



'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society
April 2022



Englehart and District Horticultural Society was formed in 1956.

General meetings:

3rd Wednesday of most months
at 7:00 p.m. in the
St. Paul's Emmanuel
Community Church

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

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Gardening on Clay (cont'd from March)

Watering Clay Soil: There are some seasonal considerations to keep in mind when watering clay soil.

- 1) Because clay soil is water retentive, water within the soil could freeze in winter and create humps that push the plants out.
- 2) During summer's hot, dry conditions, soil could become so crusted that seedlings can't emerge into the surface and their roots couldn't burrow deeper into the soil.
- 3) In spring, clay soil takes a long time to warm up, so planting schedules might be delayed.
- 4) The best time to dig or till is in autumn, when clay is at the right moisture level for handling.

Drip irrigation works best with clay soils. It allows you to deliver water at a slow rate, giving it enough time to soak through to the root regions and drain away. In summer, a soaker hose trickling at a rate of a cup per minute could run across your garden beds for 1-3 weeks to distribute water evenly, avoiding bare spots. Make sure that your gardens have proper drainage. Consider growing your plants in raised beds if rainwater puddles in the garden and doesn't drain quickly.

Mark it on Your Calendar

April 20: General Meeting St. Paul's Emmanuel Church (**Please wear a mask. We will not be serving refreshments until a later date.**)

Hooray... We Had a Director's Meeting!

On April 6th, we had our first meeting in about two years. It was so good to be able to be together to plan events. Reports were given and plans were made. As of now, we plan on having a General Meeting on April 20 at 7:00 p.m. in the St. Paul's Emmanuel Community Church at 7:00 p.m. and will enjoy a presentation by Tony Juurlink on 'Tree Care and Spring Maintenance'. We also plan on having a Houseplant Competition. The classes are: **Class 1:** One African Violet **Class 2:** One foliage plant (grown for the interest of its foliage, not its flowers. **Class 3:** Flowering plant (no African Violets) **Class 4:** One cactus or succulent. You must be masked to attend and there will be no refreshments served after the meeting.

Annual Plant and Bake Sale

Our annual **Plant and Bake Sale** is on **Saturday, May 21st at 10:00**. We hope to have lots of plants and baking for sale! Please bring donations to the Legion Hall on the **Friday, May 20th between 1:00 and 3:00 pm and, if possible, stay to help us set up!** It would be great if the plants can be named or at least described as people are often looking for specific plants. **You must be masked to enter the sale.** We will announce the date on local media and on posters before the sale. Please remember that this project depends on the Covid situation and on donations!

Going Green

How to Control Aphids Organically

So, what should you do when those nasty pests set up camp on your favourite plants? There are lots of recipes but all you really need to do is grate the peel from five lemons, cut them in half, and juice them. Throw the peel into 300ml of boiling water and leave to simmer for half an hour or so. Allow to cool to room temp. Pour the lemon juice into a spray can or a watering can with a diffuser and spray the affected leaves and stems on your plants. Aphids hate citrus, and will either die or disappear, leaving your plants to recover beautifully. You can then pour the boiled peel and its water over the soil around the plants to give off an especially off-putting lemony aroma to ward off any determined aphids who might fancy returning. Where your plants are under serious attack, you might need to repeat this every three or four weeks.

Better Alternatives to Salt for De-icing

Before you pour salt on the walkways or driveways, consider the impact it has on your plants, pets, or pavement. Think about less harmful ways to melt ice—as well as ways to use less salt. There's no "perfect" ice-melt solution but there are some solutions that are less damaging than 100% rock salt.

Rubbing Alcohol: In a bucket, mix 1/2 gallon of warm water with 6 drops of dish soap and 1/4 cup of rubbing alcohol. Splash (or put in a spray bottle) around on your icy spots and watch the ice bubble up and melt away.

Epsom Salt: Epsom salt isn't as harmful to plants or vegetation as rock salt (or table salt). You may already have some on hand from the garden. It is an abrasive and melts ice slowly.

Garden Fertilizer/Alternative Salts: Check your garage to see if you have any fertilizer left over from gardening or try alfalfa meal, wood ashes, or coffee grounds. These abrasives will help speed melting AND improve traction. Plus, they have relatively few impacts on the environment or plants. It's always a good idea to combine a de-icer with an abrasive to keep folks from slipping. Sand, non-clumping kitty litter, and sawdust do the trick. (excerpts from the Farmer's Almanac)

Vegetable Gardening Hints: Companion Plants for Beginners

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| ~ Peas don't like too much water | ~ Potatoes do not like tomatoes |
| ~ Potatoes don't like cucumber | ~ Potatoes and carrots are friends. |
| ~ Don't plant beans with onions or beets. | ~ Beans love carrots. |
| ~ Beets love onions, cabbage, and potatoes | ~ Cabbage does not like radishes. |
| ~ Beans and cucumbers don't like each other | ~ Carrots and onions are quite friendly |

Plants for Clay Soil: (cont.)

Growing plants that thrive in clay soil would ensure growing success. Below is a list to give you some ideas

Trees: Balsam Fir, Box Elder, Hawthorn, Apple, Crabapple, Willow, Oak, Aspen/Poplar, White Pine, Tamarack

Shrubs: Lilac, Honeysuckle, Juniper, Witch Hazel, Potentilla, Russian Olive, Burning Bush.

Blooms: Aster, Black-eyed Susan, Coreopsis, Hemerocallis (Daylily), Japanese Iris.

Ornamental grasses: Canadian wild rye, Switch grass, Indian grass, Fountain grass, Prairie cord grass. (Of course, there are many more plants that do well in clay soil- I have only mentioned a few. (EF)

Tough Plants for Challenging Places

Some time ago I started an article with suggestions for plants that don't seem to mind the 'challenge' of growing in hot and dry gardens. I just came upon the second part of the article which should have been followed up so I'll complete it here.

Plants for Dry Shade

Hosta: With more than 7,000 varieties to choose from, the hardest part is choosing a favourite. It is recommended that you peruse the selection at your local garden retailer for the varieties which best suit you and keep in mind that the solid green types are the most shade tolerant.

There are other plants that are tough, but they are not recommended as they are aggressive or invasive.

Barrenwort (Epimedium): This is one of Mark Cullen's favourite shade plants (and mine, too. I have had an epimedium growing well for several years). It grows well under trees and will grow to 30 cm tall, with flowers in the spring. Mine has pink flowers but it can be yellow, mauve, or white.

Ferns: Many of the ferns in the article are mentioned as growing in southern Ontario. However, Christmas fern, leatherwood fern, ostrich fern, royal, and fiddlehead fern are all native ferns, are reasonably tolerant of dry shade, and are hardy to zone 3. Choose your favourites and keep in mind that they do not like clay soil (hard for us!) but prefer the sort of loamy, humus rich soil found on the forest floor. The "no-grow" list includes sumac, periwinkle, pachysandra, vinca, lily of the valley. Some of these plants may actually be native but that does not mean that they are suitable for a home garden. If you choose to grow them in a garden, you should be prepared for spreading. However, a trick I learned from my mother is, if you just can't live without it, plant it in a container and place the container in your garden, after lining the pot with a couple of pieces of landscape cloth blocking the holes which are necessary for drainage.)



Some strange Facts

***Heliotropism and Sunflowers:** Young sunflowers track the sun, which is referred to as heliotropism, due to circadian rhythms. At sunrise, flower buds and young blossoms will face east and follow the sun during the day. At sunset, the bloom will be facing the west. As the flower reaches maturity the head becomes heavier, and the blossom will generally stay facing east to stay warm.

***Cranberries:** Small pockets of air inside cranberries make them bounce and float in water.

***Apples/Cucumbers:** 84% of a raw apple and 96% of a raw cucumber is water.

***Avocado:** have the highest calories of any fruit... approximately 167 calories per hundred grams. Health-conscious people, alert!

* **Roses:** The family of rose plants, in addition to giving us fragrant flowers, gives us apples, pears, plums, cherries, almonds, peaches, and apricots.

Plant of the Month

I have really enjoyed my houseplants the past two years. They have become more like old friends since the beginning of Covid as I have had more time to spend on and talk to them! One of my favourites is the Tradescantia Zebrina (sometimes called the Inch Plant). It is easy to propagate in water from cuttings. Its foliage comes in several colours, including green, white and green, and pink and purple. It isn't fussy about conditions- it will grow in bright light, low light, will take some dryness as well as some overwatering. It hangs down or can be trained to a lattice. Cuttings are easy to grow in water or soil. It's a great plant for beginners as well as experienced growers.



How to Grow a Garden that Will Fight Climate Change

Climate change is at the root of rising global temperatures, the melting of Arctic sea ice, changing weather patterns and a rise in the amount and intensity of extreme natural events – from forest fires to hurricanes. Since carbon dioxide is one of the big culprits in the greenhouse effect, it's up to us to find ways to remove that carbon dioxide from the air. One of those ways is gardening! If you've got a green thumb, you're well on your way, but there are a lot of aspects to creating a garden that fights climate change.

Carbon Sequestration: Firstly, you've got to know how gardening can sequester carbon dioxide. Did you know that soil can store carbon dioxide? It's true! Plants are incredible at sucking carbon dioxide out of the air and storing it in their tissues and into the soil. Soil rich in humus (which is essentially dark, organic matter that was once plant/animal material) is incredibly beneficial. You see, humus is made of about 60 per cent carbon! And that carbon can go undisturbed for hundreds and hundreds of years before the carbon is eventually released into the atmosphere again. That said, according to the director of Ohio State University's Carbon Management and Sequestration Centre, our cultivated soils across the globe have lost between 50 to 70 per cent of its carbon stock. That's a pretty big problem. But it's one that we can do something about! If you want to fight climate change in your own backyard, I will be adding some tips in next month's Through the Garden Gate to get us all started.

Poetry and Prose

Spring Rain

*The change inviting
bountifulness,
Filling us with hopes and
dreams.
Welcoming the fragrant air,
Hands are deep in damp, cold
Earth.
New birth arriving to the world,
Rain falls to quench plants'
growing thirst.
Hurry inside, clouds come
open,
Raining down upon us all.
Warm, fine tears from
heaven's cheeks,
Cascading with a gentle fall.
Spring rain comes to kiss us all.*

Gillian Sisley

A toddler was found chewing on a slug. After the initial surge of disgust, the parent said, "Well, what does it taste like?"

"Worms" was the reply.



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