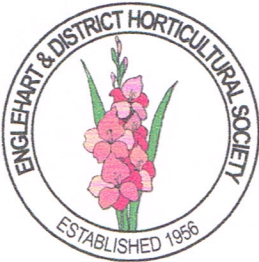




'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society
May 2014



Englehart and District Horticultural Society was formed in 1956.

General meetings:

3rd Wednesday of most months at 7:00 p.m. in the Anglican Church basement

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

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A Word From The Editor

Hurrah ...it's gardening season at last. We seem to have been waiting so long and now that it's here, we have to remember not to do what we northerners always do- go at it too hard, too quickly. Physiotherapists warn us to start slowly and to warm up first. Remember to do some stretching before starting off – it will save you a lot of aches and pains later. Make sure to sharpen your tools - working with dull tools takes much more effort. A helpful hint: paint a bit of bright or fluorescent paint somewhere on your tools to help you find them more easily after you've laid them down somewhere. If it's a sunny day, don't forget to wear sun block and a hat. That first sun burn can be nasty. Just remember - start off slowly, find the lists you made last summer of plants you just have to have, and the seeds you squirreled away last year, and enjoy another year of gardening.

Webmaster Rick Heaslip reports that we had 1475 hits on our website in April. That's up from 831 last year which was already up 78% from 2012 from 2012. What a great success story for our society!

Mark It On Your Calendar:

- May 21:** General Meeting: meet at 6:30 at Anglican Church
- May 24:** Plant and Bake Sale in the Legion Hall (Set up on Friday 23)
- June 8-14:** Horticultural Week
- Early June:** Civic planting:

~ The world's favourite season is the Spring. All things seem possible in May ~ Edwin Way Teale

Getting Kids Into a Garden

Not much is better for our children and our world than to encourage kids to get into a garden! It provides so many benefits for them it's impossible to mention them all here. But here are a few: It gives youth an appreciation of the importance of hard work; it allows them to see their role interacting with their environment; it provides a feeling of accomplishment when they see the results of their labour; it helps provide an understanding that plants and animals are indeed living things; it gives them a wonderful hobby for those long summer months; it teaches them the joy of anticipation and problem solving, the importance of planning, and much more. We host an annual Youth Gardening Competition. Perhaps you have a child, a grandchild, or a young neighbour who would like to enter this year, or just garden for the fun of it. Please encourage them. They'll thank you in the future! (Contact Bonnie Warner of Eileen Fisher for information about the competition)



Companion Planting

Companion planting is the planting of different plants near each other for pest control, pollination, encouraging beneficial creatures, maximizing use of space, etc. It allows for the interruption of the spread of hungry pests by planting different plants near each other. These all help promote crop productivity. Thousands of years ago, Chinese farmers were using this concept with their rice fields and native North Americans were well aware of its benefits, planting the 'three sisters' together. There are lots of books and websites available on this subject. Why not think about this concept when you start your garden?

DID YOU KNOW?

The Native Americans planted corn, beans, and squash together so that they would benefit each other. The corn provides a structure for the beans to climb. The beans provide the nitrogen to the soil that the other plants utilize, and the squash spreads along the ground preventing weeds.



Congratulations, Bonnie Warner

On Friday, April 4, long-time Englehart Horticultural Society member Bonnie Warner was honoured by the Englehart and Area Chamber of Commerce with the Lifetime Achievement Award for her many years of service to our area. We at the Englehart and District Horticultural Society were very proud to nominate Bonnie for this well deserved award. A good representation from our club was on hand to see Bonnie receive the award. She was also recognized by Mayor Nina Wallace, speaking for the town, and MPP John Vanthof, representing the province. Well done, Bonnie!



On April 26, ten members of our Society attended the District 12 Annual Meeting in Kirkland Lake. Our delegates, Rosemary Campbell and Ginny Montminy voted on a variety of motions and represented us well. Congratulations to the KL Society for a wonderful day! The food was great, the speakers very interesting, the displays superb. It was a pleasant way to help the Kirkland Lake Society celebrate their 80th Anniversary. Our new District Director is Suzanne Stamper of KL, 1st Assistant is Anne Jaimeson of Kapuskasing, and 2nd Assistant is Frances Crundwell of Cochrane. Bonnie Warner is the Secretary and Bruce Wilson the Treasurer. We also won a 1st prize for our newsletter and a 2nd prize with our Festival of Flowers poster.

Reports from Your Directors:

Plant and Bake Sale: Convenors Jean Bott and Les Peever remind members to bring their donations of baking or plants to the Legion Hall on Friday, May 23 from 12:00 to 4:00 pm. Members are reminded that Friday is set up day- plants and baking priced, etc., so lots of help is needed to price, to assist the pricers, place plants, etc. This is our main fund raiser, so it is important to lend a hand on the Friday. The doors open at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, and helpers are needed to assist shoppers and to help clean up. Hope to see you there. Don't forget to remind your friends and neighbours of the bargain prices and amazing variety of plants and baking available. Hope you can bring in smallish boxes/pot flats, and bags for people to use.

Programme: Carrie Anne Field presented a very interesting 'What's New for 2014' for our members in April. Door prizes were provided by Jean Bott and by Aidie Creek Gardens. Our May programme will be a bit different- we will meet at the Anglican Church at 6:30 to carpool for a trip to Karen Watchorn's home to see her vertical garden. We will have our shared snack at her house as well, so bring it with you. Juice and water will be provided. See you then.

Social: At this month's meeting, Len and Eileen Fisher will be the hosts and will also bring the gift for the free draw.

Show Schedule: The committee met at convenor Rick Heaslip's and planned some new classes for the show this year. The new information can be found on our website and is also included with this bulletin.

Civic Improvement: Carrie Anne and her committee are busy making plans for the town gardens and boxes. We will let you know the final dates for the actual planting as soon as dates have been finalized, but it will be in early June.

Horticultural Week: During the week of June 8-14 we hope that members will be out working in their yards, involved in civic planting, and listening to CJBB for some gardening hints. Convenors Len and Eileen Fisher will be visiting Holy Family and EPS, working with children in horticultural activities. Anyone interested in helping them weed the Millennium Garden at any time, please give them a call at 544 8074.

***Festival of Flowers Exhibitors' Hint #5:** Avoid cramming too much material into too small a container and vice versa ... don't show a small specimen in a large vase. Make sure the containers are clean, not too ornate, and if using a jar, make sure any paper labels are removed.*

Keep watching our newsletters for information on the hummingbird friendly gardens planned for the Hilliardton Marsh. We'll hear more from Director Deb Murray on this topic next month.

Hardening Off

Hardening off is the process of acclimating plants to outdoor conditions. Your plants are like children. They need to adapt to conditions in the great outdoors, and your timing is very important. Many books will tell you that plants started indoors are ready to go out when its roots have filled the container. But if outdoor conditions are still too cold or wet, your tender plants may be set back or die. When you first take your plants outside, try to protect them from direct sun and wind. I like to start my babies out under a tree for several days, or in some shady area. Leave them out only a few hours a day to start and make sure the soil they're in doesn't dry out. Gradually increase the time the plants stay out. After a week (or more) they should be 'hardened'. Remember that plants need to adjust to the heat as well as the cold. Some gardeners use cold frames and hoop greenhouses to assist their plants when first set out. Again, attention is important. Make sure the cold frame is properly ventilated so that your delicate green things don't bake in too much heat. Good luck with your new babies!

Colour in the Garden (continued)

Here are a few more suggestions to incorporate colour into your yard:

5. Pick a Palette: choose a few shades that go well together- artists use complementary colours often, and gardeners can as well- shades of yellow and blue look lovely together; red and green are complementary colours, as are orange and blue.
6. Plant 'en masse'- create large patches or drifts of one variety, one colour, or plant different plants of the same colour in large areas for high impact in your yard.
7. Make good use of background colours- use your fences, walls of garages and sheds, etc. to create a pleasing backdrop for your plants. Creams, pale yellows, etc., on a wall behind your garden will make your vivid blossoms pop. Darker walls and fences will provide a great backing for white and pale coloured blooms.

Plant of the Month

Trollius

Trollius, or globeflower, is a hardy, spring-blooming perennial that will grow in full sun to partial shade. There are over 30 different species of Trollius. It is a member of the Ranunculaceae or buttercup family, and doesn't mind growing in damp soil. It's a low maintenance plant that produces lovely rounded blossoms from pale yellow to bright orange that are held above the foliage. Some varieties produce very long stamens which protrude quite far from the blossom. It may grow to 3' in height, blooms from May to June and is a low maintenance plant, preferring damp, cool weather. The foliage can be trimmed back in mid summer. It makes a lovely cut flower and is useful in spring floral designs.



Feeding Hummingbirds

The hummers will soon be back with us- in fact, are probably here already, so let's talk about hummingbird food. The best way to feed hummingbirds is to provide them with nature's food- flowers. However, if this is not possible, then, by all means, use a hummingbird feeder. You can purchase ready made hummingbird food, but it is easy and more environmentally-friendly to make your own. There are several important things to remember:

1. Keep your feeder clean, including the spigots that the birds use to drink. Soap and warm water will work well.
2. Change the liquid often, depending on the temperature- the warmer it is, the more often you should change the food, as the heat and sugar will produce a nasty mold that can sicken and kill the birds. Keep the extra nectar in the fridge.
3. Don't use red food colouring- buy a red coloured feeder or paint part of it red.
4. Boil 4 parts water to 1 part white sugar to dissolve the sugar, cool and put into clean feeders. It isn't necessary to fill the feeders full- on hot days, you'll waste the nectar as it will spoil more quickly. You also need to clean the feeders more often in hot weather. 23-28 degrees Celsius weather means cleaning the feeder at least every 5 days.
5. Do not use artificial sweetener or brown sugar – white sugar only.

Sowing Season

*When lilac breezes beckon me
And birdsong blends in harmony,
It's then I know it's time to sow
My flower garden, row on row.*

*And as I plant those precious seeds
Though there'll be bugs and pesky
weeds,
I know the earth and I are one,
A sweet communion 'neath God's sun.
Unknown author*

SPRING

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"But each spring a gardening instinct, sure as the sap rising in the trees, stirs within us. We look about and decide to tame another little bit of ground." ~ Lewis Gantt