

A WORMS EYE VIEW
FERGUS AND DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
JUNE 2019



Are Your Flowers Springing to life?

Monthly Meeting
Wednesday June 19

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 June 2019

I love June! One of my absolute favourite months. The days are getting longer and the weather is finally warming up and getting nicer (I hope). Things are lush and green (especially the weeds in my garden...lol). Summer is ahead of us and lots going on outside. June is such a busy month but well worth getting out and enjoying it.

With everything so beautiful in our gardens right now, I can't wait to see the entries in our June flower show. Consider entering some of your beautiful blooms or a design or two. Please don't forget to take lots of pictures for the photo competition as well while you're out in the gardens with your camera.

Mark your calendars for our annual Garden Tour on June 23rd and coffee in Terry Fox Park on June 25th. Bring a friend along or tell a neighbour as the public is welcome to join us. Come see the beautiful peonies and irises and the lovely new arbour our fine gentlemen built.

July looks to be busy as well. We will have coffee in Templin Gardens one Tuesday (to be announced). I'm looking forward to our Bus Tour on July 11. There are still seats available so please see Randy or Karen for tickets if you'd like to join us. It should be a fun outing as usual! I'm off to my first OHA Convention in Windsor as well, from July 19-21.

Grand Gardens program is up and running. We will be needing your nominations for beautiful gardens in your neighbourhood or ones you've noticed while out and about in town to be considered as a "Grand Garden" of Fergus. Please contact Ken Johnston at kenjohnstonjohncie@gmail.com or fergushorticulture@gmail.ca

Our guest speaker this month is Rodger Tschanz from the U of G Trial Gardens and I'm looking forward to seeing what new plants he will be showing us. It should be another interesting and fun evening with good friends.

As always, any suggestions or ideas you may have for your board are very welcome. Please let us know your thoughts.

Enjoy the beautiful long days and lovely evenings of summer.

Happy Gardening!

Connie

Our Guest Speaker for June

Our guest speaker for the June, 2019, meeting is Rodger Tschanz, from the University of Guelph, who will present information on the University's Ornamental Trial Garden program.

Rodger has worked as a technician at the University since 1989. In 2001, he was invited by the Department of Plant Agriculture to create and manage the University's Ornamental Trial Garden program.

Located along the entrance to the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, the Trial Garden's 1,400 square metres of growing space allows gardeners to see what flowers and plants perform best in southwestern Ontario's climate. It's the only university-operated ornamental trial garden in Ontario and is part of a network of research centres across North America set up to determine which plants grow higher and fuller, bloom quicker, stand up in extreme weather conditions and resist common plant diseases.

The trial garden locations have expanded over the years to currently include ground bed trials in Guelph, Milton, and the Royal Botanical Gardens, as well as container trials in Guelph and at the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre.

At the Guelph site, Rodger is a judge for the annual and perennial entries of the All-American Selection organization. In addition to the Trial Garden duties, he is a technician for the ornamental plant breeding program in Guelph, teaches ornamental plant uses and identification, assists with the management of Plant Agriculture's growth facilities, and is part of the student liaison and undergraduate recruitment team for the Department of Plant Agriculture.

“WANTED” – Members to come on the Board

We are well into our year and it is now time look ahead to the November AGM when we nominate our Board for the next year.

This year we need:

4 Directors – a 2 year term (4 new and 4 stay for a 2nd year)

1 Secretary – normally a 3 year term and other members for numerous committees that help keep the Society running smoothly. Don't wait to be asked!!!! You can volunteer your services. If you have not been involved, this is your chance. Ask questions. Show your interest and hidden talents and share them with the Society.

Contact your Nominating Committee

Kathy Bouma – 519-843-7703

Fran Binning – 519-843-1640

Doreen Telford – 519- 843-4637

Many thanks for considering and we look forward to talking with everyone that wishes to join the board or committee.

Fergus Horticultural Society receives Community Mini Grant from the Grand River Agricultural Society

Last's year work on the historic Craighead property on Union Street will continue with the receipt of \$500 from the Grand River Agricultural Society. This grant will go towards enhancing the gardens with additional perennials, shrubs and a newly installed rain barrel that will eliminate obtaining water from the river or bringing water to the grounds in containers.

The neighbourhood has already been very appreciative of the clean-up and attention being given to this property. Craighead is a small and unique stone cottage built in 1834 and is nestled along the Grand River on South River Road in Fergus. The cottage was given a heritage designation in 2018 and is thought to be the first stone building between Guelph and Owen Sound. Initial gardening done in 2018 was for the Doors Open event last June.

Pictured below is Nico Van der Sluis and Kathy Bouma accepting the cheque from Paul Walker of the Grand River Agricultural Society. Watch for development of the gardens throughout the season. We hope to plant heritage type plants that might have been in gardens in days gone by. However, the gardens will be well maintained and are to be enjoyed by all. Please stop by and read the Historical Storyboard and check out the gardens. The grounds are open to the public, (but not the cottage which will require a lot of work planned for in future years).



July 11th 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 Please contact either Karen Eddie at 519-856-9881 kareneddie22@gmail.com or Bernie Siegmund at 519-843-6870 bernie.siegmund@everus.ca, for more info or to book your tour.

Hope you'll join us!

Mother's Day Pansies

Once again the pansy give away was extremely popular, thanks largely to all the wonderful volunteers who sent many little people home very happy.



We potted up about 230 plants, thanks so much to all of you.

Bert

Diggin' the Dirt

The Diggers have been very busy planting annuals in the Gardens. The Gardens that have been planted so far are Templin, the Library, Menzies Lane, Fergusson Bed, the Cenotaph, Bridge and Union and Terry fox. More will be planted before the end of the month.

The Guys have been busy rebuilding the Arbour at Terry Fox. Can't wait for coffee in Terry Fox to view the peonies and see the new Arbour.

Along with all the annual planting, the Diggers have been kept busy weeding the Gardens every week to keep them down. Bumper crop of weeds are plentiful because of all the welcome rain. The irises in Templin are taller this year then they have been in years and also the Jack in the Pulpit under the Magnolia Tree are huge this year.

Hope everyone gets a chance to walk along the River Walk behind the Library and into Templin, as well as all of the Gardens and see what's growing.

Doreen and all of the Diggers.

Flower Shows

June Horticulture and Design Show

Although, the perennials are slow to show this year, I am sure everyone will have something in their garden that is sure to be a winner.

Have a look in your Year Book to see what you can enter and take home a first place win. We are always looking for new exhibitors in the Horticultural and Design Categories. There is also a variety of vegetables asked for this month.

Hope to see some new exhibitors this month

Your Show Committee,

Liz, Sue, Doreen, Meg, Juri and Ted.

The Peony is the Queen of early summer

The following is a reprint of a past article by former Society member Ron Stevenson who passed away on January 4, 2017. With greatest respect to Ron, we have not edited his writings. Accordingly, some references to weather, dates, etc., may not be correct for current times. Ron's vast knowledge of Horticulture, his detailed research and his gardening advice are timeless.

Ron Stevenson, Fergus Horticultural Society

The Fergus Horticultural Society is especially proud of the floral beds at Terry Fox Park. For the society's millennium project, a pergola and new beds were built to showcase the treasured peonies on the property. Included in the garden is an interesting collection of peonies from the estate of Wally Gilbert. He was a grower and hybridizer in Elora, who purchased the nursery from peony breeder William Brown.

At the May meeting of the Society, Reiner Jakubowski, past-president of the Canadian Peony Society presented, "Peonies: Past, Present and Future". Jakubowski spanned herbaceous favourites and tree peonies. Herbaceous peonies are known for their large, blossoms that tumble from lush clumps of lacy green leaves. They are the ones of most interest to gardeners.

Common herbaceous peonies die back each season while "tree" (shrub) peonies have a woody stems which are exposed to winter elements. The herbaceous variety is divided into common and fern leaf types. Common peony flowers are grouped by bloom: single, semi-double, double, anemone and Japanese.

Colours include reds, coral, creams, pinks, purple, black, white, and yellow. By planting early, mid-season, and late flowering cultivars, you can have peonies flowering for 6 to 8 weeks. As for scent, most doubles are more fragrant than singles, and pinks tend to be more fragrant than reds. The peony is native to China, Europe and North America.

Nothing is more disheartening, to see the blossom that you have harbouring for the last few weeks, flattened by the weather, lying in the mud. The Fergus Horticultural Society has commissioned a local metal worker to design peony support cages that will be used to hold up individual plants in their gardens.

Historically, peonies were meant to be cut flowers. They should be cut 18 inches down on the stem. A long neck vase makes for the best presentation.

PLANTING

When planting, choose a sunny (six hour minimum), well-drained location. A spot away from tree roots eliminates future problems of shading and dryness. Dig a large hole and add the root, compost and soil. Water well.

Peonies are best planted, moved or divided, in the fall. However, spring is also a good time to plant if you have bought young container-grown plants. In a pinch, they also may be moved at other times. The plant may be set back and can take an additional year to recover.

This long-lived perennial that rarely needs division will thrive in the same spot for many years. If you notice that your plants have stopped flowering, they may have become shaded or overcrowded.

Peonies have long, thick, brown tuberous roots with three to five eyes (reddish buds) on the crown.

When dividing, dig out the roots to expose the eyes. Older plants will be deeply rooted with numerous roots. With a sharp knife, divide the clump into sections, making sure that each division has three to five eyes per root.

Mature plants will reach a diameter of 36 inches. Remember to give them lots of room to develop. When planting other peonies side-by-side, plan to leave an additional 36 inches for both plants to develop.

Critical The new division must be planted so that the crown is planted no deeper than 2 inches below the soil surface. Deeper planting will prevent flowering, while shallower planting might make the buds vulnerable.

Planting too deep is the most common reason for failure of peonies to flower. If using mulch, do not cover the crown. Some varieties will take a few years to bloom, as they need to become established.

CARE

Deep watering will encourage deep rooting. Once established, peonies are very drought-resistant. These heavy feeders require rich compost or an application of low nitrogen fertilizer, incorporated shallowly around each plant. This is beneficial in the early spring and after blooming.

Some of the older or double varieties have weak stems in relation to the heavy flowers they carry. These plants may need support.

PROBLEMS

Peony blight is a fungal disease. Symptoms include brown flower buds that do not open. Remove and destroy (do not place in the compost) all affected foliage. It is recommended that even on healthy plants all foliage be cut to ground level and removed in fall, (again, keep out the compost) as spores will overwinter on the old foliage.

Ants are known to infest peonies which are attracted by the sweet sap on the flower buds. Though they are unpleasant, the ants do not do any harm.

Peonies are hardy, sun-loving, long-lived perennials. Remember that they grow into three foot tall by three foot wide plants. Without support they tend to droop. Try to place them at the middle or back of your prize-winning bed. These absolutely stunning blossoms will quickly become the center point

Terry Fox Park Arbor

After many years of weather the arbor at Terry Fox park was starting to rot and become unsafe so it was decided to replace it.



Thanks to Juri, Bob, George, Rienk, Charlie, John, Dean and Randy for cutting and assembly and Bruce for supply of the lumber.



BEAR THOUGHTS

I have expressed quite a lot about my fur throughout my duration of having fur. I have also wondered how others are affected by fur, including whether or not they are simply aware of it and its various states of softness. I have not, however, truly detailed the various states of softness of my fur and the many complex states of being my fur can exhibit and experience. I want to do so now, so...

When my fur has been covered in water:

When my fur has been covered in water, it takes on a unique style of softness. It becomes sleek and shiny. It becomes easy to manipulate and shape. Rain or river water makes my fur a wonderful customizable ballet of individual hairs binding together. This variant of softness does not last too long without water, but it is quite enjoyable while it is around.

My fur right after a nap:

This style of softness is bit rougher compared to other styles. After a good nap, my fur gets bundled in little tufts. These tufts are not as soft as other variants of fur softness, but they are still generally soft compared to things like pinecones and the teeth of the mice who sometimes live in these tufts.

My fur after a long slumber:

See: fur right after a nap (just more).

General softness:

Without external conditions or variables affecting my fur's softness, my fur is... just soft. It is wavy and easy to comb through with a claw or paw. It shines brilliantly and requires minimal maintenance or regard. This is the ideal fur variant. It is simple and wonderful.

Softness post tree:

I have been known to rub my fur onto trees. There are many reasons to do this. Sometimes it is an itch. Sometimes I want to know the tree better through its bark. Sometimes I do it without really understanding or questioning why. Regardless of why it happens, I know that after rubbing my fur on a tree, the softness of my fur changes. The individual hairs that make up my fur seem to split apart, losing whatever cohesion or unity they once had. It was not until I rubbed my belly on a tree that I ever really realized this happens (I cannot see most of my back fur). However, it is interesting to see individual hairs that make up my fur stand on their own. It makes me appreciate the individual things that make up the bigger things of the forest (trees: forest; ants: anthill; droplets: river; seven mice and an angry raccoon: dumpster).

My fur is in a constant flux of various softnesses. I enjoy every type of softness there is. I like my fur, but I like the possibilities of my fur even more.