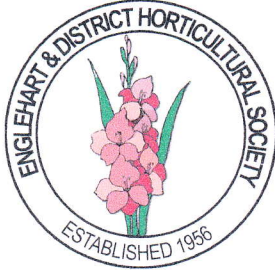




'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society
May 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
Bulletin Editor: E. Fisher

Website:
engleharthort.weebly.com

A Word from The Editor

What a strange time we are living in. Many of us are isolated from our families and are feeling the stress of not being social. Some of us are worried because we really don't know what is coming next. Many people are exhausted because they work in essential services and have that pressure on top of the fear of becoming ill. Some of us are missing our independence- our ability to do what we want when we want to. I am so thankful that I am able to go outside each day to walk around my property and check my gardens. I have never felt such joy about seeing the green tips of tulip and daffodil leaves poking through the soil, hearing the sounds of birds and frogs singing, smelling damp earth, feeling the sun on my face, and tasting those new chives popping up in my garden. It is a time to be thankful for the good things we have in or lives!

Some Sad News

We in the Horticultural Society were saddened to learn of the death of Mrs. Norma Elliot. Norma passed away on April 26th in New Liskeard. She had been a member of our society for years and was able to attend meetings once she moved into the Seniors Building on 5th Ave. She loved her little garden there and would often talk with me about what she was going to plant. Our sympathies go to her friends and family.



Herbs and Scented Candles

Uses of Herbs

Do you grow herbs? Late May/early June is a great time to plant herbs, annual or perennial. You may have started some from seed, you may have been pieces of perennial herbs, or you may have bought some from a nursery. Herbs have traditionally been used to flavour food, to act as a form of medicine, to chase away pests, to make your home smell nice. I found an interesting article in *Gardening Know How* about herbs that I thought would be timely to share.

Scented Candles

Do you enjoy the fragrance of air fresheners or commercially manufactured scented candles but worry that the chemicals in these products may be affecting your health and that of your loved ones? The good news is you can have these flower fresh scents and preserve your well-being. Making homemade scented candles can be a fun and easy DIY project. You can choose safe and natural waxes, like beeswax or soy wax for your candle. Herbs from your own garden can provide the fragrance. You can also create beautiful works of art by using plants in candles for their decorative value. (cont. on page 2)

Reports From Your Directors

Plant and Bake Sale: Unfortunately, this, our major fundraiser and fun-filled event, has been cancelled.

Membership: Ginny Montminy reports that we have 57 members to date.

Youth Garden Competition: I believe that this event will go on this year. It will be a good time for our young people to be involved in growing plants and working in their own gardens. I will put an ad in the local newspapers, on radio stations, on our website and Facebook page, as well as using posters. Having a garden to work in and be responsible for may help children cope with the upheaval in their lives. If you know a youngster that who will benefit from this programme, please let them know about it or tell them to call me at 544 8074. We need to know earlier this year so please call us by July 25th so the judges can make arrangements to visit each one.

Civic Improvement: We hope to be able to plant the beds in town as usual.

Hints and Tips for Your May Gardening Life

It has long been said that "April is the cruelest month" due to its unpredictable weather- warm sunny days followed by a blizzard. Yes, April is an unpredictable month but here in the north, May can certainly be as cruel...hot and sunny one day followed by heavy frosts and yes, even snow. Yet, we here in the north can't wait forever to get gardening... just be sure to check the long range forecast before going too crazy! Following are some spring gardening hints that might help you with your May gardening...

*Clear away and compost the dead stalks of perennials that provided seeds and cover to birds and other wildlife over the winter but may harbor unwanted diseases and bugs. Rake lawns to remove winter debris. This also helps aerate the soil to ensure air gets in to the root zone. Start turning over your compost pile. The deteriorated organic material at the bottom of the pile can make great mulch to spread over the garden.

*Wash summer hummingbird and butterfly feeders thoroughly to avoid the buildup of harmful moulds and bacteria. Do the same with birdbaths. Make sure to avoid strong/harmful cleansers.

*Clean out bird and pollinator boxes to avoid diseases and pests such as mites that can harm visitors to your garden. Use a mild soap and water mixture to avoid harmful chemicals.

*Check what plants have become overgrown and divide them before they get too tall. Share with others... you never know when you'll lose an old favourite and you can get a piece back!

Herbs (cont. from p. 1)

Best Herbs for Candle Making: Burning your homemade scented candles will release their herbal aroma and are a wonderful alternative to chemical air fresheners. To preserve their fragrance longer, try storing your herbal candles in an airtight container. By now, you may be wondering what herbs are best for candles. Aromatic herbs, like those used in aromatherapy are popular, as are herbs which evoke emotions. Flowers bring a gentle fragrance inside the home and many types of leaves can be used to decorate the outside of the candle. The following plants are good to use for scents and decorations: lavender, lemon verbena, basil (especially those scented varieties such as cinnamon, anise, and crispum), scented geranium leaves.



Home-grown Birdseed: Growing Birdseed Plants In The Garden

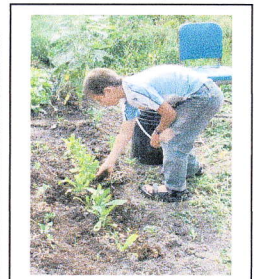
It may seem like a strange time to be reading an article about feeding birds in winter but this is a great time to be planting 'birdseed' in your own gardens. Watching birds at the feeders can keep you entertained, and birds need the extra sustenance you provide, especially during long, cold winters. The downside is that quality birdseed can get expensive if you feed a lot of birds. Cheap birdseeds are messy and may be filled with seeds that birds won't eat. All too often, budget birdseeds contain noxious weed seeds that may take over your garden. Who needs that? The solution... grow your own birdseed!

Birdseed plants are beautiful and easy to grow. At the end of the season, you can use the seeds to make fresh, nutritious, home-grown birdseed.

Growing Plants for Feeding Birds: Sunflowers should always be included in home-grown birdseed. The seeds provide energy for many birds, including finches, nuthatches, juncos, chickadees, cardinals, and grosbeaks, among others. These easy-to-grow plants are available in a variety of sizes. Zinnias bring bright colour to your garden, and they're easy to grow by seed. You can choose dwarf varieties that max out at 20-30 cm (8 to 12 inches), all the way up to gigantic plants that may reach heights of 1-3 m (3 to 8 feet). Zinnia seeds are highly prized by sparrows, finches, juncos, and chickadees. Globe thistle is a perennial suitable for growing in hardiness zones 3 through 8. The round, bluish-purple flower heads produce seeds that attract goldfinches. Russian sage is a bushy perennial that resembles lavender. You'll enjoy the bluish-purple blooms, and the seeds will draw a variety of birds. Russian sage is suitable for growing in zones 3b through 10. Other suggestions for homemade bird food mix include: Black-eyed Susan, Cosmos, Purple Coneflower, Bee Balm, and Blazing Star. I'll add the harvesting part of this article closer to the fall.

The Importance of Gardening with Children

Gardening can help children develop both their brains and their bodies. Brain development is all about intellectual skill, such as remembering and analyzing information and predicting outcomes. Adults can ask children open-ended questions about their garden and what the child thinks they should do next. Children also learn to develop a sense of responsibility when caring for living things... watering, weeding, and harvesting are all part of growing up.



Working in their own gardens will also provide children with a sense of ownership.

Regarding our own Youth Garden Competition - the rules are simple:

1. *The garden can be any size. It can even be part of a larger garden but it should be set apart somehow, so the judge can see which is yours.*
2. *You must plant and care for the garden yourself, including the weeding. Neatness is very important, as is the condition of the plants. Your garden can be all flowers, all vegetables, or a mixture of both. Garden accessories are permitted. There will be money prizes, as well as a trophy (awarded to the first prize winner in each division.). Please let Mrs. Warner (544 8916) or Mrs. Fisher (544 3771) by August 1st if you wish your garden to be judged. Remember- entering the contest is not mandatory. Just having a child planting and caring for their own garden is a joyful thing.*

We All Need a Laugh!

- *A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except earning how to grow in rows. (D. Larson)
- *Your first job is to prepare the soil. The best tool for this is your neighbor's motorized garden tiller. If your neighbor does not own a garden tiller, suggest that he buy one. (D. Barry)
- *A man should never plant a garden larger than his wife can take care of. (T. Everett)

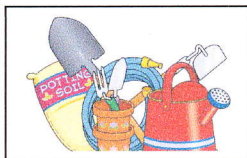
Plant of the Month

Mertensia virginica, commonly called Virginia Bluebells, is actually a wildflower that grows well in moist, rich soil. It is a clump-forming perennial which grows 1-2' tall and features loose clusters of hanging, trumpet-shaped, blue flowers, which bloom in late spring in our area. Flower buds are pink and flowers emerge with a pinkish shade before turning blue. It has smooth, oval, bluish green leaves which die to the ground by mid-summer as the plant goes dormant. It is best to overplant the bluebells with annuals or shade loving perennials, such as hostas or ferns, which will expand and cover up the bare spots left by the dormant bluebells. This plant grows well in part to full shade and requires a medium amount of water. It's best to mark the plant well so as to not disturb the roots if planting late annuals or fall bulbs. I look forward to my beauties each spring.



Gardening Work Out (cont from April)

1. **Alternate your tasks.** Do five minutes of weeding, then five minutes of watering, then five minutes of pruning, and so on, cycling through tasks so you're not in the same body shape for too long. It's like circuit training, but with dirt.
2. **Change your position during tasks.** You know those stretches you struggle to fit into your day or those yoga poses you'd love to see off the mat? Try squatting, standing on one leg, lunging, or v-sitting while you're weeding.
3. **Mix up your grip.** Hold the trowel with the other hand, or reverse the way you stack your hands when shoveling, to strengthen yourself on the left and right. Yes, the job feels less efficient, but in the larger picture, it's not that efficient to work one side of your body a lot more than the other.
4. **Use different tools for the same job.** If you're digging up a new bed, switch between a large shovel and a small trowel. The task you're completing is the same, but you'll be using different parts of your body in different ways, so you're less likely to get fatigued in one area.
5. **Carry stuff.** Carry water in buckets, or haul your loads of plants, sod, compost, etc., in your arms. Sure, one wheelbarrow trip can make it easier (read: one wheelbarrow trip can use less movement) to bring a load, but if the load's too big for your arms, try taking more trips across the yard before you resort to a wheelbarrow. And speaking of those trips . . .
6. **Vary your carry.** Do you always hold on one side of your body? MIX IT UP. (I'm not only talking fertilizer.)
(taken from a Kirkland Lake Horticultural Society newsletter...
(Thanks to Martha McSherry)



Poetry and Prose

The Bluebell

*A fine and subtle spirit dwells
In every little flower,
Each one its own sweet feeling
breathes
With more or less of power.
There is a silent eloquence
In every wild bluebell
That fills my softened heart
with bliss
That words could never tell.*

Anne Bronte

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