

GARDENING GEMS

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Iris versicolor –
Harriston emblem

MINTO COMMUNITY GARDENS

Spring has been cool and backward so gardening hasn't progressed as quickly as normal - so if you're still considering a veggie patch there are some available within Minto

Harriston - four plots available
Palmerston - two plots
Clifford is full



6 REASONS DANDELIONS DON'T DESERVE TO BE CALLED A WEED

- First food for bees in the spring.
- Can be a source of rubber.
- Roots make a decent coffee substitute.
- Contain compounds with curative properties.
- Can be made into soup, salad and jam. Dandelion leaves are high in vitamin A, vitamin C and iron, with more iron and calcium than spinach.
- Dandelion is a traditional ingredient of root beer.

There are some issues with that first point "first food" - think about it - the yellow dandelions are just bursting forth this week. What about all the blooms we've seen up to now - Snowdrops, crocus, Squill, Daffodils, Forsythia and tulips.

We keep hearing don't spray; *save the dandelions* - *save the bees*, but there's another line of thought that brings forth some very interesting reading and considerations.

This is from Guelph's Robert Pavlis and he doesn't post anything that isn't scientifically proven: <https://www.gardenmyths.com/dandelions-important-bees/#more-5172>

But something we all can do to help the bees - plant several of the same flower in groups or drifts. Bees like to find a lot of the same flower in one spot - makes for easy collection. Honeybees don't bother to stop where there's just a couple of open flowers here and there.

If you're a butterfly watcher - according to the map there haven't been too many Monarch sightings in Ontario yet: <https://maps.journorth.org/map/?year=2019&map=monarch-adult-first> When you do start seeing them just remember that not all "orange and black" is a Monarch.



Monarch



Viceroy

Smaller than a Monarch, darker orange, visible black line across hind wings



American Lady



Red Admiral

Mother's Day weekend was the season Open House for Steckle's Greenhouses. Traditionally Joanna has invited the Horticultural Society to have a table with a display of posters, brochures, and to sell memberships (members receive a 10% discount on plant material). Thanks to the "sitters" who manned the table this year, we did receive renewals as well as new memberships.



Beet seeds are fairly big. No matter how far apart you plant them each year you still have to thin them - and you can never figure out why. Mind you, thinning is good because you get to eat those tender green leaves. Yet you know when planting you spaced each big seed at least two inches apart and here are little beeties jam packed all over the place. The so-called beet "seed" is actually a cluster of seeds inside a dried fruit. So when you plant a beet seed you are actually planting several seeds in the same spot. Botanically these are called multigermed seeds. Each beet multigerm can contain three to five embryos.

Our April Horticultural Meeting had more packed in than ever before. Silent Auction went on all night, Victoria Waltham-Kingsley presented "attracting butterflies to the garden": Mary Anne Connell demonstrated tips on preparing flowers for a show; and Doug Anderson held a workshop on building a butterfly house. Great evening - we still had time for refreshments and socializing, and the meeting was only a few minutes longer than usual. The Silent Auction netted a tidy amount for an annual fundraiser



Victoria Waltham-Kingsley - Butterflies



Mary Anne Connell - tips on preparing flowers



Hands-on Butterfly Workshop

Tomatoes: Are you a "seeder" or a "purchaser". If you grow your own tomatoes then you likely scour your favorite seed catalogues or websites either for what you know you want, or to try something new and different. There's old varieties (Heirloom), some good ole stand-bys, and always new introductions. Shapes are round, convoluted, pear, oblong and heart-shaped. Colors range from white through yellow, orange, pink, purple, red, green and striped. Then they get you with "potato leaf" or regular. And to top it all off it's determinate or indeterminate. How's that for lots of choice!!

So now you're asking "what's the difference"? The short answer is: **Determinate** turns into a bush and all the fruit ripens at the same time within a short couple of weeks and then it's done. Determinates form their flowers on the ends of the branches.

An **Indeterminate** tomato plant grows tall and vines and keeps producing fruit all summer long till frost cuts it down. These form their flowers **along** the lateral shoots.

If you are a gardener who normally sows your own seeds then you are likely familiar with those terms, however, for those who purchase started plants, the Greenhouse usually comes to your rescue. One local grower posts signage indicating “bush” or “staking”. The uninitiated don’t care, they just buy a good looking plant and hope for the best. The seasoned gardener will ask questions and choose what best fits his/her criteria.

Pretty soon your tomatoes are going to be transplanted from pot to ground. **We hear a lot about Blossom End Rot, quick cures etc. Quick cures don’t work (more internet hype and false media), however one source that makes sense and that you can trust is from Ontario gardener Doug Green who now lives on Amherst island near Kingston, and who formerly spent over 30 years in the nursery business. His video is informative with a bit of humor tucked in. Although it seems way too early to be thinking about Blossom End Rot, Green explains why you have to consider it before you even put the plant in the ground.**

<https://douggreensorganicvegetablegardening.com/black-spots-bottom-tomato/?fbclid=IwAR0TrN0hk9Qknpa6UWtKg5uvszOtmParZyJt21gauXpa3clTWcD2IET3IO4>

May 15th was the Harriston society's annual Spring Flower Show. Because the weather has been so cool and backward there wasn't much hope for a colorful display as so many flowers just weren't out yet (or so we thought). What a nice surprize for Judge Roland Craig to come into the hall with four tables loaded with cheery blooms. All told there were 141 entries.



Let the Sunshine In (a design featuring daffodils)
Entries by Brenda Ortman, Dorelene Anderson, and Linda Campbell



A Table full of Tulips



Judge Roland Craig determines the best tulip

Best arrangement in show went to Dorelene Anderson
 Best Tulip was shown by Margaret Weber
 Best Narcissus (daffodil) was entered by Brenda Ortman
 Best Spring Flower - Linda Campbell's Hellebore
 Best Potted Plant - Sue Bridge's succulent



Best Arrangement in Show - Dorelene Anderson's ``Niche`` Design (title - Almost Hidden)

Tip for Daffodils: for long lasting flowers, don't cut them. Instead grasp the stem at its base among the leaves and snap it.



The June 19th meeting mini show is ``A Bouquet in a Vase`` (your choice)

At this meeting Dorelene Anderson will be explaining and demonstrating the ``Abstract`` design. This arrangement will be part of the October mini show.

When picking rhubarb always grab it at the base of the stalk and give it a good tug and twist to pull it out by the root. Don't cut rhubarb! The brains of the rhubarb plant are in its roots. When you pull the stalk out by the root the plant feels it and says to itself "oh my goodness I'd better grow more stalks". And it does. If you **cut** the stalk the plant doesn't know to grow more stems. What is left below the cut rots away. The rhubarb feels very badly then and doesn't grow another replacement stalk.



Wouldn't we all love to have a Wisteria blooming like this!! Greetings from Melanie Marjoram who last year moved from the Grand Valley area out to Vancouver Island. The Wisteria will soon be done as the leaves are starting to come out. Rhododendrons are in full bloom, and the Azaleas are starting. Orioles are rare on the island but she has spotted one.
p.s. that's not her Wisteria - it's just down the street.

Our Hort Society is partnering with the Library staff on June 7th which is a P.A. Day and thus a holiday for public school students.

For the upcoming Father's Day we plan to make whimsical hanging planters and use Calibrachoa for the hair.

We desperately need white jugs (with handle on the side), Please save your bleach jugs. The big ones would be the best because there's barely enough room for a 4 inch plant to fit inside the smaller 1.89 litre ones (but we'll take those anyway and we'll accept with thanks whatever we get.



Plant Grafted Roses The Easy Way: you should plant the bud union three to four inches below soil level, but *you don't have to plant the roots straight down. Not Straight Down, But Sideways.* Plant the shrub at an angle, with the graft at the proper depth and the roots angling downwards, but more horizontally than vertically. (Those of you who plant tomato seedlings at an angle so that the stem is buried up to the first set of leaves will immediately know what that means). To accommodate this method you will be digging a wider than normal hole.
(excerpts from Cold Climate Gardening Newsletter)



The "Garden of the Month" initiative will be in full swing again this summer. Signage is placed on the lawn of a property acknowledging the efforts of hard working gardeners. If you know of a landscape that should be rewarded please recommend it to Jean jeanurse1@gmail.com, Sue george.sue.bridge@gmail.com or Sandy gilmoresandy17@gmail.com Clifford has joined the roster this year so the "Garden of the month now includes Palmerston, Harriston, Clifford plus the rural areas of Minto. Please do your part and make suggestions to make life easier for the judges.

18th Annual Garden Festival - Harriston Community Centre
111 George Street, South (pavilion area)
Saturday, June 1st - 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Over 20 vendors - BBQ lunch - raffle prizes
Firefighters' Pancake Breakfast 7 - 11 a.m.



Next Harriston Horticultural Meeting
Wednesday, June 19th Seniors' Centre, 7:30 p.m.
Kim Delaney will be presenting "Seeds Matter"



The **Gardening Gems Newsletter** is published monthly by the Harriston and District Horticultural Society. Established in 1952 we now have 212 members.
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