



OAKVILLE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The society aims to further the knowledge of Horticulture, stimulating an interest in gardening in our community's youth and encouraging the beautification of both public and private properties since 1957.

APRIL 2011

April's Guest Speaker *From a Gourmet Garden by Astrid Muschalla*

Margaret Larson & Helen Thomson

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April Meeting:

Mon., April 11, 2011, 7:30 p.m.

Hall Set-up (9 A.M.): Lisa Kruitwagen, Sheelagh Rowland Brown, John Raynor

Library: Florence Tingle, David Marshall

Refreshments: Beryle Lowther, Jan Dobson, Christine Lee, Karen Lindsay

Clerks: Wendy Funk-Death, Elly Cooper

April Executive Meeting:

Mon., April 18, 2011, 7:00 P.M.

May Meeting:

Mon., May 9, 2011

Astrid Muschalla is a community activist, educator and garden designer promoting biodiversity that conserves indigenous plants in the home landscape and public areas. With a holistic approach, she promotes a conscious way of living through sustainable and organic practices. She is also a Professional Home Economist, nutritionist and chef with over 20 years experience in the food industry, and she led the development of the Canadian Coast Guard's Healthy Lifestyle Recipes Cookbook.

A core theme to Astrid's work involves fresh herbs. She believes that the secret to healthy gardening and cooking lies in using a great variety of herbs. Indeed, her garden boasted over 120 herbs at one time!

Her credentials are impressive and here are just a few of them:

- Graduate of the Horticulturist Program, University of Guelph and the Professional Organic Landscaper Program, Humber College;
- Horticultural member of Landscape Ontario and CNLA;
- Master Gardener since 2008;
- Design judge for Communities in Bloom; and
- Teaches botany and horticulture at college level for Ontario Learns.

Her passionate talks inspire, educate and entertain so be sure to come to the April meeting and learn how to create your own Gourmet Garden!



Astrid in the kitchen
Photo by:
www.torontocookinghealthy.com



Where Gardeners come to flourish

President's Report

Catherine Kavassalis



Erythronium americanum, Trout Lily
Photo by: Kaldari (Wiki Commons)

"Then she stopped, where the first trout lilies of the year had sprung from the ground with their spotted bodies and their six-antlered bright faces, and their many red tongues.

If she spoke to them, I don't remember what she said, and if they kindly answered, it's a gift that can't be broken by giving it away. All I know is, there was a light that lingered, for hours, under her eyelids - that made a difference when she went back to a difficult house, at the end of the day"

from Trout Lilies by Mary Oliver

A blustery March has ended and spring is fully upon us. Oh joy! I am so delighted to be in the garden again.

April is a busy month for our Society. There is much work to be done to get the Anderson Bridge Parkette ready for planting. On April 7th, we hold an Open House at Town Hall to share our design with the community. During the week of April 18th we need to remove plants from the existing Forsythe Garden. Strong backs and happy hearts are needed to work in two hour shifts to pot up plants for our May 14th plant sale. Contact Margaret Jeffery (905-847-3529 or emjeffery@sympatico.ca) if you would like to help. David Hawley has kindly offered to remove the sod from the site. A huge job and we are so grateful for his help! The Town will install the pathway during the week of April 25th and we can start planting from April 30th to May 7th, again volunteers are needed. The grand opening will be

held in the fall, giving the garden some time to grow and flourish.

As you begin looking over your own garden beds, think about digging and dividing overgrown perennials and potting them for our May 14th sale. This is our **big fundraiser** for the year and we need everyone to pitch in. Donate plants, donate time, and help publicize the event. If you are able to help, contact Celia Roberts (905-844-1110 or croberts8@cogeco.ca) or Elizabeth Thompson (905-844-0220). Marie Decker (1285 Gloaming Ct.), Stuart Gough and Sonja Tessari (1311 Avon Cr.), and Anne Ritchie (1066 Lakeshore Rd. W.) have offered to serve as plant depots. Plants can be dropped off the first week in May.

Our Junior Garden program is fully subscribed for the spring/summer season. However, volunteers are needed to help the children care for the garden and Master Gardeners are needed to help with instruction. If you can help, contact Linda Tock (905-842-6074 or linda.tock@sympatico.ca).

Once again, I am asking you to help with our Newsletter. This is Margot Byers' last newsletter and unless someone steps forward, we will not have a May newsletter. We thank Margot for all her help and wish her well on her move. Please contact Cathy if you can help (905-849-7581 or c.kavassalis@gmail.com).

For those of you interested in some basic gardening tips, consider registering for our *Introduction to Gardening* course offered through the Town of Oakville Parks and Recreation Department. Brochures are available online at oakville.ca/progbrochure.htm. The five week course is #14596.

I'll close by thanking our sister society for all their hard work to organize the April 16th district AGM for the 21 societies in Carolinian District 6. I am looking forward to sharing ideas, hearing Frankie Flowers and seeing the beautiful floral displays. I hope to see you there, but if you are unable to attend, we will share photographs from the event at our May meeting.

Enjoy the spring and feel good knowing that

Going Native - Problems with the Bohemian Approach

Catherine Kavassalis

When our Society recently presented a proposal for a native plant garden to Conservation Halton, it was rejected. Why? Our plan was too Bohemian; our plants potentially promiscuous drifters. I say this in jest, but it is the fear of unrestricted sex and propagation of potentially disruptive genes.

The problem for Conservation Halton was that our design included Ontario native plants that were not indigenous to this region. It also included cultivars and plants that were indigenous but rare in the region. Because these plants could potentially spread into areas preserved for local indigenous species, they are prohibited on lands managed by Conservation Halton. They were also concerned that displaying pretty natives might encourage poaching of wild specimen. Simply put, our garden was not native or common enough. This is of course ironic given the site is currently lawn and formal garden and backs onto a ravine covered by weeping willow, Norway maple, hybrid mulberry, etc .

While I believe that the policy is flawed and was held too rigidly for our application, it is certainly worth our time to understand the merit of the policy and its desired effect. At its core is the desire to protect biodiversity. The theory being that diversity ensures adaptability and resilience of our life support system in an ever changing world. Thus, we have charged our conservation authorities to protect our regional natural systems and species for the security of future generations.

In the belief that all indigenous species and natural habitats are important, conservation biologists try to keep out encroachments that would impair the 'natural' functioning of ecosystems and potentially erode genetic diversity. By natural functioning, it generally means functioning in the absence of human activity (a point for discussion another time). Conservationists thus start with an inventory of habitats and a list of species that were in a region prior to human settlement and use this list to define the scope of acceptable species in the region. Such an approach may be a useful starting point, but if adhered to religiously would actually interfere with the natural evolution of the natural systems.

Let me explain.

All plants existing in our region today had to migrate here after glaciers receded some 14,000 years ago. Plant and pollen records show plant ranges on average shifted northward slowly. For trees, the rate often cited is about 0.5 km per year (though long distance dispersal by wind, birds and mammals moved some species much more rapidly). Assuming nominal migration rates, indigenous species lists should at a minimum reflect plants that were 100 km from our region at the time of European settlement. Because we have so fragmented our natural systems, suppressed fires, and to a great extent prevented the movement of many seed dispersing species, our natural lands are quite distinct from those of centuries past. To complicate matters, researchers like Powell and Zimmermann note "some climatic zones are expected to shift polewards at average rates of 4–6 km/yr as the global climate warms, which is an order of magnitude greater than the average past migration rate of trees ... seed dispersal may well limit future migration, particularly in highly fragmented landscapes," (Ecology, 85(2), 2004, pp. 490–50).

It is my belief, that conservation policies that try to preserve plant assemblies appropriate for centuries past and do not recognize the need for human assisted plant migration in the face of climate change are detrimental to the protection of biodiversity and the evolution of systems.

Should we be concerned about the introduction of species and genes from outside the local envelope? For the great majority of introductions, the answer is no. (Read *Invasive plants - A Horticultural Perspective* by Alex Niemiera and Betsy Von Holle online at <http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-080/426-080.html>). Our natural lands are full of spontaneous flora that are not indigenous to the region and most coexist quite well with our indigenous species. It is only the small percentage that is invasive, like Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*). However, knowing which introductions will be disruptive is difficult to

Going Native cont'd

predict. Thus conservation policies tend to be xenophobic, assuming all foreign introductions to be a threat. Given scarce conservation resources this may simply be the most economical approach, though not particularly scientific.

Consider the case of one plant originally chosen for our native garden, the Cup Plant, *Silphium perfoliatum*. This is a common native of the Great Plains in the United States that ranges to southern Ontario (Chatam-Kent area), though it is considered "Imperilled" in Ontario. Currently in eastern New York, it has been displacing indigenous species in the Ausable River Valley and has been given a high potential "Invasive Species Impact Rank" for some regions of New York. Conservation Halton is concerned that it will prove equally invasive here and asked us not to include it in the garden. While we removed the plant, we pointed out that the Cup Plant is on recommended planting lists available through the Credit Valley Conservation Association and various Native Plant sites as it is highly attractive to pollinators. Is it a risk? I certainly don't have the answer, but it may be worth pondering that were our natural lands not so fragmented and other migratory species not diminished this species might 'naturally' already be here if it truly had invasive potential.

While I believe, the Conservation Halton policy is too restrictive with regard to acceptable plant species; at its core, it is well intentioned. As gardeners, we do have responsibility to consider the environmental impact of what we are planting. Should we use more indigenous species? Definitely. In addition, when going native and in general, we should avoid introducing plants that tend to be drifters and enjoy wandering the neighbourhood. But gardens are not restoration projects; they are assemblies of plants chosen for many purposes, not the least of which is to create an aesthetic space.

Our water efficient biodiverse native garden may not follow the rules but it will contribute many ecosystem functions while supporting community needs. We can be proud of our gift to the community.

Annual Plant Sale

Saturday, May 14 is the date of the OHS Annual Plant Sale and perennial plant material is needed. Please help by digging and dividing when you are redesigning your gardens this spring. The proceeds from this sale enable us to enjoy monthly speakers, newsletters, free tea/coffee, junior programs and public plantings. If you need help digging, dividing and potting, please call Elizabeth 905-844-0220. The plants should be in a light soil mix, which is available, along with pots, at our plant depots. Please deliver potted plants from May 6 - May 12.

Depot Locations:

North	Marie & Bob Decker 1285 Gloaming Court 905-844-1837
South East	Sonja Tessari & Stu Gough 1311 Avon Crescent 905-845-9474
South West	Anne Ritchie 1066 Lakeshore Road West 905-845-8414

All non-invasive perennials are good sellers but some of our best sellers are:

Ajuga, Aquatic plants, Artemesia, Asters, Astilbe
Bellflower, Black Eyed Susan, Border Pinks
Catmint, Coral Bells, Corydalis, Chrysanthemums
Day Lilies, Delphinium
Fall Anemone, Fall Asters, Ferns
Hens & Chicks, Herbs, Hosta, Ivy
Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Japanese Spurge
(Pachysandra)
Ladys Mantle, Lambs Ear, Lavender
Meadow Rue, Monkshood
Ornamental Grass (clumping, no Ribbon Grass)
Periwinkle, Phlox, Primula, Purple Coneflower,
Rhubarb
Sedum (Autumn Joy), Shasta Daisy, Siberian Iris,
Solomon Seal, Sweet Woodruff
Trilliums from your own garden
Yarrow, Yucca, Shrubs and Trees

Please contact Celia Roberts and Elizabeth Thompson if you have any questions.

April Show Schedule

Marie Decker &
Margaret Larson

Design Schedule - Kate and William

- Class of Distinction** **True Love**
A design in two containers.
- Chairman's Trophy** **The Bridal Party**
A traditional mass design.
- General** **Elegant Fairy Tale**
A design.
- General Novice** **The Royal Wedding**
A design.
- Miniature** **Perfect Moment**
A design in a niche, 5"H x 4½"W x 3"D
with ceiling hook.

Horticulture Schedule

- Crocus** - 3 stems
- Chionodoxa or scilla** - 6 stems
- Narcissus, trumpet/large cup** - 1 stem
- Narcissus, multi-bloom** - 1 stem
- Narcissus, other cultivar** - 1 stem
- Tulip** - 1 stem
- Perennial** - plant height under 6" (15 cm), 3 stems
- Any other spring flower** - 1 stem
- Forced bulb(s)** - 1 pot
- Bouquet of spring flowers** - in exhibitor's container, under 10" (25 cm) in any direction
- Forced branch** - cut to 36" (92 cm) or less
- Houseplant grown for flowers or fruit**
- House plant grown for foliage**
- African Violet** - single crown
- Trailing or climbing house plant(s)** - may be more than one plant in container
- Spring craft** - inspired by the garden, made by the exhibitor, not previously shown
- Seedlings** - 1 box or tray
- Education exhibit**⁶
- Any Other Cultivar**¹ (AOC) - 1 stem or bloom

Entry Tag	
	
CLASS <u>5. Columbine</u>	
SECTION (Division)	<u>Horticulture</u>
ARTICLE <u>Aquilegia ancolli</u> <u>hybrid "Blue Bird"</u>	
<small>Keep Exhibitory Name & No. Covered Until After Judging. Insert flap here</small>	
EXHIBITOR'S NO.	<u>123</u> YR <u>2009</u>
NAME	<u>A. Flower</u>
ADDRESS	<u>91 Peony Lane</u> <u>Oakville</u>
<small>fold back after judging</small> <i>A. Flower</i> EXHIBITOR MUST SIGN IN ABOVE SPACE	

(1)AOC: Any Other Cultivar for plants that do not fall into any other show category.

(6) Educational Exhibit: Scored out of 5 points and will count toward trophies. Designed to instruct viewer in an aspect of horticulture (e.g., plant propagation, environment, endangered plant preservation, etc). Must contain plant material, include botanical and common plant names, plant origin, habitat, culture (how it is grown), usage and history. Also judged on clear, concise presentation, attractiveness, quality and condition of plant material, originality and creativity. (O.J.E.S. pg. 76) .

Conditioning Flowers for Shows

Marie Decker

With excerpts from “Snippy Tips” published by the Garden Club of Toronto

Conditioning prolongs the life of plant material by ensuring the maximum uptake of water and minimizing the loss of water by evaporation. Some plant material lasts well with simple conditioning while others require special attention. Conditioning ensures your flowers are in the best condition for the duration of the flower show.

Choose the best flowers. They should be crisp, have no brown spots and no traces of pollen (which indicates aging). However, if you choose flowers that are too new or too tightly budded they may never open for the show. Stems should be clean and not discoloured; water should be clean and sweet smelling.

Flower cuttings from your garden should be cut with clean, sharp clippers or knife and placed immediately into a bucket of lukewarm water that you took with you into the garden. Cut during a cool period of the day.

Basic Conditioning Method

In scrupulously clean non-metallic pails of lukewarm water add a commercial preservative according to the instructions on the package or mix your own.

Mixture 1

1l (4 cups) water
15 ml (1 tbsp) sugar
3 ml (1/2 tsp) bleach

Mixture 2

1/2 Sprite or 7-UP (not diet) to 1/2 water
3 ml (1/2 tsp) bleach

If using floral foam, soak in the preservative and use the preservative to top up arrangements.

Remove 1/3 of the foliage to help flowers last longer. Especially remove foliage below the water line as bacterial growth occurs as the foliage decays.

Re-cut stems on a diagonal. Slit the end of thick or woody stems and place immediately into deep, quite warm water. Place fleshy stems, especially of bulbs, into lukewarm water. Leave for a minimum of 6 hours. See below more information on spring bulbs.

Special Conditioning Methods

Scalding is effective for roses, chrysanthemums and hydrangeas (stems are hard outside and soft inside). Place cut stems in an inch of boiling water (1 minute for soft stems, 3-5 minutes for hard stems) then immediately place in cool water. A quick transfer is important.

Searing is good for hardy asters, bluebells, forget-me-nots, poppies and euphorbias. Hold the stems in the flame of a candle until well blackened. For stems that produce milky exudates, this process prevents the fluid from blocking water uptake and from leaking out.

Water-filling works for amaryllis, delphiniums and lupins. Invert the stems, fill with water using a syringe or small funnel and plug the stems with absorbent cotton. Place stems in deep water.

Submerging is particularly good for rhododendrons and roses. Submerge the foliage in warm water about 2 hours as the foliage absorbs water through its surface tissue. Young foliage may become water-logged but older evergreens can be left overnight.

Conditioning Methods for Bulbs

Crocus: Wash soil off bulbs and arrange in shallow water with bulb attached.

Iris: Must show some colour when cut or will not open in time for the show. Cut off white stem. Use basic conditioning method. Iris is ethylene sensitive.

Helleborus (Lenten Rose): With a pin, prick stem just under flower head and at intervals down stem. DO NOT remove foliage. Basic conditioning plus scalding for one minute.

Conditioning Flowers for Shows cont'd



Crocus

Photo by: [Ursula Sander \(Flickr\)](#)

Hyacinth: Wipe off excess sap and wrap in newspaper for support. Basic conditioning.

Mertensia (Virginia Bluebells): Basic conditioning plus searing method.

Muscari (Grape Hyacinth): Remove white stem end. Basic conditioning in shallow water.

Myosotis (Forget-me-not): Basic conditioning plus searing method.

Narcissus (Daffodil): Remove white stem end. Rinse stem end to remove sap which clogs the stems of other flowers. Condition separately from other flowers. Do not re-cut stem if placed in arrangement with other flowers. To prevent end of stem from curling, wrap with raffia, corsage tape or scotch tape. If using floral foam, insert plastic straw up stem for about 5mm (2"). Sap can cause a contact dermatitis.

Primula (Primrose): Basic conditioning plus searing method. If flowers from small primrose are cut they will not condition well.

Scilla: Basic conditioning method.

Tulip: Basic conditioning. Remove white part of stem. To keep stems straight, wrap in newspaper while conditioning. Suggestions for keeping stems straight include a few drops of liquid starch, or gin in the water. Remember that cut tulips continue to grow and flower heads will grow toward the strongest light.

Conditioning Methods for Foliage and Cut Branches

Syringia (Lilac): Cut when $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of florets on stem are open. Remove foliage except 2-3 leaves near flower. Submerge 2-3 hours. Basic conditioning plus searing method.

Other foliage and branches:

Evergreens: Wash with a small amount of liquid detergent. To prevent the water from becoming foul smelling, add 5 ml bleach to $\frac{1}{2}$ L of water (1 tsp to 1 pint) when arranging evergreen foliage.

Most Greens: Basic conditioning plus searing. Keep cool.

Woody Stems: Split woody stems to assist them to take up water.

Branches in bud: Submerge for 2-3 hours. Peel or scrape bark 2-4 cm ($1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2") up stem. Cross cut stem ends. Basic conditioning plus scalding. Keep cool and out of sunlight.

Do not submerge branches in full bloom. Never submerge gray foliage.



Blue Sky and Flowers

Photo by: [42.thundafunda.net](#)

Events and Notices

Notices

New Members:

Please welcome the following new member who has recently joined the Society. Please help her feel at home.

Sandi Remedios

Events Schedule

Master Gardeners Advice

Monday, April 11, 2011 (OHS Meeting)
7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Master Gardener will be available to help with your gardening questions. If you are identifying a specific plant, please bring a sample or photo, if possible.

Beautiful Edible Gardens by Sean James

Wednesday, April 20, 2011
Burlington Central Library
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Cost: Free

Learn methods to create exciting ornamental gardens and tasty, fresh, nutritious food all in once convenient location - your home! Seating is limited so register for this event by calling 905-369-3611 x134.

Carolinian District Six AGM & Flower Show

Saturday, April 16, 2011
Sir John Colborne Recreation Centre
1565 Lakeshore Rd. W., Oakville
8:00 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.
Cost: \$13

The 2011 AGM will be hosted by the Bronte Horticultural Society in Oakville and includes AGM business, a Flower Show, and three interesting speakers, including our own Cathy Kavassalis. Come and meet horticulture enthusiasts from other Societies and enter the Flower Show.

Introduction to Gardening Course

May 2- June 6, 2011
Iroquois Ridge Community Centre, Northridge Rm
1051 Glenashton Dr., Oakville
7:30 - 9:00 p.m.
Cost: \$66

OHS is offering a course for novice gardeners through the Town of Oakville Parks and Recreation Department. During this five week program, you will learn how to plan a garden that meets your needs, how to choose the right plants, how to manage pests and disease, and how to maintain and prune your plants. If you know anyone who is interested in starting a garden or learning more about gardening, this is the course for them.

OHS Annual Plant Sale

May 14, 2011
St. Paul's United Church
454 Rebecca St. (next to YMCA), Oakville
9:00 a.m. to when the plants are gone

The OHS annual Plant Sale is our annual, big fundraiser so start looking at your garden as to what you can donate to the sale. Tell your family and friends about the sale so we can have a great turnout. More details are in this newsletter on page 4.



Tulips in the Rain
Photo by: 42.thundafunda.net