



# 'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society  
May 2022



**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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engleharthort.weebly.com

## Some Gardening Jobs for May...

1. Make sure your gardening tools are sharp, clean, and safe.
2. This is a great time to establish the size and shape of your rosebushes. When pruning a branch back to a bud, consider what direction the resulting new growth will take. An outward facing bud will produce a branch that grows outward, maintaining the shape of the shrub. An inward facing bud will produce a branch that grows into the shrub's interior, tangling with other branches.
3. In Zone 3 radishes can be planted as soon as the snow recedes and can be replanted every 15 days for salads, until July.
4. Try to preserve the heat around the plants. Plan to use a row cover or greenhouse plastic to protect plants against frost at night. Place large rocks, painted black, in the garden near tender plants. These will heat up during the day, and then give back their heat during the night.
5. Order from a seed catalogue that specializes in shorter season vegetables. Lindenburg Seeds in Manitoba has several vegetable varieties that grow well in our zone.

## Mark It on Your Calendar

May 20: 1:00 p.m. Set up for Plant Sale at the Legion Hall  
May 21: Plant Sale 10:00 a.m.  
June 1: Englehart Board Meeting: 7 P.M. St. Paul's Emmanuel Community Church Hall

## Our Annual Plant Sale is On!!

Hip hip hooray...our Spring Plant Sale is on this month! Please note that will just be plants and gardening material available this year...no baking due to that blankety blank Covid! We will be accepting donations of perennials, houseplants, seedlings, etc. and other horticulturally oriented materials at set-up on **Friday, May 20 at 1:00 P.M.** If possible, please name the plants or include a brief description, ie. colour, size, shade, or sun, etc. We'll also be looking for members to help our shoppers on Saturday morning and to tidy up the hall when the sale is over. This is an event that we, as a Society, are really looking forward to but we must still all be safe, so we are asking everyone who enters the hall to be masked and follow Covid protocols. We do appreciate all the support we get from our members and hope that this will be a successful project this year particularly, as we have not been able to have much in the way of fundraising recently. Make sure to mark the date on your calendars and pass the word on to neighbours and friends.



### *Where to Place Succulent Houseplants*

Many of us are living in apartments or have downsized our houses but we're not ready to give up 'gardening'. Succulent plants are great for indoor gardeners, but they have fairly specific requirements. Along with water, temperature, and soil, sunlight is an important factor for good succulent health. Most succulents need at least 3 hours of good light exposure every day. It is best to place your succulents near windows but in a place where they can receive lots of morning sunlight but less in the afternoon. Afternoon summer sunlight is not preferred as it is stronger and more likely to leave the plant sunburned. However, if all you have is a sunny south-facing windowsill, by all means use it for your indoor succulents but you will need to keep your eye on your plants to monitor how plants adjust.

### *Fiddleheads*

Ostrich ferns are often found near rivers or streambeds, but they do not thrive with excessive moisture. They grow well in shade or beneath hardwood canopies. They prefer sandy or silt loams over soil with too much clay. The fiddlehead industry remains quite small in Canada and many people forage for them in the wild. Fiddleheads should only be picked while still tightly coiled. The short stem is also edible. Sustainable harvest practices are very important, and it is recommended to leave over half the fiddleheads from any one crown to ensure its survival. If there are fewer than four fiddleheads on a crown, the fern should not be harvested as it is too young. Care must also be taken when harvesting by snapping them off or cutting them from the plant. Fiddleheads are the young, coiled fronds of the ostrich fern. Nearly all ferns have fiddleheads, but not all fiddleheads are edible. The ostrich fern fiddleheads are edible, and can be identified by the brown, papery, scale-like covering on the uncoiled fern and a deep U-shaped groove on the inside of their smooth fern stem, similar to a stalk of celery. Ostrich ferns emerge in clusters of about three to twelve fiddleheads per plant on the banks of rivers, streams, brooks, and in the woods in late April through early June. It is important to properly identify ostrich ferns or purchase them from a reputable grower, as other types of ferns, like foxglove and bracken ferns, are not safe to eat because they may be toxic or carcinogenic.

**How to Buy:** Select, firm, bright green fiddleheads with no signs of softness or yellowing in a tight coil.

**How to Prepare:** Do not trim the end of the fiddlehead until just before preparing as it will turn brown and dry out. Do not eat fiddleheads raw. Always boil fiddleheads in fresh water or steam them for 10-15 minutes before serving or cooking them according to other methods to reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses. Fiddleheads are delicious roasted, grilled, boiled, or sautéed – after they have been pre-boiled or steamed. Although fiddleheads can be added to any dish that includes vegetables, a common way to enjoy them is with butter, salt, pepper, lemon juice and garlic or parmesan cheese. Although fiddleheads may be compared to asparagus, artichokes, beet greens, okra, or green beans, they have a unique flavour worth seeking out.

**How They Are Grown:** Ostrich ferns are often found near rivers or streams, but they do not thrive with excessive moisture. They grow best in shade or beneath high canopies. They prefer sandy or silt loams over soil with clay. The fiddlehead industry remains quite small in Canada and many people forage for them in the wild.

**Harvesting:** Fiddleheads should only be picked while still tightly coiled. The short stem is also edible. Sustainable harvest practices are very important, and it is recommended to leave over half the fiddleheads from any one crown to ensure its survival. If there are fewer than four fiddleheads on a crown, the fern should not be harvested as it is either too young or stunted. Care must also be taken when harvesting by snapping them off or cutting them from the plant. Canadian crops are available May through early June depending on the weather and location.

### *Front Yard Gardening*

I recently read an article in the Toronto Star, by Mark and Ben Cullen, called 'How to Grow a Front Yard Garden'. It was actually a review of a book by that name. The article got me thinking of what has been happening in our gardening lives. When I lived on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, my main gardens were behind the house. I had a large perennial border, an ever-expanding border along the side of the garage, and a smallish vegetable garden behind it. The front consisted of a small border along the side of the driveway and a shady raised bed of mainly hostas and ferns under a window. When I think back to that yard, I see that I really missed the opportunity to provide some interest and some beauty for people who lived on or walked down the street. I wish I had been braver. Most of the front yard was grass. Nobody walked on it. It was nothing special to look at. It really only provided us with the exercise we got when we mowed it. I look back and can see it very differently. In my mind's eye, I can see a series of interconnecting brick or stone paths between gardens filled with a variety of annuals, perennials, shrubs, with interesting and ornamental 'bits and bobs (as my mother would say) such as large stones, a bench or two, perhaps some statuary. For too long we have hidden our gardens in our back yards. One of the chapters in the book is called "Front Yard Living... A Return to Being Social in the Front Yard". Apparently, it deals with the importance of being social outside. This spring and summer are going to be very different for us as we wait for the pandemic to be over. Perhaps just waving hello from your front yard to your neighbours or people out for a walk will make us all feel better. I think a good idea would be to start small and see how it goes. Perhaps you can work on beautifying one area of the front yard each year until you're happy. I'm sure it would make other people happy to see something other than a large green lawn and a driveway. (PS...I think it's also a great way to get non gardeners interested in plants and taking care of their own yards.) It's certainly something to think about.

### *Hip Hip Hooray*

April 20<sup>th</sup> was a very special day for us...we had our first meeting in two years! We all wore masks and didn't get to enjoy our usual shared snack, but it was still a wonderful evening. Tony Juurlink was our guest speaker and spoke to a very keen group of gardeners about the importance of trees in our environment. He discussed planting, pruning, maintenance, and the importance of choosing the right tree and the right size for the yard. Tony spoke very knowledgably about the topic and discussed the problems of not doing your 'homework' when choosing a tree to ensure it is hardy to our area. (We are considered to be in Zone 3a.) Lots of questions were asked and answered. Thanks to Tony for sharing your knowledge and also for joining the group as a member. Thanks to Evelyne Nemcsock for helping me with the judging of the houseplant competition and to those members who brought in their entries. **There will be no meeting in May as we will be very busy with the Plant Sale on the 20<sup>th</sup> (set up at 1:00 pm on the 20<sup>th</sup>) and the sale itself on the 21<sup>st</sup> at the Legion Hall, Branch 104, on Fourth Ave. opening at 10:00 a.m.**

### *Gardening Wisdom...*

- \*Hooray, Hooray, It's the Month of May...Gardening Fun Begins Today!
- \*A dry March and a wet May fills barns and bays with corn and hay.
- \*A cold January, a warm May. (A Welsh Proverb)
- \*Mist in May, heat in June, make the harvest come right soon.
- \* A wet May makes a big load of hay. A cold May is kindly and fills the barn finely.
- \*A swarm of bees in May is worth a load of hay.
- \* Flowers before May bring bad luck. (Welsh Proverb)

### *Plant of the Month ... The Hepatica*

This early spring wildflower is native to North America, northern Europe, and Asia. If you have a shady woodland garden, then choosing to plant some delicate, simple, and beautiful Hepatica could be a perfect choice. When the flowers open on sunny days, they'll add a splash of early spring color and encourage pollinators to visit. There are several Hepatica species, and the genus is part of the buttercup family (Ranunculaceae). The most common species is *Hepatica nobilis*, referred to as Liverwort or Liverleaf. They get this name because their foliage has three lobes, just like the human liver. These perennial plants most commonly have dainty little flowers that come in shades of blue, pink, and white. Hepaticas are usually one of the first flowers to appear in any garden but like most ephemerals, the plant will die back once summer temperatures rise. If your garden has the right conditions, they won't require a lot of attention once established. Hepaticas are often planted alongside other woodland wildflowers in clumps under tree canopies where the soil is rich or in shady rock gardens. Providing they're left undisturbed, and the conditions are right, they're regarded as being low-maintenance and long lived. If you are 'borrowing from Mother Nature, please be kind.



### *Twist and Sprout*

Thanks to President Jean Bott for this interesting article...

Sprouts and microgreens are healthy, tasty, and grown right here in Ontario. The following article, from the Food and Drink magazine, gives us more detail on growing them successfully.

**Advantages of growing sprouts in Ontario?:** if you want to grow food twelve months of the year, sprouts are the easiest to do. In one to two weeks, you get fresh, nutrient-dense food. You can get everything you need from sprouts.

**What is the difference between sprouts and microgreens?** They're basically the same- seeds grown to the first set of leaves, called cotyledons. Sprouts are grown in water, and you get the whole plant. With microgreens, the seeds are in soil, and you let them grow a bit longer and then cut them above the soil.

**Is it easy to grow sprouts at home?** We have short video courses on our website showing a step-by-step for both sprouts and microgreens. It just takes a minute to water three times a day, and you're in business. It's very economical: 30 to 40 cents worth of seeds will give you one pound of sprouts. Alfalfa and clover are two of the easiest to grow. The key is to switch them for a jar to an open mesh basket after four days, which allows them to breathe and eliminates mushiness.

(To be continued next month.)

### *Poetry and Prose*

*What is so sweet and dear  
As a prosperous morn  
in May,  
The confident prime of  
the day,  
And the dauntless youth  
of the year,  
When nothing that asks  
for bliss,  
Asking aright, is denied,  
And half of the world  
a bridegroom is,  
And half of the world  
a bride?"*  
- William Watson, *Ode in  
May, 1880*

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