



'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society
April 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 time we have been going through! I will admit that at times it has been frightening. Humans are usually social creatures and I have missed being social. However, I have been lucky to have my plants and seedlings (and my husband and dog!) to talk to. I hope we are all getting through this episode and will soon be back to normal. I'm sorry we missed our March meeting with Paul DeJong but I'm sure we'll hear from him again. We also missed our first seed exchange. Plans will be made regarding this, I'm sure. So, in the meantime, think positive thoughts, give your plants some extra TLC, enjoy the sounds of the spring birds, and watch the spring bulbs appearing in our gardens. Hope to see you soon!

Programme

I've been looking forward to our April meeting with Rosie from Rosie's Garden but unfortunately, we'll have to book her in for another time. Our plans for the annual May Plant and Bake Sale are up in the air as well but we will let you know when we hear any news. Our tentative May meeting will be our own Rick Heaslip speaking to us about growing Bulbs, Corms, and Tubers (we hope!)

Mark It On Your Calendar

May 16 Plant and Bake Sale (tentative)
May 20: General Meeting (tentative)

The Importance of Gardening with Children

May is the perfect time of year to for a child to start a gardening project. Gardening is great for physical development. Young people can develop loco-motor skills, body management skills and object control skills while they move about carrying tools, soil and water. They will be using large muscles to dig and carry, fine motor skills such as grasping when using hand tools and to pick up tiny seeds to plant. Just being outdoors in the fresh air and moving around a garden is good exercise. Another aspect of physical development is the sensory stimulation that they can experience in a garden. Feeling the texture of the soil or the plant leaves is interesting, as are the smell of the soil and the colours of the fruits and vegetables. If they plant edible plants, they learn the importance of eating fresh fruits and vegetables. Children are often more willing to try a new food if they have been involved in growing it. Literacy and math skills can be developed by gardening, too. Learning the names of different plants and reading what their growth requirements are on the seed or plant packages is a literacy activity. Counting seeds, measuring growth ... both math skills. Another reading/writing activity could be making a map of their garden and labeling the plants in it. (Continued on page 3)

Attracting Beneficial Insects

Not all insects in our gardens are bad. In fact, many are beneficial to have in our gardens. We need to grow plants that give them food, comfort, and shelter. Another way is to make sure you have lots of organic material in the soil to keep them happy. For instance, there are insects, such as a type of mite which loves manure, that prey on garden pests. Try to have something blooming in your garden at all times. A variety of blooming plants is much better at attracting insects than a border of all marigolds, all pansies, etc. Avoid the use of pesticides as even organic ones can kill beneficials. It would help to be able to identify beneficial insects to avoid killing them. That sounds like a topic for a later bulletin!

Looking Back... 2011 was a Busy Year



Lyn Coutts and Joyce Smith spoke about "Growing Succulents" in home-made hypertouffa containers at one meeting while Claudette Black, Dawna Beausoleil and Jean Bott made pressed flowers cards and bookmarks.

Hints and Tips: It's a Great Time to Prepare Your Tools

Your garden tools need to be in top condition to help you be successful throughout the season. If you didn't do it in the fall, clean off the rust, dirt, and the residue from shovels, spades, your pruners, etc. Most good pruners are made so you can install replacement parts or – at a minimum – sharpen the blade. Pruning with a dull blade is the worst thing you can do to your plants. Rather than a clean cut, which heals quickly and promotes growth, you will end up with a tear or a wound and create the opportunity for disease. Use some steel wool and some oil to sharpen your tools, so that they will be ready for this season. For those tools with a wooden handle, a light sanding with fine-grit sandpaper is recommended. Run the sandpaper up the handle a bit, and then, rub a little linseed oil into the wood.

Reports From Your Directors

Plant and Bake Sale: (Tentative) Convenors Barb Curran and Jean Bott remind everyone that, if they have planted seeds or are dividing houseplants, to put some aside for our sale on Saturday, May 16. We hope we will set up on Friday, May 15 at 1:00. Please bring along any extra newspapers, small boxes/cardboard pop flats, as well as any house plants, seedlings, perennials, etc. you are donating to the sale.

Social: (Tentative) Social convenors Joyce and Bonnie remind everyone to bring along a small donation for our shared snack at our next meeting.

Membership: Convenor Ginny Montminy reports that we have 50 members to date.

Youth Gardens: Bonnie and Eileen report that as last year was such a successful year for our Youth Gardeners, with 16 children involved, we hope that this year will be similar. If you know any youngsters who might be interested in gardening, please encourage them, even if they don't want to enter the competition. Gardening is good for them! Information will be going to the schools soon.

You know you're a gardener if... you insist on saving all 225 tomato seedlings even though you only need 6. *This sounds like someone I know whose initials are BW, lol!*

The Importance of Healthy Soil (cont)

Nutrient Deficiencies: Typically, bone meal is recommended to boost phosphorous levels in the soil while blood meal is used to raise nitrogen levels. However, both of these are products of slaughterhouses and may not appeal to everyone. However, there are some alternatives. In lieu of blood meal or fish emulsion, try alfalfa meal or alfalfa pellets (sold for rabbit food) or grow alfalfa as a cover crop to make nitrogen available to plants. Alfalfa also adds a bit of phosphorous and potassium and works well as a compost accelerator. As a substitute for bone meal, add soft-rock phosphate to increase phosphorous levels. (Non-organically grown alfalfa may contain pesticide and herbicide residues.) Organic fertilizers will add nutrients without danger from chemicals.

This is the final chapter of the article on Healthy Soil. I hope it will help come gardening time. However, below are some more tips from Jean Wallace, a woman who knows her soil!

Improving the Fertility and Tilt of Garden Soil.

As you begin gardening, it's a capital idea to build a composting box, or, ideally 3 of them (one for newly discarded material; one left from last year and eventually the third from the year before that). Once they start to produce useable soil, sift with a coarse screen, very coarse, like a gravel mesh. This step is worthwhile because it sorts out whatever has not degraded making for lovely texture to work in. But as well as, or before compost is ready, it might still be possible to purchase soil locally in whatever quantity from people like Vickerys or Terry Hack. When I was gardening they both mixed complete garden soil for sale. We never used fertilizer except to bed in seedlings and our garden had enormous growth. (*Thanks, Jean, for the hints.*)

Canada Red Rhubarb

In the spring I start longing for a piece of Frankie Bradt's rhubarb pie. Frankie was a wonderful cook and I have many fond memories of her rhubarb patch and her rhubarb pie. I'm not sure of the variety but I do remember us trying to pick the reddest stalk and dipping it into a bit of sugar in our palms.

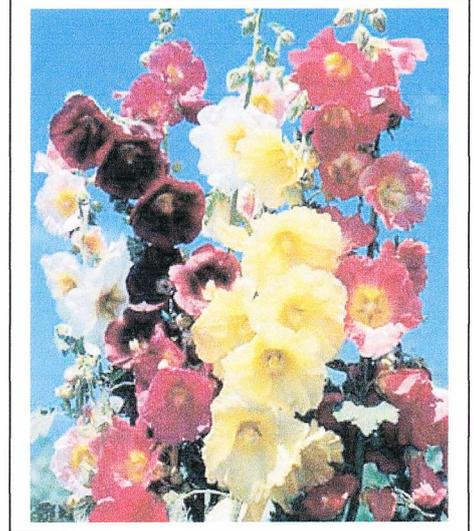
Canadian Red rhubarb plants produce striking red stalks that contain more sugar than other varieties. Like other types of rhubarb, it grows best in colder climates, is easy to grow, and adds beautiful foliage and colour to the garden. The leaves are not edible and are, in fact, toxic, but the stalks can be used in sauces, jams, pies, cakes, and other baked goods. The bright red stalks of the Canada Red rhubarb variety work especially well in desserts because they have a high sugar content. With these rhubarb stalks, you can make your favorite recipe with less sugar. Canada Red rhubarb grows as a perennial and produces stalks you can harvest for many years. It grows up to 2 to 3 feet (0.6 to 0.9 m.) tall and will produce 4 to 12 pounds (1.8 to 5.4 kg.) of stalks for each crown you plant. To grow this rhubarb you will need crowns or transplants. When planting crowns, make sure the roots are 2 to 4 inches (5 to 10 cm.) below the soil. They can be planted as soon as you can get into the soil in spring. These plants tolerate cold very well. Soil for any rhubarb cultivar should be rich with organic material and should drain well. They won't tolerate standing water. Rhubarb does best with full sun but will tolerate some shade. Once planted and beginning to grow, Canada Red rhubarb care is simple. Keep mulch down to suppress weeds and water enough to keep the soil just a little moist. Avoid standing water, which can lead to root rot. Remove any flower stalks as they appear. When harvesting your Canadian Red rhubarb, wait for the second year. This will give you healthier, more productive plants for a few years. Always allow enough stems and leaves remain on the plants to generate energy for the next year's growth. (Gardening Knowhow)



Plant of the Month

Hollyhocks

Looking for height in your garden? Try Hollyhocks. Their flower stalks can reach heights of 9 feet tall...nearly 3 metres! They are biennial or short-lived perennials in our area. They can tower above a garden, adding a lovely vertical element to your yard. Hollyhocks come in single and double varieties and are available in colours from white to a purple so deep they look black. If you are planting seeds, sow the seeds outside about a week before last frost. If you are planting seedlings out, wait about two to three weeks after last frost. Hollyhocks should be planted right below the soil, no more than 1/4-inch deep. Hollyhock plants should be about 2 feet apart to grow well. These beauties are easy to grow, but they are not without their problems. When growing hollyhocks, you need to keep an eye out for rust. Rust will typically attack the lower leaves but it may spread to upper leaves. To help keep rust to a minimum, some tips on hollyhocks include: remember to water from below and make sure the plant has good air circulation. Keep an eye out for aphids as well.



Gardening Workout

Because we are such a sedentary culture, movement recommendations are often simplified into one basic instruction: "Move more." As a biomechanist and movement teacher, of course I agree we need to move. But, I think the general advice to "move more" tends to disregard the idea that *how* you move — your alignment, mode of movement, and different types of movements — matters. One of the best workouts you can do is gardening, because squats, bends, pulls, lifts, and carries done alongside gardening are converted into food — you're reaping the most essential benefit of all, sustenance! (And if you're more of a flower gardener, then you're feeding pollinators, who in turn help feed us — so it's the same deal!) The garden is an excellent personal trainer: If you're giving the garden everything it needs, you can't help but cross-train.

Movement Matters

How you choose to move can also affect how much movement you're able to fit into your life. Movements that have a purpose other than exercise — movements that get you things you need, like groceries, rather than movements you do specifically to reap fitness benefits — are easier to fit into your life, because they can take place outside of your limited workout time. We all have many more needs than just fitness, so tending to these needs through movement is the most feasible way to start getting the larger frequencies of physical activity we require. Next month there will be some tips to help cross-train in the garden.

(Thanks to Martha McSherry- KL Society newsletter-November)

Poetry and Prose

My April Lady

*My little April lady,
Of sunshine and of showers,
She weaves the old
spring magic,
And breaks my heart in
flowers!
But when her moods are ended,
She nestles like a dove;
Then, by the pain and rapture,
I know her name is Love.*

Henry Van Dyke

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Englehart & District Horticultural
Society
Box 677, Englehart, ON P0J 1H0
President: Jean Bott
Secretary: Bonnie Warner
Treasurer: Ginny Montminy
Editor: Eileen Fisher
Copying: Ginny Montminy
Mailing: Joyce Marie Smith