

# Flamborough Horticultural Society



## May 2023 Newsletter

### President's Message

Greetings Members

On behalf of the Board, I wish a warm welcome to our newest members in April, Denice Hill and Brenda Rowley. You have joined a great group of gardeners. We were saddened to hear of the loss of long time member Pat Bresnahan, sister of Life Member Rosemary Brown. Our thoughts are with you Rosemary.

May starts to get really busy. Part one of the potting up took place. Thanks to all who volunteered. We welcome more plants Friday May 5 from 1-3 PM. You have the list!

We also need volunteers for the Waterdown and Area Garden Walk; to help solicit garden hosts (template letter available and a grid method will be used so that we do not duplicate visits). We also need help the day of the Garden Walk at the registration tent that will be at Tessa Morris's house on Mill St. serving as home base. Please consider opening your garden. Last year we had a number of potential Garden Hosts who suggested the weekend before the long weekend for the garden walk as they were going to be away during the long weekend and could not open their back gardens so this year, we are going to try and see how it works out on June 24th to 25th. I have already received several phone calls from out of town visitors asking about the Garden Walk.

We will car pool to Whistling Gardens. In order to get the group discount rate, I need all people who plan to attend even if you are going in your own car on June 14, to notify me. Pre-payment is needed for the group discount. If you have not done so already, send me an email that you plan to participate. An email to you will also follow soon.

May 6 is the District AGM and thank you to those who volunteered to attend. We will not be winning the attendance prize this year but maybe next year. We are all part of District 6 and it is important that we are represented at the AGM. Cathy Kavassalis will be speaking and also provide an update on the invasive plant council. She is always a tireless and dynamic speaker. I was amazed the first time I heard her speak on the different toxins in plants. She really knows her plant chemistry among other talents.

Please remember to register as a judge or submit properties for a Trillium award. The more the better for Ward 15.

Janet will have the membership table set up for those of you who still need to renew for 2023.

Best wishes Susan MacMillan

## Meeting and Speaker Information

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

**Date:** Wed., May 17

**Time:** 7pm (refreshments)

**Speaker:** Kristen McCarthy

**Topic:** Mycorrhizal Fungi

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

**Flower Show:** An arrangement of spring flowers in a vase or container of your choice.

## April Flower Show Winners

The theme this month was to decorate an indoor tropical plant with spring blooms from the garden.

First Place: Liz Visentin



Second Place: Marilyn Higgins



Third Place: Martha Novoselac



## Upcoming Events

**District AGM**

**Date:** Sat., May 6

**Hosted by the Oakville Horticultural Society**

**Flamborough Horticultural Society Plant Sale**

**Date:** Sat., May 27

**Time:** 8am-1pm

**(Opening day of Farmer's Market)**

**Location:** Waterdown Legion

**[79 Hamilton St. N, Waterdown](#)**

**Early Bird Plant Sale! Saturday, May 20, 9am to 12pm at 2 Flanders Dr Waterdown.**

**Catch some early buys before the May 27 sale at the Waterdown Farmers Market.**

**Cash only.**

**Proceeds to the Flamborough Horticultural Society Speaker Fund.**

## May GardenTasks

- Remove faded flower heads of spring bulbs. Let stems die down before removal.
- Harden off seedlings before planting
- Plant cold-sensitive vegetables like tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, pumpkins, zucchini and squash and cucumbers after the last frost and protect them if necessary. It's best to wait until soil temperature is 60 degrees. Harden off before transplanting.
- As you plan your vegetable garden, include some flowering herbs and annuals in it to encourage the beneficial insects to visit your garden. 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. Oregano in bloom is a bee magnet.
- 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.
- Alternatively, use a long board to distribute your weight across a large area if you need to walk or place stepping stones throughout your bed.
- Turn compost piles.
- Repair lawn damage with soil and overseeding.
- Mulch garden beds.

### Reading Corner:

Online Field Guide to Ontario Wildflowers  
[Ontario Wildflowers](#)

Ontario Nature Blog  
[Going Wild for Native Plants](#)

## Tulips: Did You Know?



My early tulips are just bursting into bloom to join the daffodils as April comes to an end. Last fall I planted some late blooming tulips so I am anticipating a longer "tulip season" this year! However much to my chagrin, the lovely deep burgundy/red tulips that were sold to commemorate Canada's 150th celebration no longer emerge. This is many a gardener's chagrin: the loss of tulips; not just to squirrels! While they are known as perennial bulbs, they are not as long lived as many others. "Tulips are indeed true perennials," explains Frans Roozen, director of the International Flower Bulb Center in Hillegom, the Netherlands. "Getting them to bloom in your garden year after year is no problem, **if** your garden happens to be located in the foothills of the Himalayas or the steppes of eastern Turkey!" According to Roozen, the tulip - an oriental native first introduced to the Western world some 400 years ago - is at its perennial best in conditions that match the cold winters and hot, dry summers of its native regions. Our conditions do not replicate these conditions, especially since our tulips are often in beds that we water during the summer, thus depriving them of the hot dry conditions which they require. Bulbs can be lifted (once the leaves have

died back) stored and subsequently replanted in the fall, but few of us are motivated to do this work!

Here are some tips for how to get more blooms out of tulips. Buy bulbs that are marked for naturalizing or perennializing. Generally species or botanical tulips and their hybridized strains are a good bet. These are cultivated bulbs that have not been extensively cross-bred and thus are very close to the bulb as found in nature. Though cross-breeding or hybridizing sometimes diminishes a tulip's ability to "perennialize," other times it enhances this ability. These hybrids are most likely to be longer lived in the garden:

1. All the Darwin Hybrids in red, rose, orange, yellow and two-tone colors
2. Emperor Tulips
3. Some Triumph Tulips
4. All "species tulips" (wild flower tulips) are totally perennial

In the meantime, these maintenance tips will help to extend the life of the bulbs and to increase chances of rebloom:

1. Plant bulbs in a well-drained area. This is always good advice for planting bulbs, and is essential for naturalizing or perennializing. Wet soil promotes fungus and disease and can even rot bulbs. Adding organic matter such as well rotted cows manure or compost can also help facilitate drainage.
2. In the spring, after the blossoms have passed their peak, clip off the flower heads and allow the green foliage to die back. This technique lets the plant put all its energy into building a strong bulb for next season.

3. Fertilize in fall with a low nitrogen (or bulb fertilizer). If you did not do this in the fall, then fertilize in the spring with a high nitrogen fast release fertilizer as the first shoots appear. This will promote future performance.

Read more here:

[Perennial Tulips by Larry Hodgson](#)  
[Species Tulips](#)

## Garden Myths: Eggshells

There are claims that eggshells do spectacular things for the garden. Some people even put whole eggs in the hole before adding a plant. There are theories touted about calcium deficiency in plants causing issues such as blossom end rot in tomatoes. Adding eggshells to soil to give an instant calcium boost has no basis in fact. Calcium deficiency is rare in nature. Except for sandy soil, most soil has enough calcium because it sticks to clay.

Most plants are usually not calcium deficient, and if they are, it's not because calcium is lacking in the soil but it's due to poor uptake of calcium by the plant most often caused by insufficient water. Calcium is taken up by roots from the soil solution and delivered to the plant via the xylem (water transportation system). Calcium cannot be actively moved or transported within a plant after it is absorbed. Thus, blossom end rot in tomatoes is technically a calcium problem, but it actually happens because there is **not enough or not consistent water available for the plant** to transport available calcium into the fruit. When the sun shines on the plant, moisture



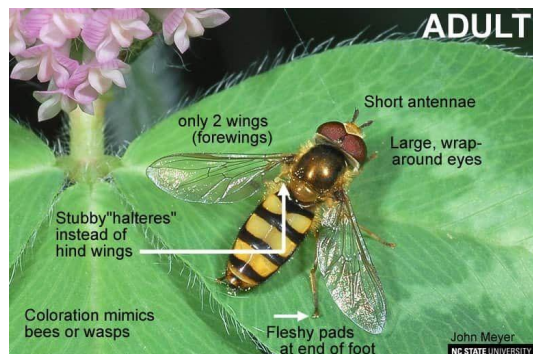
is given off the plant during transpiration which cools the plant and prevents burning. Soft tomato leaves have more transpiration going on than tomato fruit with tough, leathery skin. When there is not enough available ground moisture, the leaves win every time. The more deprived it is of water, defective fruits will be more prevalent. Thus, when watering especially during times of drought it is important to water deeply.

Applying epsom salts is also not effective as it does not contain calcium and has no influence on soil pH. In fact, magnesium can compete with calcium for uptake, so Epsom salts may have a negative effect on calcium uptake.

Another potential cause is overfertilization with nitrogen when plants begin flowering and fruiting, which can promote vegetative growth and increased moisture loss through leaves. Use a fertilizer 2 to 3 times higher in phosphorus (the middle number on a fertilizer label) than nitrogen (the first number).

Remove any fruit affected by blossom end rot when symptoms are noticed. This helps plants to utilize available resources for ripening the remaining fruit.

### Flower flies (scientific name: **Syrphidae**)



Commonly called Hover Flies, these are

completely harmless insects often mistaken for a bee or wasp. Of the nearly 900 species in North America (there are about 25 species in Ontario), most have yellow and black stripes and are excellent mimics of wasps or bees, which helps them avoid predation. They will at times land on humans, attracted by moisture and salts on our skin, but they do not sting. Flower flies are not only important as pollinators in farms and gardens, but they also help to control pests like aphids.

**OHA Website: Includes link to Trillium Newsletter [Garden Ontario](#)**

### Consider Planting Prairie Smoke



(Geum triflorum)

A beautiful low growing, clump forming, drought tolerant native perennial that is very appealing around rock gardens and ponds. It has basal clumps of ferny, blue-green, hairy leaves and reddish-purple, bell-shaped flowers that hang in groups of three. Bloom time is late spring through early summer. Clumps of feathery, plumed, pink-gray fruits stay on the plant much of the summer. The leaves of prairie smoke turn deep red in fall and are sometimes evergreen. It also serves as a great pollinator plant, attracting beneficial insects, like native bees.

Read more here: [Prairie Smoke](#)

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

**Northland Nursery : Tell them you are a FHS member when purchasing and FHS will receive a rebate at the end of the season.** A family run nursery at 722 Concession 5 W, Millgrove. Now open! (9am to 5pm 7 days a week) [Northland](#)

**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)  
PO Box 902 Waterdown ON L0R 2H0

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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 2022/23

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

***"I've always felt that having a garden is like having a good and loyal friend."***

—

***C. Z. Guest***