



Newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Ontario

Inside MGOI

Welcome to our June edition of the Master Gardeners of Ontario Inc. (MGOI) Newsletter. With a focus on you, the Master Gardeners, this is your vehicle for providing updates, insights and the inside scoop from MGOI Board & Committee members, Directors, and the 31 Master Gardener groups throughout Ontario. The Newsletter features member milestones, new group projects, short member profiles, upcoming events such as regional technical updates – anything about the functioning and activities of our groups and our members. And pictures – please feel free to submit pictures!

Contributions to future editions of 'Inside MGOI' may be sent at any time to the Newsletter Editor, Isabel Belanger, newsletter@mgoi.ca.

MGOI Board Members:

President:	Claudette Sims, Halton
Vice President:	vacant
Corporate Secretary:	Connie Hunter, Toronto
Treasurer:	Connie Hunter, Toronto
Director of Communications:	Kelly Noel, Ottawa-Carleton
Director of Education:	June Streadwick, Niagara
Director of Events:	Tena van Anel, Toronto
Director of Membership:	Pam Love, Durham Region
Director of Operations:	Suzanne Zacharczyk, Etobicoke
Director of Relationship & Partnerships:	vacant
Director of Revenue Development:	vacant
Director of Central Region:	Katherine Mathewson, Durham
Director of East Region:	Sue Flinders-Adams, Peterborough
Director of North Region:	vacant
Director of South & West Region:	vacant

Committee Members

Recording Secretary/Statistician: Rhonda Grein, Kitchener
Webmaster: Jim Cook webmaster@mgoi.ca
Newsletter Editor: Isabel Belanger, Etobicoke newsletter@mgoi.ca
Twitter: Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County
Facebook: Linda Hugli, Sudbury
MG Advice Clinic Manager for Canada Blooms: Christine Spence, Etobicoke
Manager of MG Participation in Canada Blooms: Adrienne Hanbidge, Toronto
Coordinators Conference Committee:
Manager: Kathleen Lang, Lanark County
Registrar: Anja Lowrance, Simcoe County
Social Convenor: Shirley Novak, Halton Region

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INSIDE MGOI

**Newsletter of the
Master Gardeners of Ontario Inc.**

June 2016

Editor: Isabel Belanger, Etobicoke

Milestones

Grey County Master Gardeners In Memoriam



Diane Everest - July 31, 1939 – May10, 2016

Grey County Master Gardeners remember Diane Everest. Diane died just 5 weeks after celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Master Gardener group she helped create. Her death was unexpected, shocking and saddened us all.

It has been said that in life there are participants and there are observers. Diane was an enthusiastic participant. We knew her best as a dedicated gardener. In 1996 she worked with a group of gardeners in Grey, Bruce and Huron counties to form the Tri-County Master Gardeners, which evolved into the Grey County Master Gardeners.

Diane was also part of the group that established the Rural Gardens of Grey and Bruce Counties, a network of private gardens open to the public. Her gardens at “Silk Purse Farm” were a popular stop for many.

Her interests were not limited to gardening. She loved reading, and was always ready with a recommendation for a new author she had enjoyed. Travelling was one of her passions, and to mark turning 70 Diane went on safari! She and her niece spent 5 weeks as part of a group touring Africa. Diane was fascinated by the sightings of exotic animals, and didn't mind the less than luxurious accommodations.

A deeply compassionate person, Diane spent many hours volunteering to help those in distress. Recently she drove children in care to supervised visits with their parents. Her calm, caring manner helped the children cope with these stressful situations. She was a regular volunteer at Hospice Wellington Palliative Care, where she died. Diane was never afraid to share her spiritual feelings, and in 2007 she became a Unity Church chaplain.

An animal lover, pets were always part of Diane's life, and she would be happy to know that her beloved cat, Rosie, is settling in with her youngest niece. Diane had a long and loving relationship with her three nieces, who will miss her greatly. As will we all.

A memorial tree will be planted in Diane's honour. We are also donating a book on shade gardening, a subject of special interest to Diane, to the Chesley Library where she was a member for many years.

Prince Edward County Master Gardeners

Election of New Board

Details: PEC voted in their new Board at their last meeting before the fall. PEC's hard working Coordinator, Kevin Bazkur, was thanked for his service, his impeccable manners and his gracious attitude throughout his two-year term. He will be a very hard act to follow. We will welcome the new Board at our September meeting:

Coordinator: Alexandra Wiens

Assistant coordinator: Linda Melady

Treasurer: Susan Warrack

Secretary: Ren Duinker

It was a very busy spring for all of us and we are all happy to get back in our gardens and enjoy the summer.

Elgin County Master Gardeners

Ontario Volunteer Service Awards

All 5 of the Elgin County Master Gardeners were recognized at the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards ceremony, for 20 years of service. Congratulations!



In the photo, from left to right, are: Bob Fox, Helen Smith, Brenda Swindell, Diane Vaughan and our MPP Jeff Yurek). Absent was Gail Jacques.

Master Gardeners Out & About

Prince Edward County Master Gardeners

Name: 2016 Plant Sale

Date: May 28, 2016

Details:

PEC had a very successful plant sale this year with interesting plants, and a Monarch Butterfly display of various milkweed plants. Very good turn-out and perfect weather!



Name: County Garden Show

Date: June 11th, 2016

Details: The PEC MG's were at the County Garden Show again this year. Kathy MacPherson and Joyce Young were among the MG's on hand to answer questions.



Kathy MacPherson & Joyce Young

We also handed out the Wild Parsnip Identification sheet to anyone who dropped by our booth. Thank you Julia Lamoca for the photograph.

MGOI Board Meeting

Date: Saturday, June 11, 2016

Members of the MGOI Board of Directors spent a beautiful Saturday away from their gardens, indoors, on June 11th. Members met for the day in midtown Toronto. The morning was dedicated to planning ahead for the future; the board members' grey matter was hard at work brainstorming a vision statement for MGOI. It is not easy to develop a statement that envisions the way forward for now and into the future, that embodies who we are and what we do.

Administrative matters followed in the afternoon.



Taking a photo-op break from their hard work are, from left to right, **top row:**

Connie Hunter, Kelly Noel, Rhonda Grein (Recording Secretary), Suzanne Zacharczyk, Sue Flinders-Adams

Bottom row, left to right, are:

Katherine Mathewson, Claudette Sims, June Streadwick, Pam Love, Tena Van Andel

Full titles of Board members may be found on page 1 under 'MGOI Board Members'.



Supporting our Groups

Claudette Sims, Halton Region MG

*President, Master Gardeners of Ontario Inc.
(MGOI)*

In early June, Pam Love, Director of Membership and I met with a Master Gardener group that was struggling, in order to offer them strategies and support. This group is not alone in having membership issues. Attracting and retaining new members and getting people to “step up” to take on roles are two of the major challenges faced by many Master Gardener groups.

At the beginning of the Master Gardener program in Ontario, OMAFRA supported groups with personnel, tools and ideas. When the government stopped funding for MGs, groups were supposed to be supported by Zone Directors. As a new Zone Director myself, I had few ideas or skills to help struggling groups. Now the “membership team” - Director of Membership Pam Love, the Regional Directors, and the committee members - have enabled us to start developing the needed skills, tools and resources dedicated to supporting groups. Having a Director of Membership is awesome, especially when that director has the energy, ideas and inspiration of someone like Pam!

We hope that sharing our experience will help other groups who are struggling.

Six (6) questions were sent to the group in advance. I'd like to share their answers and our thoughts with you.

1. What three things do you value most about being a (group) Master Gardener?
 - The people
 - The horticultural side, the sharing of ideas
 - Inspiration
 - Personal touch
 - Feels good to share knowledge/help people
 - Educational aspect of meetings
 - Supporting the community

The first question was meant to remind the group why they joined Master Gardeners. When these members talked about their group, their faces lit up. They loved being Master Gardeners and they loved their fellow group members. 😊

Attention should really be paid to these answers as they show the group's values. If “education” is listed as something members value, that makes it a priority at meetings.

2. How can you contribute to keeping the group going?
 - The group agreed to share the responsibility of chairing meetings and organizing the educational component; each member would be responsible for one month
 - Dates of meetings would be set ahead of time so that everyone could reserve the date

Like many groups, no one wanted to “step up”, so we ‘broke up’ the role of coordinator. We suggested that as a start the responsibility for the meeting could be shared. One member could commit to sending out an agenda, being responsible for an education piece and chairing one meeting. This responsibility would rotate each month.

We reminded them about the excellent resources on the [Coordinators' Corner](#); there are suggestions on “How to chair a meeting” and a number of “Meeting Starter” ideas to add fun and an educational component to meetings.

3. What stops you from “stepping up”?
 - Work schedule
 - Time

The group agreed that if the person responsible for a meeting had last minute work commitments, then someone else in the group would step up and lead the meeting that had been planned.

4. Is disbandment an option?
 - They agreed that they were not ready to disband at this time.

We were prepared to offer advice on how to disband a Master Gardener group so we were pleasantly surprised by their reaction - I think they were too! This is a very friendly, nice group. They are very passionate about their work. A few are charter members of the group (30 years). The group has a healthy financial balance and shouldn't need to fundraise for a time. If they get back on track, at the very least, they will feel better about their group.



5. What were the first signs that might have indicated that your group was in trouble?
- The group felt that a past coordinator followed policies too narrowly and as a result people resigned
 - In fighting at meetings
 - Some meetings consisted only of business; there was no educational component
 - The group had difficulty attracting new members
 - If new members did join or show interest, they didn't stay with the group
 - Their tried and true volunteer opportunities had changed in their community
 - Some group members felt the community no longer needed them
 - No one in the group was prepared to take over as coordinator

If your group has any of these warning signs, they should be taken seriously and dealt with. Once a group falls below a certain number of members, it becomes more difficult to help it back to health:

- There are policies and procedures to follow, but when issues do arise, the coordinator and the group should problem solve re: how to support members where possible.
- Issues regarding difficult members or concerns about coordinators can't be ignored. The excellent PowerPoint presentation about [Dealing with Difficult Volunteer Situations](#) on the MGOI website could be shown at a meeting to help everyone cope and deal with the problem. Acquiring these kinds of skills adds extra value to being a MG.
- Without an interesting educational component, new members won't be interested in staying, so we offered alternative educational ideas for meetings.
- If your former community partners are no longer able to work with you, you need to move on! Focussing on solutions rather than the problem is key to effecting positive change. Make a plan to turn things around.

6. What could have been done differently? These last ideas are a summary of what we thought might have helped this group:

- Having an effective chairperson could have reduced tensions in the group. While many of us may think we know how to chair a meeting, there is a lot more to it than following an agenda.
- Having a rotating chair makes all members appreciate and understand the duties and responsibilities of chairing.
- Clearly communicating expectations on how members are to conduct themselves at meetings is key.
- Having strategies and procedures for dealing with and "releasing volunteers" who are negatively affecting the group could have helped.
- Having varied and interesting educational components of meetings, i.e. using Internet resources/videos, speakers, tours.
- Brainstorming how to find advice clinic opportunities in the community, i.e. working with seniors, hospice patients, children, giving advice to new home owners (perhaps via a real estate contact); reaching out to your Regional Director or other groups in your area; reviewing the group activities in the annual reports or Awards of Excellence entries on the MGOI website; posting questions on the coordinator or MG list for ideas.
- Having individual members "step up" to contact various new partners; breaking up roles by activities; having mentors.
- Having a plan to make a plan for your group.

Does your group need help? Taking action now could get your group back on track, so that it can continue to inspire and support gardeners in Ontario! Groups can ask for assistance from the Regional Director or Director of Membership. They are working as a team to support MG groups.

Two out of 4 regions have a Regional Director and we are actively searching for volunteers to make it 4 out of 4.

The board is here to offer you assistance where needed and we have ideas and tools to help you!



UPCOMING EVENTS:

Stratford Master Gardeners

Date: July 3rd, 2016

Details: Stratford Master Gardeners are holding summer Advice Clinics; the final clinic will be held at the Stratford Garden Tour on July 3rd.

Location: Stratford area.

Rideau 1000 Islands Master Gardeners Technical Update

Kingston Home Gardeners Conference – Garden Bones: Trees and Shrubs

Date: Saturday October 15, 2016 from 9am to 3pm

Location: Christ Church Parish Hall, 990 Sydenham Rd., Kingston

Cost: Early Bird - \$30; After Sept 1 - \$40

Registration Information:

www.rideau1000islandsmastergardeners.com

Or contact Ann Gay eanngay@cogeco.ca or 613-389-0109.

Details: Presentations to be given by 3 experts in the field:

- 1) **Bruce Bostock** on The A to Z of Trees From Selection to Demise and Everything in Between
- 2) **Steve Poole** on Shrubs for all Seasons and the Small Garden
- 3) **John Madden** on Tree Care & Pruning

Included in the day there will be 4 mini presentations by our own Master Gardeners, a silent auction, a gourmet lunch, and the option to take a tree walking

tour through the historic Cataraqui Cemetery.



Come and enjoy a day in historic Kingston!

10th Annual Coordinators' Conference - 2016 Coordinators – mark your calendars now!

Date: October 15, 2016

Details: The conference will be held at the Landscape Ontario facilities in Milton. Groups are invited to send up to 3 members: the coordinator, the co-coordinator, and a potential coordinator!

The Coordinators' Conference Team is ready to go.

Please welcome and thank valiant volunteers:

- Kathleen Lang, Lanark County MG, Coordinator Conference Manager
- Anja Lowrance, Simcoe County MG, Registrar
- Shirley Novak, Halton MG, Social Convener

Stay tuned for updates in the coming months.....

2017 International Master Gardeners Conference

Details: Master Gardeners can get the latest newsletter on the 2017 International Master Gardeners Conference, to be held in Portland, Oregon in July 2017, at:

<http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/2017imgc/home-page/>

MGOI VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Director of Events

Timeframe: 2 years, October 2016 – October 2018 (potential to stay on until October 2022)

Description: Immediate opening for this rewarding Board position. The Director of Events has the privilege of providing vision and guidance for any event that welcomes MG volunteers from all over Ontario. Detailed procedures and timelines are available. Teams for both Canada Blooms and the Coordinators' Conference are already in place, so year 1 would be a very leisurely acclimatization to the role. Have more questions? I would be delighted to answer any questions at casey.vanandel@sympatico.ca.

Be warned, you'll have to be prepared for some gushing about how much fun and how being the Director of Events changed my life. It could change yours too!

MGOI VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Treasurer/Corporate Secretary:

Timeframe: 2 years plus 6-month transition period, working with the current Treasurer and Corporate Secretary. Starts April 1, 2016 – term ends with the AGM in 2018.

Description: The Treasurer is responsible for general financial oversight and works with the Board executive and directors. Main responsibilities include banking, book-keeping, bill payment, financial planning and budgeting, financial reporting to the Board, advising on fund-raising. As custodian of the organization's records, the Corporate Secretary is responsible for maintaining accurate documentation and meeting any legal requirements such as annual filing deadlines. The Corporate Secretary is responsible for reviewing and updating documents as necessary and ensuring all documents are safely stored and readily accessible.

