sale setup and take down that I have been part of. Thank you to members for sticking around in the misty rain and cool conditions on Friday to get all the plants laid out and priced. Knowing there was a frost coming it was beneficial to tarp the plants on Friday as well.

On Saturday we were a little nervous when the waiting crowd was a little smaller but thank you to the publicity group that got the radio station on site that help bring in more people. Everyone certainly was kept busy the first hour tallying plants, handling the cash and pushing wheelbarrows for happy customers.

This is the one fundraiser for the society and we use the funds to buy plants for the town gardens as well as art pieces, benches or memorial trees that beautify the community. So yes the money goes back in to the community. But I also want to say it is more than just a fundraising plant sale it is also about us, our community as hort society members, gardeners, and really friends that come together and work for a common cause but have fun (ok and possible frost bite) in doing that. So thank you all for a really great event.

We appreciate the work of the social committee and volunteers for all the sweet treats on Friday and Saturday. I think a few recipes will be shared. Below is the Date loaf recipe...I did say more than just a plant sale!

With THANKS to all involved for a job well done!

Michelle, Linda and Kathy

## **Date Loaf**

for one standard loaf

1 cup chopped dates  
(1/2 cup nuts - optional)  
1 tsp baking soda  
1 1/2 cup boiling water  
Put all into a small pan and let stand together

Dry ingredients:

1/4 tsp salt  
1 1/2 cup flower oops flour!  
1 tsp baking powder

In mixer cream together

1/4 cup butter  
1 cup sugar  
Then add 1 egg  
1 tsp vanilla

Then alternate flour mixture and date mixture into the creamed butter ending with the flour.

Prepare a rectangular loaf pan greased with butter then sprinkled with flour.

Bake 300 f. for 1 hour or until a toothpick comes out dry from the centre of the pan.

Share with friends.

## **BEAR THOUGHTS**

Trees are the foundation of the forest. If anything really defines the forest (its looks and feelings and general pointiness), it is trees. I have had many thoughts about trees. They are unavoidable since they are so omnipresent. Despite how much time and space trees take both in the forest and my bear brain there are still mysteries about them.

Like where did they come from?

I do not know, but I also know that might be a hard thing for me to answer. I am not entirely sure I know where I came from, and it seems to me unfair that I would ask the same question to trees when I cannot answer it for myself.

A more approachable and fair question I have about trees, however, is what is going on with the top of them? I have certainly climbed my share of trees, but never have I dared to venture all the way to the top. I can only get so high up before it becomes far too scary and shaky, so I have no reference for what they become even higher up. From what I can see, it is simply more tree. But that is from my very limited perspective, and assuming that is unfair to trees and what they might be where I cannot see.

I have a fear that up there is where they keep their mouths. Have you ever seen a mouth on a tree? I have not, but like all things in the forest, surely they consume things, right? So where do trees consume things? It seems, to me, that a good place for a tree to stick a mouth is right at the top of itself.

I suppose a high up tree mouth is not a bother for most forest creatures, but it does make me fear for one type of creature in particular: birds. If trees do have mouths at the very top of themselves, then surely they feed off of birds more than any other food source. This might explain why birds seem so skittish and frantic all the time. It does not explain, however, why birds sleep and nest in trees. If trees eat birds and birds use trees for nesting, then that is a very complex relationship. Nothing I eat sleeps on me (except for some leaves I once found tangled in my fur and had to eat to get them out of my fur).

I hope birds are okay. And I hope they know what is going on way up high.