

'Through the Garden Gate'

Bulletin of
The Englehart and District
Horticultural Society

MARCH 2013 GENERAL MEETING

"ALL-TIME FAVOURITES

*Giving a jump-start to Dahlias, Cannas, Callas
and other summer-flowering bulbs"*

SPEAKER: EILEEN FISHER

Our guest speaker, Past President of the Society, has been a gardener and Flower Show exhibitor since she was young. First encouraged by her Mother, Marie Armstrong, Eileen has spent her time and talents learning and investigating the horticultural world. She has grown and shown all kinds of plant material, with perennials and summer bulbs as her favourites. Those who attend will enjoy her lively presentation. Please feel free to bring an friend or friends.

Wednesday, March 20th, 7:30 p.m. Pioneer Hall, Christ Church, 5th Ave
Finger foods as usual, pot-luck. Delia Hill, Hostess; Ginny Montminy Gift

DISTRICT #12 ANNUAL MEETING:

Saturday, April 27th at Kapuskasing. As a member, please consider going to this meeting. We can send two voting delegates, but any Member is welcome to attend. Delegates will be elected at March General Meeting. More details next month's TTGG

PLANT & BAKE SALE:

The date has been moved to May 25th at the Legion Hall (upstairs). It's not too early to take cuttings(now), seed annuals (soon) and, as soon as the snow goes, plan which perennials need pruning. If you are growing plants from seeds yourself, please grow a few more for sale at the Plant & Bake Sale. This is a reminder to also save pop flats, plastic bags, etc Convenor: Les Peever



MEMBERSHIP:

Members so far for 2013— 60 All Memberships are for the calendar year. The first three Bulletins of the new year have been sent as goodwill gesture. However, I have to tell you now *this is the last Bulletin you will receive until you renew your membership.* To renew, send \$10.00 with your name and address and telephone No. to Ginny Montminy, Membership Secretary, Box 952, Englehart, or see her at the next meeting. If you wish to have Bulletins sent to you by e-mail, instead of by post, please call Joyce Marie Smith joyce@ntl.sympatico.ca or Ginny Montminy nessa@ontera.net



WEBSITE FOR ENGLEHART & DISTRICT SOCIETY!

Check <http://engleharthort.weebly.com>, our Society website, for new items. NOTE THAT THE ADDRESS GIVEN HERE IS THE CORRECT ONE. Among other information, the attractive site contains links to seed companies so that seeds can be ordered online directly from the companies. NOTE THAT the web address has been given incorrectly in the Bulletin. Please use the address above. Rick Heaslip is the Webmaster

SOCIETY FLOWER BEDS For several years, Dalton Black has been faithfully watering the Horticultural Society flower beds around Town. He has said he wants to take this year off. The Society members have much appreciated his work, and we Thank you, Dalton.

We are looking for someone to do the watering for this year. If you can undertake this task or want to find out what is required, please call Carrie Anne Field (2569), Civic Improvement, or Bruce Wilson (8024), President

FACTS ABOUT THE 1500'S (These are true, we did not make them up!)

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt, hence the saying "dirt poor". The wealthy had slate floors that could get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on the floor to help keep their footing. As winter wore on, they kept adding more thresh until when the door was opened, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entryway to contain it—hence a "threshold".

www.funpages.com

STARTING SEEDS AT HOME



Starting seeds yourself is a really satisfying hobby. You can grow as many plants as you have room for and, grow the exact kind, colour and variety you want. The activity has given me many, many hours of pleasure and sense of accomplishment. Not to say that you should by-pass buying plants from a reputable nursery like Aidie Creek Gardens (the only greenhouse I know of where annuals are grown locally for commercial sale), that can reliably provide you with as much garden material as you can handle or afford. Bedding plants sold in chain stores rarely have anywhere near the quality of locally grown ones.

Shown at right is a drawing of what you will need to start out with: Seed starting mix; quality fresh seeds (see <http://engleharthort.weebly.com>) for seed sources); small pots for germinating seeds; and chopsticks to poke holes. Also a selection of pots or plastic flats to plant the tiny seedlings in to grow them on to planting-out time. Have handy newspaper and plastic sheeting.

The first seeds I started in the house grew on part of my home office desk (south facing, lots of windows). If you do this be prepared to turn the seedlings every day. Put them as close

as you can to a window, but not on the sill (it's too hot). It wasn't long before I invested in an industrial 48" fluorescent light with its own shade, which I hung from chains in the basement.

Two important things happened with the light: there was enough heat on top of the metal light shade to germinate seeds, and, the plants grew much sturdier and better. It is of vital importance to place the lights 3" or so, no more, above the plants. Shorten chain as plants grow.

Start by dampening the mix—about 1 litre of water for every 2 qts of mix, just damp, not wet. If you are dampening a quantity it is best to leave it overnight to spread evenly. Fill the containers for the seed; fill them up to within 1/2" of the rim.

The package will tell you how long before planting out to start the seeds. Sow the seeds thinly, mist with water, cover with damp newspaper cut to fit and cover that with glass, or plastic. Use a short heating cable or put them where there is bottom heat. Watch closely; some seeds sprout within three to four days. As soon as they do, take off the newspaper but leave the plastic as long as it does not touch the emerging

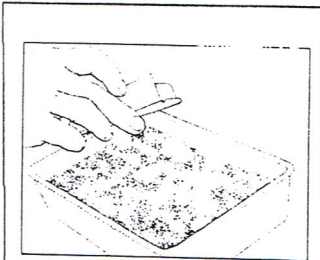
plants. Now they have to go to the best light you can find in the house, or the fluorescents you bought. Mist regularly.

When they have grown beyond the two "seed leaves" (cotyledons), they should be pricked out to plastic trays or "flats", spaced 2" apart each way to grow them on to planting time. This is where the chopsticks come in handy. Use them to punch a series of holes spaced as above, or use a piece dowel 1/2" diam. Then insert a chopstick deeply under the seedlings, lift them, tease them apart and, holding by a leaf (not by stem) set them in the prepared holes and close the hole. Mist again to maintain moisture.

If you do use purchased seeding mix, you will need to add a weak solution of fertilizer every few days. Mix in only a fraction of the recommendation on the container. It is good to apply water and fertilizer with a very fine spray or mist spray. When watering, avoid knocking over the little seedlings. Once the seedlings show they have settled in and are growing. Remove the plastic.

They will probably grow to planting out size in this tray. If they do outgrow their flat, they should be transplanted, not leaving them too crowded to mature properly. But most plants don't need this. It is perfectly all right to prune rampant growers a bit—in fact it is preferable to letting them become spindly. Prune deeply; new growth starts at the point where you pinched.

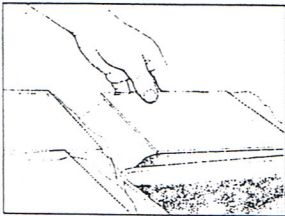
If you do not have a good source of light, You might consider making a cold frame —in late April or May.



1. Sow seeds thinly on moist seeding mixture in small trays or pots.



2. Cover seeds with more mixture, label tray, and spray with water.



3. Cover tray with paper, to absorb condensation, then a sheet of glass.

you how long before planting out to start the seeds. Sow the seeds thinly, mist with water, cover with damp newspaper cut to fit and cover that with glass, or plastic. Use a short heating cable or put them where there is bottom heat. Watch closely; some seeds sprout within three to four days. As soon as they do, take off the newspaper but leave the plastic as long as it does not touch the emerging



NEW PRODUCT FOR FAST COMPOSTING

Compostgenie is the name of a product new to us I think. On the bag it states that it will "eliminate compost odours with natural probiotics" Eileen Fisher contributed an article about. The piece was written from the personal experience of an unnamed gardener. According to him, he had had a very smelly compost bin in the garage and, after using Compostgenie, in a few days the odour was totally gone.

It is made into what looks like seeds and contains a mixture of bran, molasses and seaweed which host the bacteria that ferment the organic matter in the compost.

The process is called *Bokashi*, and it originated in Japan where the material is put into an airtight container, sprinkling the Compostgenie seeds on each layer and, in just a couple of weeks the fermented compost can be dug into the garden soil where it finishes its break-down.

With this method one could make batches of compost all summer and truck it out to the garden as it ripens.

There is a website: <http://compostgenie.com> and the site also lists stores where it can be purchased. The closest to our area is in Sudbury at the Canadian Tire store at 2259 Regent St.

Especially in Town where the odour will annoy a whole neighborhood, this

product would allow any gardener to re-use all vegetative scraps as organic matter to be added back to the soil.

With material from Canadian Gardening March/03

WHEN MARCH MARCHES IN

*March comes on bold with blustery gounds
and stings our ears with wintry hounds
It stalks around on big lion paws
And sometimes bares wild winter claws.*

*But, now and then, beneath fierce fur
We hear a gentle kitten purr...
Then days are warm and skies are clear—
We can't imagine winter's here!*

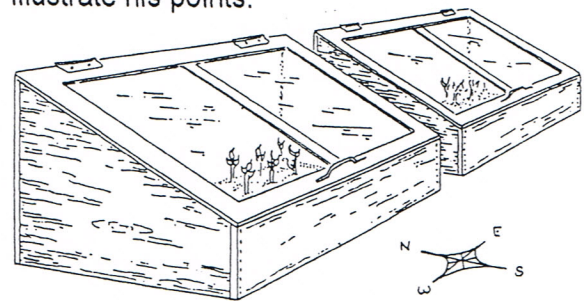
*March teases us with winter things,
But, every year it brings us --- spring*

Unattributed

(One of the several contributions the late Alma Cozac sent me)

February Progamme comments:

The Q. and A. format turned out very well. Guest speaker Mike Werner discussed composition, cameras, methods and he had many photos with him, many of landscapes and birds. He used them to illustrate his points.



COLD FRAMES MADE FROM OLD BASEMENT WINDOWS

PUBLISHED 11 times a year by Englehart & District Horticultural Society, Box 677, Englehart
Editor: Jean Wallace (544-2939),
Assistant: Virginia Montminy
Mailing: Twyla Wilson (544-8024),
Addresses: Rick Heaslip (544-2278)
Printing: Courtesy Englehart & District Hospital



Keeping Ontario Beautiful