

# GARDENING GEMS

Volume 3, Issue 2

February 2019

*Belated Happy Valentine's Day Everyone*



Iris versicolor –  
Harriston emblem



The giving of roses will always remain traditional for Valentine's Day, but there are other thoughts to consider, especially if you believe in the "language of flowers". For an interesting read go to <https://oldhousegardens.com/blog/> and scroll down to the Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> posting.....Tulips anyone?

On another blog there was excellent advice on the meaning, selecting, preserving and caring for roses:

<https://laidbackgardener.blog/2019/02/14/make-cut-roses-last/> While the info is very interesting it is just too long to put into the newsletter. The good thing he does mention is "why" it's advocated to cut flowers underwater. There's also a cartoon about the "numbers of roses" in a selection!



In addition to what the Laidback Gardener quotes in the above article, another thing I've recently learned about the "why" one is supposed to cut off leaves below the water line in a vase.....*ethylene is produced from leaves that are below the waterline. It is a byproduct of the decomposition process and will make flowers fade more quickly. Some types of flowers are ethylene sensitive and if in the same vase will quickly deteriorate.*

*Having said all that - enjoy your Valentine flowers (if you get some!!)*

Once we get rid of all that snow and ice you might want to go on an experimental trip and look for Praying Mantis sacs. The adult female lays eggs before she dies with the first frost. The sac is about one inch long, rectangular with rounded edges in tan to white. The eggs are encased in a frothy foam which hardens into a casing. The female Mantis lays her eggs on branches, twigs or stems, but also on fences, house siding and eaves. They can be difficult to find but you should do your search between November and April because the miniature babies start to erupt from the sac as soon as the weather begins to warm up in spring.

*(excerpts from the Gardening KnowHow.com)*

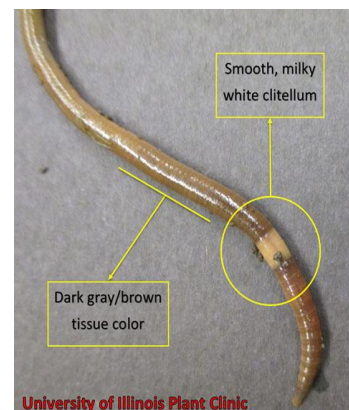


Joanna Steckle sent some rather intriguing information that she found in "Green Profit" one of her magazines for growers and retailers. And you will ask "What in the world is a Jumping Worm?" Truth is, it's an invasive earthworm. Most of the time, the earthworms we know are beneficial—breaking down organic matter, recycling nutrients, and building up soil. However, just like everything else, they're considered pests when they do what we don't want them to do at the wrong place and time - frustrations of an avid golfer when his ball bounces off a pile of worm castings!!

Native to Asia, the jumping worm (or crazy snake worm) has been found in most of the United States and is spread from place to place via mulch, fish bait, or imported potted plants or soil. This worm is easy to identify -it moves like a snake and wiggles like crazy if touched. Jumping worms grow more rapidly, reproduce more quickly, and consume more nutrients than other earthworms. Once jumping worms become established, they quickly transform soil into dry, granular pellets with a texture like discarded coffee grounds. This altered soil structure is not accommodating to ornamental and garden plants, and inhospitable to many native plant species. In many cases, invasive plants thrive where jumping worms live.

They are not slimy like other worms, and where there's one there's always more. Altho' the article doesn't mention Canada, that's not to say they're not here. The big worry is that over time they can completely destroy the native soil structure - and that in turn impacts on how grasses, shrubs and trees perform

*(more information at: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/invasives/fact/jumpingworm/index.html>)*



# Think Minto First

Once again it's time for our annual spring fundraiser. We have been partnering with the local Chamber of Commerce for several years and rewards are better each year.

This is basically a program where you purchase a certificate from one of Minto's listed businesses, somewhere you would shop anyway (i.e. garage, food store). You can use it yourself or give it to someone as a gift certificate.

The **Think Minto First** forms will be available at the next Horticultural Meeting (February 20<sup>th</sup>). They must be completed and returned the following meeting (March 20<sup>th</sup>). If you are unable to attend the February meeting but want some forms, contact Sue Bridge at 519-323-1642; [george.sue.bridge@gmail.com](mailto:george.sue.bridge@gmail.com) or message her on Facebook.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

WRAPPING YOUR LEG IN CABBAGE CAN RELIEVE JOINT PAIN, ARTHRITIS, INFLAMMATION & SWELLING.

@HolisticBodyAndSoul

**Do you have Netflix?**  
 Are you hankering to see some gardening programs on tv - some hour-long actual "gardening" type and not the regular HGTV house renovation types.  
 Netflix now carries three seasons of "Big Dreams, Small Spaces". It's a British production, so if you get BBC you might also get the weekly series there

Every year the *National Garden Bureau*, a non-profit organization promoting the pleasures of home gardening, selects one annual, one bulb, one edible plant, and one perennial to celebrate. It's a great way to discover a new plant or to learn a bit more about a plant you may already be growing.

Maybe this year we should find new uses for pumpkin besides jack-o-lanterns and pie. If you've never tried it - pumpkin soup is delicious (and can be made from canned pie filling as well as fresh pulp).




**STRATFORD garden festival**

**FEB 28 - MAR 3, 2019**

THEME: Urban Agriculture & Small Space Gardening

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28 | NOON - 5 PM  
 Join us for Seniors' Tea, Noon - 4 pm, free with admission!

FRIDAY, MARCH 1 | 10 AM - 5 PM

SATURDAY, MARCH 2 | 10 AM - 5 PM

SUNDAY, MARCH 3 | 11 AM - 5 PM

Our two gardening get-aways coming up in the next few weeks. Each one always has great speakers and things to see, to do, (and buy).



**CANADA BLOOMS**

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EXCLUSIVE TO HOME HARDWARE

**MARCH 8-17, 2019**

**Eneicare Centre**

Adults \$20 Seniors \$17

With all the weird weather we've been having lately, one wonders what's the best thing when shrub and tree branches are bending under the weight of ice and snow. Here's what the experts have to say: When snow or ice bends the branches of trees, shrubs and conifers, the best thing to do is ... nothing at all!

Trying to clear snow or (especially) ice off a bent branch with a broom or shovel can do more damage than the weight of the snow/ice itself, as wood becomes brittle at temperatures below freezing. Even manually straightening the limb may cause the wood to crack.

When a thaw occurs, the branches almost always return to their original shape. And if some were to remain a bit bent, a temporary stake, added for a week or two in the spring, will usually be enough to get them back in shape.



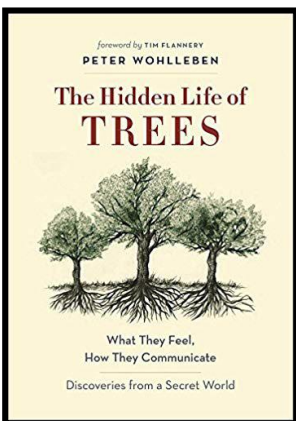
Did you receive or get yourself Paperwhite narcissus to brighten your day? Normally these are treated as a throw-away plant, but Larry Hodgson (the Laidback Gardener) has had success in getting them to bloom for a few successive years.

- cut off the faded flowers after they bloom but leave leaves intact
- keep watering and fertilizing
- when it's warm move the pot outside; foliage will die back about July
- bulbs will be plump, healthy and solid; store till fall (leave in pot or put in paper bag)
- repot and start to water
- blooms should appear in a few months time

Is seeding your own garden not for you but you still want fresh produce? The local farm on the 11<sup>th</sup> line offers 20 weeks of fresh, local, certified organic produce. The 2019 CSA shares are now available [Register now as there are a limited number of shares available for the 2019 season!](#) Caitlin and company are entering the thirteenth season of providing a multitude of vegetables and herbs for either farm visit/pickup or through shares.

New this year are a handful of "Workshare Opportunities" - available for those interested in working off the cost of their share. This is a unique way of being a part of the big picture.

For further information: [info@reroot.ca](mailto:info@reroot.ca) or text 519-820-189. To keep updated on farm happenings sign up to receive Caitlin's newsletter: <http://www.reroot.ca/>



Have you read *The Hidden Life of Trees*? Reviewers said it was mind blowing. I can vouch for that. You'll never look at a forest the same way again. The subtitle "*What They Feel, How They Communicate*" sounds a bit wacky, but you'll find yourself saying "Oh wow" over and over again.

It's a bit of a hard read at first, but once you get into the chapters it all starts to make perfect sense. *Trees (and plants) think, and their brain is stored in their complex root system.* Consider that - how else is the lowly bean seed or tulip bulb able to right itself when planted upside down?

In a severe rain storm more water hits the root system beneath a large spreading maple tree than wets the ground under a slender conifer spruce. Probably doesn't make sense to you - yet. And get this - trees sweat.

This fascinating book is available through the Wellington County Library system. It's also on audiobook.

Like native plants, sustainability is critically important, but it **can't** be the only priority in our gardens. Balance is essential in all aspects of our lives, and extremism – even in the service of worthy goals – often leads to more problems than it solves.

*(Joshua Sparkes new head gardener at England's 900-year-old Forde Abbey)*

The spring AGM is coming up on Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup> hosted by Mount Forest and to be held at the United Church. These events are always a fun and informative time. There's a photo class as well as flower and arrangements. (check pg 30 Yearbook)

While there are still a few days of winter left, you might want to refer to the listing for the photo competition as some frosty photos might just win you some accolades. Keep the following list in mind as we go through the seasons:

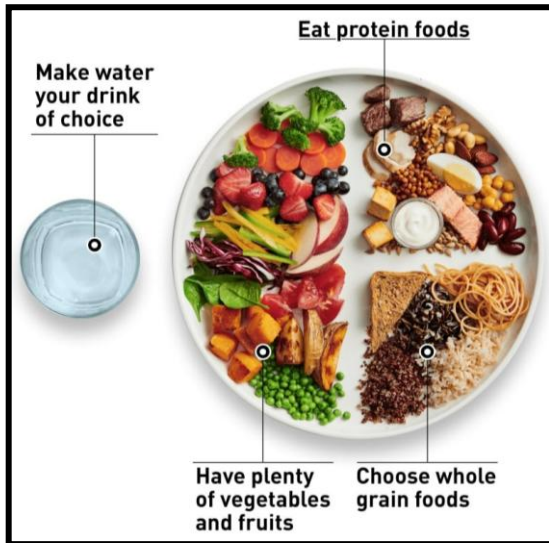
- 1. Abandoned Building;
- 2. Tranquility (your interpretation)
- 3. Rows of Things
- 4. A Frosty Day
- 5. Creepy Vines
- 6. Winter White
- 7. Country Lane (or road)



Voles are short-tailed, small-eared mice that are rarely seen, but that have the annoying habit of gnawing the bark of shrubs and young trees during the winter. They especially like fruit tree bark and will often kill young trees by ringing them entirely (removing a full circle of bark). It's in years when snow is abundant that they're the most harmful, as they dig tunnels under the snow to their favorite plants and can do their damage out of sight of their usual predators (owls, foxes, cats, etc.).

One easy way to discourage voles is to stomp all around susceptible plants. This will create a barrier of hardened snow they won't be able to penetrate

*(from the blog of the Gardening Geek)*



### Goodbye food groups. Hello new food guide.

Canada's new Food Guide was released in mid January. Meat and Dairy seem to be out; plant-based proteins and produce are in.

Instead of eating food from four groups, Canadians are now encouraged to follow three guidelines on: what to eat regularly; what to avoid; and the importance of cooking and preparing meals at home.

*(CBC tv program "MarketPlace")*

The next Harriston Horticultural General Meeting is Wednesday, February 20<sup>th</sup> 7:30 p.m., Seniors Centre (former train station). Guest will be Town of Minto's Landscape Co-ordinator, Paul Judge talking about the preparation, care, and benefits of Raised Gardens



The **Gardening Gems Newsletter** is published monthly by the Harriston and District Horticultural Society. Established in 1952 we now have 212 members. President: Jean Anderson Past President: Sue Bridge Secretary/Newsletter editor: Willa Wick Treasurer: Joanna Steckle Comments/ suggestions/new ideas - willawick@wightman.ca