



# WHAT'S GROWING ON?

Spring/Summer 2002

*What's Growing On?* is a publication of **MASTER GARDENERS OF ONTARIO INC.**

MGOI Web Site: [www.interlog.com/~onthort/mg/mg.html](http://www.interlog.com/~onthort/mg/mg.html)

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

It was a surprise and an honour that the newest member of the MGOI Board (and still a MGIT) was elected President at the AGM in April. Maybe it is a punishment for still having to complete my Hort III course. I believe the challenge facing MGOI is to make it useful and meaningful to all the Master Gardeners in Ontario. With the support of our dedicated Board members I accept that challenge.

In addition to the challenge of relevance facing MGOI, the various MG Groups across the province are also faced with a number of challenges. The top five Hot Topics for MG Coordinators were dealt with at the successful Coordinators Workshop, held at our AGM in April. You should read about the 5 Hot Topics and the results of the Workshop input, which are detailed elsewhere in this Newsletter. It is now up to your Board to act on the recommendations coming out of that Workshop.

Having been on the Board for only a year, my preliminary assessment of the Master Gardener Groups across the province is that they are very diverse organizations with a common focus. Master Gardeners have three things in common: 1. A love of gardening, 2. A thirst for learning, and 3. The desire to share their knowledge with others.

The Groups are certainly diverse. Some are very successful: in recruiting new members, in providing stimulating and educational programs for their members, in providing informed gardening advice to the public through many means and in organizing fundraising activities to make them financially sound. These Groups are self-sufficient, and for them, MGOI is in many ways irrelevant.

On the other hand, there are some Master Gardener Groups who can't attract or limit the number of new members, when new members are the lifeblood of any volunteer organization. There are other groups where some of their members have yet to complete their Hort courses (some for years). And there are some groups, which are so cash strapped that they can't subsidize MIGITs' course costs, send delegates to MGOI meetings, or even have their members pay the annual \$15 membership fee to fund MGOI. These are the Groups that need the help, aid, and assistance of a vibrant, well-funded central organization.

MGOI has been so cash strapped since being set adrift by OMAFRA, that it has not been able to provide the many needed services to its member Groups, particularly those which need assistance. Unfortunately, most of the Board meetings I have participated in have been spent discussing our lack of resources. Most

suggestions for new initiatives are met with a chorus of "That's a great idea, but we can't afford it". Face-to-face Board meetings, so essential in building relationships and exchanging ideas, are not affordable. MGOI is an organization where becoming a Zone Director and member of the Board could be considered a punishment, rather than a reward or privilege. It is certainly a financial burden for the Zone Directors, as none of the costs for travel, phone calls and other communications are covered by the organization.

It is difficult for our Zone Directors to get out and do their job of meeting, supporting and encouraging the Groups in their Zone, even once or twice a year. There is an imbalance in the structure of the Zones, with some Zone Directors asked to support 6 Groups covering a third of the Province, while others serve a single group in a single city.

What to do?

First is to act on the recommendations emanating from the Coordinator's Workshop. You will be hearing more about this in the coming weeks.

Second, the communications and contact between and among MG Coordinators and their members should be improved. MGOI, through its Zone Directors, its Newsletter, its Internet Notice Board (formerly the Master Gardener LIST) and Web Site (yes we have one!), should be the clearing house for information about successful programs: in recruiting new members, in finding informative speakers and other educational opportunities and finally in fundraising

Third, MGOI must find effective ways to raise the money necessary for it to do its job and become meaningful for all the Groups and their members across the Province. You may be unaware that MGOI is a Registered Charity, able to issue Income Tax receipts for donations other than membership dues. This is an opportunity we plan to explore and exploit.

You may not be aware that some MG Groups volunteered to provide free gardening advice at a number of Zehr's stores this spring. The MG Groups involved received \$20 per hour for each volunteer hour provided by their members. There are other Groups who provided this same service to commercial enterprises for nothing, ... no hourly fee, not even an honorarium. I believe that MGOI should coordinate and expand the provision of informed free advice at Garden Centres across the province and receive a percentage of the honorariums earned.

In summary, there is lots to do, and with the support of your Board, we will begin to work on the challenges facing our organization. Please feel free to contact your Zone Director (e-mail addresses are listed on this page) with any comments, or suggestions you may have for improving how MGOI

can better serve the needs of Master Gardeners in Ontario. You may contact me directly at [venturecan@georgian.net](mailto:venturecan@georgian.net), but please copy your Zone Director.

Regards,

John W. Hethrington  
President, MGOI

### **VISIT THE MGOI WEB SITE**

for lists of hotlines  
MG history in Ontario  
and lots of other  
worthwhile stuff.

[www.interlog.com/~onthort/mg/mg.html](http://www.interlog.com/~onthort/mg/mg.html)

### **MGOI BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2002-2003**

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## SUCCESSFUL COORDINATORS WORKSHOP AT THE 2002 AGM

The 2002 AGM at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington included a two-hour Coordinators' Workshop. Lead by facilitator, David Marshall of the Burlington Master Gardeners, the five hottest topics among MGs across the province were tackled by the 19 Coordinators and other MGs who attended. The conclusions below are a combination of reports from Ralph Bullough, Thunder Bay and Dianne Vaughan, Burlington, whom we thank for their efforts of getting the essence of the discussions down on paper.

### DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. What hours count and what hours don't?  
(a discussion on the subject of our volunteer time - meeting time, public time, training time, travel time, preparation time, etc.)
2. Growing our numbers  
(a discussion on recruiting new members and our relationships with local horticultural societies.)
3. A Master Gardener 'Code of Conduct'  
(a discussion on attendance, fulfilling time commitments, finishing courses, behavior and discipline. And does the Board have a role in imposing disciplinary measures?)
4. Who is using the Master Gardener title and How?  
(a discussion regarding the commercial use of the title, Master Gardener.)
5. The MG-List and its use  
(a discussion of the pros and cons of The List.)

### A SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS

#### **Topic 1: What Hours Count and What Hours Don't?**

All agreed that the handbook is explicit. However, many groups still dispute the nature of the hours that count. It was stated that "hands on" hours should count where there is a demo with public participation or education involved. Beyond this, "hands on" hours become questionable. It is good PR, when looking for corporate funding, to show the number of projects and hours undertaken by Master Gardeners. Some groups have problems with members "padding" or exaggerating hours; e.g., extensive traveling time. There was a strong feeling that there should be some expansion and clarification of the definition of "Hours" considered by the Board and presented to the Groups for consideration.

#### **Topic 2: Growing Our Numbers**

Recruitment varies across the province. London-Middlesex hands out applications at home shows, etc., Norfolk runs newspaper articles, Simcoe has night classes, and Markham does it through the Parks Department. Every group uses the qualifying exam, and stresses the commitment to volunteer hours. London-Middlesex does 5-minute interviews, where the applicant talks on anything for 5 minutes; Thunder Bay has a mentoring system. In general, there seems to be no difficulty in recruiting new members, if the effort is made.

#### **Topic 3: Master Gardener "Code of Conduct"**

Every group has a few members who drag their heels with the courses, but there was no sense of the size of the problem. All monitor progress of courses. Many have "buddy systems" to help MGs in training to finish their courses. Some have rewards programs offering money after each course is completed, or upon graduation. Because of close relationships within the groups, some feel it is difficult to discipline members who have not completed their course work. Everyone agreed that a member that needs discipline should receive a letter from the Board. Ralph Bullough, Thunder Bay, pointed out that if courses were not finished in time or volunteer hours not done, that these members were not Master Gardeners and therefore were not covered by the insurance. All groups would like to see a different badge for all new MG's in training. Maybe a white background with green lettering. Because of the cost involved, these badges could be plain with no name, just "MG in Training," and the groups would purchase them. Upon completion of the course, the MGIT badges would be recycled for the next group. It was agreed that when a member leaves the group, all items with the MG logo should be returned.

#### **Topic 4: Who is using the Title & How**

It was felt that it is difficult to stop use of the title, Master Gardener, by non-members or former members. However, the Board should issue a strong warning letter to any person, having left the organization, who is reported as using the title. It is clear that members are not to use the title for personal gain; i.e., on business cards or in advertising. There was a lively discussion about people using the title in credits for a TV show or in the signature line of a written article. It was decided it was not such a bad thing for high profile people to indicate that they were Master Gardeners. There needs to be some further clarification from the Board as to how the title can and cannot be used.

## **Topic 5: The MG-List and its Use or Non-use**

The majority of people at the Workshop were not aware of the existence of the MG-List and still did not understand its use and how it might serve as a communication tool for Master Gardeners across the Province. Only 82 of 750 MG's in Ontario have signed on. It was pointed out that, in fact, the "List" is not a list at all, but rather an Internet Notice Board and an opportunity for the discussion of gardening topics among Master Gardeners in Ontario. A strong stance should be taken that the "List" is not a forum to launch questionable attacks on various persons, which has happened in the past and turned people off. If this occurs again, after a warning, the offending parties should be removed from the "List". MGOI Directors must be on the "List" and actively canvass groups to try out the service. At the Spring Board Meeting, in an effort to improve its use, it was decided to rename the "List", the "MG-NoticeBoard". It was felt that Avalon Hamlin, Sarnia, should do another article on how to access the MG-Notice Board to see if the number of MG's participating increases? If the MG-Notice Board is not used more, MGOI should come up with something better for use by all Master Gardeners for less money.

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### **OUR MG-NOTICEBOARD!**

#### **Formerly THE MG-LIST**

By Avalon Hamlin, Sarnia-Lambton

One of the services that MGOI provides to all its members **free of charge** is the "MG-List Serve". This is one of the most misunderstood and least used services offered by MGOI. Let me explain what it is, how it can be of service to every Master Gardener in Ontario and the changes that are being made to improve its use.

First of all, while it has been called the MG-List, it is not a "LIST" of Master Gardeners. And with only 82 out of over 700 Master Gardeners in Ontario signed up, it is not "serving" many members. For those not up on Internet terminology, a "LIST-Serve" allows any qualified person who has signed up to interact with the other persons who have signed up, by asking a question, making a comment or opening a discussion on horticultural topics. The hope is that other Master Gardeners, who have signed on to the service, will answer your question, or offer advice, or an opinion. It is also a place where MGOI can communicate with its members by posting notices. Our Provincial Administrator just posted the information about the University of Guelph increasing the fees for Hort I, II and III from \$190 to \$225 as of September 1, 2002. Master Gardeners of Ontario Inc. covers the cost of our MG-NoticeBoard, formerly the MG-List Serve, which enables members to interact via e-mail.

At the Spring Board meeting, your Directors decided, that in an effort to get more MG's using the service, to re-name it as the **MG-NoticeBoard** and to promote its use and explain again, how to use it. This change is now being implemented and we trust that technology will re-route messages sent to the old address, mg-list@eagle.ca to the new address, mg-noticeboard@eagle.ca

#### **HERE IS HOW IT WORKS**

To subscribe to the service, join in on the discussions, and read announcements, send an e-mail in plain text format, and **only in plain text format**, to majordomo@eagle.ca. In the body of the e-mail, type in the following message and only the following message: **subscribe mg-noticeboard**

**Please note, your name and e-mail address will not appear as part of a LIST and no other subscriber will have access to your e-mail address. Your privacy is assured. To unsubscribe, send an e-mail in plain text to majordomo@eagle.ca and type only the following text as the message: unsubscribe mg-noticeboard**

When you receive notification from the Eagle site that you have successfully subscribed, you may post messages by addressing your e-mails to **mg-noticeboard@eagle.ca**. When you send e-mails to this address, you will see your original message arrive in your mailbox; you will also receive all e-mails posted by other MG member subscribers. These may be answers to your questions, or new questions, or comments on some of the following:

- Gardening
- MG group operations
- Workshops
- Technical Updates
- Anything that pertains to Master Gardeners

If you want to keep all your mg-noticeboard e-mails together, create a message rule in your e-mail program.

For example, in Outlook Express

- Click on **Tools**
- Then click on **Message Rules**
- Then click on **Mail**.
- In the Mail Rules window click on **New**. Follow along with the numbers.
- 1. Click on **Where the Subject line contains specific words**.
- 2. Click on **Move it to the specified folder**.
- 3. Click on **specified** folder which takes you to your **Local folders** where you would create one called mg-noticeboard.

From then on all e-mails going through the MG-NoticeBoard would automatically go into this folder. If you need help subscribing to the MG-NoticeBoard, or setting up the folder, contact me at hamlin@ebtech.net

## **NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST AND PLACES IN BETWEEN – THE 38 MASTER GARDENER GROUPS**

**Algoma, Brantford, Bruce North, Bruce South, Burlington, Dundas, Durham Region (formerly Brooklin), Dunnville-Haldimand, Elgin County, Essex-Windsor), Grey, Guelph-Wellington, Haliburton County, Huron, Kitchener-Waterloo, Lake Simcoe S., Lanark, Lindsay, London-Middlesex, Mississauga, Muskoka-Parry Sound, Niagara, North Bay, Norfolk, Ottawa-Carleton, Oxford, Peterborough, Prince Edward County, Quinte-Tweed, Renfrew County, Rideau-1000 Islands (previously Gananoque Sarnia-Lambton, Simcoe County, Stratford, Sudbury, Temiskaming, Thunder Bay and its 2 satellites, Geraldton and Rainy River District, and Toronto**

### **In Memorium**

**Jake Reid**  
Essex-Windsor

## **ELGIN**

By Diane Vaughan

For the past 3 years, we have staged a gardening day, *Digging in the Dirt*, for the public which has proved very popular. Initially, we brought in speakers from various sources, but this year we felt confident enough to present it all ourselves. We did sessions on *Plant Propagation, Ferns, Butterfly Gardening, and Making Living and Dried Wreaths*. The day was concluded by our annual auction of garden related items. The response was very gratifying and judging from the comments on the survey sheets, we had a successful formula. Plans are already being made for next year's event to take place on April 12. Why not join us and share in the fun!

Two years ago we undertook to renovate the old English church gardens in St. Thomas. This is a very ongoing project as we constantly battle Goutweed growing in the ravine behind. So far we have reclaimed a garden abutting the church by putting down black plastic covered by mulch. We also put in 2,500 daffodils, various roses, and a shrub border. A local retirement home garden - a new task - is planted with material from the residents' own gardens and gift plants. As you can imagine this is a real hodgepodge, and you dare not discard anything! In the county we have members renovating a school garden that was left to go semi wild. As you can see, we are not at a loss for something to do!

## **LANARK**

By Amy Pokorny

For the last eight years our group has conducted evening gardening courses during the fall and winter sessions of continuing education courses at the local branch of Algonquin College. They are usually one evening, 3 hours a week, for 4 or 5 weeks with two or three members presenting information on one or two topics each evening. We have rotated the topics over the years. The response has always been good and the last course, in February and March, attracted 21 registrants. In addition to the advertising by Algonquin College the group published details of the subjects to be covered.

Algonquin College sets the fee for the course and this year it was \$110. Our group received \$30 per hour or \$450 for the 5-week course:

1. Course Outline; Hardy Perennials; Introduction to Wildflowers
2. Evergreen Trees and Shrubs; Weed Control, Organic, Herbicides, Mulches; Drought, Shade and Special Problems
3. Indoor Plants - Demonstration; Soil Composition, Testing and Amending
4. A Small Backyard Fruit Orchard; Garden Tools and Equipment - Demonstration; Pruning of Fruit Trees - demonstration
5. All About Lawns and Ground Covers: Course Review, Questions and Critique

Occasionally we offer day-long seminars to the public and every other year we have a garden tour, alternating between the Perth and Almonte areas. The money raised pays our individual dues to MGOI and provides subsidies to help MGIT's with the cost of the Guelph courses.

We are also building up our library. Included in our collection are *Bioplanning a North Temperate Garden* by Diana Beresford-Kroeger; *Gardening with Perennials*, a Rodale Garden book; *Seed Germination Theory and Practice* and its two supplements by Dr. Norman Deno; and *Shrubs of Ontario* by Trevor Cole.

## **MISSISSAUGA**

By Julie Krahule,

Imagine giving a total of about 800 children a taste of the joys of gardening! Organized by the members of the Mississauga Master Gardeners, the *Kids Make It & Take It Garden* was one of the most popular venues at this year's *Success With Gardening Show*, March 14 to 17, at the International Centre, near Toronto International Airport.

The Royal Bank of Canada and Claritin sponsored the Garden, in conjunction with the

Ontario Horticultural Association and Mississauga Master Gardeners. Humber Nurseries Ltd., White Rose Home & Garden Centres, Naka Greenhouses and Holland Imports Inc. provided most of the material in the Garden. Mississauga Master Gardeners provided all other items, such as toys, props and educational material.

The Garden was staffed by over 55 volunteers from various horticultural societies, OHA members and Master Gardener groups. Mississauga Master Gardeners, Julie Krahule, Kathryn Fleming and Christine Says, began planning this event during the past summer. Many people worked hard to prepare for the Kids Garden and without them this event would not have been possible. Overall, our participation in the *Success with Gardening Show* (this is our second year organizing the children's garden) has proved extremely worthwhile.

The approximately 800 visitors to the Garden ranged in age from 2 to 12. The Garden was divided into five main theme areas: insects, vegetable gardening, nature crafts, recycling (with a twist) and planting a pansy. Mississauga Master Gardeners wanted to demonstrate to children that if they want to help the environment, they could start by doing so in their own neighborhood, through gardening.

We showed our young visitors how to attract birds, plant seeds, press flowers and identify insects, all with very visual displays and demonstrations. Recycling was introduced in a humorous fashion, with the use of toys as containers for a variety of plants. The workshop on how to create a pine cone bird feeder attracted great interest from all ages.

Many adults appreciated the information about good and bad bugs and enjoyed vegetable gardening information. Each child was given a package of Scarlet Runner Pole Bean seeds, colouring sheets, a pine cone with an attached suet bird seed recipe and a potted pansy.

The displays also generated the interest of grandparents and health care providers, who came in to get ideas. I planted a pansy for two severely disabled children, who were propped up in their wheelchairs. They could neither speak nor move. The boy was asleep but the little girl was cognizant. Once I planted the pansy in front of her, I positioned the flower exactly where she could see it. Her eyelids started to flutter rapidly. This affected me

greatly, was very gratifying and one of my most memorable highlights. As I am also a member of the Canadian Horticultural Therapy Association, it reaffirmed my belief in the power of flowers.

## QUINTE-TWEED

By Eve Hyndman,

### A Rewarding Project!

Responding to a plea for help from a local secondary school, my husband and I, neighbours, and three garden club members showed up at the 30' x 40' greenhouse to give a hand. The project: to grow plants for sale to the community raising money for extras for the remedial teens and students.

Able assisted by two great owners of a local greenhouse, we ordered soil, plugs, plants, started seed and went to work. Teaching 6 to 7 students, a teacher and her assistant, with volunteers from the garden club, we started breaking up the soil, filling cell packs and pots, planting seeds and trays. With each lesson taught, the teens became more open and trusting. We celebrated birthdays with cookies; we ran runner bean races; we finally joked and got ready for our sale.

It was a sea of geraniums, petunia, impatiens and marigolds. Our patio pots of a tomato, parsley and chives, our "Salad in a Pot," were a great success. We sold out of everything, a tribute to our hard working "kids".

In September 2001, we brought in our own geraniums, ivies and coleus and took cuttings. Zonal and ivy geraniums warmed our days with their bright flowers. In January 2002, we ordered seed. The 1<sup>st</sup> of March we transplanted 3,500 Zonal Geraniums. Our tomatoes are Early Girl and Ultra Sweets. We have trays of African Marigolds and Tagetes, lobelia, alyssum, asters, parsley, cilantro, basil and snapdragons. We are awaiting 5,000 plugs of impatiens and petunias. This year we are aiming for 250 hanging baskets, 30 window boxes and 50 patio gardens. This year's crew: 12 new remedial students, 5 garden club members and I, a 65-year-old Master Gardener whose nails will never be clean again, but who is also having the time of her life!

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**Master Gardeners of Ontario Inc. gratefully acknowledges a generous donation from Ralph Bullough, International MG Representative.**

## MG FEATURES

### The Quiet Beauty of Ferns

By Amy Pokorny, Lanark

According to field guides, Ontario claims a couple of dozen species of ferns. In Lanark County it is easy to find and use about a dozen attractive ones, so long as we can offer them precisely their accustomed habitat. Begin by looking in fairly shady places or open woods. Though most thrive in wet or fairly moist soil, others, such as the Common Polypody *Polypodium virginianum* is perched in rocky crevices and on sunny banks. It survives drought and sun.

Ostrich Fern *Matteuccia struthiopteris*, A is large and vigorous and according to the books is found in swamps and moist woodland patches, but it was often used in farmyards. I've had it growing for twenty-five years on a fairly shady, dry side of my house. It can be picked up on little side roads between the ditch and the roadbed. If it is happy, it can grow over a metre high and spreads by rhizomes. The fertile fronds are good for dried flower arrangements and the young shoots are edible.

Sensitive Fern *Onoclea sensibilis* has two kinds of fronds. The female frond is much shorter than the male and like the Ostrich Fern, the spore frond persists all winter, while the male frond dies back in the fall. It can be propagated by division in the fall. The 8-10 inch fertile frond is good in small floral arrangements. Look for Sensitive Fern in open patches of woodland that are submerged in the spring.

Maidenhair Fern *Adiantum pedatum* is daintily beautiful, fairly rare and definitely difficult to keep in the garden.

The Bracken Fern *Pteridium aquilinum* is a coarse fern that grows in big patches in dry open spaces. It can invade pastures.

Shield Ferns *Dryopteris* sp., about eight species, have a tendency to hybridize and are difficult to identify. The local ones grow individually, not in groups. The fronds are evergreen. I believe our Lanark species are *D. marginalis* in drier places and *D. clintoniana* in moist areas.

We have three magnificent *Osmundas*. *O. regalis* lives in water at stream edges. It is called the Royal Fern. *O. cinnamomea* or Cinnamon Fern; the fertile stalk, when young, has cinnamon coloured sporangia. It grows on stream banks. *O. claytoniana* or Interrupted Fern grows in moist woods or swampy margins. The blades of the fronds are interrupted in the middle by the fertile pinnae. These last two are easy to identify because they are strikingly different from other ferns.

If you want a fern that looks like a Boston Fern you may be able to find either a Christmas Fern *Polystichum acrostichoides* or a Brown's Holly Fern

*P. Brownii*. Their sori are on the underside of the pinnae and they are evergreen.

When you assess a habitat, note whether there is dappled shade or sun, water in the spring or throughout the entire summer, the approximate depth of soil and, if your field guide mentions it, the acidity of the soil. Ferns of the right species can be useful along ditches, fences or hedges, areas in which it is a nuisance to mow grass. Ostrich Fern is one of the most useful.

### MYKE, The New Gardening Supplement

By Norma Evans, Peterborough

This "new" product was "introduced" at *Canada Blooms*. Perhaps it is not so new as the pamphlet that accompanied each purchase claims it has been tested in over 50 universities worldwide for more than 75 years. And we are just getting it now? Apparently it is a natural product that contains the most beneficial organism for plants, mycorrhizae, and it reduces the need for fertilizers and pesticides by half. This product seems to have dropped onto the market with little fanfare—few if any ads, or articles, etc. The pamphlet contains endorsements by Larry Hodgson, Mark Cullen and Gaetan Hamel using words like incredible, extraordinary, revolutionize. Boxes are in the stores so you may want to give it a try as "it produces spectacular plant growth; amazing results; improved yield; enhanced plant quality; and magnificent, lush, robust plants!" If this is true, we all want to know more. Some of my new transplants have a dose of this and I am waiting. Produced by Premier Tech Biotechnologies, 1-800-606-6926 [www.premiertech.com](http://www.premiertech.com)

### Perennial Perques

By Elma Vanags, Rideau-Thousand Islands

According to Environment Canada the summer of 2001 was the ninth consecutive unusually warm summer. In the Great lakes/St. Lawrence region it was also the driest summer in 58 years of recorded weather data. The farmland between Windsor and Kitchener, the best in Canada, endured the driest eight weeks on record in the middle of the growing season. It was a challenge to garden. I had to make many difficult choices. Which plants do I continue watering and which ones do I abandon?

The 2000/2001 winter was the first old-fashioned cold winter in 20 years and it refused to loosen its grip when spring arrived. By contrast the 2001/2002 winter was the warmest ever recorded. Incredibly, Toronto had not yet experienced a killing frost by December 13. Except for shallow bays and inlets the Great Lakes were ice-free by beginning March. Many pests and disease pathogens are likely to survive such a mild winter.

The summer of 2000 was a rare anomaly in a series of hot and dry summers. It was the third wettest

summer recorded in Canada. Although the average temperature was only slightly below normal, overcast skies contributed to the gloom. A measurable amount of rain fell somewhere in Ontario every day in June. In July, Late Blight, which I had not seen before, killed all my tomato and many of my potato plants in a couple of days.

El Nino and La Nina are responsible for some abnormal weather patterns but not for all. Contributions by humankind to global warming are becoming increasingly more likely. We will have to use our knowledge, ingenuity and adaptability when gardening in years to come. What a challenge for Master Gardeners!

A few years ago I decided to start a low-maintenance and heat and drought resistant perennial flower bed. A pallet of crimson, purple, violet and rose would be complemented by contrasting yellow and cooling white. I chose the following plants (roughly in order of flowering):

**Pyrethrum Daisy** *Tanacetum coccineum* complementing **Lamb's Ears** *Stachys lanata* with small but showy crimson flowers early, silver foliage; an early flowering yellow scented **lily** [Stella d'Oro?]; **Sundrops**, *Oenothera tetragona* long-lasting flower, shiny green foliage turning dark red in fall, showy red buds; **Blue Sage** *Salvia nemorosa* long blooming period, if cut back after flowering frequently will flower again towards the end of summer; **Shasta Daisy** *Leucanthemum superbum* provides eye resting point; **Coreopsis** *Coreopsis lanceolata* early bright yellow flowers blooms until fall, easily crowded out by other plants; **Bellflower** *Campanula carpatica* blue purple flowers early in the summer; **Balloon Flower** *Platycodon grandiflorus* purple and white flowers July and August; **Feverfew** *Chrysanthemum parthenium* attractive white flowers, self-seeds; **Purple Coneflower** *Echinacea purpurea* spectacular plant blooming from early summer til fall, interesting seed pods, invasive, crowded out White Coneflower in a couple of years; **White Coneflower** *Echinacea purpurea* 'White Swan' nice complement to the purple one; **False Sunflower** *Heliopsis helianthoides* reaching a height of 150 cm, long flowering period, excellent for middle of the perennial bed; **Yarrow** *Achillea millefolium* many varieties; **Globe Thistle** *Echinops ritro* Favourite rabbit food! (As soon as it grew a little, sharp rabbit teeth cut it down to ground level. Never reached flowering stage. No other flowers were touched. I gave up.); **Brown-eyed Susan** *Rudbeckia triloba* similar to Black-eyed Susan, long flowering into fall; **Garlic Chives** *Allium tuberosum* white flowers and interesting seedpods late season; **Stonecrop 'Autumn Joy'** *Sedum spectabile* 'Autumn Joy' rose to purple flowers lasting well into October.

## MY HORTICULTURAL HISTORY

By John Hethrington, Toronto

The following tale of 50 years of gardening was effective in getting me into the Toronto Master Gardeners.

1948-49 Upper Canada College, Prep School, Toronto President, Junior Farmers Club

1948-52 Forced child labour in my parents' one-acre garden near St. Clair & Yonge Sts., Toronto.

1951-53 The Harry Bickle Garden, Toronto Allowed to cut the grass in this famous iris hybridizer's garden, but no weeding.

1953 Vineland Experimental Station Spent the summer as a Horticultural Assistant, pulling weeds at this federal experimental station. The Director was a world-renowned lily hybridizer and the Station was a test garden for new gladioli varieties. Assisted in judging the "Garden of the Year" for the St. Catharines Horticultural Society.

1954 The Gardening Service (Part I) Toronto Launched a garden maintenance service for doctors away on summer holidays.

1955-57 The Grand Tour of Europe (slides of hundreds of gardens), first year U of T Engineering, geological surveys in Northern Ontario, work on the Toronto breakwater.

1958-61 The Gardening Service (Part II) Toronto/Oakville/Kleinberg Built a landscape and garden maintenance business to pay for a BA and MBA the UWO Business School. The business grew to 120 clients, two crews, and landscaping projects for famous people like Pierre Burton in Kleinburg. Sold the business to my Italian immigrant foreman, Rocco Sciotti, who is still operating.

1963-64 The Gardening Service (Part III) Pierrefonds, Que. As a young advertising executive in Montreal and a new homeowner in suburban Pierrefonds, landscaped model homes for the Greendale housing project and the Greendale Marina. Worked on my own home too.

1966-68 Joined Bombardier and landscaped a new home in Sherbrooke, Que.

1969-72 Bombardier's Marketing Department moved back to Montreal where I landscaped an established home in Beaconsfield, Que.

1972-96 Moved back to Toronto with Benson & Hedges Tobacco where I landscaped a ravine-side, century home in Rosedale. For 24 years, operated a management consulting practice, Venturecan Ltd., planted and replanted extensive sun and shade perennial gardens.



1996-01 Moved to a Rosedale townhouse and completely refurbished a 19' x 130' downtown garden which was featured on the Moredale and Civic Garden Centre garden tours, summer 2000. I may have been Rosedale's last dirt gardener.

2000-2002 Joined the Toronto Master Gardeners group. Still working on Hort III.

2001 + Appointed Zone Director of MGOI, representing the Toronto Master Gardeners Group.

2001 + Moved Venturecan Consulting and my long suffering wife to 2 acres, high up on Blue Mountain to start all over again. We bought a breathtaking view of Thornbury, the Beaver Valley and Georgian Bay, with a post and beam house attached. We have almost completed some major renovations to the house, so I am allowed to start on the garden. Active as the gardening organizer for the Beaver Valley Probosc Club, Garden Group.

2002 Elected President of MGOI

## Perennial Plant of the Year 2002

From [www.perennialplant.org](http://www.perennialplant.org)

The Perennial Plant of the Year 2002 is **Phlox 'David'** Paniculata Group. It is an erect perennial 36-40" tall; the glossy leaves are thin with bristly hairs on the margins. The fragrant white flowers have a long bloom period during the summer and the plant performs well in zones 5-8 (US). University of Vermont research has determined that it is superior in powdery mildew resistance.

*Phlox 'David'* can be propagated by root cuttings, stems cuttings, divisions, and tissue culture. Division is done in spring or early fall. Three to five crowns per division are sufficient for a one-gallon container. Root cuttings are best done after dormancy in the fall. Dig the plant and select roots that are thick because thin feeder roots and root ends are not suitable. Roots are cut into 2" long sections and placed horizontally in a potting media and covered with 2" of sand. Tip cuttings are easy to obtain from stock plants. Cuttings 3-4" long, containing several nodes, are used to create liners or plugs; young terminal vegetative cuttings provide optimum rooting although older cuttings will root. As the tissue ages, the cuttings will require a rooting hormone. A cool temperature of 55-60° F is needed for optimum root initiation.

This long-blooming perennial for full sun to partial shade grows best in moist but well-drained soil. If planted in full sun, organic matter and extra water should be added to mitigate the effects of heat and drought; otherwise, spider mites may be a problem. Old blossoms should be removed to maintain vigor, prolong bloom, and prevent self-seeding. Deadheaded plants will flourish into fall. Plants should be divided every two to three years to maintain vigor.

**What's Growing On? Spring/Summer 2002**

Fairly resistant to powdery mildew, proper culture will aid in prevention. Plants should be thinned to four to six stems to increase air circulation and to prevent a heavy mass of stems. Water at the base and not the foliage.

'David' can be used in both the formal garden and the informal garden as in a cottage garden style or in a naturalized design. It provides great garden color and fragrance from July through September. Use with *Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus' (purple coneflower) or *Echinops ritro* (globe thistle) for a study in color and textural contrasts. For a stunning effect plant with *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light' or *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Cabaret' to provide a color echo of the variegation of the grass foliage with the white flowers of 'David'. The blue flowers of *Aster laevis* 'Bluebird' highlight the white panicles of *Phlox 'David'* for an excellent autumn-blooming combination. There is no better choice for fragrance, color, mildew resistance, and long season bloom.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Book Recommendations

By Barbara Phillips-Conroy, Burlington

***Making More Plants***, Ken Druse - Beautifully illustrated and well written description of the science, art and joy of propagation; and three books co-authored by Piet Oudoff, ***Gardening with Grasses***, ***Designing with Plants and Dream Plants for the Natural Garden***. Piet's idea, that a plant should look as good dead as it does alive, is a good one. This is a lesson that has been reinforced this past winter when I've had to stare at the same dead stuff since November.

***Insects and Gardens***, Eric Grissell, Timber Press, ISBN 0-88192-504-7

Reviewed by Joan Tobin, Peterborough

*The balance of nature is...a complex precise and highly integrated system of relationships between living things...* from *Silent Spring*, by Rachel Carson to whom this book is dedicated.

This is a book about the interdependency of insects and gardens. The author is an entomologist who has a talent for describing the world of insects in a way that is educational to a person who has no knowledge of or even respect for the merits of the insect world.

Insects are not things that should be eradicated with chemicals. They should be invited to our gardens. If our gardens have diversity – lots of many different kinds of plants, then this environment will support the interaction of thousand of insects, which in 'nature's balance' will provide the necessary checks and balances to deal with most problems – in time.

As a Master Gardener, I highly recommend this book as one to have in your library. One of the difficult topics for me to deal with when providing advice to the home gardener always centred around issues involving insects.

This book is an excellent primer of the basics you need to know about insects, their life cycle, feeding habits and interaction with plants and other insects. I know I'll refer to this book many times. The presentation of the subject is logical, and organized, and the colour photography is truly outstanding.

### **Good Bugs for Your Garden**

Allison M. Starcher; ISBN: 1-56512-071-X  
Reviewed by Norma Evans, Peterborough

Do you wish you had an easy to understand, easy to carry bug book? Well look no further. *Good Bugs for Your Garden* is a handy reference, 50 pages, about 5" by 7".

The illustrations are both charming and clear. You really will be able to distinguish an ant lion from a robber fly. You can stop wondering if you should squish it, or protect it. Set up like a field guide with one good bug per page, the book contains descriptions, and information as to where to find each species, what they eat, what attracts them, all in straight forward point form.

It is a handy reference for the experienced gardener and a carry-in-the-pocket book for the budding organic gardener. Add to your gardening experience by learning when to rejoice over the arrival of one of the "good" bugs to your garden.

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### **INTERNATIONAL MG CONFERENCE**

By Ralph Bullough, MGOI International Rep.

It is not too early to plan to attend the next International Master Gardeners Conference in 2003. The last one in Florida was professionally run, informative, a great chance for networking and most of all fun. The next one in the Ohio Valley is a joint production of groups in the Greater Cincinnati-Kentucky area with the University of Ohio. This conference is within driving range and June 19 to 22 should be just after the major rush of spring planting. A great chance for a breather. For more info check out <http://hcs.osuedu/mg/imgc2003/index.html>

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### **WILDERNESS GARDENING**

The Muskoka Heritage Foundation offers cottagers advice about landscaping with native plants and has suggestions about nursery sources of native plants (since you should never dig plants from the wild), as well as a resource centre for browsing. Contact: 11A Thomas St., Bracebridge, ON P1L 1T8; 705-645-7393

Thunder Bay 2002, a non-profit group, has published two useful brochures: Home Owner's Guide to Naturalization and Native Plant Species: Thunder Bay Region. Contact: 504-16<sup>th</sup> Ave., Thunder Bay, ON P7B 2R8; 807-344-2002. An excellent field guide is Forest Plants of Central Ontario, published by Lone Pine.

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### **CROSSWORD**

By Sandy Ellenor, Essex-Windsor

#### **Crossword Solution Fall 2001/Winter 2002**

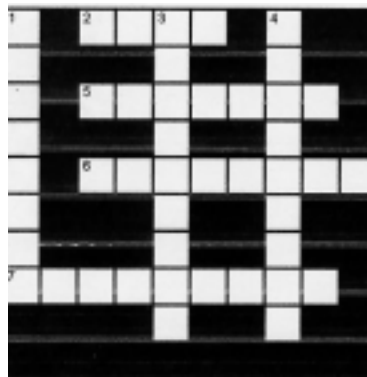
##### **ACROSS**

- 1 WHITEFLY
- 6 SCALE
- 7 CUTWORM
- 8 APHID
- 9 BORER

##### **DOWN**

- 2 LEAFHOPPER
- 3 LEAFMINER
- 4 ORIENTAL
- 5 CURCULIO

### **PESTS**



##### **ACROSS**

- 2 Rumex family; very difficult to pull out; brown seed heads in fall (4)
- 5 Scotch, Canada or Bull (7)
- 6 poisonous berries; our country's first ink (8)
- 7 yellow harbinger of spring; good in salads (9)

##### **DOWN**

- 1 Monarch butterfly depends on this. (8)
- 3 Mouse-ears (9)
- 4 beautiful yellow flowers in fall; often mistakenly blamed for hay fever (9)

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**Submit Fall/Winter 2002 contributions for *What's Growing On ?* by Oct. 1, 2002, to [hamlin@ebtech.net](mailto:hamlin@ebtech.net) or A. Hamlin, 299 Tawny Rd., Sarnia, ON N7S 5K1**