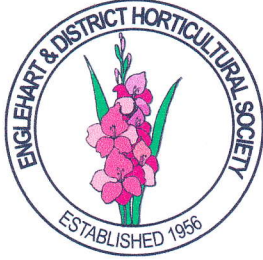




'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society
January 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

President: C. A. Field
Bulletin Editor: E. Fisher
Website:
engleharthort.weebly.com

Looking Back... What a Busy Year!

2016 was a very busy year for us. We started off with our annual meeting and elections, learned from a variety of interesting speakers throughout the year, had a couple of trips and presentations, learned about succulents, planted some gardens, hosted the District 12 Annual Meeting, offered interesting and informative tips of the radio, enjoyed a 'Jaded' evening, read 11 bulletins, celebrated our 60th anniversary, enjoyed a visit from Jean Wallace, learned a lot about our history as a society...in other words, we were even busier than usual.



Mark It On Your Calendar:

January 18: Annual Meeting, Potluck Supper, and Elections

Are the leaves on your houseplants turning yellow? They may be suffering from a lack of nitrogen. Consider giving them a shot of fertilizer with a higher first number, which is nitrogen. Always make sure the soil is damp before fertilizing to avoid burning the delicate roots.

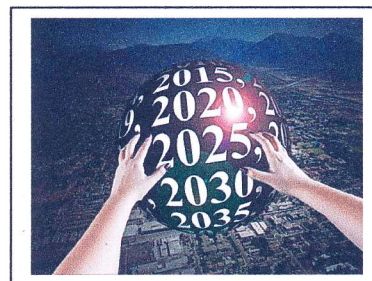
A Season's Reflection

*Winter is here, it will always come, a frozen silence with a building hum.
The snowfall silent but the winds go wailing, promised thoughts of spring start failing,
Footprints covered without a trace, frozen fingers, toes, and face,
Blinding sunlight, reflected white, days are brilliant, oh, but the night.
Temperatures drop and our hearts do too, quiet outside but so much to do.
The bustle of Christmas to start the season, by March even the air is freezing,
But spring will come with its new start, warmer days and warmer hearts,
If I could have the choice of just one season, autumn's glow is the most pleasing.*

Thank you to Rosemary Campbell for this lovely original poem which reminds us that even in these dark winter days, spring is just waiting to arrive.

Looking Ahead

We spent much of our last year “Looking Back” as we celebrated our 60th anniversary. As we begin our 61st year as a Society, we can look forward to repeating some of our old tried and true ways but must also look forward to some changes. My mother often said that a change was as good as a rest, but I don’t think we’ll be doing much resting. Is there something new or different that you’d like to try? Let the executive or directors know your ideas. Is there something you think is worth trying? Let’s look forward to our next 60 years of community service, horticultural education, and just plain fun. We will have a new executive for the coming year. Let’s all make an effort to support them when they ask for help!



Looking Back

Our annual Christmas Workshop was a huge success last year. We were sold out of kits quite quickly, although some people stayed just to watch others make their beautiful centerpieces. Convenor Rosemary Campbell and her committee had purchased, cut, gathered, and organized the necessary materials for the craft in advance, and set up the hall earlier in the day. Hostess for the evening, Carrie Anne Field, along with Social convenor Mary Schippers, did a great job of presenting the delicious snacks donated by Society members. Rosemary demonstrated the craft and the audience went to town, making beautiful and original lantern centerpieces with cones, greenery, lights, ribbon, and decorations. Rosemary also thanked her hard working committee for their help. She also thanked Len Fisher for his generous donation of a bird house which was won by Natalie Perron. Rosemary herself had donated a gift for the monthly free draw. Thank you to Rosemary for your years of dedication to this committee and the Society.



Reports from Your Directors

social: Mary Schippers reminds Deb Murray and Judy Eastman that they are the hostesses for this month and Jen Holmes brings the gift for the free draw. Don’t forget to bring a dish for the shared supper...main course, dessert, salad...your choice. Set up is at 5:30, supper at 6:00.

Programme: Convenor Carrie Anne Field reminds everyone that our Annual Meeting starts at 6:00 with a potluck supper, followed by the Annual Reports and the election of the Executive and Directors. After this, we will enjoy a short slide presentation of our 60th year’s events.

Nominating: Convenor Bruce Wilson and his committee have been busy working on this important committee. Although the committee does contact people to see if they would be willing to stand for office this year, as an executive member or a Director, it is also possible on January 18 at the Annual Meeting, for people to be nominated from the floor. Please come out to this meeting to show your support for the Society. It’s a great way to start of the new year.

Website/Facebook: Webmaster Rick Heaslip reports that there were 456 visits to our website in December. Check it out for all of the latest information and past happenings. Eileen Fisher reports that we now have 97 members who use our Facebook page for information about the Society, for tips on gardening, houseplants, etc. Remember that you don’t have to ‘join’ the page to be able to use it but we’d love to have you with us.

Membership: Membership convenor Ginny Montminy reports that we have 35 members who have signed up or renewed their membership for 2017. If you haven't yet, please contact Ginny to renew your membership for the low cost of \$10.00. A membership also makes a great gift for a friend or family member.

Happy Birthday, Canada!

Fifty years ago on New Year's Eve, many Canadians stood outside listening to bells welcome in not only the new year, but the year of Canada's 100th birthday. It seems amazing to me that another 50 years have gone by and this July 1st we'll be celebrating our 150th year as a country. This past fall, Deb Murray, Judy Eastman, Mary Schippers, and I planted many of the beautiful Canada 150 tulips bulbs to help beautify our town. Do you have any other ideas, any suggestions which we could do as a society to mark this special year? Please let any of the Directors or Executive know of any ideas.



A Helpful Friend

If you're like me, you'll have found yourself wondering about seeds lately. Over the past few years I've read articles and listened to speakers on the topic of seeds, using terms such as 'heritage' or 'heirloom' or 'open pollinated'. I'm the first to admit that I have become very confused about the terminology involved in the seed business, so, knowing a man who could probably help me, I turned to none other than our own Joe Muething. After a small bit of begging, he agreed to help me out by providing an article for the bulletin. Many thanks go to Joe for taking the time to write this for us. Due to its length, we'll enjoy it over several months of bulletins.



A Seed Primer from Joe

I always welcome the arrival of the seed catalogues as the official beginning of the new gardening season. As important as the seed catalogues and seed companies are to our gardening endeavors though, I hadn't given much thought to how the business started. Then one summer our family visited the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, Kentucky. The Shakers were a communal religious sect. In the mid 1800's, there were at least 19 Shaker communities spread over 8 of the eastern United States. Amongst a number of interesting interpretive exhibits I found one particularly intriguing. It was about the Shaker seed industry. The first garden seeds sold in paper packets to individual customers were produced by the Shakers. According to Margaret Frisbee Somer in her book, "Shaker Seed Industry", the Shakers started selling garden seeds in the 1790's and the business continued for around 100 years.

By the time it reached its peak in the mid to late 1800's, the Shaker seed industry had much in common with the seed companies that are in business today. The seeds were put up in brightly coloured packets and promoted through informative catalogues. Like many of today's seed catalogues, the later versions of the Shaker catalogues contained much more than simple descriptions of seeds. There were directions for planting, harvesting and preserving. There were illustrations and recipes. At least one catalogue had instructions for constructing a hot bed. (to be continued next month)

Plant of the Month

Sansevieria

Sansevieria, an easily grown succulent, is also called Snake plant (because of its markings) and Mother-in-law's Tongue because of the sharpness of the leaves. Native to Zaire, it requires moderate water in summer and low water in the winter months. It is considered a low light plant and is happy in most homes. It can be multiplied by breaking off the offsets or 'pups' and replanting them, or by taking cuttings of the leaves. However, if the leaf cutting is from a plant with yellow edging on the leaves, the new plant will lose this colour. Well-drained soil is essential for this plant. There are several different varieties of this plant, including the 'Bird's Nest', which has shorter leaves that grow in a more circular pattern, somewhat resembling a nest.



Taking Cuttings (Continued from November '16)

7. If the cutting is going into water, carefully place the cutting into the room-temperature water so that the scar is below water. Try not to get any remaining leaves in the water as they will rot and produce bacteria.
8. Check daily to make sure the scar is below the water level; top up with room temperature water if needed.
9. When there are enough roots grown to feed the plant, pot it up in good potting soil.
10. If you're planting the cutting right into the soil, make sure the soil is firm, but not packed hard into the pot. Water enough that the excess water runs out the bottom (make sure you hold the pot over the sink or remember to empty the saucer underneath)
11. Carefully place the cutting into the hole, without damaging the new roots...they're very tender.
13. Gently tap the soil back around the stem, making sure the cutting is standing up straight. Place in a spot that is not in direct light for a few days.

A few extra suggestions:

- › Some people use a rooting hormone to help the plant to root faster. There are several different kinds of rooting hormones. Most plants we grow inside use the pink or 'softwood' type.
- › Many cuttings do well if kept in a greenhouse-like condition. Do this by putting a plastic bag over the plant, pot and all. This helps to keep the soil moist and the plant likes the moist air as well. Don't tuck the bag around it too tightly, or else poke a few little holes in the bag to avoid rot.

Poetry and Prose January

*The days are short,
The sun a spark,
Hung thin between
The dark and dark,
Fat snowy footsteps
Track the floor.
Milk bottles burst
Outside the door.
The river is
A frozen place
Held still beneath
The trees of lace.
The sky is low.
The wind is gray.
The radiator
Purrs all day.*

John Updike

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Society
Box 677, Englehart, ON
PoJ 1H0
President: C. A. Field
Secretary: Bonnie Warner
Treasurer: Ginny Montminy
Editor: Eileen Fisher
Copying: Ginny Montminy
Mailing: Joyce Marie Smith
Labels: Rick Heaslip