

Flamborough Horticultural Society



July 2021 Newsletter

President's Message

Welcome new members in June Jeanette Szabo and our new District 6 Assistant District Director (ADD) Liz Chappel.

Members who have email received information about the upcoming OHA virtual convention. A few of our members have registered. It's not too late to register and you can view any of the presentations for 6 months post-convention.

We are having a members-only garden tour July 24-25. Final planning is taking place. New members who join before this date can be part of the garden tour. Have you thought of "gifting" a membership to someone? For those of you who do not have email, we will phone you with an update.

Trillium judging, an important part of recognizing beautification, has begun and FHS members constitute a large majority of judges for the Ward 15 Hamilton area. Thankyou to Trillium Committee members Ann Cochren and Tia Coverly for your tireless efforts in helping make this program a success.

Most gardeners absolutely love the rain. Next to good healthy soil, it is one of the most important contributors to a good garden. June 30th was a day for us to assess the storm damage and rid the garden of the weeds that grew overnight with the rain we happily received. A.A. Milne said *"Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them."*

I think of a garden as a place where we can meet nature without traveling too far. An acquaintance who wants to put in a garden in a small townhouse lot visited our garden and asked me what I liked most about gardening. "I like to be able to provide as much food as possible to our insects and animals to help them in their life cycle." I may get cross at the rabbits for eating gray coneflowers and other plants but they are now munching on the clover instead. However, the chipmunk population explosion is another problem.

Happy gardening and we hope to see you on the members-only garden tour.

Susan MacMillan

Meeting and Speaker Information

There will be no monthly meetings in July or August. Details for the September meeting will be included in the August and/or September newsletters as well on our website and Facebook page and via email or phone call to members.

Flower Arranging in Victorian Times

It could be said that the Victorians were flower obsessed! Flowers had become symbols of luxury and sophistication and were a means by which one could make a fashion statement. Instead of thought out or minimalist arrangements, their aim was to pack as many flowers as possible into vases. There was little regard for complementary colours, symmetry or design.

Seasonal flowers were used in the arrangements. The most common varieties were tulips, carnations, daisies, fushians, dahlias and lilies. Later, roses became so popular that it became almost mandatory for them to be included in arrangements. The containers were equally important and were elaborately designed.

The Victorians were so fascinated with flowers, that they created an entire “language of flowers” by which they could send secret messages. In fact, several dictionaries were published to explain and decipher the meaning of flowers. This was very handy as at this time speaking of certain topics or making advances on a love interest were considered uncouth behaviours. Some of these ways of relaying messages have become universal such as a red rose symbolizing love and white roses symbolizing purity.

Flower Show

The theme for the June Show was: “The Edibles: A display on a dinner plate using herbs and edible flowers”. Thank you to the six people who entered this month, showing their artistry. Congratulations to the winners!

First Place: Ann Cochren



Second Place: Liz Visentin



Third Place: Martha Novoselac



There are always flowers for those who want to see them,

Henri Matisse

July Garden Tasks

This is the month when we really see the fruits of our garden labours! Many flowers and vegetables come into their prime!

- Weed, weed, weed! Shallow hoe gardens regularly.
- Fertilize annuals and vegetables.
- Continue to mow lawns high (no shorter than 3 inches).
- Deadhead annuals and perennials to extend the bloom season.
- Stake tall perennials.
- Remove old raspberry canes and
- Trim back strawberry plants once fruiting is done.
- Fertilize roses.
- Repot root bound houseplants and small outdoor planters. Turn compost and check moisture levels.
- Prune shade trees.
- Sow lettuce, arugula and radishes for a fall crop.
- Aim to water plants in the morning in order to minimize the spread of fungal diseases. Also, water deeply.
- Keep container plants well watered and fed especially during periods of intense heat.
- Keep flower beds edged.
- Check for slugs.
- Watch for Japanese beetles, especially on roses, lilies, hollyhocks, and rose of sharon. Handpicking, squeezing and setting traps are recommended.
- Trim evergreens and cedar

edges as needed.

Consider Growing these Native Flowers!



CONEFLOWER

Coneflowers, also known as *Echinacea*, are tough little native flowers. Their genus name comes from the Latin name for hedgehog, *echinus*, referring to the often prickly lower stem of the plant. Echinacea flowers are a good food source for pollinators like flower flies, bees and butterflies, including Monarchs. If you let them go to seed, they will remain on the stalk providing food in the winter for birds like juncos, finches and chickadees. In late summer, goldfinches cannot resist them! *Echinacea pallida* (Pale Purple Coneflower) is native to Ontario. It grows well in full sun but will handle a bit of shade and is able to grow in a variety of soil types and is somewhat drought tolerant. Another feature is that they are deer resistant. Clumps of Echinacea are attractive alongside prairie grasses and Black Eyed Susan.



Black-eyed Susan

Rudbeckia hirta or common Black-eyed Susan is a member of the aster family. This widespread wildflower is considered an annual to a short-lived perennial across its range. Bright-yellow, 2-3 in. wide, daisy-like flowers with dark centers are its claim-to-fame. They occur singly atop 1-2 ft. stems. The stems and scattered, oval leaves are covered with bristly hairs. They're rough-stemmed plants with daisy-like flower heads made up of showy

golden-yellow ray flowers forming a cone.

Growing Garlic: Harvesting

In the June newsletter, the topic of removing scapes was discussed. For hardneck garlic, this is usually done in June. When is the best time to harvest garlic? Garlic should be harvested when the tip of three to five of the leaf sheaths have turned brown. This signals the plant has reached its maturity and is starting to decay. Why do the leaves provide a clue when to harvest? Because the leaf sheath and covering on the bulb are part of the same structure, the change in colour is an indicator that the plant has reached peak maturity. Leaving the plant in the soil beyond this point will cause the layers on the bulb to decay. It's important to preserve as many of these layers as possible—they protect the bulb during curing and storage. Some farmers advise digging up and examining a few test plants before the leaves have started to turn brown, especially in wet weather. Moist soil can cause the layers on the bulb to degrade prematurely. If this is the case, don't wait for the leaf tips to turn brown. It's time to harvest!

Digging the Bulbs

Loosen the soil with a fork, spade or other digging tool, taking care to dig straight down—parallel to the stem of the plant, six to eight inches (fifteen to twenty centimetres) deep and at a distance of three to four inches from the stem—far enough not to damage the bulb. Lever the tool back and forth, gently loosening the soil around the bulb. Now, grasp the base of the plant, near to the soil surface. Pull straight up, taking care to not bend the stem, and gently brush off loose dirt and dead leaves. Lay each bulb on the ground and check for damage. Use them right away if damaged

as those bulbs will decay.

Drying/Curing Garlic Bulbs

Immediately after harvest, garlic is hung to cure for two to three weeks. This allows moisture to escape and prepares the plant for long-term storage. Hang garlic bundles in a shaded, ventilated locale. In places with high humidity, set up a fan. Tie garlic plants together in bundles of five or ten (or of your choosing), with a string approximately four feet long—two bundles per length of string. Tie tightly to avoid having plants slip out of their bundle—the stems will shrink as they dry. Each set of two bundles is hung by the string to dry or “cure.” Remember, a cut or bruise in the stem or in the leaf sheaths that cover the bulb can allow fungus, mould or other undesirable organisms into the plant.

Storage

After curing, trim the roots and cleanly cut the bulb from the stems. Table garlic (for eating) stores best in a cold room or cellar, or in a clay garlic keeper. Avoid storing in higher humidity, or in temperature extremes, such as near a stove or sunlit window sill. Table garlic stored at room temperature may dehydrate faster. *Do not refrigerate garlic!* Depending on the variety and strain, garlic can be stored for up to one year. No matter the variety of garlic you grow, how you handle the plant during growing, harvest, bundling, curing and storage affects how well the bulbs will store. Since the leaf sheaths covering the bulb serve a purpose similar to human skin—protecting the bulb from potentially damaging organisms—you should ensure that as many sheaths as possible remain on the bulb after harvest. Bulbs with tight-clinging leaf sheaths will likely store the longest. Bulbs with exposed areas on their surface should be the first to

be eaten or planted in the fall.

Pollinator Friendly Trees:

Consider planting pollinator friendly native trees:

Flowering trees offer pollen and nectar, called “floral resources”, that are, sometimes, even more generous than herbaceous plants. As an example, author Douglas Tallamy compared the native Black Cherry tree to Goldenrod. He reported that the Black Cherry tree supports 456 different wild pollinator species compared to 115 supported by Goldenrod.

Cities are very important refuges for wild, native bees because they’re largely pesticide free, unlike monoculture farm fields. Planting early flowering trees in an urban setting is very beneficial to native bees!

Other native trees that are excellent pollinators include: Eastern Redbud, Red Maple, Honey Locust, Balsam Poplar, Serviceberry, American Basswood, Butternut, Crabapple, Pussywillow and Hawthorn.

Information and photos of Pollinating Trees

[Ontario Pollinators](#)

Beneficial Insects

Only a few of the world’s 750,000 known insects are worthy of the label “pest”. Most are harmless, and many are beneficial. So the next time you spot an unfamiliar critter in your garden, consider it innocent until proven guilty! Insects provide a number of essential services including pest control, pollination and the breakdown of decaying matter. Attracting and protecting beneficial insects will help you attain greater garden success with minimal or no chemical use.

Follow these guidelines to attract and protect these allies:

- Fill a shallow birdbath or dish with stones and water so tiny beneficial insects can drink without drowning
- Attract adult insects with a variety of nectar and pollen-rich plants including herbs (e.g., fennel, dill and parsley) and flowers of the daisy family (e.g., cornflower, coneflower, sunflower and coreopsis).
- Leave some weeds in your yard including Queen Anne’s lace and dandelion for food and shelter. Dandelions are especially important as they play a part in the ecology of 93 different insect species
- Avoid chemical pesticides as well as botanical insecticides that kill the good insects with the bad. If you must use these products, spot-spray instead of broadcast spraying.
- Establish permanent walkways and perennial beds, apply mulch and allow some leaves to remain where they fall for year-round shelter.
- Leave some areas unmulched for ground dwelling native bees

Cucumber tree (Species at Risk)

Scientific name: *Magnolia acuminata*



The Cucumber tree is Ontario’s only native magnolia species. Once found across the carolinian zone, it is now endangered. As of most recent surveys, there are approximately 170-190 mature trees in Ontario and they are only found in the Niagara Region and Norfolk County. “Endangered” means the species lives in the wild in Ontario but is facing imminent extinction or extirpation.

The Cucumber Tree gets its name from its fruit that is pickle-like in shape and changes from green to red as it ripens. Once ripe, the oily, scented seeds are exposed and hang by fine threads. It is assumed that birds are the main consumers and dispersers of these seeds.

The Cucumber Tree can grow as high as 30 metres. The lower branches swoop down from the trunk and then curve upwards. The large, oval-shaped leaves are simple and smooth edged without teeth. The greenish-yellow solitary flowers grow six to nine centimetres across. The tree is named for the slight resemblance of the immature fruit to a cucumber. When pollinating insects first enter the flowers of the Cucumber Tree, they cannot escape because of the tiny wax rollers on the surfaces of the petals that cause them to fall back whenever they try to climb out. It is only after the pollen is released that the petals bend back, releasing the pollen-covered insects.

The fruit matures in late summer into a cone-like structure composed of many red, fleshy pods, each containing one to two scarlet seeds. The Cucumber Tree was used by the Cherokee and Iroquois First Nations for a variety of medicinal purposes including alleviating stomach aches and toothaches. If you are interested in planting cucumber trees as part of the "Recovery Strategy", contact your local Ministry of Natural Resources.

Read more about saving the Cucumber Tree [Cucumber Tree](#)

Flower Trivia

The petals of a sunflower are actually each a single-petalled flower; a sunflower is actually a cluster of hundreds of flowers.

A 32 000-year-old extinct Arctic flower, *Silene stenophylla* was resurrected using seeds found in the cache of an Ice Age squirrel.

A plant called *Ramonda Serbica*, which miraculously comes to life when watered, even if it's completely dried.

There is a plant called the Skeleton Flower whose petals turn transparent when wet and then revert back to white when dry.

The Spiderwort flower is a natural radiation detector. The stamen turns pink in the presence of radiation. When planted around a nuclear power plant in Japan they accurately detected how much radiation was released and how the wind dispersed radioactive material.

In order to produce a kilogram of Saffron up to 110 000–170 000 flowers must be picked, equaling to about forty hours of labor.

The Ghost flower is a flowering plant with no chlorophyll.

The crowns of Broccoli, cauliflower and artichokes are known as vegetables but they are actually flowers.

The world's oldest flower bloomed about 125 million years ago. It was discovered in 2002 in China and it resembles a water lily.

The '*Puya raimondii*' is the slowest-flowering plant. The flower cluster emerges after about 80 to 150 years. Once the flower blossoms the plant dies.

While the smallest orchid weighs a dime, the largest weighs several hundred pounds.

There are over 13 000 species of roses.

The rarest flower in the world is the Middlemist Red or Unspecified Camelia. Read more here: [Ten Rarest Flowers in the World](#)

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MISSION

The mission of the Horticultural Society is to encourage interest and involvement in horticulture through civic improvement, preservation, exhibitions,

the distribution of plant materials and regular instruction pertaining to the theory and practice of agriculture.

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