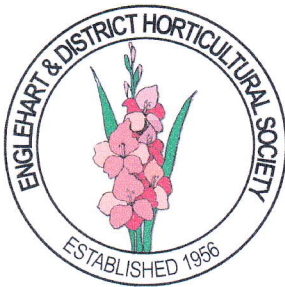




'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society
June 2020



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

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Edible Flowers ... Beautiful and Tasty!

Here's a news flash...flowers are not just for beauty. They're also for eating! Edible flowers can be used to add a splash of colour to lots of foods, from salads to desserts to fancy cocktails. Before going out to the garden to harvest flowers for the dinner table, it's important to remember that some flowers are poisonous. Make a positive i.d. of each variety before using. Obviously, one should avoid flowers that may have been sprayed with chemicals. All flowers should be shaken and washed in cold water prior to use, as they may to be homes for insects. Pick edible flowers in the morning, when they have the highest water content. Keep them on dampened paper towel inside a sealed container in the fridge. Wilted flowers can be revived by floating them in some ice water for a few minutes. Prepare them for eating just before serving in order to prevent further wilting. Remove the stamens and styles from flowers before eating. Pollen can cause allergic reactions when eaten by some people, and it may overwhelm the delicate flavor of some flowers. Johnny-Jump-Ups and pansies, as well as scarlet runner beans, honeysuckle, and clover can be enjoyed whole, and will probably be more flavourful this way. Over the next few bulletins I will discuss how some more common garden flowers may be used this way. (cont. on page 2)

Mark It On Your Calendar

June 7 - 13: Horticultural Week

Horticultural Week

This week is usually a busy week for us. However, with the situation the way it is, Horticultural Week, from June 7-13, will be somewhat different this year. It will be a time to focus on your own yards as we won't be having any group activities. Perhaps you know an elderly or disabled person who would love to hear that you would be willing to weed or plant for them. Perhaps it's the time to introduce your children or grandchildren to gardening. Hopefully you'll listen to convenor Evelyn Nemcsok's gardening hints on The Train radio station. Check out our page on Face Book and website as well. Below are some pictures of past Horticultural Week activities. Check out the full report on page 2 of the bulletin.



(Continued from p.1-Edible Flowers) **Basil:** Most growers use basil's leaves (*Ocimum basilicum*) before the plant has flowered. After blooming, the character of the leaves changes and becomes less appealing, but the flowers can be eaten. They may be white to lavender, but they look stunning when sprinkled over pasta. Thai basil is sometimes allowed to flower before whole stems, with leaves attached, are harvested. The whole flower is edible.

Borage: This herb has furry leaves and pretty blue, star-shaped flowers. Both have the cooling taste of cucumber. Try some of the flowers in a summer lemonade or sorbet – or a gin and tonic! They work particularly well as garnishes for meat/cheese plates, or just sprinkled over salads.

Youth Gardeners

We seem to have quite a few young gardeners keen to enter our contest this year. I think that many parents are happy to have their children keeping busy outside this month. Looking back to my own past, I always wanted my own garden but was only ever allowed a corner of one of my mother's gardens. I hope if you have a youngster or know of a child who may be interested in gardening, that you will encourage them. It is not necessary that they enter the contest, but we hope they will. Whichever way they choose, they will have something interesting and positive to do with their time this summer.

Hints and Tips for Growing Beets

When I was a child, I would rather have eaten the dirt they grew in than have eaten beets. Thank goodness our tastes change as we age. Now beets are one of my favourite vegetables. Buttered, pickled, or in a salad, they're delicious. Packed with essential nutrients, beetroots are a great source of fiber, folate (vitamin B9), manganese, potassium, iron, and vitamin C. Beets and beet juice have been associated with numerous health benefits, including improved blood flow, lower blood pressure, and increased exercise performance. The following are a few hints to help improve your beet harvest.

- >Thinning beets is necessary, as you will probably get more than one seedling out of each seed cluster. When the tops are about 10-12cm (4 to 5 inches tall), thin seedlings to 3 to 4 inches apart.
- >Pinch or cut off the leaves. Pulling them out of the ground may disturb the roots of nearby seedlings.
- >Mulch and then water regularly with about 1 inch per week.
- >Weed as needed but be gentle; beets have shallow roots that are easily disturbed.
- >Start your first round of beets in early spring, as soon as the soil is workable. Make successive plantings every 2 to 3 weeks until mid-summer. (*The Old Farmer's Almanac*)

Reports from Your Directors

Civic Improvement: Convenor Mary Schippers reports that the municipal beds we look after have been planted. Bruce Wilson prepared the beds and the planter at Ace Hardware was planted for their **100th Anniversary**. The cenotaph and Legion Hall beds are growing nicely in this damp weather and Mary also added flowers to the gardens in the park. Many thanks to Mary and Bruce for all the work they do for our Society. Civic planting is part of our Society's mandate and I think we do a great job!

Youth Garden Competition: Convenors Bonnie Warner and Eileen Fisher report that posters were placed locally and letters were sent to local radio stations and newspapers to advertise this. If you know of a young person interested in gardening, perhaps you could mention this to them and have them call Mrs. Warner at 544 8916 or me at 544 8074 or 3771. This will be a great year to have a child plant and care for their own garden. Even if they don't want to enter the competition...please encourage any youngster you know to plant a garden- no matter how small, no matter what they plant. The gardens will be judged in the end of July, early August. Please check with us if you have questions.

Insecticidal Soap

Back in November I included a short article about using insecticidal soap to fight pests on our plants. I would like to continue the article this month with some information on how to make your own insecticidal soap. There are several ways to do this. The choice depends on the ingredients on hand and the extent to which one wants to use natural ingredients, i.e. those without perfumes or dyes. To make insecticidal soap, simply mix the following horticultural soap recipe ingredients carefully:

Combine one cup of oil, any variety, such as vegetable, peanut, corn, soybean, etc. with one tablespoon of dishwashing liquid or other "pure" soap. Be sure to avoid any dish washing liquids which contain degreaser, bleach, or those that are for an automatic dishwasher. Mix two teaspoons of this "soap" mixture to every cup of warm water and put into a spray bottle. Tap water is okay to use, but if you have hard water you may want to substitute bottled water to avoid any soap scum buildup on foliage. Mix only what is needed for a one-day application. **Alternate Soap Recipe:** Homemade horticultural sprays can also be made using a natural soap product without synthetic additives or perfumes, which can be found in local natural food stores. Combine one heavy tablespoon of liquid soap to one quart of warm water. To either of these soapy concoctions, a teaspoon of ground red pepper or garlic may be added to further repel chewing insects. Also, a teaspoon of cider vinegar may be added to assist in the removal of powdery mildew. There are few limitations to horticultural soaps. Just be sure to thoroughly wet the insects, and be aware that effectiveness may be limited if the soap solution dries or washes away. Phytotoxicity may occur if applied during hot days, so avoid spraying if temperatures are over 32 C.

Before using any homemade mix: It should be noted that anytime you use a home mix, you should always test it out on a small portion of the plant first to make sure that it will not harm the plant. Also, remember to avoid using any bleach-based soaps or detergents on plants since this can be harmful to them. In addition, it is important that a home mixture never be applied to any plant on a hot or brightly sunny day, as this will quickly lead to burning of the plant and its ultimate demise. (Gardening Knowhow)

Keeping In Touch

While we are unable to enjoy our regular monthly meetings, we are lucky that we have several ways to keep in touch with and continue to learn from gardening friends. Our Face Book page has never been so busy and webmaster Rick Heaslip has been very busy keeping our website up to date. He reports that: All meeting cancellations have been posted to keep the members aware.

The handout for the cancelled May meeting on "Bulbs, Tubers, Corms" is available.

All the info for the District 12 Student Bursary is on the main page.

All the info for the Junior Garden competitions appears on the main page. Thanks to Rick for this effort.

Gardening Tools- The Cobra Head

The Cobra Head is another other hand-weeding tool that I really think I need. It is especially made for tap-rooted weeds, such as dandelions and thistles. Without the right tool to extract them properly, including the entire root, many weeds will quickly grow back. The design of the Cobra Head allows you to approach the weeds from the backside and pull towards yourself. You may actually find pleasure in popping tough tap-rooted weeds out after plunging the Cobra Head into the soil and under the weed and roots. The Cobra Head is said to feel great in your hand, is fun to use, and is designed for precision weeding around young tender plants. Between hard surfaces such as sidewalks and driveway cracks it's said to act like a steel fingernail. It also comes in a long handled version if you'd like to do your weeding from a standing position. (I'll be looking for one of these!)



Plant of the Month

Pinus strobus 'Pendula'- Weeping White Pine

Weeping White Pine is a multi-stemmed evergreen with a rounded form and gracefully weeping branches. *Pinus strobus 'Pendula'* is a weeping form of white pine that requires staking to obtain the desired height. It will then continue weeping and form a large mound. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage. Needles are generally full, long, and blue/gray in colour. It makes a fantastic and elegant form for the garden. It grows from zone 3-8 and reaches a height of 6' to 15' with a spread 10' to 20'. It has green to blue/green needles, prefers sun to partial shade, and requires a medium amount of moisture. This is a semi-dwarf cultivar with weeping, trailing branches that may touch the ground. It typically grows to 6' – 15' feet with a larger spread. Its form depends on how it is pruned and trained. Branches typically spread horizontally for a short distance before drooping. (info from D. Mailleux) I love the sound of this tree and hope to be a proud owner soon. I also hope you can remember back to one of our Latin lessons in an earlier bulletin that *pendula* means 'weeping'.)



The Benefits of Gardening

There are as many reasons to start gardening as there are gardeners. You might look at gardening as adult playtime, and it is, since it's a joy to dig in the earth, plant seeds, watch them grow. You might view gardening as an economical way of getting healthy food, with garden chores as part of your responsibility. One thing is certain: the benefits of growing gardens are many and varied. Regardless of your motive for starting a garden, the process is sure to bring you many rewards. The act of nurturing plants in your backyard is good for the mind and body. Scientific studies have established how gardening helps reduce/prevent anxiety and depression, offering a therapeutic, calming experience. Of course, it helps the body too. Digging and weeding burn calories and help create and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle. It may be helpful in lowering high blood pressure and fighting osteoporosis. There are also practical reasons to start gardening- starting with your household budget. Most of us prefer eating healthy, organically grown vegetables, but high quality food can be expensive to buy. In your own garden you can grow delicious, organically grown food for much less than it would cost to buy them in a store. One hint- be sure to include a mixture of food- those that are best for fresh eating and those that store well during winter. Gardens and finances can be linked in other ways. You may be able to sell homegrown produce at Farmers' Markets or from your own home. Eventually, you may be able to sell at a local garden centre. Other benefits are more ambiguous but just as powerful. While you can measure your blood pressure or balance your budget, it's hard to quantify the benefits of feeling connected to nature, to your land, and to your community, which come from gardening.

Poetry and Prose

My Lovely June

*Oh come sweet June,
my lovely June
The month when first the
roses bloom -
A wondrous, colourful
display
By sunlight kissed
throughout the day,
So chasing all my
cares away.*

Valerie Dohren

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