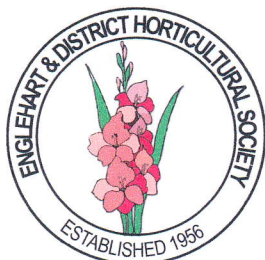




'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society
August 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

President: Jean. Bott

Bulletin Editor: E. Fisher

Website:

engleharthort.weebly.com

Gardening During the Pandemic

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 Benefits of Gardening...

Being surrounded by plants, digging in the soil, and connecting with your world in a very tangible way can be incredibly life affirming. Below are just a few of the positive aspects of being a gardener.

- * **Mood-boosting benefits:** a source of pride and confidence when something grows.
- * **Physical benefits:** aerobic exercise: bending, stretching weeding all improve muscle tone.
- * **Decreased dementia risk:** a 2006 study found gardening could lower risk of dementia by 36%
- * **Sleep may improve:** I know I sleep better after a good day of gardening.
- * **Nutritional benefits:** fresh fruit and vegetables with surety that pesticides have not been used.
- * **Social benefits:** sharing common interests with other gardeners
- * **Clearing our minds:** we concentrate on the garden task and forget our problems for a while
- * **Connecting with nature:** enjoying the feeling of being one with the natural world
- * **Environmental benefits:** Working and breathing in fresh outdoor air.
- * **Anticipation:** Looking forward to what will appear next in our gardens
- * **Saving money:** If you grow your own vegetables and fruit, you won't spend as much for groceries.

Eat Your Flowers (continued from last month)

Nasturtium Sauce: (good with cold meats, cheese, and salads).

1 litre of flowers (well pressed down)	1 litre good vinegar
6 to 8 shallots, finely chopped	1 clove garlic, bruised
1 bay leaf	6 cloves
1 tsp. salt	1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper

Simmer all ingredients but the flowers. Pour all ingredients into a large jar and cover it well. Keep two months then strain the liquid and bottle it. (Add a little to a French dressing occasionally to give a flavor to your salad that is different.)

Herb Jelly: Sage Jelly is simply an apple jelly boiled with a handful of sage, delicious accompaniment to cold meats or roast pork. Other herbs: mint, rosemary, parsley, and tarragon, may also be used this way. Scented leaves of pelargoniums also flavor jellies for breads and desserts.

Why We Garden: The Psychology and Philosophy of Gardening

I came across this article on a gardening website, and while it is somewhat technical, I think that the message and meaning of the author will appeal to all of us who garden....

Ineni, architect to Pharaoh Thutmose I (d. 1492 BCE), had his garden painted into his tomb, along with a list of all the trees within it—presumably, so that they might be accounted for in the afterlife. Ineni's garden included: 170 date palms, 120 doum palms, 73 sycamore fig, 31 persea, 16 carob, 12 grape vines, 10 tamarisk, 8 willow, 5 fig, 5 pomegranate, 5 garland thorn, 2 moringa, 2 myrtle, and more. A grand garden of this sort symbolized control and mastery over nature, a haven of peace and plenty, of order and beauty, by which to project the status, power, and temperament of its owner. Other, more famous examples include the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Gardens of the *Real Alcázar* in Seville, and the Gardens of Versailles. The garden could also have a religious or philosophical message or dimension. For example, the Old Testament's four rivers of Eden are represented by four watercourses in Islamic paradise gardens, and four paths in Christian cloister gardens. The Zen garden, by hinting at hidden principles, serves as an aid to meditation about the true meaning of existence. The Gardens at Versailles reflect a rationalist, Cartesian vision of God-given ideas and principles for the intellect to apprehend or recognize, whereas English landscape gardens are more in the empiricist mold, presenting nature as a stream of sensory experiences skirting across the blank slate of the mind. In either case, the garden represents a taming of nature, from dark and deadly forest, or disease-infested swamp, to an extension of our living space: open and structured to still our minds, but retaining enough mystery to sustain our interest and even, perhaps, capture our imagination. Individual plants too can have a meaning. English churchyards often feature yew trees, which are poisonous, dark, and evergreen, and symbolize both death and immortality. A yew tree is commonly found near the lychgate, where, prior to the advent of mortuaries, cadavers, guarded by vigils, awaited burial. In the ancient world, the palm tree symbolized victory, peace, and bounty, while the cedar of Lebanon symbolized pride, majesty, and dignity. Both also stood for righteousness, as in Psalm 92:12: "the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, grow tall like the cedar of Lebanon." Today, *Cedrus libani* is the national emblem of Lebanon, and a symbol of the peaceful Cedar Revolution of 2005. Trees can also be planted to mark an important occasion, which is why British royals are often asked to brandish a shovel. In a recent annual tradition, the friends of a local park may purchase a noteworthy tree and invite a dignitary such as the Mayor to plant it. Today, gardens and gardening are more popular than ever. According to the National Gardening Survey 2018, more American households (77%) are gardening than ever before. In the U.K. 87% of homes have access to a garden, and 27 million people report a personal interest or active engagement in gardening, even if it is only on a balcony. *(To be continued.)*

Epsom Salts (continued)

9: More Bountiful Roses: Ever wonder why your neighbors' rose bushes are fuller than yours and sport so many more blossoms? It is highly likely that the answer is Epsom salt. Not only does it help roses to produce larger blossoms in greater numbers, many successful rosarians will agree that magnesium also aids in the growth of new canes from the base of the plant. And of course, Epsom salt increases chlorophyll production meaning darker leaves. For maximum benefit, roses should at the least be fed with Epsom salt at time of planting, then again at the first sign of new growth, and once more when the flowers are in full bloom. Bare root roses may also be soaked in water containing dissolved Epsom salt before planting. It is almost impossible to use too much Epsom salt in your garden. Magnesium sulfate is pH neutral, so it won't harm your soil. The crystals break down into water, magnesium, and sulfur – three components which are beneficial in some way to most plants. Epsom salt is safe, easy to apply, and works fast to correct a variety of problems and increase the overall health of your garden. As if that weren't enough, Epsom salt is also inexpensive making it one of the most perfect tools for the health-conscious, responsible gardener.

10. More Plentiful Peppers: Peppers are another popular garden plant with a higher-than average fruit to plant size ratio. As such, they should also be fed magnesium every two weeks to achieve higher yields of larger fruits. *(This brings us to the end of the article on Epsom Salts. I hope it has helped or will help you as you continue gardening.)*

Going Green: The Butterfly Effect

Few southern Ontario species inspire more devotion than the monarch butterfly. Its striking black and orange colouring and unmistakable flight pattern – a series of wing flaps interspersed with leisurely glides- make it one of the province's most recognizable butterflies. It is not hard to understand why the species' 80 percent decline over the past two decades has spurred well-intentioned nature lovers to try to bolster its numbers in the wild by releasing individuals humans have raised. But good intentions do not always produce good results. Ayse Tenger-Trolander, a PhD. student at the University of Chicago, recently showed that captive-raised monarchs lack the ability to migrate to overwintering grounds in the southern United States and Mexico. Instead of joining their wild brethren for the long journey south, the hand-reared insects in her study flew in random directions and ultimately never migrated. Monarch migration is controlled by two factors- genetics and environmental clues. The subjects Tenger-Trolander used in her study came from a commercial supplier that breeds monarch butterflies for use at festivals and weddings or in classrooms. The individuals were likely bred from stocks that, over generations, had accumulated genetic changes that eliminated their ability to migrate. Scientists have noticed parallel patterns in the wild. Monarch butterflies originated in North America. They have since dispersed to Europe, South America, and Oceania, but none of the monarchs in the new lineage migrate. In another part of Tenger-Trolander's study, monarchs raised indoors that developed from eggs she had collected outdoors, also failed to orient south. This happened despite Tenger-Trolander's close replication of the temperature and lighting conditions in the butterflies' natural habitat. Clearly the environmental cues needed for migration had been disturbed. Releasing captive-raised monarchs in hope of offsetting population declines is a contentious issue in conservation circles. Many scientists decry the practice, warning that the butterflies reared in close proximity to one another are more susceptible to diseases they could subsequently pass to their wild peers when released. Now, the new findings highlight potentially even more serious danger: if they breed with their migratory counterparts, the specimens raised indoors could introduce genetic variation that disrupts migration in wild populations of the species. Monarch butterflies doomed to spend the winter in Ontario would not survive long. (Author- Lisa Richardson is Ontario Nature's Nature Network and communications coordinator) *Thank you to Jean Wallace for this informative and somewhat disturbing article.*

Plant of the Month

The Gladiolus

Gladioli, known for their tall flower spikes and large, colourful blooms, are great cutting flowers and look lovely in summer bouquets. Commonly called “glads,” these lovely flowering plants are available in a multitude of colours and typically reach between 1/2 m to 1.5 m (2' - 5') in height. They grow from a ‘corm’ but are usually called bulbs. Their blooms also range in size from “miniature” flowers less than 7 ½ cm (3”) in diameter, to “giant” flowers greater than 13 cm (5”) across! The taller varieties, which need to be staked, are often placed in the back of a garden to nicely complement shorter plants. Some glads have a lovely scent and many have ruffled flowers. In our growing zone, 3a, gladioli corms need to be dug up in the fall, dried, stored in a cool dark area, and replanted the following spring. If you’ve got some room, they are well worth trying. The plants should be cut down and dug in fall, with the corm and part of the stem left to dry before the new corm, which grows on top of the old corm, is carefully removed for storing in a cool, dry spot. (The name Gladiolus comes from the Latin term for sword, ‘gladio’, and is named for its sword shaped leaves.)



Poetry and Prose

August

*The hot still sky is hushed in silent
rest... no voice of bird.*

*A fleecy whiteness wings away to
west... No leaf is stirred.*

*The poplar's silver glistens in the
burning light.*

*The meadow lands
bathed in the still heat
of a hot delight,*

*The hay-cart stands on the
white road, waiting in the sun.*

*A straggling vine stretches across a
dell where brown bees hum
and wet weeds shine,*

*A locust slips its shrill note in the
air; the beetles' drone flecks
the hushed stillness here and there
with lazy tone.*

By Gay Watters

Composting... Materials to Avoid

- **Coal Ash** – Most ashes are safe to mix into your compost pile, but coal ashes are not. They contain sulfur and iron in amounts high enough to damage plants.
- **Coloured Paper** – Some paper with colored inks (including newsprint) contain heavy metals or other toxic materials and should not be added to the compost pile
- **Diseased Plants** – It takes an efficient composting system and ideal conditions (extreme heat) to destroy many plant diseases. If the disease organisms are not destroyed they can be spread later when the compost is applied. Avoid questionable plant materials.
- **Inorganic Materials** – This stuff won't break down and includes aluminum foil, glass, plastics and metals. Pressure-treated lumber should also be avoided because it's treated with chemicals that could be toxic in compost.
- **Meat, Bones, Fish, Fats, Dairy** – These products can “overheat” your compost pile (not to mention make it stinky and attract animals). They are best avoided.
- **Pet Droppings** – Dog or cat droppings contain several disease organisms and can make compost toxic to handle.
- **Synthetic Chemicals** – Certain chemicals (herbicides – pesticides) can withstand the composting process and remain intact in the finished compost. Poisons have no place in the natural micro-community of your compost pile. **(From Planet Natural)**

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