



MAY 2011

# 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 private and public properties since 1957.*

## May's Guest Speaker

### Tony Post on the Blue Flowers

Tony Post is a noted speaker who will share with us his wealth of knowledge about "The Blue Flowers" at our May 9th meeting. He has over 20 years of experience in garden retail and is now with Valleybrook Gardens in Niagara-on-the-Lake, one of the major garden centres in North America.

Tony often ignores his own advice in his zone 6, St. Catharines garden and plants zone 7 and 8 plants. It doesn't always work, but when it does the result is a landscape unlike any other in the neighbourhood. For a taste, visit Tony's blog at [niagaratropicals.blogspot.com](http://niagaratropicals.blogspot.com).

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## ANDERSON BRIDGE PARKETTE



*Steve Hawley pitches in.  
Photo: Cathy Kavassalis*

OHS volunteers braved the rain and cold on Sunday 17 April to dig up and pot plants at the Anderson Bridge Parkette.



*Photo: Margaret Jeffery*

### **Mailing Address:**

Box 69605  
109 Thomas Street  
Oakville, ON L6J 7R4

### **President:**

Catherine Kavassalis  
[ckavassalis@gmail.com](mailto:ckavassalis@gmail.com)

### **Membership:**

Elizabeth Thompson  
[membership@oakvillehort.org](mailto:membership@oakvillehort.org)

### **Mailing:**

Joan Paris

### **Secretary:**

Valerie Westwood  
[valerie.ohs@lycos.com](mailto:valerie.ohs@lycos.com)

### **Treasurer:**

Stuart Gough  
[treasurer@oakvillehort.org](mailto:treasurer@oakvillehort.org)

### **Newsletter:**

Natalie Ann Comeau  
[nacomeau@cogeco.ca](mailto:nacomeau@cogeco.ca)

### **Website:**

[www.oakvillehort.org](http://www.oakvillehort.org)

### **May Meeting:**

Monday 9 May 2011, 7:30 p.m.  
Hall Set-up (9 a.m.): Cindy Popp,  
Rosanne Swalwell, Ted Bateman

Library: Pam Jeremiah, Julie  
Douglas

Refreshments: Karen Milloy, Joyce  
Turner, Liz Lloyd, Wendy Twynam

Clerks: Sonja Tessari, Cyndi  
Stackhouse

### **Executive Meeting:**

Monday 16 May 2011, 7:00 p.m.

### **June Meeting:**

Monday 13 June 2011

*Where Gardeners come to flourish*

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### Garden of Friendship

*Friends are like flowers each unique in their own way, put them all together what a wonderful bouquet ... (anon)*

I don't know who penned that little Garden of Friendship ditty that has circulated through my mail-box, but it certainly reminded me of the wonderful, colourful circle of friends I have developed through the Horticultural Society. We are a diverse bouquet of people and I hope you have time to meet and cultivate friendships with your fellow members.

The best way to meet and connect with others is to come out and volunteer on one of our many projects or to attend some of the regional and provincial events.

In April, we had great fun at the Carolinian District 6 AGM – 185 people from the 21 district societies got together for a day of learning and sharing. Our sister society in Bronte did a wonderful job organizing an interesting and welcoming day for us all. I was humbled to be recognized with an OHA District Appreciation Award and delighted to learn that our Linda Tock will be presented with the prestigious OHA Youth Leader Award at the OHA Convention that will be held this summer from July 15th to 17th in Sudbury. I hope some of you will be able to attend the celebration, but moreover I hope more of you will come out to help Linda with the Junior Garden program. There are some exciting new plans for this season.

It is a joy to get out and work together – even when it pours. And it did on the intrepid volunteers who came out to move plants from the Forsythe



*Catherine Kavassalis & Celia Roberts at Carolinian District AGM.  
Photo: Elizabeth Schleicher*

Garden. Thank you to Margaret Jeffrey for organizing everyone and to all who braved the rain and sleet and mud to dig and divide the plants in the garden. All were taken to the plant depots to be readied for our May 14th Plant Sale. We will call on volunteers to help plant the new garden during the first week of May. Let Margaret know if you would like to help but haven't yet signed up, (905-847-3529 or emjeffery@sympatico.ca).

We hope all of you are preparing to share some of your treasures and your time to make this a successful fundraising event. We need volunteers to help put up signs in the community and to help spread the word. It's also time to ask some new folks to come out and assume leadership roles for next year. So join in this year and see if you have ideas for next season. It's up to you to step up.

Natalie Ann Comeau, our new newsletter editor, did just that. After joining this April, she offered her time and talents to make sure our newsletter continued. Please give her your thanks and support as she develops a new look and style for our news. We are so delighted to have her on our team.

Our year end is in October, and we need to begin our search for those interested in serving as officers and Board members. Both I as President and Valerie Westwood as Secretary will not be putting our names forward this fall and feel it is time to pass our roles on to some new faces, while remaining committed and supportive of Society activities. New vision and leadership for the renewal and growth of our society is important. We will be asking Sean Minich and Norma Kirkpatrick on our Search Committee to begin calling through our roles to inquire of your interest in a greater role in our Society.

I want to close by recognizing the special efforts of another new member. David Hawley volunteered to remove the sod from the Anderson Bridge Parkette – all 33 yards of it. This is going above and beyond. I want to recognize him with a President's Award at our May meeting so we can all publicly express our thanks.

As the poem goes...

*You are a flower in my garden that makes up my bouquet, my friends you all make a very impressive display.*

**Catherine Kavassalis**

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## HISTORICAL TIDBIT FROM OUR SOCIETY

How interesting the November 8th, 1965 monthly meeting must have been! The guest speaker that evening was the esteemed Mr. Leslie Laking, Director of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton. The subject of his presentation that evening was Garden Perennials, with an emphasis on the seasonal aspects of planning for colour.

(Dr. Laking guided the development of the RBG, both physically and institutionally, from 1954-1981. The Lilac Dell, Rose Garden, Headquarters Building, tea house and Rock Garden, herbarium, library and geology exhibit at Rock Chapel were all his doing.)

Also on the agenda that evening was discussion about the Almey Crabapple Tree Planting project. "In cooperation with the local Board of Park Management, 25 Almey Crabapple trees (6 ft. high) will be planted in the Sir John Colborne Park. Robert Neilson Nurseries were the successful tenderer. They will supply, plant, water, and replace any which might not grow." It was further noted that "the planting of flowering crabapple trees will

become an annual project of the society. We all know how famous Washington, D.C. is with its flowering cherry trees. Let's make Oakville known for its flowering crabapple trees!!!"

In the thin wedge of land of what now remains of the Sir John Colborne Park, there appear to be a small number of crabapple trees – is it possible that they are the remnants of that November planting 46 years ago? Further perusal of our archives gives no indication whether OHS ever planted any more crabapple trees in Oakville.

Finally, the inspirational quote from that long-ago newsletter:

*"What is lovely never dies*

*But passes into other  
loveliness*

*Star-dust, or sea foam,  
flower or winged air."*

*Joseph Addison.*



**Sheelagh Rowland-Brown.**

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## LAST CHANCE TO DONATE TO PLANT SALE

Perennial plant material is needed – please help by digging and dividing this spring. Proceeds enable us to enjoy monthly speakers, newsletters, tea/coffee, junior programs and public plantings.

The plants should be in a light soil mix. Soil and pots are available at our plant depots. We prefer to have plants delivered from May 6 - 12.

All non-invasive perennials are good, but some of our best sellers are: Ajuga, aquatic plants, Artemesis, Asters, Astilbe, Bellflower, Black Eyed Susan, Border Pinks, Catmint, Coral Bells, Corydalis, Day Lilies, Delphinium, Fall Anemone, Fall Asters, Ferns, Hens & Chicks, Herbs, Hosta, Ivy, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Japanese Spurge(Pachysandra), Lady's Mantle, Lambs Ears, Lavender, Meadow Rue, Monkshood, Mums, Ornamental Grasses (clumping and no Ribbon Grass), Periwinkle, Phlox, Primula, Purple Coneflower, Rhubarb, Sedum Autumn Joy, Shasta Daisy, Siberian Iris, Solomons Seal, Sweet Woodruff, Trilliums (from your own garden), Yarrow, Yucca, Shrubs and Trees.

**We need your help to make this a success!**

At the next meeting, please sign the clip board. We need plants, help potting, a couple of strong people to load plants into truck on Friday night and early Saturday morning, and a lot of help the day of the sale.



*Photo: Stuart Gough*

### Depot Locations:

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

Please contact Celia Roberts (905-844-1110) or Elizabeth Thompson (905-844-0220) if you need assistance or have any questions.

# BULBS AND PLANTS COMMITTEE

Helen Young, Chair of our Bulbs and Plants Committee, reports there will be a limited number of special summer bulbs available for sale at the May 9th meeting.

Bring your money and fill your garden with gorgeous spring colour!

*In the spring, at the end of the day,  
you should smell like dirt.*

Margaret Atwood



Photo: [http://ms.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fail:Stargazer\\_Lily.jpg](http://ms.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fail:Stargazer_Lily.jpg)

## MAY SHOW SCHEDULE

### Horticulture Schedule

1. **Bouquet of small spring flowers**
2. **Bouquet of forget-me-nots**
3. **Pansies or violas** 3 stems with own foliage
4. **Grape Hyacinths** 3 stems
5. **Primula/Primrose** 3 stems
6. **Dicentra (Bleeding Heart), old fashioned** 1 stem
7. **Dicentra (Bleeding Heart), other** 1 stem
8. **Iris** 1 stem
9. **Other perennial, plant height under 15"**  
3 stems (see Horticulture Guidelines pg. 2)
10. **Other perennial, plant height over 15"**  
1 stem
11. **Tulip, single red** 1 stem
12. **Tulip, single pink** 1 stem
13. **Tulip, single other colour** 1 stem
14. **Tulip, ruffled or parrot** 1 stem
15. **Tulip, lily flowered** 1 stem
16. **Tulip, species** 1 stem
17. **Tulip, other cultivar** 1 stem
18. **Narcissus, trumpet/large cup, yellow**  
1 stem
19. **Narcissus, trumpet/large cup, other colour**  
1 stem
20. **Narcissus, multibloom** 1 stem
21. **Narcissus, other cultivar** 1 stem
22. **Other bulb, corm, tuber** 1 stem

23. **Rhododendron or azalea**  
1 branch cut to 36" or less
24. **Lilac** 1 branch cut to 36" or less
25. **Apple/crabapple** 1 branch cut to 36" or less
26. **Other flowering shrub**  
1 branch cut to 36" or less
27. **House plant grown for foliage**
28. **House plant grown for flowers or fruit**
29. **Seedlings** 1 box or tray
30. **Rhubarb** 3 stalks pulled, leaves trimmed to 2"
31. **Vegetable** 1 specimen or bunch
32. **Educational exhibit**<sup>6</sup>
33. **Any other cultivar (AOC)**<sup>1</sup>  
1 stem or bloom

### Design Schedule – Nature in Life

1. **Class of Distinction** Early Morning Rain
2. **Chairman's Trophy** Fire Storm
3. **General** Wild Blue Yonder
4. **General Novice** Nature Trail
5. **Miniature** Dance of Flowers – A design in a niche 5" high x 4½" wide x 3" deep. Each niche is equipped with a ceiling hook.

(1) AOC: The "Any Other Cultivar" class has been added 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 the viewer in some 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).

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## CONDITIONING FLOWERS & BRANCHES

**Conditioning:** is the process whereby everything possible is done to prolong 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, other require special attention. Conditioning will ensure your flowers are in the best condition possible for the duration of the flower show.

### Conditioning Methods

(Refer to the April Newsletter for conditioning methods)

**Apple/Crabapple:** Split or cross-cut woody stems to assist them to take up water. Branches in bud may be submerged for 2-3 hours. Peel or scrape bark 2-4 cm (1 ½ - 2") up stem. Basic conditioning. Keep cool and out of sunlight.

**Azalea:** Split stem. Basic conditioning plus searing method. The houseplant is more difficult than cuttings from outdoors.

**Dicentra (Bleeding Heart):** Cut when ¼ to ½ of flowers on stem are open. Split stems. Basic conditioning plus searing method.

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

**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.

**Pansies or Violas:** Submerge for 15 minutes to an hour. Place stems in cool water and mist frequently

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

**Rhododendron:** Slit stem ends. Basic conditioning plus scalding method. Flower heads may be submerged in cool water for up to two hours.

**Rhubarb:** Cut stems that are even in diameter, length and are the same colour. Clean gently clean the dirt off but do not cut off the root end. Trim the leaves evenly to 2". Keep cool until the show.

**Syringia (Lilac):** Cut when ¼ to ½ of florets on stem are open. Remove foliage except 2-3 leaves near flower. Submerge 2-3 hours. Basic conditioning plus scalding 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 will continue to grow and that flower heads will grow toward the strongest light.

**Vegetables:** Choose mature well shaped specimens with as little damage as possible. If more than one is requested choose specimens that are the same size, colour and at the same stage of maturity. Leafy vegetables may be displayed in water to keep them fresh.

**Marie Decker**

*From "Snippy Tips" published by the Garden Club of Toronto*



*Photo: Natalie Ann Comeau*

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## NATIVARS – CULTIVARS OF NATURAL PLANTS

I love the *Story of the Apple* by Barrie Juniper. In his book, he describes how apples evolved from the small, tart, bird-distributed fruit of 20 million years ago to the modern eating apple. It is believed that a wild apple, *Malus sieversii*, became isolated in the Tian Sian Mountains of Western China, an area with a large number of bears. By selecting the largest sweetest fruit, over time the bears transformed the ancient apple, producing large sweet ‘cultivars’. These are the direct progenitors of our modern eating apples.

While the apples of the Tian Sian only became cultivars when humans recognized them as special and began propagating them, their creation by bears

involved the same process of selection over time that we use to shape plant varieties to our preferences. Mind you, we have developed some very sophisticated methods for engineering plants that are quite unnatural. In general, however, cultivars are not ‘unnatural’ and reflect the same kind of selection processes that have shaped the evolution of plants for millennia.

We define a cultivar as a plant selected by humans and “clearly distinguished by morphological, physiological, cytological, chemical, and or other characteristics. When reproduced, they retain these characteristics. That is, their traits are heritable.” (Kujawski, J. & Ogle, D. 2005. “Not your

grandpa’s cultivars” *Native Plants Journal*. 6(1) pp. 49-51). Their naming is regulated by the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature.

The term nativar is not a technical term but is attributed to world renowned horticulturist, Dr. Allen Armitage from the University of Georgia. It simply means a cultivar or hybrid of native plants. Thus, a marigold cultivar may be considered a nativar in Mexico, but certainly not here in Ontario.

Many native plant aficionados advise against cultivars because these plants may transfer their heritable traits to wild populations interfering with the local gene flow. Though pollen movement is relatively short range, this should always be considered if gene conservation of wild populations is an issue.

Unless sourced from local populations, native species coming from who knows where are equally likely to interfere with the genetics of wild populations. On the other hand, use of cultivars may have benefits.

Nativars may offer improved disease resistance, e.g. a mildew resistant bee balm. Nativars may have better habit, fruiting, or flowering for ornamental, agricultural, or conservation usage. Frankly, as much as it is possible for a nativar to introduce deleterious genes to wild popu-



*Beach sunflower (Helianthus debilis) and southern fleabane (Erigeron Quercifolius) in bloom along the edge of the Concho Billy Trail, in Big Cypress National Preserve. Source=[http://gallery.usgs.gov/images/01\\_14\\_2009/n\\_](http://gallery.usgs.gov/images/01_14_2009/n_)*



### THROUGH THE GARDEN GATE – THE OHS ANNUAL GARDEN TOUR

Save the date! Christine Lee is interviewing potential participants for this year’s garden tour. Mark your calendars for Sunday 25 September and stay tuned for more details...

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lations, they may equally offer improved viability to fragmented wild populations. Finally, natives that perform better may encourage greater use of native species and thereby support native wildlife while providing regional character to our landscapes.

For example, the USDA Plant Materials Centers recommend cultivars with well-defined performance expectations for critical area conservation work. They have developed hundreds of cultivars of conservation plants with predictable traits. The USDA Material Center in Florida, for instance, offers a floriferous beach sunflower to stabilize sand dunes. The center in Bismark North Dakota offers a beautiful Red Prairie hybrid plum as a windbreak which “furnishes both good habitat and food for wildlife.”

Different ecological goals are met by the cultivars and concerns of gene flow are considered secondary. The USDA does note however that for “specific ecological restoration or enhancement projects, locally collected, source-identified plant materials may be preferred to preserve and promote the genetic pool of nearby wild plant populations.” (Kujawski. 2005).

In another example, the US National Wildlife Federation has partnered with American Beauties and North Creek Nurseries to develop native cultivars to encourage the general public to use native species to benefit wildlife. North Creek offers a mildew resistant cultivar of *Monarda fistulosa* called ‘Claire Grace’. (Monrovia has also developed ‘Peter’s Purple’.) While these introductions would come from gene pools distant from Ontario’s wild monarda, the plants will support local pollinators and be more attractive in mildew prone gardens. Depending on the goal of the garden and its placement with respect to natural lands, this type of cultivar may be a healthier alternative.



*Monarda fistulosa* photographed in Minnesota in Late July.  
Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Monarda-fistulosa.jpg>

Natives can have a role to play in native gardens depending on the goal of the garden. From gorgeous moss phlox cultivars to well behaved New England asters, there are many beautiful natives for our region. As Armitage says, "For native plant purists, cultivars just sully up the game plan. For breeders of baptisias, monarda and phlox, purists are nothing but collectors. Don't get into arguments, find your comfort level, use or don't use natives, but understand one thing—the gardening-as-lifestyle movement is here to stay."

*Catherine Kavassalis*

Have garden wisdom or great photos to share? Contribute to the newsletter!  
Send your material to [nacomeau@cogeco.ca](mailto:nacomeau@cogeco.ca)  
by the 15th of the month.



"Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders."

*Henry David Thoreau*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

# garden

### Garlic Mustard Pull

Thursday 5 May  
10 a.m. to noon  
Winston Park Woods

Come out to help students from Appleby College and volunteers from Oakvillegreen. Bring gloves and wear protective clothing as there is poison ivy in the woods and it can be muddy in May.

### RBG Auxiliary Plant Sale

Thursday 5 May & Saturday 7 May  
9:00 a.m. - noon

Come early for the best selection. Many rare plants, including RBG Fifty on Fire lily. Catalog available at [www.rbg.ca](http://www.rbg.ca).

### Incredible, (mostly) Edible Container Gardening Workshop

The Riverwood Conservancy  
Saturday 7 May  
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Cost: \$50 for Friends of Riverwood, \$60 for others. Call 905.279.5878 or email [Info@TheRiverwoodConservancy.org](mailto:Info@TheRiverwoodConservancy.org) to reserve your space.

### RBG Tulip Festival

Weekends 7 - 15 May

Celebrate spring — see the colourful tulip display and the gorgeous azalea collection.

### Halton Compost Give Away

9 -14 May and 17 September  
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Halton Waste Management Site  
5400 Regional Road 25, Milton

Bring your own containers (up to seven garbage bags worth) and a shovel, as well as a donation of non-perishable food items.

### OHS Annual Plant Sale

Saturday 14 May  
9:00 a.m. till plants are gone  
St. Paul's United Church

The OHS Annual Plant Sale is our annual, big fundraiser. Tell your family and friends about the sale so we can have a great turnout.

### RBG Lilac Festival

Weekends 21 - 29 May  
One of the largest Lilac species collections in North America.

### Garlic Mustard Pull

Thursday 9 June  
Iroquois Shoreline Woods

Join students from Rotherglen in the afternoon. Bring gloves.

### RBG 50th Anniversary Garden Party

Wednesday 22 June  
1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Everyone is invited to attend in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the RBG Auxiliary.

## Notices

### New members:

Please welcome the following new members who have recently joined the Society. Please make them feel at home.

- Natalie Ann Comeau

### Upcoming meetings:

13 June

John Vanderkruk  
Rose Propagation

12 September

Robert Pavlis  
The Lesser-Known Spring Bulbs

17 October

Lotte Brunner  
Basics of Flower Designing

14 November

Diana Pooke  
Geraniums –The Garden Chorus Line

12 December

AGM  
TBA

