

Master Gardeners of Ontario

What's Growing On
MAGAZINE GROWING ON



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Summer, 2010

www.mgoi.ca



The Importance of Water

Marjorie Latimer, Halton

An essential part to all life is water. Plants require water in the photosynthetic process, it transports and dissolves nutrients to root systems and water nourishes animals, insects, and human life. The inter-connection of all life has its foundation in the soil. The understanding of land and water resources will ultimately improve our management strategies for their protection. There seems to be a lack of knowledge by the average home owner regarding soil depletion and water contamination. Creating healthy habitat within our gardens needs to be at the forefront of education that we, as Master Gardeners, should provide to the general public.

David Suzuki writes "Water is a sacred liquid that links us to all the oceans of the world and ties us back in time to the very birthplace of all life".

Sustainable practice begins upstream by preventing erosion often caused by compacted and poorly drained soil in combination with irresponsible irrigation practices.

Here are some tips that will improve garden conditions:

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Modern Landscaping

Edythe Falconer, Ottawa Carleton

Xeriscaping is about working with plants that don't require much watering. It's also a system in which soil quality and water conservation play integral roles. A large part of Earth's surface is water. Yet for many nations, it is a scarce resource. Without it plants and people cannot survive and prosper.

Plants that like dry conditions often have small leaves, thick skins, hairy leaves, or greyish colouring. They make appropriate choices for "dry" gardens. Just a few examples of such plants include *Iris*, *Achillea*, *Bergenia*, *Centaurea*, *Doronicum*, *Echinops*, *Euphorbia*, *Gaillardia*, *Limonium*, *Papaver*, *Seadum*, *Stachys* and *Verbascum*. Shady choices include *Alchemilla*, *Anemone*, *Brunnera*, *Epimedium* and *Pulmonaria*.

Start with rooftop runoff fed into barrels, pumps and siphons to all parts of the garden. Or have sump pumps feed fish ponds that provide as water for surrounding flower beds. Or excavate basin and swale gardens to provide catchment areas. Or contour slopes in the form of mini terraces. Or install porous driveways alternating hardscape with patches of low-growing perennials. Or use decorative pails by tub and kitchen sinks. Or leave plants intact in fall to function as snow traps. Or dig pothole gardens. Or use drip irrigation, spot watering and sprinklers not on timers in the morning. Or water roots, not foliage. Or apply mulch to conserve moisture and discourage weeds. Or build moisture-retentive, well-aerated soil on a regular basis.

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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.

The importance of Water Continued from page 1

- Improve soil with organic matter that binds soil aggregates, retains moisture while improving drainage. Know your soil type.
- Diversify plant material. Use native and drought tolerant plants. Once established they survive on rainfall rather than municipal water supply.
- Avoid the use of chemicals by creating healthy environments in the soil. Attract beneficial insects, wildlife and pollinators.
- Prevent soil erosion. Aerate and improve soil structure, and secure soil on slopes with plant material.
- Avoid over-irrigating. Monitor rainfall with a rain gauge.
- Frequently inspect your property for weed and disease control. Control helps eliminate need for unhealthy product use that contaminates water supplies.
- Use organic fertilizers that slowly release nutrients
- Prevent soil loss associated with improper irrigation methods.

We are planning to put the following message in our newsletter each issue to remind us of the close and interdependent relationship we have with the OHA.

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



**Working
Together**



Selecting and Installing a Waterfall Pump

Robert Pavlis, Guelph

Water pumps are available as both internal pumps which sit at the bottom of the pond and external pumps that sit on dry land. Internal pumps are usually less expensive to buy,



Waterfall of Robert Pavlis

and require less plumbing to hook up. The problem with these pumps is that you need to remove them periodically to clean the filters. External pumps are usually equipped with a leaf trap which makes cleaning easy. They also use less power and last longer making them a less expensive option. Overall external pumps are a better choice.

The flow rate of a pump is affected by a number of factors. All of the tubing, connectors, elbows and valves will reduce the flow. Pumping vertically has a significant effect on the real flow rate. Designing the plumbing to reduce these effects as much as possible will allow you buy a less expensive pump and it will reduce the amount of electricity you use. Use tubing that is as large as possible. If the waterfall is more than 3 feet high use 4 inch PVC pipe going up the hill. Use flexible tubing and stay away from 90° elbows.

Most external pumps are not self priming which means they need to have water in the pump before it will start pumping. Adding a check valve in front

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of the leaf trap will keep water from flowing out of the pump when it is off. With a check valve in place you can now shut the pump off, clean the leaf trap and start the pump again without it going dry. Your pump will also start pumping when the power comes back on after a power outage.

It is a good idea to add a shut off valve on the outlet side of the pump. Turning this valve off will prevent water from running back down the hill which makes it easier to open the leaf trap for cleaning.

What kind of flow rate should the pump have? The answer to this question is complicated since it depends very much on the effect you are trying to create. Some people like a trickle, and others like a gusher. Wider waterfalls need a higher flow rate to give the same visual effect as narrow ones. The best advice I can give you is to talk to someone with a waterfall that meets your esthetic needs and simply copy them. My waterfall is running at about 3,500 gal/hour (from a 5,500 gal/hour pump) and my waterfalls (a series of 7) are about 1.5 ft wide. This produces a nice medium high flow.

Diapers for all!

Kevin Long, Lanark

Lanark County Master Gardener, Kevin Long, arrived at our last meeting with a bag full of diapers. At last year's Nova Scotia summer school, Kevin learned that diapers can be used to help our containers retain water. The diaper is made up of layers of material that looks like a floating row cover. Take the diaper apart and rip this material into little pieces. Mix the pieces with the soil, water and plant. These pieces slowly release moisture when the soil begins to dry, reducing the need for frequent watering.



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 an *Echeveria* in flower. Anne Morgan, Kitchener was first.

Modern Landscaping continued from page 1

In North America, 50%+ of residential water is used for landscaping and lawns. Xeriscaping can reduce consumption by 50 - 75%.

These suggestions are but a "drop in the bucket" but every drop counts!

MGs in Action

The Toronto group has started an annual honour roll to recognize members who volunteer more than 50 hours in a calendar year. There were 34 individuals on the list for 2009 activities.

New Directors:

Zone 6 – Lynne Marie Sullivan, Lake Simcoe South

Zone 10 – Jane Beck and Tena van Andel are job-sharing.

Rain Barrels

Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County

Lanark County Master Gardener, Gerda Franssen, has come up with a way for our group to make some money. She has built a Rain Barrel and is giving workshops on making these rain barrels. On our first outing, we sold our first Rain Barrel for \$75 at our Plant Sale almost as soon as the doors opened.

Rhonda Persichilli, London Middlesex

London Middlesex recently teamed up with a small business enterprise to sell modified recycled food storage barrels to be installed as rain barrels. Rain barrels collect water from the roofs of buildings by use of the downspouts so that the water can be used at a later date when the weather is dry. Downspouts are often located such that water gushing out of them causes erosion of flower beds and/or water damage to foundations and to buildings. Properly installed and located, rainbarrels can prevent costly damage. In a heavy downpour, water in the storm sewers overwhelms treatment plants, and untreated sewage is flushed into the river. Once collected, this water is soft, contains no chlorine or other added chemicals and it quickly warms up to a plant friendly temperature. It is ideal for watering plants or washing the car. And it's free, hence lower water bills and less demand on city water.

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London Middlesex MG group recently held a very successful fund raiser, selling rain barrels. Shown here is the MG Rainbarrel Committee of (from left to right) Bob Worthy, Donna Slater, Rhonda Persichilli and Lynne Campbell standing amongst the 240 rain barrels they just unloaded from the transport truck ready to distribute to the customers who ordered them.

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London City Council were supportive of the project. The project was given the go-ahead in mid April. The barrels were promoted at Master Gardener events (with permission of course), in a local newspaper, through word of mouth and by emails. Finally, on Saturday May 29, 240 barrels were delivered to a city works yard and distributed to the lucky buyers. There was of course a benefit to London Middlesex Master Gardeners balance sheet. We expect to repeat the project next spring.

Rain Gardens

Editors

Rain gardens are attractive and functional landscaped areas that are designed to capture and filter stormwater from roofs, driveways, and other hard surfaces. They collect water in bowlshaped, vegetated areas, and allow it to slowly soak into the ground. This reduces the potential for erosion and minimizes the amount of pollutants flowing from your lawn into a storm drain, and eventually into our streams and lakes. For more see www.pwd.org

Milestones

New MGiTs

Durham – Elaine Davidson, Jessica Greer, Mary Hinton, Joan Kerr, Karen Sciuk, Susan Shepherd, Isia Yeo

Halton – Jane Leonard, Dee Miron

Mississauga – Martha Kantarczyk, Diane Rogers, Sandra Spudich, Michelle Wilson

Niagara – Pam Coring

Ottawa-Carleton – Margaret Don, Dale Ford, Tara Jowett

Completed Nova Scotia Agricultural College courses

Thunder Bay – Laurie Benoit

New MGs

Huron – Ann Ingles

Lake Simcoe South – Meghan Jones, Terri Briggs, Lynne Marie Sullivan

Mississauga – Mary Jean Kucerak

5 Years

Lake Simcoe South – Elizabeth Clarkson, Penny Coleman

Mississauga – Phyllis Hall

Toronto – Ruthanne Stiles, Pat de Valence, Daryl Bessell, Jane Bridgeman

10 Years

Halton – Donna Parker

Mississauga – Diana Pooke, William Pooke

Toronto – Peter Cox, Ellen Farrelly, Lorraine Flanigan, Catherine Peer, Lucy van Wyk

15 Years

Halton – Belinda Gallagher, Ray Hipworth, David Marshall, Sharon Paradis

Mississauga – Shirley Daniel, Errol Falconer, Marie Pearson, Philip Stuart

Niagara – Bonnie Priest, Vivian Shoalts

Toronto – Sonia Leslie

20 Years

Niagara – Cecile Letourneau

Toronto – Mary Mordy

Retired

Halton - Molly Fuller

In Memorium

London Middlesex – Donna Hickmott - see the tribute to her on the [MGOI website](http://www.mgoi.org)

Andre Citroën Gardens

Linda Clay, Guelph

A visit to this contemporary park located on the Seine in Paris, France is unforgettable. Built on the site of the former Citroën car factory, it is a combination of numerous gardens, stately greenhouses and geometric form. Each garden is based on a theme associated with a water feature, metal, a day of the week, and a sense, and a colour, including black. The multitude of variety within each species being featured is amazing, including the Garden of Acanthus, the Garden of Poppies and Iris or the Garden of Geraniums, the Garden of Japanese Maples or the Garden of Astilbes and Rhododendrons. Among many interesting autumn features is an entire grove of female Ginkgo trees laden with golden fruit.

This little known gem is one of the great major gardens of Paris. Located in the 15th arrondissement, Javel area, it is easily reached by metro or train.



Roadsides

Editors

An initiative of the Conservation and Environment Committee of the Ontario Horticultural Association, 'Roadsides' encourages the gardeners of



Ontario to create "Pollinator Patches", small colonies of native plants in unused public spaces and in private gardens. In May, the first patch was created in Barrie.

This grass-roots activity will provide habitat for native pollinators, preserve native plant species in Ontario and add a little beauty to Ontario roadsides.

Creating a "Pollinator Patch" is easy. One patch won't change much but hundreds of patches across the province could make a big difference to the number and health of our native pollinators.

For more information go to <http://conservation.gardenontario.org/>

Events

July 3 – 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. – Prince Edward County Communities in Bloom 10th Annual Garden Tour and Gourmet Lunch. Tickets are \$35.00/person which includes a gourmet lunch. For more details call Sandra 613-393-5577

July 14 – 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Bus trip to Montreal Botanical Gardens sponsored by Stittsville Goulboun Horticultural Society. Cost \$50 for H.S. Members and \$60 for non-members (includes membership to Goulboun H.S.) include bus and entrance to the gardens. Contact Catherine Disley at 613-836-3588, catherinedisley@rogers.com

July 17 – 18 – M.G.O.I. Summer Workshop at the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture. The fee is \$250. For more information go to www.mgoi.ca under 'Latest News' on the front page. For registration contact June Streadwick at streadwick@sympatico.ca or at 905-934-6137.

August 15 – 9:00 – 1:00 p.m. – Ottawa-Carleton MGs host 2nd Annual Hundred Mile Garden Sale at the Central Experimental Farm Ottawa. Contact elou@bell.net

September 11 – 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Lake Simcoe

South presents Along the Garden Path Fall Garden Tour featuring 12 gardens including the Sharon Temple National Historic Site. Tickets \$10 per person. Information: lssmastergardeners@gmail.com.

September 11 – 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. 'Garden Design 2010 For You' at the Simcoe County Museum, 1151 Hwy 26 West, Minesing. Cost is \$40.00 for Master Gardeners and \$45.00 for non-members. This includes refreshments during the day and lunch. Please contact Linda Peacock to register before August 29. Call (705) 424-2179 or send payment to 9871 County Rd 10, R. R. #2, New Lowell, Ontario, L0M 1N0 email: peacockfamily@ymail.com

September 12 – 10:00 a. m. to 3:00 p.m. at Vineland Research and Innovation Centre. The Education Committee has planned an Educational Short Course – a one day session aimed at Master Gardeners. Participants will be able to select from a series of workshops – presented for the most part by Vineland's research scientists. The cost is \$50 which includes lunch and any handouts. Registration forms will be available soon

October 2 - Coordinators' Conference at Landscape Ontario in Milton