



'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society
October 2019



Englehart and District Horticultural Society was formed in 1956.

General meetings:
3rd 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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A Word From The Editor

"There can be no other occupation like gardening in which, if you were to creep up behind someone at their work, you would find them smiling." (Mirabel Oster) I like this quote because 99% of the time it is certainly true. Out in the sun (or the rain) in a garden... hands in the dirt or at least touching plants, breathing in the sweet smell of flowers and the rich smell of earth, is a heavenly place to be. Of course, there are those moments when I lose that smile...the sight of slugs enjoying my dahlias or lily beetles devouring my lilies is enough to make me cross. But about 99% of the time, I am smiling. Gardening is the best therapy there is for a person having a bad day. Getting your hands dirty planting bulbs or pulling weeds or harvesting potatoes will raise your spirits as well as your serotonin, a 'happy' chemical, a natural anti-depressant which strengthens the immune system. Yay gardening!

Programme

"What Went Wrong/Right in My Garden?" This programme will be a time for all of us to ask questions and share experiences and advice on gardening problems and successes. We can all learn something from this, young and old together. Refreshments will be served at the end of the meeting.

Mark It On Your Calendar

October 16: General Meeting/ Awards Night
November 20: Christmas Workshop



Our young gardeners have been invited to attend our October meeting to receive their certificates and awards for participating in the Youth Garden Competition. This year we had a record 16 entrants ranging from JK to Grade 8. We hope that they will be able to join us in our meeting this month to participate in the discussion/question and answer time about our garden successes and problems this past summer.

District 12 News

On September 28, Ginny Montminy and Rick Heaslip attended the Fall Planning Meeting in Kirkland Lake. It sounds like it was a full and successful meeting with reports from District 12 societies. Plans were made for the 2020 District 12 Spring Annual Meeting. This meeting will be in Kapuskasing on May 9th and the theme will be "**Northern Possibilities**". Members from all of the District 12 societies will be able to attend. There will be competitions in photography, creative writing, plants, art, etc.

Looking Back... Forty-four Years



Looking Ahead...



Reports From Your Directors

Social: Kim Inglis is the hostess for this meeting and Claudette Black brings the gift. Remember to bring along a small something for the shared snack.

Facebook/Website: We now have 307 people using our Facebook page to share information, learn horticultural tips, etc. You do not have to belong to the page to use it for information but you do need to ask to belong to be able to post. Rick is busy keeping our website up to date...be sure to check it out.

Membership: Chairperson Ginny Montminy reports that we already have 6 members for 2020.

Bulletin: If there is something you would like to see in the bulletin, please let me know. If you have an interesting article, please share it with me.

Christmas Workshop: Plans are well underway for this year's workshop. Convenor Carrie Anne Field reports that we will be working on a decorative hanging basket combining natural and decorative materials for our creative evening on **November 27th**. This evening is open to the public so feel free to bring along a friend for a fun-filled evening. There will be 50 kits available so don't wait too long to arrive...you will be able to wait in the warmth of the church upstairs after the doors of St. Paul's Emmanuel Community Church open at 6:30. More information to follow next month.

What's the Buzz?

Did you know that:

- In spring, a colony of bees can include from 10 000 to 15 000 bees?
- In the summer, a colony can grow to 50 000 bees?
- A honey bee flies up to 24 km per hour and beats its wings **200** times per second?
- A typical colony has only one queen that may lay 2000 eggs per day during her busy spring and summer season? (CSA News)



The Importance of Healthy Soil

I have long wondered about my garden soil... Is it healthy? How can I improve it? How much would it cost? Should I get it tested? We sometimes take our soil for granted and, as a result, our plants sometimes suffer. I noticed this this past summer. As a result of being in a hurry and being impatient, I used some soil from pots I grew plants in on my deck last year for this year's plantings, thinking, "Oh well, I'll just fertilise them well this year." I also didn't amend my gardens the way I usually do, with my own compost and triple mix. Silly me....they did not do well. Serves me right. I started to do some reading on the subject and have found several articles (some of them far too deep into the chemistry of soil for my brain!) but I have found information that I thought would be good to share with you through the bulletin. If you're like me, and not scientifically oriented, just wanting to improve your soil, the following information (from Planet Natural) may help. I think it's worth the time it will take to read it over the next few bulletins....

Healthy soil is the basis of healthy plants and a healthy environment. When garden soil is in good shape there is less need for fertilizers or pesticides. As author and respected gardener Frank Tozer writes, "When building soil you not only improve your plants health, but you can also improve your own." Organic soil is rich in humus, the end result of decaying materials such as leaves, grass clippings and compost. It holds moisture, but drains well. Good organic garden soil is loose and fluffy — filled with air that plant roots need — and it has plenty of minerals essential for vigorous plant growth. It is alive with living organisms — from earthworms to fungi and bacteria — that help maintain the quality of the soil. Proper pH is also an essential characteristic of healthy soil. So, how do you know if your soil is healthy? And what do you do if it isn't?

Determining Soil Health Of the 17 or so elements thought to be essential for plant growth, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium are the most important. They are known as primary or macronutrients because plants take them from the soil in the largest amounts. Fertilizers that contain all three of these nutrients are labeled complete fertilizers, but they are hardly complete in an absolute sense. Calcium, magnesium and sulfur, known as secondary nutrients, are also important to many plants. Lesser or micronutrients include boron, copper, iron manganese and zinc. Some plant micronutrients have specific functions such as cobalt, which isn't used by most plants but helps legumes fix nitrogen. Another critical component of your soil is its acid-alkaline balance or pH reading. All these essentials — and the proper texture — make for healthy soil.

Insect Pests...Spider Mites

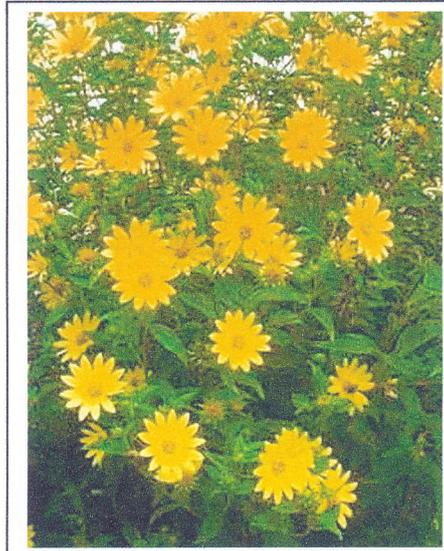
Spider mite on houseplants and outdoor plants is a common problem. Spider mite damage can not only make a plant look unsightly, it can even kill the plant. It is important to use a spider mite treatment as soon as possible on an affected plant in order to keep the plant looking its best and healthiest. Initially, spider mite damage will appear as small yellow or brown spots on the leaves of the plant. If the plant is badly infested, the plant's health will suffer and it may develop completely yellow leaves and may stop growing. Spider mite damage may also include a tell-tale spider web type webbing on the plant. Spider mites are arachnids and are related to spiders. They produce webs in order to protect themselves and their eggs. It is very difficult to see spider mites on houseplants and outdoor plants with the naked eye because they are so small, but if you suspect that your plant has spider mites, you can hold a piece of paper under the leaves of the plant and shake them gently. If it is spider mites, specks will fall on the paper that looks similar to pepper. It's bad enough having spider mites on your garden plants but having them on your houseplants can be devastating.



Plant of the Month

Helianthus

Probably one of the most-loved flowers, sunflowers are long-time favourites for borders and for bouquets because of their huge blossoms. While not quite as large as its annual cousin, the perennial sunflower, *Helianthus*, makes up for what it lacks in blossom size with the amount of blossoms. *Helianthus* grows from 3' to 20', depending on the variety. It blooms from late summer well into the fall and is able to take frosts. It really is a tough plant, is quite drought tolerant, and requires little maintenance. The pretty yellow flowers attract birds and late pollinators. *Helianthus* can be started from seed or by division. An excellent choice for heavy clay soils, they thrive in tough growing conditions. *Helianthus* are also an excellent choice for covering unsightly fences and large, empty walls



Going Green in Autumn

>Earthworms are extremely beneficial to the soil and plants, increasing air space in the soil and leaving behind worm castings. Do everything you can to encourage earthworms in your soil.

>Mulch can contribute fertilizer to your garden without the carbon signature of processed products. Some gardeners choose chicken manure and mushroom compost; others prefer bark, straw, leaves, or even grass clippings. Nutrients and vegetative matter help enrich the soil and build stronger plants. A good mulch also helps hold water in the soil during warm weather and protects plant roots from damage due to winter's cold.

>Prepare new flower beds; plant spring-blooming bulbs; clean and sharpen garden tools; some gardeners like to fertilise the soil now so it has time to replenish itself for the rigors of spring. Compost and mulch work well with organic fertilizers to restore life to the ground during autumn/winter rest. Pick herbs for drying or freezing.

>Remove diseased foliage from all plants...perennials, vegetables, etc. Bag up and garbage; do not put in the compost. Remove dead branches from trees and shrubs. Rake fallen leaves for composting, garden protection, etc.

>Check the notes you made during the spring/summer regarding moving, dividing, seed collecting, etc. Take pictures of your fall gardens to remind you of what you wish to change in the spring.

Competitions for This Month

Class 1: Wreath (any (any material/occasion) **Class 2:** 'Everlasting' a dried arrangement **Class 3:** Photograph "Fall Beauty" (photo to be 4" by 6" mounted on a piece of Bristol board 5" by 7") We would love to see lots of entries in these classes. It all adds interest for people.

Poetry and Prose

*Like a gypsy caravan, autumn
comes with its bright foliage
and many coloured fruits.
Leaves dance and swirl to the
wind's music, and the world is
gay and beautiful. But, as in
gypsy airs, there is a sadness, a
thoughtfulness underlying the
lilt and gaiety. For the
thoughts of autumn are long
thoughts, with a backward
glance at summer and a getting
ready for the winter days
ahead.*

Esther Baldwin York

(Thanks again, Jean Wallace)

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