



'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society
June 2019



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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The Mystery of Hardiness Zone Numbers

Often when we buy plants, there is a number on the tag which gives the 'hardiness zone' of a plant. The term and use of 'hardiness zones' can be very confusing to people, especially beginning gardeners. Most common garden plants have been assigned a hardiness zone range that indicates if a particular plant will grow in your climate. It is a range of numbers with both a high and a low limit because most plants have trouble growing in very cold or very hot regions. Some take hardiness zone numbers as gospel, but they are only an approximation. Most hardiness zone numbers only look at temperatures, but other factors may be just as significant. For example, many alpine plants can grow in very cold conditions if they remain very dry. These plants quickly die in the warmer, wet winters found in the Northeastern US. Soil drainage can also play a big role in the hardiness of a plant. Winter in clay soils can kill some plants that would survive well in the same area if they were provided with sandy soil. How are the zone numbers developed for plants? When a new cultivar is developed, it has no zone rating. To establish a zone value, the plants are grown in a variety of locations (cont. below)

Mark It on Your Calendar

June 9-15: Horticultural Week
June 19: Monthly Meeting

Hardiness Zone (continued from above)

This provides some information about the hardiness, but it is still only an approximation. After introduction, the plant is grown by more people, which provide even more data. Over time the zone value for the plant is fine-tuned. No official organisation regulates these numbers. Each grower or seller will provide the number they think is best. If you Google a plant, you will find a wide range of values. Nurseries in warmer areas don't really care too much about the cold end of the range and underestimate it, and northern nurseries are always trying to stretch the lower end of the range to get more sales. Snow cover plays a big role. Plants will survive in much colder regions if they're covered by snow all winter. The snow protects the plant from extreme cold by holding the heat from the soil around the plant. The same plant will perish in warmer areas that don't get reliable snow. Summer heat and humidity also plays a factor. The famous blue poppy does not grow well in the humid, warm summer found in Ontario and subsequently dies in winter, but it grows well a few hundred miles away in Quebec. Local microclimates can also play a role. Cold air is heavy and settles in low areas. The bottom of a hill is usually colder than higher up on the hill. Inside the city is warmer than the outskirts. On a hardiness zone map, all of these areas are given the same number. (cont. on page 3)

Programme

Our programme this month promises to be an interesting and instructional one. Charlie Warner of Aidie Creek Gardens will be talking about and demonstrating pruning methods. Weather permitting, we will meet at the St. Paul's Emmanuel Community Church at 6:45 to car pool for the drive to the home of Eileen and Len Fisher (first house on Kap Kig Iwan Road) for this meeting. Charlie will be able to demonstrate pruning techniques on a variety of trees and shrubs. Bring something along for the shared snack. A fruit punch will be supplied.

District 12/OHA News

Due to inclement weather, our Society was not able to attend the District 12 Annual Meeting in Porcupine. We were very disappointed as it promised to be a great day. It was also District Director Anne Jamieson's last official duty. We were lucky enough to have enough people attending that the meeting was able to be held so that the election for new executive members could be held. Peggy McIntyre of the Kirkland Lake Society will take over as the District Director and Billie Rheault will be First Assistant. I believe the position of Second Assistant will be filled at a later date.

Planning Your Vegetable Garden Part 4 (cont. from March)

STEP 6: Will your garden be easy to water? Once your garden is planted, how will you water it? Will your vegetable garden have a water source or will you need to cart in water with watering cans or install a rain barrel? This is an important consideration. If your garden is close to the house, it shouldn't be a problem to stretch a hose to the garden and either water using a watering wand or drip irrigation. However, if your garden is far from the house, you may need to pipe in water under the ground and set up a tap directly in the garden. If your garden will be located far from the house and far from a water source, think about how you will be watering your garden before deciding on a permanent location.

Reports From Your Directors

Horticultural Week: In May, Evelyne Nemcsok and her committee met to plan events for Horticultural Week, the week of June 9-15th. Members will be going to the two elementary schools for some planting activities. We would also appreciate help at the Millennium Garden in the courtyard at EPS on Wednesday, June 12 at 1:00 p.m., weather permitting. Bring along your favourite weeding tool and maybe a pair of clippers if you can, please. Contact Evelyne/Eileen with any questions. We are also looking forward to people sharing photos on our Facebook Page of their gardens and/or horticultural activities in which they are participating.

Membership: Convenor Ginny Montminy reports that we have 65 members to date

Social: Lynne Peeling is the hostess of this month's meeting and Ginny Montminy brings the gift.

Members are asked to bring along a snack for sharing after our outing to the Fisher's place.

Youth Garden Competition: Letters were taken to the three schools in May and posters were displayed in town. We also sent ads in to the newspapers, the radio stations, and the library community channel. There are already several children who have enrolled. If you know of a young person-JK to grade 8 age this month who may be interested, please have them contact Bonnie Warner or myself.

Website/Facebook: Rick Heaslip reports that he continues to update our website and has added the latest information and photos. Please check it out. We now have 275 people using our Facebook page.

Civic Planting: Mary Schippers and Bruce Wilson have been busy planting our town beds...the cenotaph, the Legion, and the two beds in the centennial Park will be beautiful thanks to them. Say thanks the next time you see them! If you see a weed in these gardens, please feel free to pull it!

What Does Hardiness Zone Mean?

(cont. from page 1)

Zone numbers also get updated from time to time. Canada had a major revision in 2000, and the US updated theirs in 2012. That means that older books and web pages may be out of date. Plant hardiness zones are a very useful tool for determining the likelihood that a plant will survive in your garden, but it is not a guarantee. Use them as a guide only. (This article is thanks to Robert Pavlis, author of two books, *Garden Myths* and *Building Natural Ponds*.)

I have found that, although we are now considered to be zone 3a in Englehart (zone 3b in New Liskeard) I am able to grow plants for zone 4 with a bit of winter protection. You won't know until you try. I have even kept some zone 5 plants alive for a few years with a lot of work. I hope this helps explain those mysterious zone numbers that we usually find on plant tags we see in pots at nurseries and stores.

Hints and Tips

We know how easily weeds can take over our gardens. It's disheartening to see this happen when we put so much work into our flowers and vegetables. Here are a few timely tips to help out with this perennial problem:

1. While planting a garden bed, take care that you don't leave too much space between plants and rows. Tight garden beds restrict weeds.
2. Mulch as much as you can. Mulching retains moisture and doesn't let weeds thrive in your garden. Newspapers, dried leaves, and compost can be used. For better mulching, spread newspaper over the ground and cover it up with the 2 inch layer of compost and leaves.
3. Don't throw weeds into a compost pile, unless you can provide temperature over 49 degrees C (120F), which is required to kill weed seeds.

Plant and Bake Sale 2019

Our annual Plant and Bake Sale, held on Saturday, May 25th was another successful event for us. Despite the abysmal spring weather we haven't enjoyed, people dug in and literally dug in to their gardens to do their best to make the sale a success. Convenors Barb Curran and Jean Bott oversaw a very energetic bunch of workers setting up the hall on Friday afternoon, pricing and placing donations of plant material and baking on the tables. Len Fisher had donated a beautiful handmade birdhouse and sold tickets on it. Doors opened at 10:00 Saturday morning and all was over in a short time! Clean up went quickly and many of the workers went out to lunch to catch their breath and enjoy some social time. Barb and the rest of the Directors wish to thank all who worked at the sale, all who donated material for the sale, who donated material for the draws, and those who came to shop.



Plant of the Month

Doronicum

Also known as Leopard's Bane this late spring blooming perennial is a lovely yellow daisy that makes for a sunny splash in a garden. There are several varieties of Doronicum. My favourite is a compact variety with semi-double, bright-yellow flowers named Little Leo. Doronicum does best in light shade, such as a woodland setting but will take a fair amount of sun. Plants may go dormant during hot summer weather, particularly in hot humid summer regions. They can be trimmed back by half after blooming, to prevent self-seeding, although I like to let mine drop some seed for sharing baby plants. These pretty perennials may be difficult to find in nurseries but are worth a good search.



Planning Your Vegetable Garden Part 5 (cont.)

STEP 7: Do you want to have a seating area in your garden? As we move further down our list, we begin to look at our garden wish list. These are the added bonuses which personalise our gardens and make them aesthetically pleasing and inviting. Having a seating area in the garden may be part of that list. Consider adding a nice bench or a couple of chairs and a small table.



STEP 8: Do you want a water feature in your garden? A water feature in the garden, like a pond or a fountain, can be aesthetically and audibly pleasing. Water attracts frogs, which will help to reduce the mosquito population in your garden and any nutrients from fish or frog waste in the water, will nourish the garden if used for irrigation. Adding a water feature in the garden will also attract birds and pollinators by providing them a drinking source on a dry day. If you don't want to build a pond, you could simply add a small plug in fountain. The running water creates a relaxing sound and a beautiful environment

STEP 9: Would you like to have a compost bin in your garden? A compost bin can be as simple as a 4 x 4 wooden box with an open or closed top and front, built to collect garden waste, fallen leaves, and other materials, or it can be a store-bought round bin that either sits stationary or rolls to move the interior contents and helps to break them down. This bin can collect kitchen scraps and is latched securely to deter predators, like raccoons, from opening it. I like the convenience of having three compost bins directly outside my vegetable garden walls. *(Some people prefer an open bin or box, allowing the elements and animals to help Mother Nature along (EF) (cont. next month)*

Poetry and Prose

*'Tis like the birthday of the
world,
When earth was born in
bloom,
The light is made of many dyes,
The air is all perfume:
There's crimson buds, and
white and blue,
The very rainbow showers
Have turned to blossoms where
they fell,
And sown the earth with
flowers.*

Thomas Hood

Published 11 times a year
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