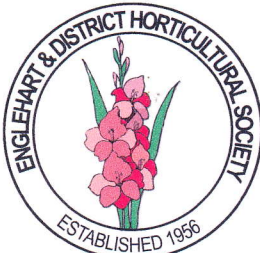




# 'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society  
April 2021



Englehart and District  
Horticultural Society was  
formed in 1956.

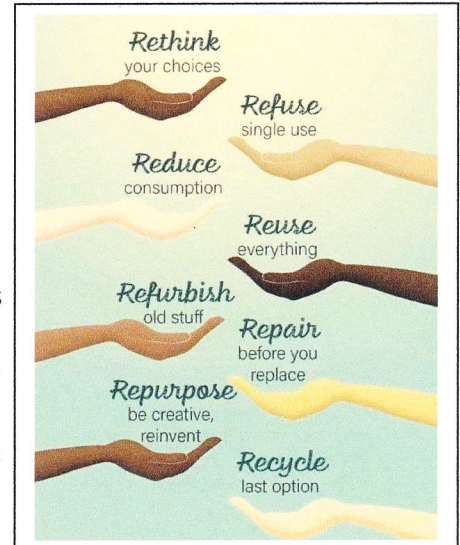
**General meetings:**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of most months  
at 7:00 p.m. in the  
St. Paul's Emmanuel  
Community Church

- \*Speakers, workshops, demonstrations
- \*Civic Improvement
- \*Youth Involvement
- \*Displays and Competitions
- \*Environmental Stewardship

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## Earth Day 2021

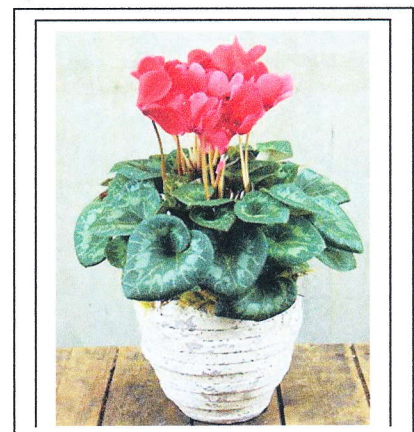
Every year on April 22, we celebrate Earth Day. This year will be the 51<sup>st</sup> celebration. April 22 marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970. However, the stage was set for change with the publication of Rachel Carson's New York Times bestseller, 'Silent Spring', in 1962. The book represented a watershed moment, selling more than 500 000 copies in 24 countries, as it raised public awareness and concern for living organisms, the environment, and the inextricable links between pollution and public health. Before 1970, most North Americans were just becoming aware of the dangers to environment that the vast amounts of leaded gas being consumed, the huge number of factories producing smoke and dumping sludge into our land and waterways, and the effects it was having on our environment. We now prepare to celebrate the 51<sup>st</sup> Earth Day. Some of us will be working in our yards. Some will be helping older or incapacitated friends or neighbours. Some of us will be working to clean up public spaces, such as parks. Some will be working with children to encourage environmental awareness. What are you planning to do to mark this day?



## Propagation of Houseplants: Tips for Success

This is the final installment of the article on houseplant propagation. I hope you have enjoyed it and that some of you will try a few new methods...especially air layering! It's tricky but fun. Below are a few hints to help you be a more successful 'propagator'. Good luck!

- \*start with healthy plants and clean, sharp tools
- \* use a disease-free medium that can hold water
- \*use bright, indirect light
- \* for most plants, try to maintain high humidity
- \*try to avoid having leaves touch each other or edge of container
- \*keep rooting medium moist
- \*don't wait too long to transplant
- \*try to maintain constant temperature and high humidity
- \*watch seedlings carefully as the root system is small and fragile



## Happy Earth Day Quiz

People in many world countries will be celebrating Earth Day on April 22. What will you be doing? We do not all have to be part of some big plan or celebration. We can all do something small in our own homes and communities and incorporate it into our daily lives. For instance, wasting less food is a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. More than one third of food produced globally never makes it to the table. Some of this wasted food spoils in transit, while consumers throw some of this food out. During the production, harvesting, transporting, and packaging of the wasted food, more than 3.3 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide is emitted. Can you answer the following questions?

- 1. Which of the following is a greenhouse gas?** a. CO<sub>2</sub> b. CH<sub>4</sub> c. water vapour d. a, b, and c
- 2. Which of the following are consequences associated with climate change?**
  - a. The ice sheets are declining, glaciers are in retreat globally, and our oceans are more acidic than ever
  - b. Surface temperatures are setting new heat records about each year
  - c. More extreme weather like droughts, heat waves, and hurricanes occur
  - d. Global sea levels are rising at an alarmingly fast rate ...+17 centimeters (6.7 inches) in the last century alone and going higher
  - e. all of the above
- 3. What was agreed to in the "Paris Agreement" that came out of COP-21, held in Paris in 2015?**
  - a. To protect biodiversity and end the deforestation of the world's rainforests
  - b. To keep global temperature rise well below 2°C pre-industrial levels and to pursue a path to limit warming to 1.5°C
  - c. To limit sea level rise to 3 feet above current levels
  - d. To pursue a goal of 100% clean, renewable energy
- 4. How much has the average global temperature risen by since 1880 (in Fahrenheit)?**
  - a. 0.5 degrees b. 1.69 degrees c. 5 degrees
- 5. Globally, which of the following economic sectors emits the largest percentage of greenhouse gas?**
  - a. transportation b. buildings c. industry d. electricity and heat production (answers at bottom)

### Ten Tips for Growing Tomatoes (cont.)

- 2. Give Tomatoes Enough Light:** Tomatoes love sun. Many beginning gardeners start their tomatoes from small plants purchased online or at a garden centre. If you are planting seeds yourself, it is critical to provide strong, direct light. For young seedlings, northern gardeners should use growlights 14-18 hours a day to provide an early boost and promote strong, upright growth.
- 3. Planting seedlings or transplants in the ground:** If your seedlings were grown indoors or in a greenhouse, do not just go outside and set them in the cool ground. Outdoor tomatoes will first need acclimatizing to outside conditions to avoid cold shock. If the plants have been inside a greenhouse, harden them off over a period of two weeks. Begin by leaving plants outside for just a couple of hours a day then gradually increase the length of time they spend outside, avoiding windy days. Bring plants under cover if temperatures threaten to drop below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Plant outside only after danger of frost has passed. When planting in the ground, choose your sunniest spot with at least 7 hours of direct sunshine a day. For tomatoes, sunshine is like water and they'll soak it up and produce more fruit! Also, make sure your tomatoes aren't too crowded so the sunshine can reach their lower leaves. Plant seedlings (small plants) 30 to 48 inches apart, with rows set 48 inches apart. (to be cont.)

### Answers for Earth Day Quiz

# 1: d      #2: e      # 3: b      # 4: b      #5: d.

## Going Green (Cont. from March)

### Cheap or Free Peat Pots Alternatives Abound!

There are lots of creative, innovative ways to make your own biodegradable or recyclable seed starting pots. Here are a few possibilities:

**Toilet Paper Rolls:** use the tubes as starter pots. Toilet paper rolls are about the right size as-is. Paper towel rolls can be cut to any size you wish. To use these cardboard tubes, simply pack them closely in a tray, fill them with potting soil, and plant away! You would plant your flower seeds in a manner very similar to those described for both Jiffy peat pots and eggshells. You can plant the entire roll along with the root ball into the garden. You may want to pull it away a bit to help the roots grow through and take hold but the cardboard should biodegrade quite nicely on its own.

**Newspaper:** Make seed starter pots from scratch using black and white newspaper. There are a number of different ways to fold or roll or otherwise create very nifty little seed starter pots using black and white newspaper. Online video instructions range from extremely simple to origami-like in steps and complexity. There are videos online in which the presenter shows the very simplest method; however, if you enjoy complex and ingenious folding, there are a number of videos to be found online that will suit your fancy. The main thing to remember when using newspaper to create biodegradable, free seed starter pots is that you must use only black and white newsprint. Don't use shiny, colourful paper because the dyes used in this type of paper are likely to contain toxic heavy metals.

**Recycled containers:** There are lots of other possibilities when it comes to reusing containers for starting seeds. I have used mini yoghurt, fruit, and pudding cups, water bottle bottoms...anything that can have drainage holes put into the bottoms and can be cleaned and eventually recycled.

**Are Peat Pots Passé?** While peat pots are certainly traditional and have been very useful to gardeners for many decades, with the information we now have it seems quite clear that it is smarter, thriftier, and more environmentally friendly to seek out alternatives. In the world in which we live today, it is essential to make the most of the resources we have. When we remember to reduce, reuse, and recycle as often as possible, we can make a real difference in the condition of our one and only habitable planet. ( some info. from Plant Care Today)



### Youth Garden Competition

Once again we will be sponsoring the garden competition for our youth. Why? First, there's the important lesson of learning how to grow food, a skill that every person on our planet should have. Planting seeds, digging in soil, and pulling out weeds gets little hands covered in dirt, and dirt is good for kids! Dirt is full of microbes that build up children's immune systems and help to reduce chronic conditions like asthma, allergies, diabetes and obesity. Getting kids outside also helps children stay active, reduce stress and get smarter! Even the pickiest of children are willing to try eating the fruits and veggies they grow themselves. Gardening is also good for building muscles and improving fine motor skills and coordination. Digging dirt is hard work, as is pushing a wheelbarrow, pulling weeds, and mounding potatoes. Fine motor skills improve when plantings seeds, picking off slugs from lettuce, or picking fruits and veggies. Spending time growing a garden helps children develop an upstanding of nature, how beautiful it is, and how they have an important role in taking care of it. It's a wonderful way to teach children that they are never too young to make a difference in the world. (continued next month.)

## *Plant of the Month*

### **Fritillaria**

Delicate and exotic, Fritillaria flower varieties may appear difficult to grow, but most Fritillaria care is simple. They are true lilies, growing from bulbs, and produce best when planted in moist soil in a sunny to part shade location. There is a good range in colour and height among these plants. Some varieties of Fritillaria, such as *F. Imperialis*, may reach 1 m or more in the late spring. Smaller ones, such as *F. meleagris* have blooms like checkerboards and are best planted in groups. *F. imperialis*, or Crown Imperial, has the showiest flowers of the species, often bright yellow or orange. Most Fritillaria bulbs have nodding flowers, topped with a tuft of foliage. Plant larger bulbs with the base about 5 inches (13 cm.) below the soil surface, while smaller Fritillaria bulbs should be planted about 3 inches (7.5 cm.) deep. Plant bulbs in well-drained soil and keep it moist until the root system is established. One of the best things about Fritillaria is that they are unappetising to rodents and deer. One of the worst things is that they smell like skunk!



### *Horticulture during Covid Times*

I'm wondering how many of you have houseplants. I'm also wondering how your relationship with those plants has developed during the months of Covid 19. I recently read an article in the Toronto Star entitled **Love Sprouts Eternal** with the lead-in "*Houseplants offer comfort, companionship when no one is around.*" The article described how many people, especially those who live alone, have come to depend upon their plants for companionship. One woman is quoted as saying, "*Throughout the coronavirus times I would care for her every day. I feel like someone is beside me that makes me comfortable.*" She went on to say that her family thought she was crazy but, according to psychologists, her behavior is normal, especially when people have been deprived of social interactions. Psychologists in Japan, speaking about anthropomorphism, (the treatment of a nonhuman object as a friend), describe it as "*a source of comfort, pleasure, and support, helping to banish- or at least alleviate- the stress and loneliness that have accompanied the pandemic.*" I know that my houseplants have never been so well cared for. I have repotted, taken cuttings, fertilized, moved to better places, and talked to my plants more than ever before. They have brought me more pleasure than ever before. I check them daily for dryness, spider mite, signs of new growth, etc. and I find myself talking to them as my mother talked to hers. The lengthy article ends with the following: "I love the flowers in my garden but it's different with the ones that come inside. It's more than the pleasure of looking at their beauty. It's a deeper feeling... I can feel her and she can feel me."

### *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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### *Climate Zones (continued)*

Some months ago I began an article on our climate zones and neglected to finish it. The following is the conclusion of the article... Nurseries in warmer areas may not really care too much about the cold end of the range and underestimate it, and some northern nurseries may try to stretch the lower end of the range to get more sales. (*I must say I have never found this up here, thank goodness.*) Snow cover plays a big role. Plants will survive in much colder regions if they're covered by snow all winter. The snow protects the plant from extreme cold by holding the heat from the soil around the plant. The same plant will perish in warmer areas that don't get reliable snow. Summer heat and humidity also play a factor. The famous blue poppy does not grow well in the humid, warm summer found in Ontario, and subsequently dies in winter, but it grows well a few hundred miles away in Quebec. Local microclimates can also play a role. Cold air is heavy and settles in low areas. The bottom of a hill is usually colder than higher up on the hill. Inside the city is warmer than the outskirts. On a hardiness zone map, all of these areas are given the same number. Zone numbers also get updated from time to time. Canada had a major revision in 2000, and the US updated theirs in 2012. That means that older books and web pages may be out of date. Plant hardiness zones are a very useful tool for determining the likelihood that a plant will survive in your garden, but it is not a guarantee. Use them as a guide only. After introduction, the plant is grown by more people, which provide even more data. Over time the zone value for the plant is fine-tuned. No official organisation regulates these numbers. Each grower or seller will provide the number they think is best. If you Google a plant, you will find a wide range of values. (D.Mailloux)

### *North Facing Window Gardening*

Keeping healthy houseplants is a good way to improve indoor air quality and bring a sense of calm and abundance to your environment. Living here in northern Ontario, I would be lost without my houseplants to care for during those long winter months. I was disappointed that my best windows/patio doors face north. However, I have found that a varied collection of low-light houseplants can add a new dimension of interest to your north-facing window. So you want to know "What are the best north facing window plants?" There are more than you think! Many people are unaware that the northern window is a perfect place to grow indoor plants. Without direct sunlight the north facing window is especially suited to cultivating tropical rainforest under-story plants. The relatively small amount of light (no direct sunlight) a north-facing window receives is perfect for keeping these low light plants a deep, luxuriant shade of green throughout the winter months and year round. A quick search will result in many options for north-facing window plants. It's easy to see that choosing just the right plants for your northern window garden is the key to success.



### *Memberships*

As we have not been able to hold any meetings since last year, we have been unable to renew our memberships easily. What we can do is mail a cheque for \$10.00 to Treasurer Ginny Montminy at Englehart & District Horticultural Society, Box 677, Englehart, ON, P0J 1H0 or you can send an e-transfer. Please use the following email address to submit your payment via e transfer – [nessa@ontera.net](mailto:nessa@ontera.net) The e-transfer identifies the sender but the Society also requires a mailing address and if you wish to receive the bulletin via email – your email address – this may also be sent to [nessa@ontera.net](mailto:nessa@ontera.net).