



LONDON  
FANSHAWE  
HORTICULTURAL  
SOCIETY

# Garden Dispatch

July/August 2020

## A word from our President

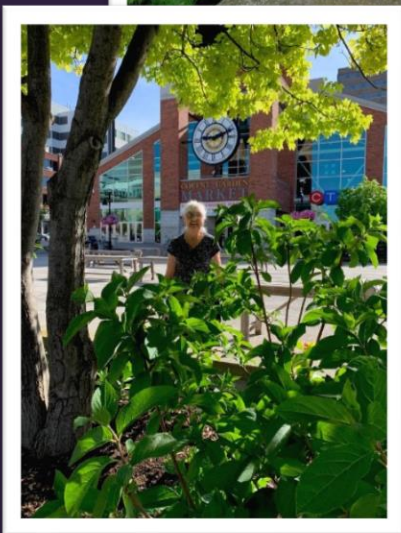
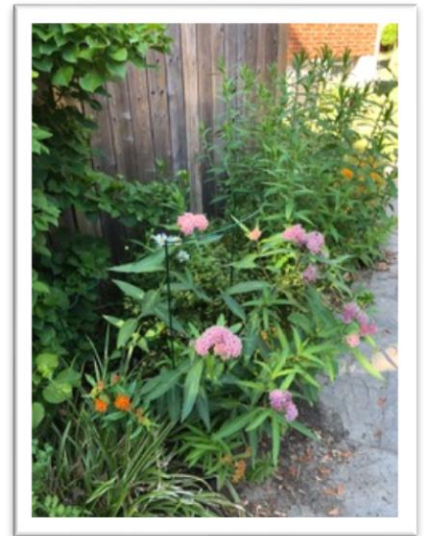
Our circumstances this summer are still very strange, once in a lifetime (we hope). With all this uncertainty it is difficult to plan. We are considering possibilities and hope to be ready for what the future holds.

Our reduced program included a members-only mini plant sale which was very successful in large due mainly to the efforts of a few dedicated members. Bob provides details later but we do owe special thanks to Vince who held the sale in his yard, John and Lois who ordered and organized the growth and sale of many plants, Jennifer Smout whose tomatoes sold well with some going to the London Food Bank, and Linda Armstrong who had a sale in her neighbourhood and donated the profits to LHFS, and of course Bob who was in charge of our sale.



The Covent Garden market planting went well. Take a drive by the market to see the results of our efforts which Gabie Sanio is caring for over the summer. Dee Biggar coordinated with the market. The 12 members made short work of the task.

I am sure each of you is using the time to benefit your garden. Mine is certainly missing the plant sale and is overcrowded. One of my projects is growing 3 types of milkweed to sustain Monarch butterflies. I have seen very few butterflies so far. At this point I have only managed to protect and release one butterfly. If anyone would like some of the type of milk weed plants as seen in the picture, I can plant some young ones up for you, just ask me. They are about 3 feet tall with pink flowers.



The board will reassess the situation in August and let you know what we plan for the Fall. We have some information about Siloam which is a start to making plans.

Feel free to let us know if you have ideas that might be of interest to us. Stay cool.

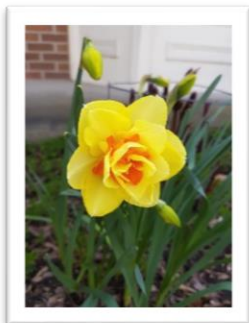
**Ann Larkin**

Social distancing and  
face covering oh my!  
Photo credit: Kathleen Ledoux

*Details here as we move into Phase 2: Restart - Stage 3 of Reopening our Province:*

<https://files.ontario.ca/mof-framework-reopening-province-stage-3-en-2020-07-13.pdf>

# From our members' gardens...



*Valsa's Tahiti daffodil*



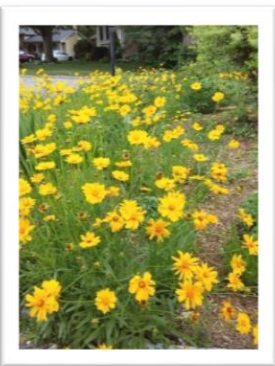
*Patricia's Spring pots*



*Scented lilac*



*Ant loving peonies*



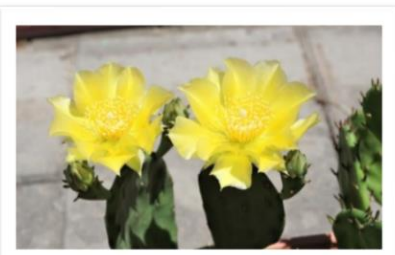
*Brian's coreopsis*



*Lois's amaryllis in July*



*15th anniversary Jackmanii clematis from 2018*



*Bob's prickly pear cactus*



*Vince's bee friendly Bishop of Landorf dahlia*

## Plant Sale 2020

We were given a lemon this year when we could not hold the plant sale, our major fund raiser. Just before the Covid shut down, Vince, Ann, John, Lois, Camillia, Jack, Ola and I potted up a number of plants at the greenhouse space donated by Van Dam's. Later on, it became evident we could not hold the regular sale, so as you know, we decided to hold a members-only sale. Jennifer Smout was also starting her tomato seedlings and decided to continue with 200 for the sale. As well we potted up over a 100 strawberry plants.

Vince volunteered his porch and driveway for a curbside pick-up style sale in May (with all the appropriate precautions). The results - \$820 in sales and many happy buyers. Plus, 25 tomato plants were donated to the London Food Bank's vegetable garden.

While this was going on, Linda Armstrong, who always donates many plants to the sale, decided to go ahead and pot up about 250 plants originally intended for the LFHS sale. She held her own driveway sale to friends and neighbours and collected \$600 to donate!

Total sales - \$1400. Nowhere near our normal sales but a plus for LFHS's finances. A big thankyou to all the volunteers, donors and buyers who took the lemon and made lemonade.

**Bob Crowhurst**

All I need is  
**THIS PLANT**  
AND THAT OTHER  
**PLANT,**  
and those plants over there,  
and...

WHEN WOMEN SAY THEY ARE  
"RUNNING ERRANDS"  
THEY ARE ACTUALLY AT  
THE GARDEN CENTER  
SNIFFING FLOWERS AND  
READING PLANT LABELS.





## Ah, Dahlias!

by Ola Nowosad

Now that the tulips and roses have finished blooming, my very favourite flower is the dahlia.

I fell in love with the dahlia at the Butchart Gardens in the mid-1980's. A decade later, I was growing my own, only a few plants each summer. Now, I am addicted – 30 dahlia plants in my 2020 collection.

Why do I love dahlias? They are exquisitely shaped, beautifully colourful, with elegant posture and stunning presence in the garden.

This quote sums it up. "The rich variety of their flower colours, shapes and sizes added to their extensive blooming season have turned dahlias into popular additions to our landscapes." From <http://www.gardenia.net/plant-variety/dahlia-types> (Read this article if you want to learn about the shape categories of the dahlia.)

My favourite is the waterlily form of the dahlia. Fully double with a slightly flattened top, it resembles waterlilies. This year, **Karma Prospero** (one of three sold by our Hort Society) is a fine example of the subtle colorations and perfect geometry of a waterlily dahlia.

I happen to like the collarettes (**Esther** being a very prolific bloomer) too, and dahlias with darker foliage (**Fascination** is one of my favourites). Other favourites of mine: **Arabian Nights**, **Maya**, **Alauna Clair-Oscur**. With more than a thousand varieties to choose from, I hope that you have found some favourites, too.

I don't grow the dinner plate varieties, mostly because I don't like the process of staking. However, the huge dinnerplate blooms are certainly breathtaking. Among them is the **Café au Lait**, highly sought and hard to find.

People often talk about storing dahlia tubers. You can google how to store them, and you will get numerous opinions on which medium is best for storage (peat, sand, etc.). No matter which you choose, keep your fingers crossed, as tubers will often dry out or get moldy. If you'd rather not store tubers, the garden centres sell dahlias already planted.

Another downside is that, like the rose, the dahlia attracts many insects: earwigs, grasshoppers and Japanese beetles (particularly plentiful this year!). Add rabbits to the list. Again, you have to keep your fingers crossed, but then gardening is an act of optimism!

Seeing your dahlias dazzling in the sun or gracing your indoors (in a vase) is certainly worth any effort required to grow them.

In the Fall we'd like to have a "Swap list" of dahlia tubers. If you have any extra tubers that you would like to swap for others, please send a note to the Hort Society at [londonfanshawehortsociety@gmail.com](mailto:londonfanshawehortsociety@gmail.com). Details of actual swap forthcoming in the next newsletter.

In the meantime, enjoy the articles listed below, heed the simple tips from Vince, our seasoned dahlia grower, and try your hands at garden photography. I wish you a glorious and colourful garden to enjoy during this most unusual summer!

**Dahlias Bring Diverse Shapes, Sizes, Colors to the Garden** by Melinda Myers  
<https://www.fyi5oplus.com/2019/02/06/dahlias-bring-diverse-shapes-sizes-colors-to-the-garden/>

**Dahlias in a Hot Climate** by Ethne Clarke  
<https://hartley-botanic.com/magazine/dahlias-hot-climate/>

**Dahlias and me** by Jack Wallington  
<https://www.jackwallington.com/dahlias-and-me/>

**Dahlia garden review: exciting newcomers** – Cloverhome  
<https://www.cloverhome.nl/dahlia-garden-review-newcomers/>

**Tried & True Favorite Dahlia Varieties** – Flourish Flower Farm  
<https://www.flourishflowerfarm.com/blog/2019/8/23/favorite-dahlia-varieties>

**Growing dahlias – everything you need to know** by Alexandra Campbell  
<https://www.themiddlesizedgarden.co.uk/growing-dahlias-everything-need-know/>

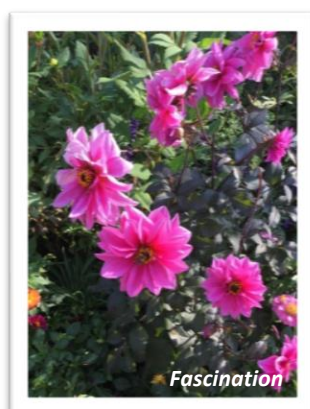


Photo credit: Ola Nowosad

## Dahlia Tips by Vince Chicoine

1. When potting up dahlia tubes, if they are not showing new shoots, keep them moist and warm and wait till they show signs of new growth before planting them.
2. Dahlias are heavy feeders and like to be kept moist. Don't let them dry out.
3. Dahlias will bloom continuously all summer if you deadhead them regularly.
4. My favourite dahlias are the collarette variety because they are bee friendly and bloom profusely.
5. Feed them 20 20 20 slow release or water soluble whichever you can find.
6. When growing the dinner plate dahlias be prepared to stake them especially when it threatens to rain heavily.
7. In the Fall let them get hit by the frost before digging up the tubers.
8. When you dig them up make sure you do not damage the tubers, use a shovel not a pitchfork and dig about 10 inches or 25 cm from the stalks.
9. Cut all the stalks back to about 3 inches from the ground.
10. Lift them out carefully removing most of the soil from the tubers. Then place in a suitable plastic bag with a little moist potting soil and an identifying label then fold over the top of the bag; do not seal.
11. Put them in cardboard boxes in the coldest frost-free area of your house.
12. Do not divide them until Spring.

## Garden Photography Challenge 01 – Fall for the smallest details

What can you see that others will not? Get outside and really look.

Giulia Ciampini Photography (with permission from Giulia, a photographer, teacher and trip leader based in Vancouver Island, BC)  
<https://www.giuliaciampiniphotography.com/learning-photography/macrophotography>

*Love to hear from you and see your gardens. Send us an article, a picture or two or many many...*