



Sharlene Desjardins for a Second Term as OHA President

Greetings!

I have been nominated and have accepted the nomination put forward by the Pembroke Horticultural Society for the position of President of the Ontario Horticultural Association for a second term. I have been within the umbrella of the OHA since I joined the Deep River Horticultural Society in 2012. Within the society I held many positions including President, Past President, Membership Chair, Yearbook Designer and Editor, Photo Competition Chair and Spring Flower Show Chair. In 2017, I also joined the Pembroke Horticultural Society.



I am married and have three children, two sons and a daughter. During their formative years, throughout winter and summer, we travelled extensively for hockey and figure skating and therefore, my introduction to gardening happened later in life. I worked full time for Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (now Canadian Nuclear Laboratories) for twenty-six years and I am currently retired and loving it.

Although I have been a member of the Skate Canada Eastern Ontario Board of Directors and an executive member of several other clubs and organizations, I would like to speak to you about my journey with the OHA.

Aside from being a member of the Deep River Horticultural Society, in 2015 I was asked to take over the position of interim Assistant District Director for District 2. I was elected to that position in 2016 and in the spring of 2017, the same year I joined the Pembroke Society, I was elected to the position of District Director. I found the position to be very rewarding and fulfilling and decided that I wanted to learn more about the organization.

In April of 2019, I resigned from the position of District Director to pursue the position of 2nd Vice President which I was filling on an interim basis. At the July 2019 convention I was elected to that position and held it until the 2021 convention when I was elected to the position of 1st Vice President. On July 23rd, 2023 I was elected to the position of President of the OHA.

I also hold the position of OHA Awards Coordinator which I find very rewarding. I appreciate all the work and research that societies/clubs and individuals include when applying for grants and awards. The time and effort that everyone across the province

puts into beautifying their communities and educating their members and residents is amazing and makes for some very interesting reading and potential vacation destinations.

I completed the OHA Judging School in November of 2020 and am a Certified Judge. I also completed the Master Gardener course at Dalhousie University to further my gardening knowledge.

During my time in the organization, I have learned a great deal and have become a better public speaker. I was a part of the Code of Conduct Committee for a term and spent a brief period of time on the Judging Committee. I Chair and fully participate in the monthly Officer and Finance Meetings where I continue to learn new things. I have prepared a power point presentation on awards and I participate in our educational and earth day events. I regularly participate in the creation of new guidelines and in creating standards for the Association as well as guides for the Districts, Societies and Clubs. For example, I have written the OHA Website Guidelines with input from the Officers and a society member and have completed revisions to the Awards and Grants booklet with input and feedback from the committee.

Although my gardening life began late, I find it to be calming and relaxing and all the people I have met have been helpful and friendly. We are an amazing group of people right across Ontario doing wonderful things for the environment and our own communities.

I am very excited to continue our work in moving the Association in new and exciting directions including a new endeavour that will bring fundraising opportunities to all Societies/Clubs and the Association. I have invested significant time and energy to the Association, its Districts and to the Societies and Clubs and have committed fully to this position. My time as President so far has been extremely rewarding and has come with its challenges. I am enjoying my time as an Officer of the Association and would like to continue this wonderful path I have embarked on. I am always interested in hearing comments or suggestions that any member has and I am always available for a chat, email or text. I hope you will consider me for reappointment to the position of President of the Association for a second term.

“To plant a garden is to dream of tomorrow” Audrey Hepburn

Respectfully submitted,

Sharlene Desjardins
OHA President