

# Master Gardeners of Ontario

What's Growing On  
MUST BE GROWING ON



Serving Ontario for 25 Years

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Summer, 2011

[www.mgoi.ca](http://www.mgoi.ca)



*MGOI Celebrates 25 Years*

## What is Organic Gardening?

Astrid Muschalla, Etobicoke

You'll be hearing more about Reconciliation Ecology which emphasizes the redesign of human habitats for the accommodation of other species. This is the thrust of Organic Horticulturists. But what does it mean to the home gardener? What is organic horticulture really?

Attending the recent Soils and Urban Trees Conference held in Toronto in April, I queried several company representatives which were claiming to practice 'organically' but the definition they used for organic was the chemical definition: "Relating to, or containing carbon compounds" – carbon, hydrogen, oxygen". That means all synthetic products derived from oil are included. More confusion arises when you hear the biological definition being used: "Of, relating to, or derived from living organisms". That includes anything that used to be living like coal (a living plant millions of years ago).

According to Humber College's new course being launched in September Organic Horticulture Specialist LAND 901

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## 25 Years (almost) in Lanark

Dale Odorizzi and Helen Halpenny, Lanark

In 1986, the Ontario Department of Agriculture and Food (now OMAFRA) initiated a programme to train experienced gardeners to enable them to help other gardeners with their gardening problems. These volunteers were required to successfully complete two University of Guelph independent studies courses (The Home Gardener and the Qualified Plantsman) within two years and agree to give at least twenty hours of volunteer time providing advice and ten hours administration. In 1987, the Horticultural Societies across Lanark County promoted this programme to their members and 12 participants began to study. Twenty-four years ago, our courses were paid for by OMAF and there were no membership dues. Then, as now, we all learned from each other. One of the founders talks about walking with trepidation to the mail box to submit her first assignment. She overcame this nervousness and went on to take 13 courses for a Horticultural Diploma from the University of Guelph. Today, we are fortunate to have two of the founding members active in our group.

Lanark County encompasses an area of 2,979 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 62,000. It consists of a number of towns and large rural areas. Over the years, we have provided gardening advice to hundreds of home gardeners by telephone, home visits, presentations to service groups and horticultural societies. We have hosted gardening advice clinics at fairs and farmers markets, taught courses at Algonquin Col-

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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.*

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organic horticulture is defined as, “an ecological management system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles and soil geological activity. The Society for Organic Urban Land Care (SOUL) further defines it as, "a holistic approach which emphasizes the importance of relationships between living organisms & their environment". In other words, the whole ecological footprint.



In Canada and the USA, as in many other countries around the world, organic agriculture & horticulture sectors have legislated standards. All comply with the minimum requirements set out by IFOAM International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements. These define organic practices or products but the problem is that all but two relate to agriculture. Our home gardens are permanent landscapes and hence require many different approaches. Enter the Society for Organic Urban Land Care (SOUL) which has set the standards for organic horticulture practices in Canada based on similar associations around the world. They are working together with the Organic Landscape Association (OLA) in Ontario which serves companies that practice organic horticulture for marketing to business and home owners.

Organic horticulture is based on science – it is not a fad. It recognizes the huge difference between concepts of landscape health management as opposed to pest management. Organic horticulture means that a holistic decision making framework for creating and maintaining vibrantly healthy gardens and landscapes is emphasized.

Based on these principles, on June 4, I presented a talk on organic best practices to an audience at the first annual “Connecting People with Plants” Event at the Humber Arboretum (which was organized in conjunction with the Etobicoke Master Gardeners).

To carry out best practices means we have to think differently, with a commitment to always question why? I will briefly summarize some key points based on this new framework.

- go native where ever possible
- right plant right place
- plant more trees
- plant densely and bigger gardens
- keep plants healthy by planting correctly
- feed the soil and mulch
- use compost
- respect insects

This is an abridged version of the original article. To read the full article visit [www.mgoi.ca](http://www.mgoi.ca)

*Mystery Plant*

*Do you know this plant? The answer will be revealed next issue. Contact [editors@mgoi.ca](mailto:editors@mgoi.ca) with your guess.*

Last month's mystery was identified correctly as Alpine Betony (*Stachys officinalis* or *Stachys monieri*) 'Hummelo' by Linda Hugli, Sudbury, Robert Pavlis, Guelph, Catherine Kavassalis, Oakville, Katherine Granger, Guelph, Mary Ann Gilhuly, Kitchener and Gillian Boyd, Ottawa.

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*25 Years in Lanark from page 1*

lege and written articles about plant care and culture for local newspapers. Each year we have training sessions to upgrade our knowledge.

In recent years, we faced many struggles. Our Bank Account was rapidly dwindling and our numbers fell to only eight members. We were having problems recruiting new members. The cost of the courses was \$1,000 and we were recruiting from a small population base. Membership fees rose 133% in 6 years. Many new members found it a challenge to complete the courses and their volunteer hours. We were spending more and more time talking about fund raising, instead of about gardening.

Our turnaround happened with a Recruiting Open House. We had 15 visitors and signed up 2 new MGITs. The publicity, before and after, drew in more inquiries and within a year, we had 6 new MGITS. With more members, we could provide more support to our Advice Clinics. We also started partnering to a greater extent with the various local Horticultural Societies. Virtually all our members are also Horticultural Society Members.

This past year, we worked with the local Algonquin College and provide both Fall and Winter series of Horticultural Seminars. We partnered with a Horticultural Society and ran a very successful Plant Sale and Rain Barrel Sale, selling 120 Rain Barrels. Our bank account is as healthy as it has ever been. In recent years, we have participated in Zone wide Technical Updates. This year, we are hosting the Technical Update in Lanark County in the beautiful town of Carleton Place on October 15. We value working as a part of an International Organization. We are active supporters of the mg-list and the MGOI Newsletter. As a part of this organization, we have professional signage and handouts and are able to have our own website that receives over 250 'Unique Visitors' per month, all things we could not manage on our own. We hope that we can continue to keep new members joining and more importantly can keep our existing members excited about providing Master Gardeners services across Lanark County.

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



**Working  
Together**



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

## MGs in Action

### *An Open House Like None Other.*

Mychelle Primeau, London

Wednesday, the 13th of April 2011 the Master Gardeners of London held an Open House at the Civic Garden not only for entertainment purposes but to acknowledge several of our members. Donna Slater hosted the ceremony.

Elmer Jorgensen and Eve Norman-Vestergaard received their 25 year badges and we also were very lucky to welcome Rhonda Persichilli as the newest Master Gardener. James Lee, Bob Worthy and Ron Rossini offered their congratulations to those very deserving members. Once more, our warmest wishes to those three very important members of our team.

The entertainment consisted of a fabulous presentation by our member Julie Dorssers on the plants and vegetation of the Galapagos Island and we were also joined by the king of combined gardening and humor, Denis Flanagan, who proceeded not only with a slide show but also distributed several gifts for the members and visitors, by asking "tricky" garden questions.

Brochures and books were available on the main table, and quite a few visitors were solicited to join our group in the future. Nancy Abra was the queen of photography for the night. Following the presentations, coffee, tea and fabulous pastries were served along with a cake celebrating the occasion. Not many of us left without Julie's fabulous Dutch lemon cake.

Every member of our team got involved in this great event which once again shows the dedication, the drive and the camaraderie of the Master Gardeners of London.

### *Philadelphia Flower Show*

Joy Cullen, Northumberland

On Monday March 07, fifty-four avid gardeners and shoppers left Peterborough, Port Hope and Brighton headed for Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia Flower Show.

Day one was a travel day with late afternoon arrival at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, right next door to King of Prussia Mall, the second largest Mall in USA. Lots of places to shop and eat!

We spent day two at the Philadelphia Flower Show

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which is produced by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and is billed as the “largest indoor flower show in the world”. It attracts 250 000 people annually and has been running since 1927. What a show! This year’s theme was Springtime in Paris complete with a 33 foot Eiffel Tower base and romantic and elegant scenes from Paris gardens.

Day three was a trip to Longwood Gardens, the former home of Pierre duPont. Although it was too early for spring blooms, it was an excellent opportunity to explore the grounds and appreciate the bones of a garden. We also enjoyed the conservatory with its 20 indoor gardens and Orchid Extravaganza, an incredible display of orchids in every colour, size, shape and variety.

It was a wonderful trip and just what we all needed in March.

## The Gardens of Ninfa

Linda Clay, Guelph

The New York Times has called Ninfa the most beautiful garden in the world and Italy has designated it as a natural monument. These unique and romantic



gardens are located an hour south of Rome in the ruins of the ancient city of Ninfa. With the mountains behind and the sea a few miles away, the geographic location provides a mild climate, gentle rains and protection from winds, much like a natural green house. Most plants grow to three times their normal size and outlive the average lifespan of their species. This magnificent balance of chaos and harmony boasts such features as pathways of roses through nature-covered ancient ruins shaded by maples and banana trees. Every month of the year presents a new magic. Visits are limited and a guide is required. For more information and beautiful photos, go to the official website <http://www.fondazionecaetani.org/index.php>

## Milestones

### New MGiTs

Halton – Liz Chapple, Dan Gardiner, Shirley Novak

Lake Simcoe South – Carol Ditomaso, Ruth Gemmel, Laura McCallum, Daila Webster

Ottawa-Carleton – Terry Mueller

Peterborough – Deborah Fraser, Kathy McMahon

### New MGs

Brantford – Vae Hamett

Etobicoke – Anne Grgic

Grey County – Rebecca Baker

London Middlesex – Rhonda Persichelli

Niagara – Tricia Golob, Linda Wade

Ottawa-Carleton – Anna Sipos

Prince Edward County – Marianne Malachowski

Toronto – Josee Couture, Sylvia Green, Janet Koerssen, Cathy Kozma, Alan Malcolmson, Christine March, Doryne Peace, Sylvia Sarkus

### 5 Years

Halton – Karen Walsh

Ottawa-Carleton – Diane McClymont Peace

Toronto – Aldona Satterthwaite

### 10 years

Halton – Marjorie Latimer, Roberta Roberts

Prince Edward County – Virginia Mitchell, Joyce Young

Toronto – Katy Anderson, Carol Bairstow, Linda Fischer, Eleanor Ward

### 15 Years

Huron – Eleanor Horst

Toronto – Susan Martin

### 20 Years

Halton – David Marshall, Sharon Paradis

London Middlesex – Jennifer Grant

Peterborough – Ferne DeBaeremaeker

Prince Edward County – Barbara Stock

Toronto – Charmiene Montgomery

### 25 Years

London Middlesex – Elmer Jorgensen, Eve Norman-Vestergaard

Niagara – Cecile Letourneau

### Special Achievements:

We were overwhelmed by contributions from a number of groups wishing to honour their volunteers for special contributions. It was pushing the newsletter to nine pages. You can read the extended version of this section on [www.mgoi.ca](http://www.mgoi.ca) (photos included).

## Coordinators' Conference

Kelly Noel, Ottawa Carleton, June Streadwick, Niagara

The 2011 Coordinators' Conference and MGOI Annual General Meeting will be held on October 22, at the Landscape Ontario facility in Milton, which once again is being made available to us at no charge. We can accommodate approximately 90 people (two members from each group plus board members) and we would like to have a full house. This is a great opportunity to meet and learn from other MGs from across the province.

It is not too early to start thinking about what you can contribute to the Silent Auction this year. This has become an important part of the Conference, and the funds received are used to finance the next year's event, making us self-sufficient. For information on the auction, please contact June Streadwick at [streadwick@sympatico.ca](mailto:streadwick@sympatico.ca).

## OMAFRA's Urban Agriculture Website

Anna Peterson

Visit OMAFRA's new [Ontario.ca/UrbanAgriculture](http://Ontario.ca/UrbanAgriculture) website. – A collection of links about growing your own produce, food safety and regulations. OMAFRA's urban agriculture site was created with the urban agriculturist and the municipal policy-maker in mind. While both groups may look at backyard agriculture from different perspectives, there is a synergy between them. Many of the links connect website visitors to OMAFRA resources and those of other organizations to make the urban agriculture collection a comprehensive resource.

If you have industry stakeholders who should know about [Ontario.ca/UrbanAgriculture](http://Ontario.ca/UrbanAgriculture) please tell them about it. You can also contact Susin Micallef, marketing and communications officer, at [susin.micallef@ontario.ca](mailto:susin.micallef@ontario.ca) for material for your newsletters, workshops and tradeshow.

## Events

July 9, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. – Green Trust Garden Tour – Ten Inspiring Gardens in Prince Edward County. Cost: \$15.00. For more information call 613.393.2111 or email [theprinceedwardcountygreentrust@yahoo.ca](mailto:theprinceedwardcountygreentrust@yahoo.ca) for further information or to obtain tickets. Get updates on Facebook: The Prince Edward County Green Trust

Sunday, July 10, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Rain or Shine. Annual St. Thomas Garden Tour. Visit Seven Gardens in St. Thomas and Elgin County. Cost: \$10.00. Sponsored by the St. Thomas and District Horticultural Society. Visit our website at [www.gardenontario.org/site.php/thomas](http://www.gardenontario.org/site.php/thomas) or E-mail us at [stthort@acanac.net](mailto:stthort@acanac.net)

July 10, 9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. – Vineland Research and Innovation Centre and Master Gardeners of Ontario Educational Short Course at Vineland Research and Innovation Centre – 4890 Victoria Ave. North, Vineland Station. Registration cost is \$60.00 and includes lunch and materials. Space is limited! To Register: please contact Kathryn Goodish at [kathryn.goodish@vinelandresearch.com](mailto:kathryn.goodish@vinelandresearch.com) 905.562.0320 x777 [www.vinelandresearch.com](http://www.vinelandresearch.com)

September 10, 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. – Annual Flower Show at the Toronto Botanical Garden. Contact Pat Cappelli <[patcappelli@yahoo.ca](mailto:patcappelli@yahoo.ca)>

Saturday, September 17 – Halton Region Master Gardeners Technical Update 'All Things are Connected' at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Burlington. Speakers: Virginia Burt, Philip van Wassenaer, Jim Lounsbery. Cost: \$45 includes lunch and admission to the RBG. Contact: Jane Leonard at

[hhmg.register@gmail.com](mailto:hhmg.register@gmail.com) For details and updates visit [http://www.haltonmastergardeners.mgoi.ca/Technical\\_Update.php](http://www.haltonmastergardeners.mgoi.ca/Technical_Update.php)

October 13 – 24 – Italian Garden Tour with author and garden expert, Marjorie Harris designed for garden enthusiasts, gardeners and landscape designers. Only 7 seats remaining. Discount for MGOI members. Contact Linda at 1 888 823 5849 [www.travelspecifics.com](http://www.travelspecifics.com)

October 15 – 8:30 – 3:30 – Technical Update – Owen Sound Legion, Owen Sound. The morning speakers are Peter Middleton, President of Owen Sound Field Naturalists, retired Outdoor Educator: Nuts, Buds and Hips (Native Woody Plants.) Prof. Greg Boland, U of Guelph: Plant Pathology (current practices in the diagnosis and treatment of plants diseases.) Afternoon speaker: Martin Galloway, Professor Seneca College and York University/Owner of Chalk Lake Greenhouses, Uxbridge: Native Plants in our Day to Day Lives. Lunch – brown bag or at a local restaurant. Cost: Donation to Grey County Master Gardeners. For more information: Sue Connelly/Patricia Draves Co-coordinators Grey County Master Gardeners. Sue: 519-924-0207, FAX 519-924-0806, [svc@cablerocket.com](mailto:svc@cablerocket.com) or Pat: 519-376-3684 or [patriciadraves@yahoo.ca](mailto:patriciadraves@yahoo.ca)

October 15 – Eastern Ontario (Zone 8) Master Gardeners invite you all to attend our Technical Update – Trees in the Urban Landscape in Carleton Place, just east of Ottawa on Highway 7. Learn how to plant and care for your trees, grow Nut Trees and Fruit Trees. Visit our web site [www.lanarkmastergardeners.mgoi.ca](http://www.lanarkmastergardeners.mgoi.ca) for more information.