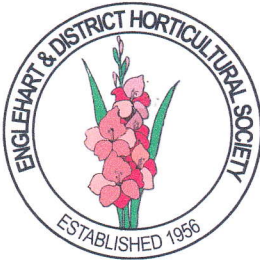




'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society
January 2021



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

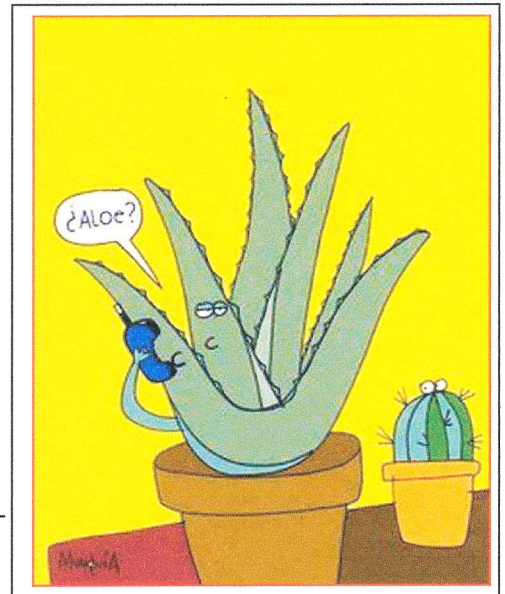
- *Speakers, workshops, demonstrations
- *Civic Improvement
- *Youth Involvement
- *Displays and Competitions
- *Environmental Stewardship

President: Jean. Bott
Bulletin Editor: E. Fisher

Website:
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Yahoo...It's 2021

Goodbye and good riddance to 2020. I've never been so glad to see a new year! Last year started off so promisingly. I remember thinking that it seemed such a magical sounding number- 2-0-2-0. It had a nice ring to it. In January we had our annual election, filling all of our positions. Our February meeting featured Bonnie and I talking about starting seeds indoors. There was an amazing story about a 2,624 year-old Bald Cypress tree being discovered in North Carolina. Our executive - Jean Bott, Evelyne Nemcsok, Ginny Montminy, Carrie Anne Field, and Bonnie Warner agreed to stay on for the new year. Then...bang! Hopefully we will be able to meet soon. I am so looking forward to it!



Mark It on Your Calendar

Sadly, there was no Christmas Workshop this year. It is impossible to say when we are able to meet again but hopefully it will be sooner than later. As we are not seers, we are unable to make plans for any 2021 activities.

December Christmas Competitions

The Englehart & District Horticultural Society, with Ev Nemcsok as convenor, held a December competition online! Adult classes included: Class 1 - Seasonal Wreath; Class 2 - Everlasting Card (a holiday design using dried and / or treated natural materials); Class 3 - Outdoor Seasonal Arrangement. Judges B. Warner and E. Fisher had the difficult job of choosing winners from pictures which were submitted by email or Facebook. Unfortunately we had only two entrants but their work was great. Results were:

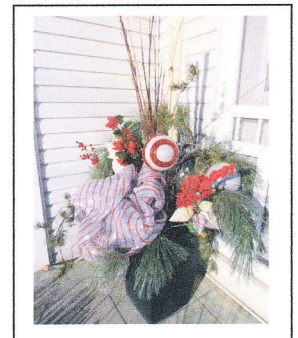
Outdoor Seasonal Wreath

1st: Anna Flewwelling 2nd: Rick Heaslip

Seasonal Arrangement: 1st: Rick Heaslip

2nd: Anna Flewwelling 3rd: Rick Heaslip.

Thank you to Evelyne for convening the contest and Rick and Anna for entering. Well done, both of you. We just wish we had had more entries. Here are Anna's wreath and Rick's arrangement...





Happy New Year!

Did you make any resolutions this month? I know we all usually do and then we try to keep them... 'try' being the operative word. I promised to pay more attention to my houseplants this year. I have long fought spider mites on my plants, especially in the warm, dry winter air in our homes. I know I must be more vigilant and not let the nasty critters get ahead of me. I must admit that I also made another resolution...to try to reduce the amount of gardening I do outside and thus take better care of the plants I have already. This one will be a bit more difficult for me because I do love my perennials and can never say "No" to a new plant but right now I mean it!

A Letter from Your President

Our little acre this past summer was a green thumb delight. The Siberian Iris shot up lovely purple blooms. When the seedpods dried and turned a rich black-brown, I snipped off the stalks and scattered them down the property line. Hopefully they'll all grow, come spring. The old dried gourds, that I had impulsively thrown out into the garden in May, all dutifully shot up vines which produced a great variety of babies that I didn't have the heart to pull out. I'm hoping they, too, produce next spring.

The amazing colour and blooms that bordered the flowerbeds, even until mid-October, came from cheeky pansies and snapdragons. I'm hoping I can find them again at the garden centre in the spring.

Gardening this summer was very rewarding for me. Lady Bird Johnson assured us that "Where flowers bloom, so does hope." I'm holding her to that! I hope that we can all keep a happy balance, knowing that good times are just around the corner. Keep safe and happy in 2021.

(Thanks, Jean, for your words of hope. With the Covid 19 situation, I think many of us found great rewards spending time with our gardens and house plants. May we all have a wonderful winter and better spring and summer in 2021!)



The January Blues...

January is one of the most difficult months for a gardener. The days are short and often frigidly cold, the winds howl and blow snow against our windows and fill our driveways. The nights are long and even colder. The prettiest part of a January day may well be the frost flowers on those windows, but there are things that a horticulturalist can do to make those January days more interesting and less damaging to our outdoor plants. We often have a 'January thaw' and although we may love it, it can be hard on our gardens. One thing we can do to help our plants is to ensure that the perennials in our gardens are well protected. The best thing to do is to make sure that the shrubs and perennials that are planted up near the house have been well watered and mulched with dry leaves in the fall. Many people also wrap their shrubs in the fall with burlap which seems to help against those drying, freezing January winds. The best part of January is that it also brings seed and bulb catalogues. We can start dreaming and planning and ordering for our upcoming gardening season. It might also be a great time to take a course either in person or on line, to surf the net for interesting upcoming garden events, and in the meantime, lavish love and tender care on your houseplants.

The Language of Flowers

Floriography (language of flowers) is a means of cryptological communication through the use or arrangement of flowers. Meaning has been attributed to flowers for thousands of years, and some form of floriography has been practiced in traditional cultures throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa. Plants and flowers are used as symbols in the Hebrew Bible, particularly of love and lovers in the Song of Songs, as an emblem for the Israelite people, and for the coming Messiah. In Western culture, William Shakespeare gave emblematic meanings to flowers, especially in Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. Similarly, in a scene in his Henry VI, Part 1, English noblemen pick either red or white roses to symbolize their allegiance to the Houses of Lancaster or York. Interest in Floriography soared in Victorian England and in the United States during the 19th century. Gifts of blooms, plants, and specific floral arrangements were used to send a coded message to the recipient, allowing the sender to express feelings which could not be spoken aloud in Victorian society. Armed with floral dictionaries, Victorians often exchanged small "talking bouquets", called nosegays or tussie-mussies, which could be worn or carried as a fashion accessory.

Here are some common flowers and their meanings: **Anemone** – *Forsaken*; **Azalea** - *Take Care of Yourself for Me; Temperance*; **Begonia** - *Beware*; **Bouquet of withered flowers** - *Rejected Love*; **Cactus** – *Endurance*; **Yellow Carnation** - *You Have Disappointed Me*; **Cattail** - *Peace, Prosperity*; **Red Chrysanthemum** - *I Love You*; **Yellow Chrysanthemum** - *Slighted Love*; **Crocus** - *Cheerfulness*; **Daffodil**- *Regard, Unrequited Love, You're the Only One*; **Dandelion** - *Faithfulness; Happiness*; **Fern** - *Magic; Fascination*; **Forget-Me-Not** -*True Love, Memories*; **Gardenia** - *You're Lovely, Secret Love*; **Geranium** - *Stupidity, Folly*; **Hyacinth Purple** - *I Am Sorry*; **Ivy** - *Wedded Love, Fidelity, Friendship, Affection*; **Calla Lily** - *Beauty*

A Gardener's Friends: Those Amazing Bumblebees

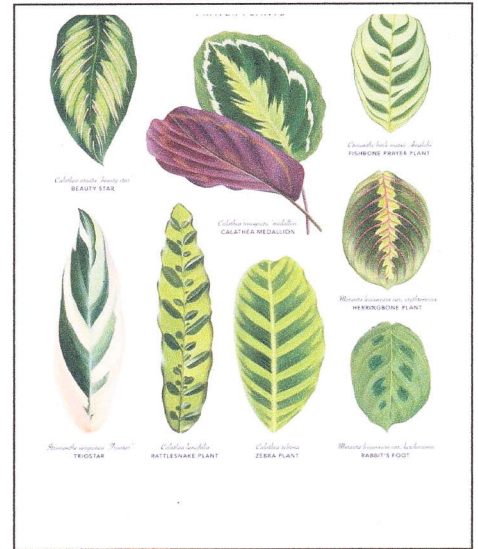
In a new study from the University of Exeter, researchers report that the biggest bumblebees take the time to memorize the location of flowers with the richest nectar. With a shorter flight range and less carrying capacity, smaller bees are not concerned with finding the best flowers. Honeybees are known to perform "learning flights" after leaving flowers. The Exeter team discovered that bumblebees do the same thing, repeatedly looking back to memorize a flower's location. "It might not be widely known that pollinating insects learn and develop individual flower preferences, but in fact bumblebees are selective," said study co-author Professor Natalie Hempel de Ibarra. "On leaving a flower, they can actively decide how much effort to put into remembering its location. The surprising finding of our study is that a bee's size determines this decision making and the learning behaviour." The researchers designed an experiment in which captive bees visited artificial flowers that contained a sugar solution of varying concentrations. The experts found that the larger the bee, the more its learning behaviour varied depending on the richness of the solution. Meanwhile, smaller bees invested the same amount of effort in learning the locations of the artificial flowers, regardless of whether the sugar concentration was high or low. "The differences we found reflect the different roles of bees in their colonies," said Professor Hempel de Ibarra. "Large bumblebees can carry larger loads and explore further from the nest than smaller ones. Small ones with a smaller flight range and carrying capacity cannot afford to be as selective, so they accept a wider range of flowers. These small bees tend to be involved more with tasks inside the nest – only going out to forage if food supplies in the colony are running low." (PlantSnap)



Plant of the Month

Calathea

Calathea plants are popular as indoor plants because they are relatively easy to care for. They're in the same family as the Maranta or Prayer Plant and are grown mainly for their interesting leaves. They like bright, indirect light and prefer distilled water or purified water. They like moist, but not soggy, soil. Calathea are from tropical areas of the world and prefer temperatures between 18-26 degrees C. These plants do well with high humidity and can absorb moisture through the air via their leaves. They don't need a lot of fertilizing, but they will flower and do well with standard houseplant fertilizer during spring, summer and fall. Most calathea flowers are fairly insignificant but their leaves are interesting, often multi-coloured.



Gardening in the Pandemic - Part 2 (cont. from Nov.)

There's a risk-reward ratio inherent in gardening. You have to learn to balance weather that may thwart your efforts. But that experience bears sweet tomatoes or refreshing cucumbers -- offering a tangible sense of accomplishment when we're floundering around, looking for something to focus our minds. "You're able to see the fruit of that effort," Hall said. "That's a teachable moment in people's lives." Gardening may have a fitting philosophical lesson for us during this time. "Sometimes pruning occurs," Hall said. "You prune a plant so that it's even healthier when it comes out from its pruning. As plants need water, fertilizer and sunlight to grow, we're nurtured by challenge and engagement with things we enjoy," Hall added. And when plants grow so well they outgrow the space in which they're needed, gardeners must replant them in a different space where they have the room to thrive. "People move up into bigger areas of responsibility during their careers. There are all kinds of metaphors that come out of gardening and how it applies to everyday life," Hall said. "Sometimes you have to be transplanted into areas where you could grow even further. It is good for your overall health." Gardening can be a coping mechanism during this unsettling stage of life, but it also comes with benefits for your physical and mental health. One study found gardening, among other leisure activities, may prevent brain shrinkage in older adults. Our cognitive abilities, including learning and memory, largely depend on the size of our brains. Gardening has also been connected with mindfulness and alleviation of depressive symptoms. It's a mild form of activity offering respite from staring at your screen all day. And it can improve hand-eye coordination and finger flexion -- the ability to bend your joints -- that carries over to everyday life. More than ever, we need nature. It makes us and our children happier. In the words of one new gardener... "I started a garden and I've been able to find so much peace." (from CNN News)

Poetry and Prose

Wintertime Beauty

*The chilling winds,
Each frosted pane,
Tells us it's wintertime again.
Soon all the earth is
robed in white,
A fairyland of sheer delight.
The sparkling snowflakes
swirling down,
Adorn the trees in
ermine gowns.
The shrubs don shawls
of silver lace,
Each snowman wears
a jolly face.
(to be con't)
(Thanks to Irene Bond for this
lovely poem)*

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