

# WINONA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY



## Newsletter

March 2024



## SPRING IS HERE!!!



It arrived last night at 11:06 P.M. and yes, it seems early, but that's because of the leap year! :D

Spring arrived at the Gage Park Greenhouse last week with the Spring Tide Bulb Show.

They were featuring pollinators, mostly bees, with the blooms.

Notice the citrus on these trees...



Did you plant any spring bulbs last fall? Mine definitely think it's spring and are growing happily!

Have you started some seeds yet? If not, tonight's seed swap should be a great way to get going!

Remember to save the date for our **95<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party & D6 Fall Dinner**

Sunday, 27 October, 2024 3 P.M.

We will be asking you, our members, for ideas and tips. We want to showcase WinHort and Winona !

**Sunny Blooms & Happy Spring!**

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## Notices and Events

### ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS

680 Plains Road, Burlington

#### **Nature's Superheroes: Life at the Limits – continues to April 21**

Life is full of unexpected wonders. Over billions of years, living things have evolved from simple cells into an awe-inspiring array of life forms—a spectacle of colours, textures, behaviours, specialized parts and exacting skills.

Some species are familiar, while others are so amazing that they test the limits of our imagination. Get to know some of these incredible creatures at RBG's Winter Exhibit. This is a time-ticketed exhibition, pre-registration is required. For details visit <https://www.rbg.ca/things-to-do/by-season/special-events/winter-exhibit/>

#### **Eclipse Prep and Viewing Experiences – SOLD OUT**

#### **The Joy of Birding – April 12 9am**

Another session with instructor, Catherine Manschot, and other birders to explore and get to know birds better. Registration is kept to a small group size of 12 registrants, and takes place in a variety of habitats on RBG lands. Participants will be notified of the program's location via email at least 48 hours prior to program date. 2-3 hours long, for more experienced birders. \$20 (+ 1\$ Service fee & HST) per session. Members 10% off. Must pre-register by April 9. More dates available. <https://www.rbg.ca/events/the-joy-of-birding-intermediate-2/>

#### **Seed Library**

RBG provides seeds that you borrow, grow, and then return. Whether you are new to gardening, interested in growing a greater diversity of plants, or invested in supporting a community of growers, the seed library will help you meet those goals. The seed library focuses on herbaceous perennials, grasses, annuals, and trees and shrubs although some food plants are also available. There are two lists: one containing only perennials and grasses, and the other with annuals, veggies and woody perennials. You may request up to 8 seed varieties, to make sure you get some of your preferred seeds, but only 5 will be supplied. Place your requests early, as seed supply is limited. More at <https://www.rbg.ca/plants-conservation/science/library-archives/seed-library/>

RBG offers a great lineup of fun, and educational programs for all ages. Call 905 527-1158 or visit their website [www.rbg.ca](http://www.rbg.ca) To borrow the WHS member's passes contact H el ene or Krysl.

### **WHS BOARD MEETING – Wednesday, March 27 7pm**

At Anne's.

### **THE BIGGEST HOUR FOR EARTH (Earth Hour) – Saturday, March 23, 2024 8:30 to 9:30 pm**

Switch off lights, and give an hour for Earth. An annual event since 2007, turning lights off for one hour shows symbolic support for the planet, and raises awareness of the environmental issues it faces. [www.earthhour.org](http://www.earthhour.org)

### **HALDIMAND SEEDY SUNDAY – Sunday April 7 10am to 4pm**

Riverside Exhibition Centre, 151 Caithness St. E., Caledonia

Speakers: Kevin Kavanagh (Growing Importance of Gardening for Nature); Cat McGill (Intro to Plant Therapy); Kerry Royer (Benefits of Native Plants); plus, arborist, Ian Wagner will answer questions. Food, youth activities, vendors, pine needle basket weaving demo, and more. \$5 Food bank donations appreciated.

### **TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE – Monday, April 8 2:04pm to 4:31pm**

The darkest part of the eclipse is at 3:18pm and lasts for 1 min and 50 secs.

Safe-viewing glasses available from the Hamilton Public Library, free of charge.

### **WHS NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, April 17 7:30 pm**

St. John's Anglican Church Hall, Winona

Cathy Swain, formerly of Van Noort Bulbs, will share her extensive knowledge of summer/fall flowering bulbs.

### **D6 AGM & FLOWER SHOW – Saturday, April 20 8am to 1pm**

Caledonia Lions Hall, 177 Haddington St., Caledonia

Hosted by Haldimand Horticultural Society, celebrating their 40th Anniversary. Attendees are encouraged to wear red for the Ruby Anniversary or orange for colour of the year. Speaker is Lorraine Johnson on "Putting more native plants back in the garden". \$20 WinHort will subsidize. Must register by April 12.

#### **District 6 Workshop – Tufarooms – Following the AGM 2pm**

Elsie's Workshop, 4064 Hwy 6, Hagersville

Create Hypertufa mushrooms for your garden. \$25 - \$50 See poster on back page.

### **OHA 116TH CONVENTION 2024: The Heartland of Gardens Growing and Rivers Flowing – July 12 to 14**

Hosted by Districts 7 & 8, at the Delta Hotels Conference Centre in Guelph

Time to start thinking about this year's convention. So much to see and do, including workshops and seminars, vendors, competitions, and more! WHS will subsidize the cost of registration.

Go to <https://gardenontario.org> for details.

## **Tonight's Speaker**

Tonight, it is once again our pleasure to welcome Catherine "Cat" McGill as our speaker. Always fun to be with, and ever knowledgeable, Cat's talks are gems of wisdom, embellished with the joys and challenges of life. And hers is a life well-lived.

Over the years, Cat has worn many hats, including blacksmith, horse trainer, and riding instructor, but her passion for gardening, especially in our "golden years", is what brings her to us this evening. Cat has owned and operated a garden maintenance business for more than 40 years, where many of her clients are seniors. Besides that, she is a Horticultural and Design judge, putting good use to her expansive knowledge of plants. For several years she was OHA Director of District 6, over-seeing 21 hort societies, as well as serving as Southwest rep for the board of OHA, helping directors of all the other districts!

Cat is officially retired from it all, but as she says, "once a volunteer always a volunteer". She is still the administrator on gardenontario, District 6 and Haldimand Horticultural Society Facebook pages.

Cat describes herself as "aging, round, and humour in a nutshell", wonderful qualities to exemplify her motto: "If you can't see the humour in what you are doing - why are you doing it?"

*"Gardening adds years to your life and life to your years"* (Unknown)

*"Old gardeners never die; they just spade away, then throw in the trowel."*  
(Herbert V. Prochnow)

## **Gardening at any age**

Many of the world's centenarians share one common hobby: gardening. Not only does it help you live longer, gardening at any age helps you grow!

For many of us, our first gardening experience was in early school days, growing a bean sprout in a glass jar. Remember the fascination of seeing the seed swell, then the tiny shoot emerging, and soon a fully developed plant with roots and leaves and everything?! Perhaps it's that feeling of creating life that keeps us gardening well into our senior years, but there are so many great benefits to gardening, that it's hard not to!

The first that comes to mind is fresh air and sunshine. Cleaner air promotes deep breathing, which helps to relieve stress, and sunshine provides our bodies with a source of Vitamin D, to lower blood pressure and boost our mood.

Moderate exercise helps to keep bones and muscles strong. It improves hand strength and dexterity, and can even reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes. And fun fact: digging in the dirt can boost the immune system, because working with the soil

exposes people to *Mycobacterium vaccae*, bacteria which, according to some studies (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00213-019-05253-9>), has anti-inflammatory, immunoregulatory, and stress resilience properties.

There are also significant benefits to our mental health. Having a garden that needs our attention can help foster a sense of purpose, and watching it grow imparts a real sense of accomplishment. It's a wonderful way to stay engaged! Research shows that this kind of focus is good therapy for people with dementia, and may even help to prevent it. (<https://www.neurology.org/doi/10.1212/wnl.0000000000007021>)

As we continue to garden into advancing years, we should not let "numbers" discourage us. Nowadays there are so many tips and tools available to make the work accessible, that there is no reason to give up our favourite hobby. JB

<https://www.epicgardening.com/elderly-gardening/>  
<https://www.nextavenue.org/gardening-helps-you-grow-at-any-age/>  
<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/benefits-of-gardening>  
<https://gardenerspath.com/how-to/hacks/benefits-gardening-seniors/>  
<https://sowsmallgarden.com/benefits-of-gardening/>

## **Equinox vs Equilux – what's the difference?**

Yesterday, March 19, 2024, marked the "spring equinox", or the first day of astronomical spring. The term equinox means "equal night", when day and night are supposedly each 12 hours long. However, this is not entirely true. Because the Earth's atmosphere acts like a lens and refracts (bends) the sun's light above the edge of the horizon, we actually can see sunlight for a few minutes before sunrise, and another few after sunset. Thus, the length of daylight on any given day is increased by six or seven minutes. In spring, this means that the time when day and night are actually equal happens a few days before the equinox, and is known as the equilux ("equal light").

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-47660337>  
<https://www.farmersalmanac.com/spring-equinox-first-day-spring>

## **Solar Eclipse**

On April 8, a spectacular and rare celestial event is set to unfold over Canada, the United States and Mexico – a total solar eclipse. As the Moon aligns perfectly between Earth and the Sun, temporary darkness will sweep across parts of the country. In Hamilton, the event begins at 2:04pm and is 2 hours and 27 min in length. The total eclipse is at 3:18pm. This will be the last major eclipse for 20 years!

<https://www.asc-csa.gc.ca/eng/astronomy/eclipses/total-solar-eclipse.asp>  
<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/total-solar-eclipse-sun-science-viewing-2024>

## Membership Renewal

Many thanks to those who have already renewed for 2024; but if you haven't, why not do it tonight? At only \$10 single, or \$20 family, it's a great bargain. Some of the benefits include: access to OHA resources; OHA *Trillium* (available to download at <https://gardenontario.org>); participation in OHA and District events, such as AGMs, workshops and flower shows, and the OHA Convention; RBG group membership; WHS Newsletter; discounts at selected garden centres; and notification of gardening events and offers. Best of all, you get to meet and talk with other like-minded gardeners!

## Summer Garden Help Wanted

In spite of the wintry blasts we're getting this week, it's not too early to think ahead to spring and summer gardening. As soon as the nice weather hits, we will be needing volunteers to help look after the WHS beds at St. John's and the Post Office. This will include dead-heading, weeding, planting, and watering. If you are able and willing to lend a hand with any of that, please let us know.

## OHA 116th CONVENTION 2024

Hosted by Districts 7 & 8, with the theme "**The Heartland of Gardens Growing and Rivers Flowing**", this year's Convention takes place at Delta Hotels Conference Centre, in Guelph Ontario, from July 12-14.

Although there are many fun things to do over the weekend, the bus tours are a great way to meet people, while enjoying the unique attractions of the host district. This year there will be four tours, each running on Friday and Saturday, leaving at 1pm and 4:30pm. Featured are: The Green Legacy Programme, and Aspen Grove Gardens; University of Guelph's Trial Gardens, and Arboretum; Guelph Floral Clock & Enabling Gardens, and Woodlawn Cemetery; and Historical Blooms at McCrae House, Basilica of our Lady Immaculate, Cottage Garden and Guelph Wellington Hospice. Bus tours are \$45 per person, per trip. Sign up as part of registration, but don't leave it too late, as they fill up quickly!

Also not-to-be-missed at Convention are the competitions. Enter, or just admire the beautiful blooms in the Flower Show. Horticultural classes include annuals, perennials, and houseplants, and the Design classes are a showcase for Ontario's best, and most imaginative designers. Photography is always a favourite, and Creative Writing brings out the inner poet in all of us. (Some more than others – lol) There are also Arts, Publications, and Youth competitions, to round things out.

Any member in good standing, of an Ontario horticultural society, may enter any of the competitions. Get details on classes, and deadlines at [gardenontario.org/convention/](https://gardenontario.org/convention/)

## District 6 Workshop after AGM - Tufarooms

2 PM April 20th - After AGM and your lunch

4064 Hwy 6, Hagersville.

Watch for a sign at the end of the driveway.



2 options available:

Tops with wooden stumps for stems provided

Small \$25 large \$40

Hypertufa Tops and the Stems

Small \$35 Large \$50

Send payment in advance to [d.6treasurer@outlook.com](mailto:d.6treasurer@outlook.com)

Payment due by April 12th

*"Can words describe the fragrance of  
the very breath of spring?" Neltje Blanchan*

## Members' Corner

**As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions. Who would you like to have as future speakers? What kind of topics or activities interest you? Share gardening tips or pictures of your yard or garden. Please, drop us a line, send an e-mail, or talk to one of the Board members. This is the 2024 Board:**

President – Hélène Brûlé-Besner  
905 977-9329 [hebrulebesner@gmail.com](mailto:hebrulebesner@gmail.com)

Vice-president – Mark Shufflebottom  
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Secretary – position open

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