

Gardens open for business during COVID-19 lockdown

Ask FHS members for tips on social media, say Godyn and Susan MacMillan

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While the Flamborough Horticulture Society is under 'lockdown,' our gardens are open for business, so here are a few gardening tips for you.

Many of us were able to delay the clean up in the garden so that overwintering beneficial insects were protected from this prolonged cold spell. This cool weather has extended the spring flowers. Our daffodils are still cheerily blooming while perennials are slowly emerging.

Remember, wait until the daffodil leaves have turned brown and died down before removing the leaves. Leaves manufacture food and feed it to the bulbs to store for another year of bloom.

Dividing perennials rejuvenates the plant and stimulates new growth.

When you divide fall blooming perennials in the spring, it is easier to see what you are doing and cause less damage than if the leaves were full grown. Water the soil a day in advance if the area to be worked on is dry.

Better still, wait until after a rain to divide them. Divide spring and summer blooming perennials in the fall when there is less garden work to do. The fall also allows you to determine if a plant needs dividing.

Perennials such as *Paeonia* spp. (peonies), *Papaver orientale* (Oriental poppy) and *Iris siberica* (Siberian iris) are best divided in the fall.

Lawns can be dethatched, fertilized and seeded as needed. White clover increases the essential element nitrogen in soil and is suggested as an adjunct for lawns, especially for those of us who battle with grass maintenance.

Think about long season interest in your garden by combining perennials with shrubs, always being mindful how to increase soil health, the zone you garden in and sun exposure. Garden centres can help with garden plans.

Visiting other gardens as physical distancing allows, will also give you new ideas and many members of the Flamborough Horticulture are experienced gardeners willing to answer a gardening question.

Check our Facebook page (FB) for shared information, post a question and a knowledgeable member will be able to help you. The 2020 perennial plant of the year is *Aralia cordata* 'Sun King', a beautiful chartreuse green that produces tiny white flowers. This shade-loving perennial also performs well in the sun and can be mass planted if you have the space.

Plant colourful perennials like echinacea in front and if you are looking for more colour, the 2019 Perennial Plant of the year, 'Stachys Hummelo' has lived up to its name. A long-blooming pinkish-mauve addition to the garden winters very well. We hope to have some of these plants available at our plant sale, tentatively set for June 13.

We will keep you updated on our Facebook page and website for a time and location. For now, happy gardening and stay safe.

— *Connie Godyn and Susan MacMillan are members of the Flamborough Horticultural Society.*



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