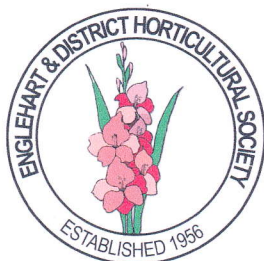




# 'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society  
November/December 2020



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

President: Jean. Bott  
Bulletin Editor: E. Fisher  
**Website:**  
[englehartort.weebly.com](http://englehartort.weebly.com)

## The Benefits of Gardening

There are as many reasons to start gardening as there are gardeners. You might look at gardening as adult playtime, and it is, since it's a joy to dig in the earth, plant little seeds, and watch them grow. You might view gardening as an economical way of getting healthy food, with gardening chores as part of your responsibility. One thing is certain - the benefits of gardening are many and varied. Regardless of your primary motive for starting a garden, the process is sure to bring you many rewards. The act of nurturing plants in your backyard is good for the mind and the body. Scientific studies have established how gardening helps reduce or prevent both 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, active lifestyle. It may well be helpful in lowering blood pressure and fighting osteoporosis. There are also practical reasons to start gardening- 'practical' leading to the household budget. Most of us prefer eating healthy, organically grown vegetables, but high quality vegetables and fruit can be expensive. In your own garden you can grow delicious, organically grown food for much less than it would cost to buy in a store. One hint-be sure to include a mixture of food- those that are best for fresh eating and those that store well during winter. Gardens and finances can be linked in other ways as well. You may be able to sell homegrown flowers and vegetables at Farmers' Markets or from your own home or at a local garden centre. Other benefits of gardening are more ambiguous but just as powerful. While you can measure your blood pressure or balance your budget, it's hard to quantify the benefits of feeling connected to nature, to your land, and to your community that come from gardening.

## Looking Back

While looking through some old bulletins this month, I came upon this delightful entry from March 1984, when Jean Wallace was the Bulletin Editor: "**Horticultural Definitions: Annual**- any plant which dies before blooming. **Bed** - 1. where most prized flowers are blooming. 2. Where most gardeners are located when they hear rabbits. **Border** - Strip of ground that divides the area where the shrubs were from the place where the lawn will be with a neat row of white plastic markers indicating where the flowers would have been. **Brochures and Catalogues** - Forms of entertaining fiction, published by nurseries, seedsmen, and tool manufacturing companies. **Carrot** - Crunchy root vegetable, the consumption of which is alleged to improve eyesight. The veracity of this folk belief is challenged to some degree by the large number of rabbit cadavers on streets and highways. **Christmas Tree** - A well-shaped evergreen, 5-7 feet in height, situated on public land or a remote area of private land that can be transferred to an automobile in less than 10 minutes." (from 'A Gardener's Dictionary'). Thanks, Jean!

## *Ontario Horticultural Association/ District 12 News*

We have a few newer members who may not be aware of the relationship between our society, the Ontario Horticultural Association, and District 12. The provincial body is the OHA, to which every local horticultural society belongs. There is a provincial constitution which governs the OHA and each society pays an annual fee, based on its membership number. The province is then broken down to Districts. There are 19 Districts in the province and we are situated in District 12. We usually have two District meetings per year...a Fall Planning Meeting where reps from individual societies meet to plan the agenda for our spring District Meeting, which is hosted by a different society each year.

### *You know you're a horticulturalist when....*

- \*You don't hesitate to book an extra moving van just to move your plants.
- \*With each road trip your car instinctively knows the routes to every garden centre along the way.
- \*You delight in the harvest of the first carrot. The \$25 and 20 hours of work to produce it is irrelevant

### *A Sweet Thought*

I asked the leaf whether it was frightened because it was autumn and the other leaves were falling. The leaf told me, "No. During the whole spring and summer I was completely alive. I worked hard to help nourish the tree, and now much of me is in the tree. I am not limited by this form. I am also the whole tree, and when I go back to the soil, I will continue to nourish the tree. So I don't worry at all. As I leave this branch and float to the ground, I will wave to the tree and tell her, 'I will see you again very soon'." That day there was a wind blowing and, after a while, I saw the leaf leave the branch and float down to the soil, dancing joyfully, because as it floated it saw itself already there in the tree. It was so happy. I bowed my head, knowing that I have a lot to learn from the leaf. (*Thich Nhat Hanh*)

### *Reports from Your Directors*

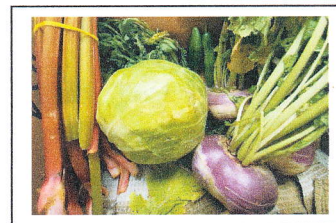
**Membership:** Just a reminder that this will be our last bulletin for 2020. Please contact our Treasurer, Ginny Montminy, to make arrangements to renew your membership for 2021. Hopefully we will soon be able to get together at our monthly meetings.

**Website:** Webmaster Rick Heaslip reports that during the Covid-19 pandemic, from beginning of April to the present, our website has had over 360 visits. Each visitor has viewed at least 2 pages. Most of the changes on the website have been over meeting cancellations, 2020 Youth Garden Competition results, Spring Horticultural and Fall Horticultural Week challenges, and Bulletin additions. Rick says he's looking forward to "normal" times!"

**Fall Horticultural Photo Challenge:** Director Evelyne Nemcsok came up with a fall photo challenge for people on Facebook. She put together a list of photos that gardeners could enter for fun. Thanks, Ev! We had lots of entries from people on the page. Here are a couple of entries from the challenge.



Dorothy de Champlain's  
"Garden Upcycle"



Ev Nemcsok's  
"Garden Harvest"

**Bulletin:** I'm always looking for interesting articles for our monthly newsletter. If you have some news or a horticulturally-oriented article to share, please email it to me at [efisher1951@gmail.com](mailto:efisher1951@gmail.com) or pop it in the mail to me at Box 686. As we are unable to hold face to face meetings, I hope that the "Through the Garden Gate" will tide you over until we can return to holding meetings. I assume I will still be the Bulletin Editor until we are able to meet again. I have enjoyed doing this job for the seven years I have been doing it. I hope that someone else will enjoy it as much as I have.

## *Make Your Own Bird Feeding Suet Cakes*

Fit a large bowl inside a hanging basket. Line the bowl with foil or plastic. In a pan, melt 6 cups of saved kitchen fat or lard. When melted, stir in 1 cup of peanut butter and 5 cups of mixed bird food. Pour the fat/ bird food mixture into the lined bowl. Place outside to freeze. When frozen, remove the suet cake from the bowl and peel off the tin foil. Put the suet back into the basket and hang outside by your window.

## *Propagation of Houseplants*

*(As we have new members in our group, I thought that it was time to share this information which was originally from a presentation at a meeting by Bonnie Warner and me in February 15, 2006.)*

Propagation of houseplants is an ancient form of plant reproduction. It has been done since humans first began to domesticate wild plants, using many different methods, for many different purposes. Unlike reproduction by seeds (sexual reproduction), using parts of the existing plant (asexual reproduction) guarantees that the new plant will be identical to its parent. Why should we propagate plants asexually? As noted above, it allows reproduction of a plant that will be genetically identical to its parent. It will ensure that the genetic make-up of an individual plant will be preserved. It is also a cheap and relatively simple method to ensure survival of a favourite plant. It is an inexpensive way for plant professionals and the amateur horticulturalist to increase the number of plants of a certain species/variety, either to sell, or simply to share with friends. Above all, plant propagation can become an interesting and inexpensive hobby! There are many methods we can use to propagate our favourite houseplants. Some of the easiest and most common are listed below:

**Cuttings:** Cuttings are severed parts of the parent plant which produce roots and/or stems to form a new plant stems, leaves or roots may be used. No matter which of the type of cuttings taken, the equipment used is the same: a clean container, a sharp knife, rooting medium, plastic bag, and sometimes, rooting hormone. It is important to supply the cutting with the correct amount of moisture and temperature/light conditions, no matter which method of cutting is used. Some cuttings will root easily in water, while others prefer sand, or vermiculite, perlite, or soil (soilless mix). Roots formed in water tend to be more brittle than those in soil, and may be more easily broken. Always start with a healthy plant, make all cuts clean, make sure the cutting piece makes firm contact with the rooting medium, keep moist, not wet, and pot the cutting quickly after it begins to show an abundance of roots.

**Tip and Stem Cuttings:** Tip cuttings, taken from the tip of a plant are generally 3-5 inches long, and are removed from the parent plant just below a leaf node. Most cuttings of this nature do best with 3 or 4 leaves attached to the cutting. Remove the bottom leaf or pair of leaves, to scar the leaf node. This is where the new plant will grow its roots. Many types of ivy, coleus, etc. can be started in this manner. Often the tip of the cutting is pinched off to encourage more strength going to produce roots as opposed to putting out new leaves. Place a clear plastic bag over the cutting, and it should root quite easily.

**Cane Cuttings:** This type of cutting is used on plants like dieffenbachia, Chinese evergreen, and other plants which have a cane-like or leafless stems. The cane is cut into small pieces, 2 to 3 inches long, which are laid on their sides slightly below the level of the rooting medium. A bud will eventually form and a new stem will emerge when the cutting is rooted.

**Leaf Bud Cuttings:** Leaf bud cuttings are made using a leaf and a piece of stem approximately 1-1 ½ inch long. The dormant bud, located where the leaf stalk joins the stem, will eventually form a new plant. This type of cutting should be inserted so that the bud is about ½ inch below the surface of the medium.

**Cactus/Succulent Cuttings:** These cuttings should be allowed to dry or 'callous' for several days before placing in a rooting medium. This prevents too much moisture from the rooting medium from entering and rotting the stem. Geraniums are another species of houseplant whose stem should be allowed to callous before planting. (to be continued next month)

## *Plant of the Month*

### **Fittonia**

Grown as a houseplant in our zone, the Fittonia or Nerve Plant, is a spreading evergreen perennial with pretty, delicately veined, deep-green leaves. Although the most popular vein color is silvery-white, you can also readily find varieties with veins in red, pink, white, and green. Fittonia is a low-growing creeper that is a perfect fit for terrariums or bottle gardens. It usually grows to a height of 8-15 cm (3-6 in.) with a trailing spread of 30-46 cm (12- 18 in.). Although the plant rarely flowers when grown as an indoor houseplant, it does occasionally bloom with insignificant reddish or yellowish-white spikes. As beautiful as it is, Fittonia is somewhat temperamental and tricky to grow as a houseplant. It requires very high, constant humidity, such as found in a terrarium, but cannot tolerate stagnant conditions. Nerve plant is also sensitive to strong, direct sunlight and will quickly suffer from leaf burn. So...although it is a pretty houseplant and well worth the try, it can be a tricky one to grow.



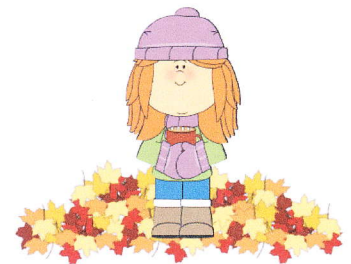
## *Gardening in the Pandemic*

Many plant nurseries/greenhouses have seen spikes in sales during the pandemic. People started vegetable gardens big and small, including a plethora of backyard plots and windowsill herbs. Some plant lovers are engaged in community gardens where they work in timed shifts, maintaining proper distance while wearing masks and cleansing tools for the next use. As people sheltering in place took up hobbies and started projects to fill the time during the coronavirus pandemic, gardening was blooming. Caring for a garden can be a respite from the horrors of the pandemic, as it serves several natural desires related to accomplishment, community and belonging, and staying connected with nature. It can get partners and the whole family outside, happily bonding while doing an activity together. It can also help to alleviate food insecurity as some incomes dwindle and concerns about the food supply grow. "There's just a greater cohesiveness within the family unit that occurs outside with your hands in the dirt," said Charlie Hall, professor and Ellison Chair of the department of horticultural sciences at Texas A&M University. "There's not as much eye-rolling when teenagers are told to do something, not as much fighting between siblings. There are fewer harsh words between spouses. Getting your hands in the dirt keeps you connected to nature while we're staying indoors more these days. The orderliness gardening requires, with its rules and rows, can carry over into the manageability of other life tasks. The calmness of the activity may relieve some pent-up frustrations. Your cortisol levels go down dramatically when you're in the midst of gardening and cortisol is the stress hormone in your body, so you're less stressed." (It's lovely to have a positive thing to report from 2020!)

## *Poetry and Prose*

### November

**No sunshine, lots of rain.  
No warm days, snow  
again.  
No bugs or bees,  
No leaves on trees.  
You must remember,  
This is NOVEMBER!**



Published 11 times a year  
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