

Master Gardeners of Ontario

What's Growing On
MAGAZINE GROWING ON



Serving Ontario for 25 Years

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Fall, 2010

www.mgoi.ca



Japanese Quince

Mychelle Primeau, London

The quince or *Cydonia oblonga* originated in the Caucasus, a mountainous area between the Black and Caspian seas. It belongs to the genus *Cydonia*, it is of the Order Rosales and the same family as the rose, Rosaceae. Formerly, there were four species in the genus of *Cydonia* but now the quince is treated in a separate genera. Its original name "supurgillu" is of Arabic nature, but the quince has then taken its modern name from an old French word, coin, which in the plural form is quins.

It is believed that the harvesting of the quince may have originated before the apple. Numerous references are made throughout history to the golden quince. It was often offered as a ritual at Greek weddings. Apparently a bride was to bite into a golden quince before the wedding ceremony so her kisses would be sweeter. Old Roman cookbooks, mainly "Apicus" (compiled in the 4th or 5th century) offer recipes for quinces to be served with honey and strangely enough mixed with leeks. Apparently, the Golden Apples of Virgil were, in effect, quinces. In some countries, Croatia, for example, a quince tree is planted as a symbol of life and fertility.

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Saskatoon Berry

Tony Rudd , London Middlesex

Across North America several species of *Amelanchier* are found in woodlands, forest margins and in clearings. These are large shrubs or small multi-stem trees. They all have small white flowers in spring and produce small apple-like fruit in early summer. This fruit



Saskatoon Berries

is a staple food for many wildlife. Aboriginal people used the fruit to enhance flavour and to preserve game. Berries collected from these shrubs have for years been used for pies, tarts, jams, juices and dried for storage over winter. Most of these species are found in Eastern Canada. Just one is found in Western Canada and the prairies, *Amelanchier alnifolia* or Saskatoons. The city of Saskatoon was named after them.

The Saskatoon is a member of the rose family. The small apple-like fruit is actually a pome. It is ripe in June, hence the alternate common name June Berry. It shares this name with many of the other *Amelanchier* species. It is a small multi-stem tree that grows to as much as 9m and lives for 30 years. It will tolerate a range of soils so long as it is not heavy clay or water logged. Soil should be well drained, but uniformly moist. The small white flowers appear in spring when the leaves are breaking. If grown for the fruit for people, the crop needs to be protected from birds. Saskatoons are susceptible to Cedar

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What's Growing On is the newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Ontario, Inc. It is published 4 times per year in January, April, July, and October.

Japanese Quince Continued from page 1*Quince blossoms*

The common quince is a tree whose fruit is cultivated mainly in Asia and the Mediterranean area. The most common known to us in North America is the Japanese quince whose genus is *Chaenomeles lagenaria*. It is used mainly for medicinal purpose, as the fruit is hard and very bitter. Very often it is simply used here as an ornamental tree. Most varieties of quinces are not eaten raw, as the fruit is often too sour, but are used to make jams and jellies. The fruit however does become sweeter after it has been bletted (after the first frost). Because of its strong flavour, the quince is sometimes added to other dishes. In many South American countries, it is eaten with cheese in sandwiches. In France and some regions of Switzerland, liqueur is made out of the quince and used as a “digestif” after a meal.

In order for quinces to ripen, the fruit requires hot summers and in order to produce flowers, cool periods below 7 degrees Celsius. Quince trees are also used as a rootstock for grafting plants, mainly, pear trees. As far as the medicinal values are concerned, the dried pit of the fruit can cure sore throats and coughs. In Iran, the seeds of the quince are used to

fight pneumonia. Quince is also used as a moisturizer and day cream for the prevention of wrinkles.

In 1979 Sweden along with Spain and France started a program of breeding the flowering quince. The research is based on breeding methods, use of the plant in the food industry and methods of cultivation. The fruit can vary from 4 cm diameter to 8 cm and weigh from 50 grams to 180 grams depending on the variety. The fruit growing on the Japanese quince in my back yard are the smallest, but the ones my husband's grandparents harvested in Romania were almost the size of a small fist. The fruit contains between 80 and 120 seeds. Most fruits usually ripen after August and develop a yellowish colour from its original olive green brown. The quince is extremely high in vitamin C (more than in lemons) and fibre. In order to propagate, the seeds of the quince cannot dry off before being stratified. Propagation can also be done by grafting or hard and soft wood cutting. There are several pests that can hinder the growth of the quince. They are *Monilinia*, leaf spots, grey mould, and fire blight bacteria, along with rootknot nematodes. The latest can cause up to 5% of crop loss each year. The absence of selective cultivars has limited the development of the quince on a large area market which is one of the reasons why I consider the quince an uncommon fruit in North America.

*Ontario Horticultural Association and
Master Gardeners of Ontario Inc.*



**Working
Together**



Here is the [latest issue OHA's newsletter the Trillium.](#)

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Hardy Kiwi Vines

Gillian Boyd, Ottawa-Carleton



left - Variegated form of Kiwi. right - regular Kiwi and friend.

In 1993 I put up an arbour and planted a kiwi vine at each end. *Actinidia kolomikta* is dioecious so both male and female plants are necessary for fruit. The female vine grew much more slowly than the male which threw out wild stems in all directions and needed very firm training over the arbour. Although the male flowered the following year, it took three years before they both flowered together and I saw any fruit.

There is a variety that produces pink and white splashes of colour and some grow it just for the colourful foliage. The fruit is grape-sized with smooth green skin and until each one is ripe, it remains very hard and firmly attached. It is not worth trying to harvest enough over a few days to provide a bowlful since the fruits become mushy and tasteless when refrigerated. They are best enjoyed fresh off the vine to revive the flagging gardener or share with a visiting friend. The flavour is the same as the larger fuzzy brown fruit of *Actinidia chinensis*.

Kiwi vines are not fussy and will grow in sun or part shade in average soil. Flowers are produced on ripe wood. The vines produce strong stems through the summer and I either train them, cut them back or take them off the old wood. I have had fruit

every year except the year after I had to reduce the heavy top growth. The vines get some leaf and compost mulch in the fall but otherwise no special treatment. They are hardy to zone 3 and appear to be impervious to pests and diseases. I have had occasional leaf scorch in very hot summers.

Squirrels and birds take some fruit but are not a nuisance. The main problem in the last three years has been raccoons. They consume the unripe fruit and damage the stems and foliage in their greed and determination. I was only able to drive off the first one I saw feasting by hitting it as hard as I could with a heavy shovel. The raccoon climbed down and left very reluctantly. I now net the top of the arbour. Raccoons still climb up but find it harder to reach the fruit which hangs down below.

Steps to Leadership



Coordinators' Conference

editors

The conference will be held again Oct 2 thanks to the generosity of Landscape Ontario for the venue in Milton and to the generosity of all those who provide contributions to the auction. We also thank our sponsor, Steps to Leadership, Speakers Network Funding for assisting with our speaker Denise Edwards who will speak on "Will Your Master Gardener Group Have Productive Volunteers in the Future?" Denise will share some strategies for strengthening your volunteer programme.



Mystery Plant

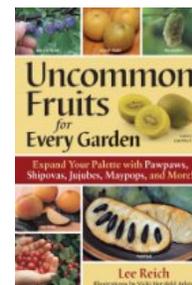
Do you know this plant? The answer will be revealed next issue. Contact editors@mgoi.ca with your guess.

The mystery plant last issue was a Japanese Butterbur – *Petasites japonicus* 'Giganteus' identified by Claudette Sims, Halton.

Uncommon Fruits for Every Garden

by Lee Reich

You might find this book an interesting source for information on fruits that are not commonly grown.



Saskatoon Berry Continued from page 1

Apple Rust, a destructive fungal disease. The alternate host for this are Red Cedars and Junipers (not White Cedar). It is difficult to grow these plants in close vicinity to a quantity of these trees.

For the complete article on Saskatoon Berries see our website www.mgoi.ca.

MGs in Action

LSS - 'Along the Garden Path' Garden Tour and the selling of Veseys Bulbs are new fund-raisers as well as our 2nd Annual Plant Sale in May, 2010.

Elgin County MGs gave daily presentations at the International Plowing Match which was held near St. Thomas.

Oakville - Roseanne Nelson has replaced Linda Brentnall as Coordinator. Oakville MGs provide gardening advice at the local Harbourside Organic Farmers' Market. Presentations which are being given by two of our members - Oct. 15, 2010 - Horticultural Therapy; and Nov. 18, 2010 - Organic Gardening. Contact Roseanne Nelson - at roseannenelson27@hotmail.com

Ottawa-Carleton - Plant Sale on August 15 - during worst rainstorm of the summer! Proceeds will be used to partially subsidize courses of MGITs.

North Bay - participates in a seed exchange; provides plants and planting for retirement home; works two days a week at President's Choice spring plant sale (In return, PC with pay for hot line.) Second annual tea and plant sale will be held in a Master Gardener's garden. Powasson

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Diapers Revisited

Dale Odorizzi, Lanark

In the last newsletter, we passed on a tip from NSAC about using diapers as a method to retain moisture in containers. We received negative feedback on that tip. Unfortunately, the NSAC staff is off on summer recess and could not comment. It appears that the water retaining compound in diapers is sodium polyacrylate. Rats injected with the substance suffered haemorrhage, cardiovascular failure and death. The biggest concern seemed to be that there may be allergic reactions/irritations/infections caused by the substance rubbing against a baby's skin. Some sites referred to the substance as non-toxic and said it should decompose naturally. If you are passing along this tip, pass along the warning as well. It sounds like disposable diapers can provide more of a risk to a baby than to a container of flowers.

Speakers List

On our website www.mgoi.ca there is a new feature listing speakers who have made themselves available. If you would like to be included as a speaker, login to the website as a Master Gardener; complete and submit the form with your information or contact [Linda Hugli](#).

Edible Landscape Videos

editors

This [video \(high speed recommended\)](#) is three short (about 15 minutes each) documentaries on creating edible landscapes by people involved in permaculture.

Milestones

Completed the MG course at NSAC

Lanark - Kevin Long (achieved 100% on all four courses)

Sudbury - Frank Beer, Jill Beer, Rita Beer, Dan Tobodo.

New MGITs:

Halton - Patricia Knapp, Sarah Willis

LSSMG - Meghan Jones, Deirdre Kavanagh, Michele McDonald

Oakville - Margot Byers, Stacey Ellerbeck

Ottawa-Carleton - Dale Ford, Tara Jowett, Nancy McDonald

New MGs

Halton - Roberta Roberts

North Bay - Vicki Doucette, Carole Gough

Oakville - David Oldacre

Sudbury - Irene Granger

5 Years

Sudbury - Cathy Carr, James St. John, Lisa Turpin

10 Years

Sudbury - Shirley Burley, Joanne McLellan, Jane Palmer

15 Years

Sudbury - Linda Hugli, Shelby Woolnough

Honourary Master Gardener Certificate

Mark Cullen

La Promenade Plantée

Linda Clay, Guelph

When strolling in Paris, what better place than La Promenade Plantée. Once the only elevated public park in the world, La Promenade has inspired urban designers, architects and gardeners. Built atop an ancient railway viaduct, it provides a delightful vantage point for the architecture of the eastern districts.



Even on a cloudy day, this 4.5 km hallway of horticulture is restful and intriguing. Along the walk you will find arbours, narrow ponds and hundreds of vibrant perennials, roses, acanthus, lime trees, triton, bamboo, chestnuts, cherries, vines, among others.

Designed by Philippe Mattieux and Jacques Vergely in 1988, The Promenade includes a lower level where the Viaduct des Arts studios showcase the work of cabinet makers, sculptors, ceramicists, tapestry-makers, violin and flute makers and other artisans.

The main stairway to this contemporary Parisian landmark is at Avenue Daumesnil. Take the Bastille Metro line 1 or 5.

MGs in Action Continued from page 4

Medical Centre-working with clients providing support and advice. Selecting Shade trees for North Bay Health Unit to be planted in school play grounds etc. Judging final round of North Bay Community in Blooms Contest.

The Toronto Master Gardeners - are particularly proud of the amazing contributions by: Billy To: organized and was the interviewee in a series of 12 radio question and answer programmes targeting the local Chinese community. Cathy McCartney: has taken over our statistician's role and has been amazing everyone with her creativity and resourcefulness in helping the group better understand the nature and mix of questions we receive and how we might make more productive use of all the information that accumulates as individual MGs respond to specific questions from the public. Sheila Smith: as our info tech person, has just finished installing a new computer for the TMG office so we can start moving more fully into the 21st century with our internal and external communications. A couple of our longer-term members, Elizabeth Stewart and Connie Hunter, have worked intensively with staff from the Toronto Botanical Garden and outside horticultural experts to create and deliver a highly successful programme on urban edible gardening. The TMGs held an internal PowerPoint presentations training workshop in the spring. We have 25 individuals who have expressed an interest in becoming MGITs

Events

October 5 – 11 – Norfolk County Master Gardeners will have a display booth at the Norfolk County Fair & Horse Show in Simcoe. We invite everyone to stop by and visit us.

October 19 at 7:00 p.m. – Norfolk County Master Gardeners present Carson Arthur "How Green is Your Garden? Environmentally Friendly Solutions to Eco-friendly Gardens" at Eising Greenhouses & Garden Centre, 814 Cockshutt Road, Simcoe, Ontario. Free admission.

October 30 – Simcoe County Master Gardeners present a Technical Update at the Simcoe County Museum near Midhurst ON. – Garden Design 2010 For You. The cost is \$40 for Master Gardeners and \$45 for others which includes lunch. Four excellent speakers plus a silent auction table. Please contact John Crow at 705-436-5292 or e-mail jonbon@bell.net

January 8, 2011 – Toronto Master Gardeners Technical Update at Toronto Botanical Garden, 777 Lawrence Avenue East. Sustainable Horticulture – Speakers: Dr. David A. Galbraith, "Exploring Sustainability and Naturalization of Urban Gardens"; Dr. Rebecca Hallett, "Are you Bugged? Getting to Know the Good Insects in Your Garden."; Sean James, "Sustainable Gardening: Making it Happen". Cost is \$35.00 including lunch. Contact: Registration Coordinator: Linda Boyko lboyko@kpmg.ca

March 7 – 10, 2011 – Bus Trip to the Philadelphia International Flower Show – Presented by Northumberland MG. A deposit of \$300.00 required with your registration request. Full payment required by November 30, 2010. Contact Judy Harris, M.G., 2973 Cornish Hollow Road, RR #6 Cobourg, ON K9A 4J9 905-342-3888 judy.harris@gmx.com