



SPRING 2019

SARNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

The purpose of a Horticultural Society is to increase interest in horticulture by encouraging private and public gardens, by holding meetings, exhibits, plant sales, and field trips.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Marilyn Rawson

After a winter of up and down weather, spring is coming. As I write this article at the end of March, there are snowdrops in my garden and the tulips, crocuses, daffodils and hyacinths are starting to come up. My garden needs a good cleanup but the plants are pushing through the soil. The robins have returned. Gardeners are anxious to get out and clean their yards and see if the bulbs they planted have survived, or maybe the squirrels have had a feast. We have several events planned over the coming months. If you haven't renewed your membership, now is a good time, so you can take advantage of the discounts provided by our sponsors. Membership will be available at our next meeting on April 17th. Next year is our 100th anniversary and we look forward to this.

LOGO

Lena DeKeyser has created an outstanding logo for the Sarnia Horticultural Society. Thank you Lena for the wonderful contribution for our organization.

PICNIC IN THE PARK by Marilyn Rawson

This event started about 9 years ago with just a few people attending. We brought our supper in a brown paper bag and enjoyed the gardens and fellowship. The weather hasn't always co-operated for us but we endured and now it is a yearly event. The large crowd in attendance consists of members and spouses these days and a pot luck dinner is now the norm with the Society providing hot dogs, hamburgers and beverages. Doug and Holly Chaytor plan the annual picnic. Doug takes on the role of grill master, and Holly has entertained us with music on occasion.

Several years ago, we dedicated a plaque in the park in memory of Maud Hanna and a shingle was added to our sign which reads "The Sit Down Park". Homeowners on College Street refer to the park as "the sit down park", a place to come and relax amid the beauty of the flowers. Local artists use our park for inspiration when painting flowers. This year's event is on Wednesday, May 15th at 6 p.m. Bring a dish for pot luck, and a lawn chair. Plates and cutlery are provided. Come and enjoy the fellowship of our members.

PLANT SALE by Diane Dorgeloos

It is that much anticipated time of year again, spring, which means gardening. I so look forward to seeing all the plants peeking through the soil. It also means our horticultural plant sale is fast approaching. When cleaning up your gardens and splitting your plants, please remember to pot them up and donate to our sale. Hopefully there will be a table for native plants again and a table for houseplants. Please remember to label all plants.

The sale this year is on Saturday, May 11th. Help will be needed that day and also on the Thursday and Friday before, the 9th and 10th. A sign-up sheet will be available at our monthly meeting on April 17th. If you do not get a chance to sign it, you can always call me at 519-542-6539 and leave a message. I hope to have the tables set up by May 4th, so plants, books, garden ornaments and pots etc. can arrive anytime after. Lets look forward to another successful year. Memberships will also be available for sale on the day of the plant sale. It is the donations and help of the horticultural members that makes this event such a success. Thanks in advance one and all.

MEMBERSHIP by Jan Casbourn

As the Membership Officer I would like to inform you that membership for 2019 is at 116 paid up members. Of that total 25 are new members and 91 members have renewed for 2019. Gardening season is fast approaching and there are yet 86 members to renew from 2018. Everyone please encourage family, friends and neighbours to join and push the membership over 200 to obtain a larger grant from the OHS. Better yet, surprise them with a membership.

Memberships will be on sale at the plant sale on May 11th. The last day to purchase memberships for 2019 will be June 15.

KEYHOLE GARDEN PROJECT by Valerie DeJong

At the January meeting I asked members for gardening donations to send to an orphanage in Rajahmundry India. This orphanage had heard of the success of the Kageyo keyhole garden project in Rwanda. I had hoped to send a suitcase of articles. Thanks to the generosity of the members I was able to fill the suitcase with good sturdy garden tools, pruners, 8 soccer balls and pumps, skipping ropes, crayons, balls and eye glasses. The kids were thrilled with the gifts. The orphanage has a great rapport with the tribespeople and will help distribute the glasses. My nephew Eddie, his wife Lerryn, and I thank all of you who contributed to make this trip a success.

SARNIA PARKS AND RECREATION by Rob Harwood

The city of Sarnia is pleased to have completed the Parks, Culture and Recreation Master Plan which is available on the city of Sarnia website. We are thrilled to continue to support the great work of groups such as the Sarnia Horticultural Society. Together we continue to collaborate as a community to create and maintain beautiful "Places and Spaces" and that is what makes Sarnia "The place You Want To Be". Thanks for being awesome community members and keeping our community beautiful.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, April 17th at 7 pm is the monthly meeting at DeGroot's. The speaker is Mike Kent from Sarnia Parks and Recreation discussing invasive species.

Saturday, April 27th - The annual meeting for District 11 will be held in Chatham. This is an opportunity to learn what other societies are doing within our district and there is always a great speaker.

Sunday, April 28th from 1-3 pm is the spring clean-up at College Park. Everyone is welcome to come help Heather Ashe look after this beautiful garden.

Saturday, May 11th from 8 am -1pm is the annual plant sale at 1435 Windemere Street. Help out with this event, not just the day of the sale but also organizing and potting plants. The plant sale is a success because of all the hard work from our members. Diane does a great job organizing and hosting the sale.

Wednesday, May 15th is our annual pot luck picnic at College Park. Hamburgers, hot dog, cutlery and beverages are provided.

Saturday, June 1 from 1-4 pm is the annual open house and plant sale at Cuddy Gardens in Strathroy. The cost is \$5. The address is 28443 Centre Road in Strathroy. Cuddy Gardens are owned and operated by the horticultural program at Fanshawe College in London.

Saturday, June 8 is our bus trip which includes Cuddy Gardens, lunch at Pine Croft in Aylmer, Winter Wheat in Sparta, and a visit to Quai Du Vin Estate winery. The cost is \$60, and the bus leaves Sarnia at 8:15 am. The bus should arrive back in Sarnia at approximately 7 pm. Seats are selling fast. Contact Dave Hearn at 519-541-9846. We will have a waiting list.

Wednesday, July 17 and Wednesday, August 21 are the garden tours from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm. The itineraries will be available later. The August tours are in Sarnia.

Friday, July 19th- Sunday, 21st is the OHA(113th) convention in Windsor. District 11 is hosting this event. Registration forms are on the OHA website, Garden Ontario.

September's meeting brings back Marg Dudley as a speaker and in October Larry Cornelius returns.

Visit the Garden Ontario youtube videos to watch gardening videos.

This spring take a drive to Greenhill Gardens in Wilkesport. It is open daily and free to the public. The gardens are located at Wilkesport Line and Indian Creek Road. It has been described as an oasis in the middle of nowhere. There is a picnic area, so bring a lunch and wander.

DeGroot's is once again offering garden workshops this spring and summer. Information can be accessed at www.degroots.ca

Saturday, June 8th, the garden program at Fanshawe College is running a workshop on masonry work for the garden.

The Sarnia Horticultural Society has been assigned the task of providing 400 goody bags for the upcoming OHA convention in Windsor. John Vanden Hoven has been busy sourcing samples for the bags, while other members have been making crafts for the bags. We appreciate all the work John has been doing for this project.

THE IRIS BORER by Heather Ashe

Bearded irises are a wonderful colourful addition to our gardens. Especially in recent years, they have become available in many different sizes and incredible colours. However, in my home garden I have experienced the challenge of the iris borer that brutally attacks bearded irises, destroying previously-healthy clumps. I'm sure that many in the Sarnia Horticultural Society are familiar with this pest, but perhaps some aren't. I would like to pass on my experience.

Several years ago I decided to divide a clump of tall yellow bearded iris that was looking very tattered. After rinsing and cutting the rhizomes into pieces, I was surprised to see white 'worms' with black heads peeking out of holes. I knew nothing about the iris borer before then, but I soon learned.

The 'borer' is actually a caterpillar that invades the rhizomes of bearded iris via the leaves and then eats its way down inside, finally making a tunnel in the rhizome. The holes in the rhizomes allow bacteria to enter and kill it, producing a soft, foul smelling mass. The final product is an empty shell.

This photo shows infected rhizomes. On the right is an empty shell of a dead dwarf bearded iris rhizome. On the left, many holes in the rhizome of an Iris pallida 'variegata' are clearly seen. It also has thin, misshapen roots, a characteristic of rhizomes damaged by the borer and/or bacteria.

The iris borer is the larva of a small brown moth, about one inch across. The moth is apparently nocturnal so seldom seen. It lays eggs on the leaves of bearded irises in late summer that remain there over winter. In early spring the eggs hatch to produce tiny caterpillars that eat their way into the leaf and then down to the root. Apparently it is possible to see the caterpillar in leaves if the leaf is backlit. A simple squeeze will put an end to that culprit.



Once a rhizome is infected like the one in the picture, it can't be healed. However, some infected rhizomes have new growths along their sides with strong well-shaped roots. These 'babies' can be cut off and the mother rhizome discarded. Clean the babies by cutting off and discarding any bit of rhizome that has brown spots inside (I think they are bacterial damage). The cut wound should be white.

Also cut off any portion having suspicious-looking roots. Use a sharp knife and wipe the blade and cutting surface with a cloth moistened with rubbing alcohol, especially when making the final cuts.

With larger rhizomes, I cut off all but the bottom inch of the leaves and peel off the outside leaves. The resulting babies and their leaves are usually very small - they can be very tiny! I soak them in a solution of insecticidal soap then rinse in fresh water. Another method is to soak them in a solution of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water followed by rinsing. These treatments should kill eggs and caterpillars. These new plants will be only a small percent of the original, but they will grow vigorously next season. Iris borers are very persistent especially if

there is an infected clump nearby. New plants should be monitored and the roots inspected every two to three years for new infestations.

Excellent photos of caterpillars and moths with descriptions are shown on Chuck Chapman's website: <http://chapmaniris.com/id38.htm>

Excellent descriptions of iris borer are found on the websites of several iris growers:

http://www.trailsendiris.com/learn_about/learn_about_pests_and_diseases.htm

<https://www.thespruce.com/identifying-and-controlling-iris-borers-2539844>

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/bulbs/iris/iris-borers.htm>

GARDEN THOUGHTS

A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning to grow in rows.

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is fruit,
Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad,
Philosophy is wondering if that means ketchup is a smoothie.

You know you're a gardener when everything you see becomes a planter.

SARNIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY CONTACTS

President Marilyn Rawson 519-344-6360
First Vice President Christine Cole 519-542-6914
Second Vice President Doug Chaytor 519-344-2873
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John Vanden Hoven 519-542-8207
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Jackie Spearman newsletter 519-331-8699

2019 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Jan. 1, 2019 – Dec. 31, 2019. Single membership \$12, double membership \$20.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **Postal Code** _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

**Include email in order to receive newsletters and updates. Submit form to:
Jan Casbourn, 559 Lakeshore Rd., Sarnia, ON, N7V 2S6, 519-337-9139,
jcas@cogeco.ca.**