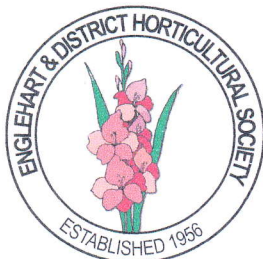




'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society
September 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

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A Word From The Editor

This has been such a strange time in our lives. At times it has seemed like a bad dream; other times, all too real. I imagine that there will be books written, movies made, tall tales told, blame cast. However, I truly believe that those of us who are gardeners have had an advantage over non gardeners. First... we have been able to work in our gardens and, even if only for a short time, have been able to distract our brains from world affairs. We have worked with our hands in the earth and I truly believe in the health benefits of getting dirty. If we grow edibles, we have had the pleasure of eating our own healthy and tasty fruits and vegetables. We have felt the warmth of the sun on our skin and have been able to commune with Mother Nature as we seeded and weeded and harvested. The act of nurturing plants in your yard is good for the mind and also good for the body. Scientific studies have established how gardening helps reduce or prevent anxiety and depression, offering a therapeutic and calming experience. Of course, it helps the body, too. Digging and weeding burn calories and assist in creating and maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle. It may well be helpful in lowering blood pressure and fighting osteoporosis. Hopefully next year will be better for all of us. Hopefully we will be able to meet regularly, both within our own society and as a District for our Fall Planning and Spring General meetings. Hopefully, we will remember lessons learned, the appreciation of little things like the taste of fresh fruit and vegetables, and the importance of a wave, a smile, a kind word.

Some Autumn Hints for Gardeners

Add Compost in the Fall: Adding compost to your garden has a variety of benefits. However, it can be a lot of work to mix in that compost before you plant in the spring! Save your back by spreading your compost on the top of your garden in the fall and cover with a mulch of straw or dead leaves. Then, let nature take its course. The melting snow and soil organisms like earthworms that were active during the fall months will mix in the compost for you, leaving you with well-mixed and ready-to-plant soil in the spring.

Use Season Extenders: Using season extenders can add weeks to your pre and post crops. Covering your crops early in the spring and late in the fall can be a bit of a job, but can extend your growing seasons, to get crops to maturity or simply get more of the same vegetable. Nowadays there are specially made lightweight materials to use.

Keep It Clean: Go ahead and clean up the summer garden before it gets too cold. Once the plants are dead, it is good practice to remove them as soon as possible. Fungal disease and many garden pests will overwinter in the dead leaves and stems. Compost only plants not showing signs of disease or mould.



Reports from Your Directors

Civic Improvement: We hope you've been enjoying the town plantings which were planned and planted by Mary Schippers and Bruce Wilson. I imagine they will be removing dead plants and tidying up the beds this month. Perhaps you can give one of them a call if you can help them out.

Programme: We will not be holding a monthly meeting this fall. Let's keep our fingers crossed for 2021. If we are lucky enough to be able to meet in January, here are the monthly competitions:

Class 1: Wreath(any occasion/size)

Class 2: Pressed Flower Picture 6" by 8", framed or unframed

Class 3: "Fall Beauty" (a fall photo, 4"by 6" mounted on white Bristol board/paper size 5" by 7")

Herb Scented Candles

Do you grow herbs? Do you use candles? You may be wondering what herbs are best for candles. Aromatic herbs, like those used in aromatherapy, are popular as are herbs that evoke emotion. Flowers bring a gentle fragrance inside the home and many types of leaves can be used to decorate the outside of the candle. Consider the following candle herb plants:

Lavender – One of the most popular choices of dried herbs for candles, lavender elicits calmness and reduces anxiety. Use crushed dried lavender to scent candles and dry flower buds for decoration.

Mint – Use homemade peppermint scented candles for a holiday table centerpiece or give them as Christmas gifts. Burn spearmint scented candles year round for that clean, fresh minty fragrance.

Rosemary – Like lavender, rosemary can be used for both fragrance and as a design element in candles. Rosemary can be grown in a container or in the garden as a perennial shrub. Harvest the leaves before the plant blooms for the richest aroma.

Lemon Verbena – This lemon-scented perennial shrub is so aromatic it releases a fresh citrus scent every time its leaves are touched. Harvest and dry lemon verbena leaves individually on screens. Dried leaves can be stored in zippered bags.

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.

Youth Garden Competition JK-SK, Grades 1-3

We decided it was important to continue with the annual competition as it was a wonderful activity and a distraction for our young people during this difficult time. Judges Lois Dekker and Dorothy de Champlain judged 14 gardens during August and report that they were very impressed with the efforts of our young horticulturalists. We are so indebted to these two ladies who give up their own time to visit the children's gardens each year, encouraging and teaching these budding young horticulturalists. This year



they visited 14 gardens and spent time discussing and making suggestions to the youngsters. (Not all of the youngsters are in this photo. **Grade JK/SK: 1st:** Myles Tucker **2nd:** Leah Fehr **2nd:** Kam Tucker **Grade 1-3: 1st:** Georgia Tucker & Adrien Denomme **2nd:** Emma McCarthy **3rd:** Lily Fehr **4th:** Steven Nemcsok **5th:** Liezel Nemcsok. (continued on p. 4)

To Clean or Not to Clean... That is the Question

Why is this the question? It's because gardeners are divided as to whether it's better to do a thorough garden clean-up in the fall or wait until the spring. Proponents of a fall clean-up say it's a good way of checking out each plant and making sure that each is in the best shape possible to withstand a winter. Cleaning up in the fall gives a neat appearance to the garden; after all, it might be some time before snow covers everything. And, of course, it means that the spring garden time can be devoted more to choosing and planting than in clearing away garden debris. The spring cleaners like to keep plants intact so birds can have a chance to eat remaining seeds through the hard winter months. Keeping plants in place during the winter also helps hold the snow so that the spring melt will automatically water the plants. The spring clean-up gardeners also like to enjoy the sculptural effect snow on plants imparts to the garden during the winter. In fact, some even dump out their summer garden pots so that there will be interesting snow-covered mounds to look at.

It's not all quite that black and white, however, because there are some garden clean-up tasks which have to be carried out in the late fall, no matter what. It's a matter of basic garden sanitation and common sense. If you planted annuals this year, they're now dead and won't revive in the spring. It's your choice as to whether you leave them as is or pull them out now, with one exception – if they or any other kind of plant for that matter is in a container, dump out the whole container now (but not on the lawn). If you leave them where they are, the soil will freeze and expand through the winter and damage the container. You can then clean and store the container away so you can use it next year. Raking leaves from lawns is also an important task. If you leave them on the grass, they'll stop the sunlight from reaching the grass plants next spring and may well kill the grass and cause snow mold to form. If you want to put the leaves to good use, it's a good idea to run over them several times with a lawn mower and rake them into the perennial beds where they'll provide some winter protection and then decompose to enrich the soil. Sometimes, raking whole leaves (especially maple) onto garden beds can cause problems. They sometimes just mat and freeze in place which means your plants won't be warmed easily by the spring sun. If you've had a vegetable garden, check it for any root vegetables you might have missed and put any remains from it and the containers in the compost. (continued in October)

Waxing Fall Leaves

This craft takes me back to my childhood. Every year we would collect and press leaves between pieces of wax paper. However, to do this project you will need a mini crock pot. If you don't have one you may find it at a local thrift store. You can find paraffin wax at most grocery stores in the canning section. It takes about 30 minutes for the wax to completely melt in the crockpot. When the wax is melted you can dip the leaves. Don't wait until the leaves are dried to dip them in the wax. In fact, they turn out better if they are still "fresh". The softer they are the better you will be able to flatten them after they are dipped in wax. **Directions:** Protect your counters with plastic or newspaper. Lay a piece of waxed paper on the counter where you are working and start dipping the leaves in the hot wax, being careful not to touch it with your fingers. Lay the leaves on the waxed paper to dry. The leaves will dry in a minute or less. You can dip the leaves in the wax more than once. However, the more wax you put on the leaves, the more you will be able to see the wax on them. One or two coats should be fine. Make sure to dip the stems too, as it will help keep them from breaking. When the leaves are done you can use them for decoration in a number of ways. Lay them on end tables, your dining room table, or in a pretty bowl. You can also string them onto a leaf garland. Just use a needle and thread to string the leaves together for the garland. The wax will help keep the leaves from tearing apart when you poke the needle through them.



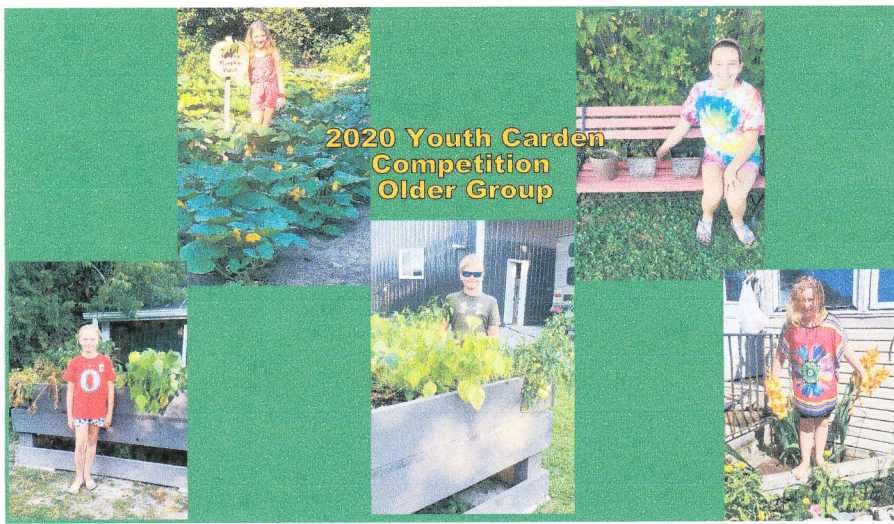
Plant of the Month

Heliopsis

One of my old favourites, Heliopsis, is a hardy perennial in our area. Other names for it include False Sunflower, Oxeye Sunflower, and Sunflower Heliopsis. It blooms from July into the fall, loves the sun, will tolerate light shade, and isn't fussy about soil. There are double and single varieties, with bright yellow daisy-like blooms (2-3", 5-7 cm in size) growing on wiry, stiff stems. Most varieties are fairly tall, so are great for the back of a garden, although both Tuscan Sun and Ballerina grow to around 2' tall. It is attractive to pollinators, is a long lasting cut flower, and is deer resistant. Deadheading will keep it blooming longer. One of my favourite aspects of this plant is that the flowers can be dried by 'watering' (leaving the blooming stems in shallow water to dry gradually as the water evaporates.) The photo to the right shows a Heliopsis with variegated foliage.



Youth Garden Competition Grades Four - Eight



2020 Youth Gardeners

(Older Group)

Grades 4-6

1. Kyra Shearing
2. Makayla MacPherson
3. Olivia Nemcsok
4. Claire Groulx

Grade 7 and Above

1. Aiden MacPherson

Our Society owes a huge thank you to two ladies who have given up hours of their time to encourage and praise the young people who participate in this important summer time activity. Lois Dekker and Dorothy de Champlain have given up days in the month of August to visit each young gardener, to spend time with them, offering praise and suggestions, and ultimately, to award prizes to the participants. These two ladies have done this now for many years. Please thank them if you happen to run into them. If you know of a youngster who might be interested in this next year, please encourage them to enter.

Poetry and Prose

*Autumn always puts us in a
reflective mood.
Somewhere amidst the hustle
and bustle of daily activities,
there drifts the leaf smoke of
old memories and the gypsy
call of autumn roads bright
with red and gold.
The autumn of life, too, is a
time of reflection and memory
and the young of heart are
those who, at least inwardly,
still answer the gypsy call.
(Esther B. York)*

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