



'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society
June 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

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Building a Gardener

Do you have a child, a grandchild, or a young neighbour who might enjoy planting a garden? This might be the year to set aside a bit of your own vegie garden or to clear a spot on your property to help a youngster know the happiness of eating their own carrots, or of picking a bouquet of their own flowers to give to mom or grandma. I have found that the younger the gardener, the more pleasure they derive from playing in the dirt. Why not make it this year?

Lessons from the Garden



"A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in." - Greek proverb

Rose Pruning

Spring is a great time to establish the size and shape of your rosebushes. When pruning a branch back to a bud, consider what direction the resulting new growth will take. An outward facing bud will produce a branch that grows outward, maintaining the shape of the shrub. An inward facing bud will produce a branch that grows into the shrub's interior, tangling with other branches



Ten Tips for Growing Tomatoes

#9: Feeding Tomato Plants: Most gardeners have a secret or two up their sleeves. Some treat their plants to crushed eggshells in the planting hole while others use a handful of bonemeal. My mother swore by a ¼ cup of Epsom Salts. (She was from Epsom and was taught to garden by her grandfather.) If you fertilize after planting, side-dress the plants with compost or a dose of liquid seaweed or fish emulsion. Stay away from high nitrogen fertilizers unless your plants have yellow leaves. Too much nitrogen will cause lush foliage growth but give you little or no fruit. If the leaves on your plant are purple, they are calling for more phosphorus. This is the most important nutrient for fruit production. Some gardeners like to feed their tomatoes compost tea to keep heavy-feeding tomato plants happy. Soak one part compost in one part water, let sit for at least 24 hours, filter the "tea," and use to nourish plants. Apparently it is okay to actually apply the compost tea to the foliage of the tomato plant as well. One article I read said it can be applied every 2 weeks while others say more often. However, most articles recommend diluting it to 1 part 'tea' to 4 parts water, while other users say they apply it without diluting it. Mind you, there are also gardeners who say using compost tea doesn't work. I guess we'll have to do some experimenting!

More Benefits of Composting...

- provides a good environment for the microbes, earthworms, and insects that break down soil constituents into plant nutrients
- nourishes microbes that protect against some plant diseases
- reduces the need for other soil amendments and for fertilizer



Double box compost



Turnable modern compost container

Brown (Carbon)

- ashes (wood)
- bark
- cardboard (shredded)
- corn stalks
- fruit/veg waste
- leaves
- newspapers (shredded)
- peanut shells
- peat moss
- pine needles
- sawdust
- stems and twigs (shredded)
- straw
- vegetable stalks (broken into small pieces)

Green (Nitrogen)

- alfalfa
- clover
- coffee grounds
- food waste
- garden waste
- grass clippings
- hay
- hedge clippings
- used hops
- manures
- seaweed
- sawdust
- weeds (avoid those gone to seed as they can survive all but the hottest compost pile)

(A healthy compost pile needs a good balance of both brown and green additions ... 1 part green to 3-4 parts brown material)

Common Raised Garden Mistakes (cont. from May)

3. Building with the Wrong Materials: If you are planning on building a DIY raised bed, pressure-treated lumber may seem like a durable and long-lasting material to use, but many gardeners prefer to avoid it because of the risk of harmful chemicals leaching into the soil (the same goes for old tires). On the other hand, you'll also want to avoid using wood that is prone to decay or is already showing signs of wear, such as from a pallet, or you may have to rebuild in a year. Instead, opt for cedar, redwood, stones, and bricks, which make excellent, long-lasting, chemical-free choices.

4. Not Using the Best Soil: The bag says garden soil, so it must be good for every type of garden, right? Not so fast. Bagged garden soil is intended to be mixed with existing in-ground topsoil to help improve its texture and nutrient composition. When used in raised beds, it can become compacted and inhibit drainage. Make sure you use bagged soil specifically designed for raised beds, which also has the advantage of being sterilized to kill any weed seeds, insects, or diseases in it. (We ordered good garden loam from Vickerys and were very happy.)

5. Making the Beds Too Big: While it's tempting to create a large plot, it's important to keep logistics in mind. Your plot should be narrow enough that you can reach at least halfway across it to plant, weed, water, and harvest in the middle. Three to five feet wide, which is the size of most premade kits, is ideal for most people. Avoid making it too long as well; you don't want to become frustrated walking in giant circles around your plot. If you have the space and desire, you may be better off creating multiple smaller raised beds. (also easier to cover in the case of early frosts)

The Year of the Bean

Every year, the American National Garden Bureau selects one annual, one perennial, one vegetable, one shrub and one bulb to celebrate home gardening. For that organization, 2021 is the Year of the Bean – the common garden bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris*). Garden beans come in a variety of colors including yellow, green, purple and mottled. They largely self-pollinate prior to opening, but not all ovules are fertilized before the flower does open, so that allows some cross-pollination to occur from insect visits. Bush beans are compact and fit well into both small garden patches and patio containers. They are determinate, meaning they all ripen at the same time. Wax beans are simply beans with yellow pods. French green beans are distinguished by elegant ultra-slim pods. Dried or shelling beans are grown for their edible seeds rather than edible pods. Pinto beans, kidney beans and black beans fall into this category. Pole beans can be grown on arbours, trellises and teepees. They take up a bit more garden space than bush bean, but offer harvests over a much longer period. Beans are warm-weather vegetables and are best planted after soil temperatures reach 70°F (21°C). Avoid sowing too early in the season. Cool, wet soils can lead to rot. Beans thrive with at least eight hours of daily sun, moderate fertility, and well-drained soil. They have shallow roots so weed carefully to prevent damage to the root system. Mulch the soil around the bean plant; consistent moisture results in the highest quality harvests. Succession sowing of bush beans every 2–3 weeks will produce delicious beans all season. Harvest frequently to encourage pod production. Wax beans' golden color is due to their lack of chlorophyll. They retain their beautiful golden colour when cooked. Purple beans contain anthocyanins (the purple pigment) that disappear when beans are cooked. Pick green beans when pods are young and tender, just before the seeds begin to swell. Beans will “snap” when you bend and break them. If they are immature, they won't snap! Bean leaves and flowers are also edible. Simply add them to any vegetable dish for extra nutrition and flavour. Did you know that one serving of beans provides as much protein (7grams) as 28 grams of meat? (Harriston and District Horticultural Society)



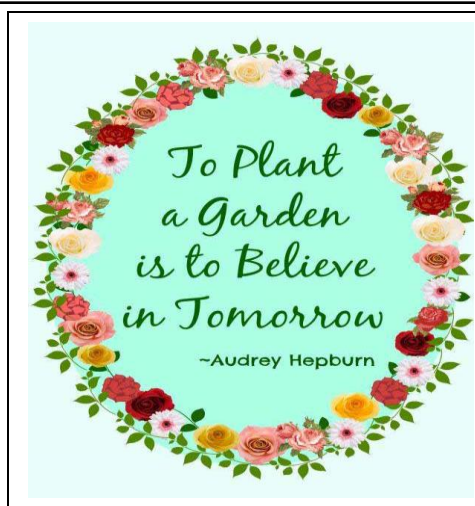
Ten Tips for Growing Tomatoes (final)



10. Try Companion Planting: According to the Gardeners' Almanac, they practically invented modern companion planting, following in the footsteps of Native American growing techniques. They've always found that tomatoes seem to thrive when planted with basil, just as they do in the kitchen! Basil and marigolds act as a natural insect repellent when planted amongst tomatoes, helping to ward off whitefly. Borage attracts bees and tiny pest-eating wasps, making it a great companion for tomatoes. *(I hope the information in the past few bulletins will help improve your tomato harvest. Good luck!)*

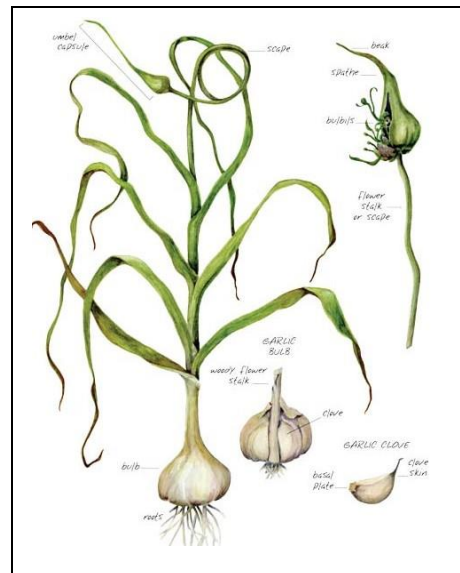
Civic Improvement

Due to the current Covid situation, we did not have our usual Civic planting bee but convenor Mary Schippers was a busy lady. She planted mixed annuals in the Legion beds. In the Centennial Park, she added impatiens for colour in the perennial beds. Work at the cenotaph has eliminated the beds where we had planted tulips. Thanks so much to Mary for all of her work... and remember, if you see any weeds in the beds- feel free to pull them! If you think some of the beds need some water, please let Mary know or, or better still... give those thirsty plants a drink. Many thanks go to Mary for all of the work she does for the Society.



Plant of the Month *Garlic*

You will grow good bulbs in deep, moist, well composted, friable soil that is best prepared in the fall. Garlic will grow almost anywhere but does best in full sun. Separate the bulb into its cloves and plant each one about 5 cm deep and 12-15 cm apart as early in the spring as possible. Keep them moist but not wet. When the foliage dies, dig up the bulbs and dry. The easiest way to store garlic at home is in mesh bags or woven baskets. Garlic with flexible tops can be made into braids to hang but garlic with a stiff central stalk, often called hardneck garlic, will shatter if you try to braid it. Garlic keeps longest when stored at 16-20 C and in moderate humidity. This is what makes storing fresh garlic throughout the winter so hard: our heated winter homes tend to be very, very dry. You can mince garlic in a food processor and freeze with a bit of water in an ice cube tray. When frozen, bag, seal, and return to the freezer until ready to use.



Rhubarb (cont. from May)

Easy as Pie: We know why we really came here...delicious flakey crusts, the perfect balance of sweet and tart, and the overwhelming taste of summertime. You can pair it with other fruit or let it fly solo. To put it simply, rhubarb makes a great pie. Some tips on making a great rhubarb pie:

The Crust: Rhubarb holds a lot of moisture. When added to pies, this can result in a patisserie nightmare: the soggy bottom. When choosing a crust recipe, opt for using a combination of shortening and butter to benefit from the structural integrity of the shortening and the decadent flavour of the butter. You can also sprinkle a bit of sugar on the bottom crust before adding the filling to create a thin caramelized layer between the crust and the fruit.

The Filling: After mixing the rhubarb with sugar, let sit for a while in a colander. The sugar will seep some water from the stalks, and you can drain this off before adding to the pie. Add the thickener (often corn starch) only after your filling is drained. That way, you won't lose any thickener in the draining process. Rhubarb has a strong flavour itself, but feel free to experiment with additional spices. Maybe sprinkle in some cinnamon or cardamom or add some rose or lavender for a more floral take. Add other fruit like strawberries is a classic way to spruce up a rhubarb pie. Both delicious and nutritious, adding rhubarb to your summertime traditions is a great way to spice up your cooking and gain some notable health benefits. Just the word 'rhubarb' takes me back to my childhood. Frankie Bradt (my neighbour and second mother!) grew it in her garden and allowed us to pull a piece occasionally as a treat (especially when we got to pour a little bit of white sugar into our palm for dipping) We were in heaven!

Poetry and Prose

*Oh for a taste of rhubarb pie!
Home picked, home baked--
Mouth watering,
I don't lie.
A tart and sweet
delicious delight;
Tingles, mingles with
the tongue.
Mom cooked it
just right!
Some might let theirs
go to waste,
But I'll eat their piece
without delay,
I just love
that capricious taste!
(Connie Wong)*

Published 11 times a year
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