

# Flamborough Horticultural Society



**April 2023 Newsletter**

## President's Message

Greetings Members

On behalf of the Board, I wish a warm welcome to our newest members in March Melanie Serr, and to Bev Titley who has rejoined the Society.

Are your seeds germinating? Some can seem to be very slow while others are already popping up. The ones undergoing cold stratification outdoors in containers are still asleep at my house, but after the cold spell, I hope to see some green soon.

April and May means the Society will be ramping up additional activities. For example, the Co-chairs of the Plant Sale Committee need your help. A sign-up sheet will go around at the April meeting for you to help make the plant sale a success. The committee has provided a list of plants that sell well. As you evaluate your gardens in late spring, please look to divide lots of plants that are needed for the sale.

In keeping with our commitment to prevent the spread of jumping worms to customers, soil-less potting medium will be used again this year. While all earthworms are invasive in Ontario, jumping worms pose a serious risk to our gardens and to forests. Their castings degrade the soil quality, leaving it inhospitable to many native plant species and causes increased soil erosion. These worms quickly consume the leaves of the forest floor (and your garden) which puts native insects, amphibians, ground nesting birds, and native flowers at risk when they do not have leaves and debris to overwinter in or for protection from the elements. These jumping worms leave tiny cocoons that spend the winter in the soil and they can reproduce without fertilization (parthenogenic). The easiest time to spot jumping worms is late summer in the topsoil where they tend to appear in large numbers and will thrash wildly from side to side if disturbed. The YouTube video link below shows them in action. To test your soil, you can also coax them to the surface. Mix 1/3 cup of ground yellow mustard seed with 1 gallon of water. Clear a bare patch of soil and pour slowly over the soil. Worms then usually move to the surface and you can determine whether they are invasive jumping worms (wild thrashers) or common worms.

Check out YouTube Video about Jumping worms at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bFI6Pw6nzQ>. Master Gardener Cathy Kavassalis also wrote an article about Jumping worms that can be [found here](#). For additional reading on these nasties, see the [Garden Ontario website](https://gardenontario.org/jumping-worms/) at <https://gardenontario.org/jumping-worms/>. Early detection and preventing spread is key.

Best wishes, Susan MacMillan

## Meeting and Speaker Information

**Note that our April meeting will be in person.**

**Date:** Wed., Apr. 19

**Time:** 7pm (refreshments)

**Speaker:** Kirten McCarthy

**Topic:** Mycorrhizal Fungi

**Location:** St. Thomas the Apostle  
Church Parish Hall, 715 Centre Rd,  
Waterdown

**Flower Show:** Bring a small potted,  
tropical plant decorated with some spring  
blooms from your garden

## Upcoming Events

**District AGM**

**Date:** May 6

**Hosted by the Oakville Horticultural  
Society – details were emailed.**

**Photo Contest:** Watch the District 6  
Facebook Group for a new contest each  
month.

[District 6 Facebook Group](#)

**Ontario Horticultural Association (Garden  
Ontario) 50/50 Raffle**

**Ticket sales deadline:** Thurs., July 20

**Early bird deadline:** May 13

**Draw Date:** Fri., July 21

**(The last draw surpassed \$5000.00 for the  
winner!)**

[Buy tickets here](#)

## March Flower Show Winners

The theme this month was the creation of a  
green display using natural materials.

First Place: Martha Novoselec



Second Place: Liz Visentin



Third Place: Marilyn Higgins



## Community Gardens

As I work on this month's newsletter I am STILL looking at a wintry scene after another 12 hours of snowfall, the second blast of winter for the first week of March!

### Community Garden at Freelon Library

Society members tend a number of community gardens in our area. This lovely garden was under the care of Jan Bignell with assistance by Liz Henderson and Janice Burns.



## April GardenTasks

- The urge to get the rake and clean-up our lawns is great, but wait! Allow the ground to defrost and dry up before cleaning up.
- If your compost pile has thawed by the beginning of the month, give it a good stirring. At the end of the month, if the garden is dry enough to work in, add a 1-2 inch layer of well composted material (sweet smelling, crumbly and dark brown) to your garden beds and work it in lightly.
- As you plan your vegetable garden include some flowering herbs and annuals

in the garden to encourage the beneficial insects to visit. This is especially important if you plan to grow vegetables such as zucchini and cucumbers which have both male and female flowers and require visits from bees and other pollinators.

- To prevent soil compaction and damage to plant roots, wait until the soil is dry enough to crumble in your hand before walking and working in your garden. If you must step into the garden for some reason (to prune, for example), put down some planks and step on them in order to distribute your weight across a wider surface.
- Vegetables such as spinach, lettuce, beets, peas and radishes all enjoy cool soil and can usually be planted starting in mid to late April –check the long range forecast first in case some very cold weather is coming and in this case, delay planting. Lettuce and peas require the soil to be a little warmer than spinach, beets and radishes. Watch the weather – if a frost is predicted, cover your plants to protect them.

## Plant Purple in 2023

Purple has been named the Communities in Bloom's colour of the Year for 2023. for more information see [Live the Garden Life](https://livethegardenlife.gardenscanada.ca/) <https://livethegardenlife.gardenscanada.ca/>

### Reading Corner: Gardening for Butterflies

Informative article by the Ottawa Field-Naturalist's Club

[What Do Butterflies Need?](#)

[Ontario Wildflowers: List of Native Species](#)



## Hyacinths: Did You Know?



While they come in several colours, the deep purple Hyacinths are my favourite! There are three main varieties of Hyacinths: Single, Double and Multiflora. Along with their beautiful spikes they are one of the most fragrant of spring bulbs, usually blooming in late March into April (thus, it's best to plant them during the fall months). However, I do NOT expect to see any Hyacinth blooms in my garden during March **this** year! Wild hyacinths are native to Turkey and the Middle East however they were grown in Europe in the time of Greeks and Romans. They disappeared from history until the late 16th century. During this time, They began to be cultivated commercially and became especially popular during the 18th and 19th Centuries.

Carolus Clusius (1526-1609), a Flemish botanist and celebrated Curator of the botanical gardens at Leiden (the oldest botanical garden in the Netherlands) orchestrated serious cultivation of bulbs including Hyacinths. His work led to Holland becoming the commercial bulb-growing center of the world.

During the second half of the 18th Century, breeding Hyacinths became fashionable in Germany. Even King Wilhelm III personally took care of the hyacinths in his palace gardens. These flowers have also had a bit of nefarious past! The French have been known for using hyacinths for poisoning others. They would spray the flowers with poison and then

place them in the bedrooms of their victims! Please don't try this at home!

Read more about Hyacinths here:  
[Hyacinth Fact Sheet](#)

## Horticultural Terms

**Compost Tea:** Compost tea is a natural liquid fertilizer that is made by steeping compost in water. This process extracts a few beneficial microbes and soluble nutrients. This results in plants being able to uptake and use the nutrients. Read more here about the production and benefits of compost tea: [Compost Tea](#) 'A simpler method of production is non aerated compost tea.

Read more: [Non-Aerated Compost Tea](#)

## Attracting Hummingbirds

By the end of this month, it's highly likely that we will have our first sightings of the Ruby Throated Hummingbirds as they complete their spring migration after overwintering in Mexico and South America. If they survive the migration, they tend to return to the same location. Hummingbirds are very territorial so finding an ideal nesting place will be a high priority. They are not cavity nesters so birdhouses or nest boxes will not attract them. Nests are typically built high up off the ground, between 10 to 40 feet—and even as high as 90 feet—and located in shrubs and trees. They use a variety of materials including moss, lichen, plant down, feathers, and spider silk. Their nests are tiny, about 1.5 inches in diameter, roughly the size of a ping pong ball. I have been birding for about 25 years and have never seen one! In order to

attract hummingbirds, ensure that feeders are out before they arrive in your area. Mix one part sugar to four parts water. Change frequently if the weather is hot. Specific flowers will also attract them and provide much needed food. They are attracted to bright colours and red in particular. Tubular flowers are a good option as bees and butterflies have a difficult time accessing them, leaving more nectar for the birds. But, do plant flowers for the other pollinators, too!

## Native Flowers For Hummingbirds:

**Early Season Blooms (May to June)** Native (red) columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) Hairy beardtongue (purple)/*Penstemon hirsutus*

**Mid Season Blooms (June-July/August)**  
Fireweed (purple) (*Epilobium Angustifolium*)  
Michigan lily (orange/red) (*Lilium michiganense*)

## Late Summer/Fall Blooms (July-Sept/Oct.)

Cardinal Flower (red) (*Lobelia cardinalis*)  
Red Bee Balm (*Monarda Didyma*)  
Cup Plant (yellow) (*Silphium perfoliatum*)  
Joe Pye Weed -*Eupatorium purpureum*(pink/purple).

Read more here about these and other native plants that attract hummingbirds. Site also includes a migration map. [Hummingbirds Canada](#)

## Cuban Garden Tour

By: Trudy Bliedung

I was fortunate to travel to the Caribbean in late February for two weeks, visiting botanical and private gardens, as well as cultural sites in Cuba. This table was set up for us to decide which fruit to choose to be made into freshly prepared Juice



My choice was star fruit – and it was delicious.

The tour started in Varadero, from where we traveled to Havana, to the Sierra del Rosario mountain range where we visited a famous orchid garden, built between 1943 and 1953 by a Spanish lawyer in memory of his wife who died in childbirth at age 21. So did her child.

A sad story but a fabulous garden consisting of 700 orchid species and 6,000 ornamentals. In Cienfuegos, we visited the botanical garden which was established about 100 years ago by the research centre for Harvard University. It consists of a remarkable collection of tropical palm trees as well as an Ebony tree which is one of only a few of the almost extinct trees. They take two years to maturity and are valued for their almost black wood. We also visited three large gardens, two farms and hiked in mountainous areas. It was a truly memorable trip.

For the detailed itinerary, you can check out the website at [Cuba Tours](#) although you will have to wait till 2024, if you wish to go on this 11-day bus tour.

**OHA Website: Includes link to Trillium Newsletter**

[OHA Garden Clubs in Ontario](#)

**Connon Nurseries** Please show your appreciation by shopping at Connon Nurseries 905-689-7433 [Connon Nurseries](#)

**Northland Nursery** : A family run nursery in Millgrove Ontario (722 Concession 5 W, Waterdown) Opening April 22 (9am to 5pm 7 days a week) [Northland. Tell them you are a Flamborough Member. The Society receives a small rebate at year end for your orders](#)

**Wild Birds Unlimited** offers a 10% discount on products you buy when you mention that you are a Horticultural Society member. [Wild Birds Unlimited](#)

To learn more about District 6 see [OHA Garden Clubs and Societies in Ontario » GardenOntario](#).

**How to Reach Us:** Please email your comments, suggestions, corrections or submissions. If you wish to submit an article, questions or tips, contact: [flamhort@hotmail.com](mailto:flamhort@hotmail.com)  
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## MISSION

*The mission of the Flamborough 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 horticulture.*

## Directors for 2020/21

President – Susan MacMillan  
Past Co-President - Trudy Bliedung  
Vice President - Open  
Treasurer - Trudy Bliedung  
Recording Secretary - Tessa Morris  
Publicity - Shared by VP and President  
Facebook Admin. - Liz Visentin  
Newsletter Editor - Liz Visentin  
Flower Show and Trillium Judging Liaison- Ann Cochren  
Director at large - Christine Rowe  
Director at large - OPEN

## Committee Chairpersons

Bus Tour – Open  
Caring - Open  
Nominating Committee - Trudy Bliedung,  
Civic Improvement – Jan Bignell  
Communications Copywriter – Jennifer Godyn  
Garden Walk – Open  
Meeting Hospitality – Ann Williams  
Membership – Janet Waterfall  
OHA Website Monitor – Phil Longstaff  
Spring Plant Sale – Connie Godyn & Roxanne Riley  
Sign Standardization – Ann Cochren  
Speakers and Programs – Connie Godyn & Roxanne Riley

*"No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow."*

*English Proverb*