



'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society
April 2017



Englehart and District Horticultural Society was formed in 1956.

General meetings:

3rd Wednesday of most months at 7:00 p.m. in the Presbyterian Church basement

- *Speakers, workshops, demonstrations
- *Civic Improvement
- *Youth Involvement
- *Displays and Competitions
- *Environmental Stewardship

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A Word From The Editor

Have you started any seeds yet? Have you been learning from Joe Muething's great article on Heirloom Seeds which has been in the past few bulletins? Check out page 4 of this bulletin for the final installment. Thanks so much, Joe, for sharing your experiences and expertise with us. Remember, you don't have to have a greenhouse to start seeds...a bright windowsill will do. Many seeds like a bit of heat to germinate (I've used an old heating pad/electric frying pan on low, etc. to put under my seed container); others need to be cool, even cold before and during germination time. Some like to be kept in the dark; others like full light. The best thing to do is to follow the instructions on the seed package, or get advice from the person who shared the seeds with you. If you're unsure of the age of the seeds, (which may affect germination), try a few seeds early, before you plant a lot. You can actually check out the germination rate by starting a few seeds on a damp paper towel in a plastic bag. Be patient...some seeds take a long time to pop up, while others appear in a few days. It's a great activity to do with children, especially if you use seeds large enough for them to handle.

Mark It On Your Calendar:

- April 19:** General Meeting
- April 29:** District 12 Annual Meeting
- April 27:** Earth Day
- May 27:** Plant and Bake Sale (set up on Friday 26)

Earth Day Should Be Every Day

For 2017, the theme of Earth Day is 'Earth Play for Earth Day'. Throughout the month there will be a push to get everyone outside, playing and connecting with nature. It is apparent that children today spend much less time in active play outdoors than previous generations. Playing outside helps children make meaningful connections to the environment. The more time children and youth spend playing in nature, the more likely they will be interested in protecting it as adults. So, if you are a parent, a grandparent, or work with children, encourage them or enable them to start loving the great outdoors. *"If children, in their play, have been able to give up their whole being to the world around them, they will be able to, in the serious tasks of later life, devote themselves with confidence and power to the service of the world."* (R. Steiner)



Last Month's Meeting

About 30 people, from as far away as Timmins and Latchford, enjoyed a presentation by Bill Smith on bees and bee houses. The hall was filled with the sounds of hammering as we hammered and screwed the wooden pieces (cut out in advance by Bill) to make homes for Mason bees, which we hope to attract come summertime. Many thanks to Bill for all the work he did in advance. To the right we see new member Barb Curran and Ruth Webb hard at work.



OHA/District 12 News:

Last year we were the host society for the District 12 Annual Meeting. In 2017, the Annual Meeting will be held in Kirkland Lake on Saturday, April 29. Please let Bonnie Warner know asap. It would be nice if we could support the KL Society as well as they did for us last year by attending. It's always an interesting day, with speakers, competitions, business, and good food. The list of competitions you are encouraged to enter are on our website and Facebook Page.

Reports from Your Directors:

Programme: Bonnie Warner tells us that our programme will be 'What's New at Aidie Creek Gardens' with Carrie Anne Field. This is always a very popular meeting, so do come out to enjoy and join in the fun. Please join in the competitions, too... it all adds interest to the night.

Competitions for this month are:

Class 1: One African Violet

Class 2: One foliage plant

Class 3: Flowering plant (no violets)

Class 4: One cactus or succulent

Entry tags will be available before the meeting between 6:30 and 7:00 Last month's photographic winners were Deb Murray and Eileen Fisher.

Social: Mary Schippers reminds Ruth Webb that she is the hostess and Ginny Montminy brings the give-away gift. Please bring along a small snack to add to the shared snack. Coffee, tea, and juice are provided.

Plant and Bake Sale: Convenor Jean Bott reminds members that we will be looking for garden plants, houseplants, trees/shrubs, vegetables, bulbs and tubers, as well as baking to sell at our Plant and Bake Sale. We'll also need bags and small boxes for packing materials for the customers. Don't forget to remind your friends and neighbours and get them to mark it down on their calendars as well....**Saturday, May 27th.** Please let Jean know if you can help out either at the sale, at set-up on Friday, or both.

Youth Garden Competitions: Once again we are looking forward to involving our young people in gardening. The Youth Garden Competition is open to all youth in the area in all grades. Information about the competition will be available from schools and from Eileen Fisher and Bonnie Warner in May. Involving young people in gardening is positive on so many levels. It teaches the value of hard work, of perseverance, of dedication, of honesty. It provides a source of exercise and encourages an appreciation of our natural environment.

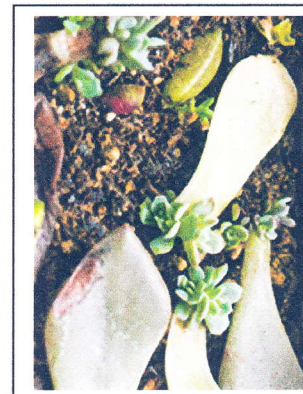
Membership/Website/Facebook: We have 58 members to date, we had 571 individual hits on our website in March, and 116 people have joined our Facebook page.

Here is some very interesting and exciting news from Guide leader, Ashley Fehr: This spring we will be starting a community garden in town on Second Street. I'm very excited for the kids to learn about growing their own food, but also that anyone and everyone can participate. We are open to any tips or suggestions." Such great news! I hope that anyone in our Society who is able

to with help out with this wonderful venture. We look forward to progress reports, Ashley. More information will follow in next month's bulletin.

Propagating Cuttings from Succulents

Remembering back to our 'Jaded Gardener' programme from the fall, I thought this article might be helpful to those of us who like succulents: If you grow cacti & succulents indoors and find that your plants look pale and stretched out during the winter, it's probably because they need more light. The way to prevent this is to give your plants more light, such as under growlights. But this is also a great opportunity to increase your number of plants by taking cuttings. All you need is the 'mother plant', a bit of soil, and a sharp knife or secateurs. Sometime you don't even need soil! You can actually use every part of the plant- leaves, stem, and the root. When a succulent plant begins to grow like this you have a couple of choices. You can remove the lower leaves and plant the mother deeper or you can remove the lower leaves and set them aside to dry for about three days. This allows the end of the leaves to callous over to prevent rot. You can also cut off the top and also set it aside to dry for three days. You can even keep the "stump" of the original plant because it will send out new leaves and plants that you can cut off and also root later. After about the three days all you need to do is lay your leaf cuttings on top of a pot of soil and wait for them to root. They will soon develop thin, hair-like roots and tiny new leaves. They can then be potted up in either cactus soil or sandy loam to start new plants. The top portion that you removed can also be inserted into soil and rooted. The stump can be watered sparingly and will probably put out new shoots. (info from 'Succulents and Sunshine')



Herbaceous Peonies

Over the next few months the bulletin will feature an article on peonies. Herbaceous peonies are perennials which die down in the fall. To begin, let's talk about the requirements for planting. First, a good sized root, free of disease, with enough roots or fingers to supply enough nourishment for the best development of the plant is best. This root must be planted properly, in a location that is well drained, with sun most of the day. (Peonies can be planted in raised beds as well as in in-ground beds.) Try to avoid planting near large trees as tree roots often take food away from the peony and also may shade the plant too much. Also, when choosing the place for planting, keep in mind that peonies are long-lived and resent being moved, so they should be left in the same location unless it becomes necessary to move them. Peonies should be planted at least 3' away from other perennials. The hole should be dug deeply, about 18", and the soil amended with bone meal, wood ash, kelp meal, or a fertilizer with a ratio such as: 5-8-8, 2-10-10. Avoid fertilizers or other material that provide a high nitrogen (the first number in a fertilizer) as this promotes lots of green growth and few flowers. Refill the hole so that the bottom of the hole is about 8-10" below the soil level. Allow time for the soil to settle or firm it down carefully. Next, place the roots in the centre of the hole. There should be several 'eyes' – the spot from where the stems will grow. Begin to fill the hole with soil, packing it down well, being careful not to injure the roots or eyes and not to leave any spaces unfilled around the roots. When the hole has been filled to the tops of the eyes, carefully pour in about a gallon of water and allow it to sink in, then fill in the rest of the hole, ensuring that the eyes are no more than an inch or two below the soil surface. Most people plant peonies in the fall, but they can be planted in the spring as well, although they may not bloom the first year. (to be continued)



Plant of the Month

Salix integra 'Hakuro Nishiki'

Also known as Dappled Willow, this lovely deciduous shrub's fine branches have striking pink stems and buds, surrounded by foliage mottled in white, green and pink highlights. The brightly coloured stems provide excellent winter interest. This graceful shrub is a perfect garden accent. Being a willow, it tolerates dampness well and in dry weather requires regular watering until it is established. It needs partial to full sun and can apparently grow to 20'tall. I have had one for years and it has remained between 8'-10' tall, but is wider than it is tall. It provides a splash of colour when many plants aren't blooming.



"A Seed Primer" by Joe Muething (con't)

Another advantage of being able to save seed is that by doing so you can guarantee that you'll be able to continue growing your old garden favourites. Seed companies cannot offer an unlimited number of choices. Each year some old varieties are removed from the list to make room for new ones. More than once I've been distressed to find that a variety I'd come to depend on is no longer available.

The main reason I like to grow heirloom plants is that they add another level of interest and enjoyment to my garden. Many of the plants have fascinating stories. Some bring to mind gardening friends who have shared wisdom as well as seeds. Heritage plants are a connection joining gardening traditions that run from ancient times through the present and on to a hopeful future.

There are many sources of heirloom / heritage seed. Here are a few to get you started:

Seeds of Diversity Canada

1-12 Dupont St. West, Waterloo, ON N2L 2X6

<http://seeds.ca/>

Heritage Harvest Seed • P.O. Box 279, • Carman, Manitoba
• RoG oJo

<https://www.heritageharvestseed.com/index.html>

Hope Seeds

324 St. George St., Box 460, Annapolis Royal, NS B0S 1A0

<http://www.hopeseed.com/article;story,38;Celebrating-Seed-Heritage>

Poetry and Prose

Always Marry an April Girl

*Praise the spells and bless the
charms,*

I found April in my arms.

April golden, April cloudy,

Gracious, cruel, tender, rowdy;

April soft in flowered languor.

April cold with sudden anger,

Ever changing, ever true...

I love April, I love you.

Ogden Nash



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