

OAKVILLE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

March 2014 Newsletter

March Guest Speaker...

Introduction to Orchids and Window Sill Growing with Claudio Rossi

Tonight we will look at how to choose orchids that are easy to grow, a suitable size for growing on a windowsill, will likely survive in a home environment and how best to look after them. Claudio will help you to choose plants for bright colours, ease of growth and fragrance, which makes orchid growing a pleasurable experience! Follow up with your orchid questions.

Claudio Rossi has been growing orchids since 1974. He has a strong background in botany, taxonomy, genetics, statistics, computers and horticulture. He has had a wide spectrum of experience such as a rose judge, horticulturalist at University of Windsor, owner of an art gallery and Computer Analyst with IBM. He founded Cloud's Orchids in 1990, providing locally flask-raised orchids to other nurseries and the general public worldwide.

He is currently an orchid judge with senior status from the AOS (American Orchid Society), and has maintained his passion for gardening.



Where gardeners
come to flourish

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March Meeting:

Monday, March 10, 2014
Doors open 6:30pm

Location:

Knox Presbyterian, MacMillan Hall
89 Dunn Street

Hall SetUp (9:00am):

Ted Bateman, Paula Korczak
Sheelagh Rowland-Brown

Clerking:

Michelle Durrant, Veronica Heiderich

Hospitality:

John Raynor, Nancy Schmidt
Sonja Tessari, Elizabeth Thompson

April Meeting:

Monday, April 14, 2014



President's Message

Stuart Gough

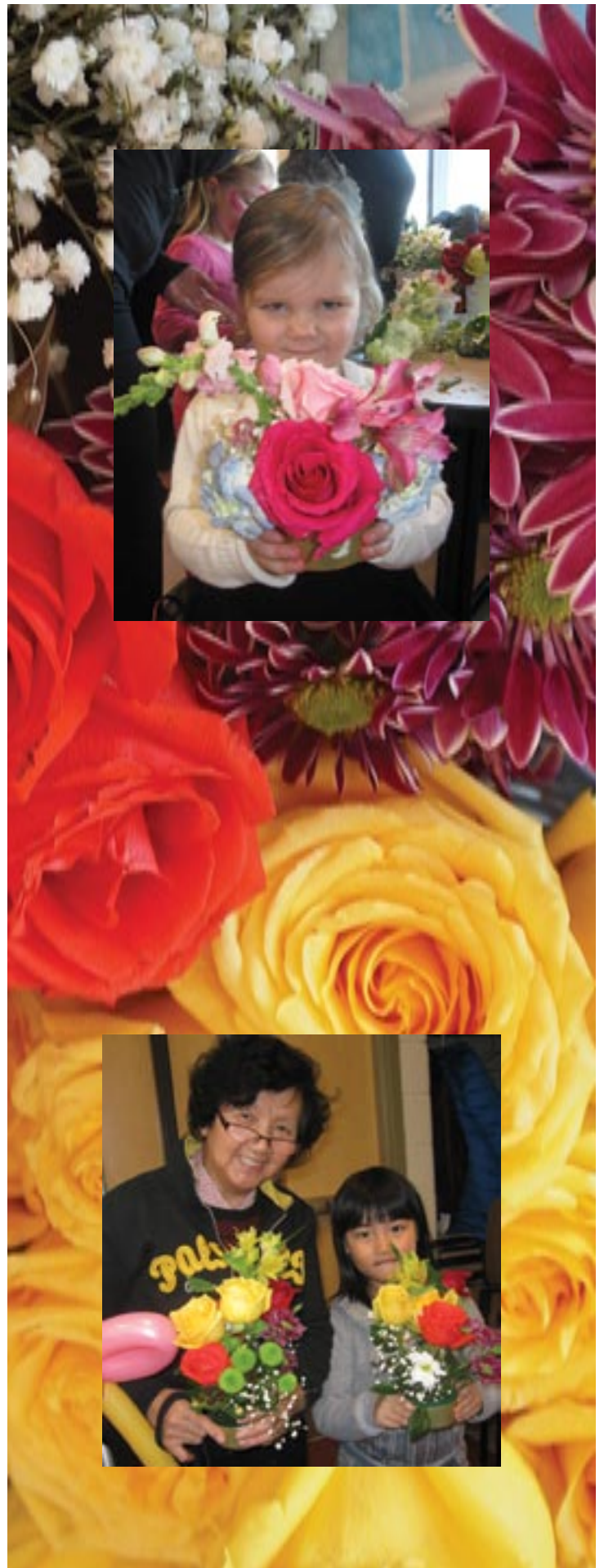
Only 22 days till spring. Oh really? It is minus 22 outside as I write. Hard to believe spring is just around the corner. But as the saying goes, it is always coldest just before spring.

We have enjoyed the beginnings of spring with the Fun with Flowers on Family Day. All those blossoms all in one room and the happy smiles of the young and old as they created at least 150 floral arrangements in the three sessions we ran. It is a real joy taking part in this day and it all begins with our members reaching out to local business asking for donations. We thank Ada's Flowers, Flower Deco, The Flower Place, Fortinos, Longo's North Oakville, Metro, Sobeys and Whole Foods for their kind donation of all the floral material. Each year I am amazed at how generous their donations are. At the last executive meeting we began to discuss how we acknowledge those businesses that support our activities. We currently provide links to the above on our web site. Should we be doing more, should we look to accept support for our other activities such as finding a sponsor for the printing of the garden tour guide.

Spring took a step closer when I received a suggestion for a new device that we could use at our Plant Sale, enabling credit card sales along with our cash sales. A little widget that plugs into a cell phone and takes credit cards swiped through the card slot. It sends a receipt to the purchaser and pops the payment into our bank.

And while I was looking into the credit card widget, I came across the latest widget for the garden. It is a stick-like remote computer sensor that you place in the soil beside your prized plant, providing real-time measurements of the factors essential for healthy growth and then sends updates to an app on your smart phone. By keeping an eye on soil moisture, fertilizer, ambient temperature, and light intensity, you can provide just the right care to help your plants thrive.

A bit more digging and I found that one can now have Durr's Tree and Shrub Finder on your smart phone. Based on the Manual of Woody Landscape Plants by Michael Durr, this app covers 1,670 species and 7,800 cultivars with 7,600 high quality plant images, searchable by 72 criteria. The more I looked, the more gardening apps and books one can find. It is a brave new paperless world!



Fun with Flowers

Linda Tock

Over 100 floral arrangements were created by a wide range of "floral designers". The smiling and proud faces in our photo collection indicate a good time was had by all !



Our generous sponsors for this year were : Ada's 250 Speers Road, Flower Deco 35 Lakeshore Rd. W., The Flower Place 1011 Upper Middle Rd., Fortinos 173 Lakeshore Rd. W., Longos 338 Dundas, 3 Metro stores 1011 Upper Middle, 1521 Rebecca, & 280 North Service Rd., Sobey's 5111 Maple Grove and Whole Foods 301 Cornwall.



Thanks to all the volunteers Stu Gough, Sonja Tessori, Christine Lee, Elizabeth Thompson, John Shane, Margaret Jeffrey, Marie Decker, Valerie Westwood for making this another wonderful Family Day event !

Special thanks also to Wayne Curtis and others who collected all the tins! We couldn't have done this without them.



Out on a Limb

Barbara Phillips-Conroy

I haven't been doing much seed-starting this winter. I want to wait to see what I'm left with post-storm before I go crazy growing too many new plants. One success I have had was getting last year's Amaryllis to re-bloom. What I did differently this year was to put the bulb outside in May in its clay pot. I watered it frequently and fertilized once a week when I was doing the rest of my pots. In October, I cut it back to the top of the bulb and put it in the garage and forgot about it. In early December, I brought it in the house and started to water it. Presto, eight weeks later, I had two beautiful stocks of enormous flowers. Kevin was impressed enough to give me a lovely arrangement for Valentine's day with three different varieties of Amaryllis in a gorgeous copper bowl. The pressure is now on to see if I can recreate my success and have a living room full of these beautiful flowers next February.

Easy Care Roses From Landscape Ontario's Trial Gardens

Trying to find carefree roses can be a challenge, so I was pleased that Landscape Ontario had dedicated several plots at their Milton site to them. Often plant tags are more fiction than fact, so being able to see how roses perform in person close to home is ideal. Here are several standout roses from the trial garden you might consider for that sunny spot in your garden

Campfire Rose (1-1.25M) A beautiful tri-coloured rose (yellow/pink/white) from the Canadian Artist Series. Disease resistant - hardly a spot on the tightly grown plants - and has wonderful old-fashioned look. J.C. Bakker chose this beauty as its nursery guide cover girl for 2013. Mild fragrance.



Party Hardy (1.25-1.75M) Another Canadian bred shrub rose. Dark pink flowers appear in clusters. Keeps clean foliage from the ground up. Will definitely need a bit of room. Mild apple fragrance.



Home Run by Proven Winners (Red or Pink) (1M) Shrub rose that could be used as a taller ground cover. Has single blossoms. Slight fragrance.



Carefree Spirit (1M) Single blossoms in abundance on this shrub rose. Pretty pink colour with white centres. Slightly ruffled petals. Mounding habit. No fragrance.



And, just so you can see the value of a trial garden - here is one more rose from the Canadian Artist Series - Emily Carr, a hybrid tea. Perhaps good in another climate, but not necessarily this part of Ontario:



See you at our next meeting!

MARCH MONTHLY SHOW SCHEDULES

Design Schedule - WEATHER OUTLOOK

1. Class of Distinction - "Mercury Rising" - a design
2. Chairman's Trophy - "Lightning Strikes" - a design
3. General - "Solar Flare" - a design
4. Novice - "Tropical Storm" - a design
5. Miniature - "Moon Frost" - a design in niche 5"h x 4½"w x 3"d.

Horticultural Schedule

6. Bonsai
7. Branch, forced, under 36"
8. Bulbs, forced - minimum 5 bulbs in bloom, 1 pot
9. Cactus or succulent
10. Gesneriad, including African violet - single crown
11. House plant grown for flowers or fruit
12. House plant grown for foliage
13. A craft item (must have some horticultural content), made by the exhibitor, and not previously shown
14. Educational exhibit 2
15. Any other cultivar (AOC) 3 - 1 stem or bloom

Special Exhibits

16. Pot-et-Fleur, not to exceed 18" in any direction. (see O.J.E.S. pgs. 75, 103) 6

Photography Schedule

17. "Pink Passion" (any pink flower(s))
18. "I Met a Dandy Lion" (Dandelion(s))
19. "Silhouette" (a plant in silhouette).
20. "Along the Way" (a trail or pathway through nature)
21. "Out of the Ordinary" (a grouping or collection of horticultural related photographs, pictures can be different sizes, mounted on a backing no larger than 12 " by 12")

Notes:

Exhibitions are open to all members of the Society.

Entries must be placed in the hall from 6:30 to 7:20 pm.

Photo entries are limited to one per exhibitor in each class.

All Photo entries must be the work of the exhibitor and must have been taken in the last 24 months.

Photographs must be 4" by 6" in size, and either matted or mounted to 5" by 7". Photographs must not be in frames.

All photographs should reflect the theme and contain some horticultural material.

Preparing Our Plants For What Spring May Bring...

Kevin Kavanagh, South Coast Gardens

At South Coast Gardens (www.southcoastgardens.ca), anxious clients are beginning to ask what they can do about plants that are starting to show wear and tear from a winter known for its punishing pre-Christmas ice storm, record-breaking -40°C windchills and the bone-chilling cold associated with the 'Polar Vortex.' While some of the news headlines may seem more media hype than cold reality, temperatures over the past three months do, in fact, show this to be a below normal winter across the southern Great Lakes Region (and beyond).

Tips to protect plants in late winter

Many of the more tender plants and those with southern origins often struggle more with late winter cold than early season low temperatures. They tend to break dormancy earlier and become more vulnerable to damage from late cold snaps. Hence, the need to consider protective action now. As the sun gets stronger, it can warm up cold plant tissue very quickly, damaging plant cells. This is especially true of young tree stems with smooth and/or thin bark as well as the foliage on broad-leaved evergreens. Also, although the sun may be warming the above ground parts of the plant, if the roots remain locked in frozen ground they simply can't supply the stems and evergreen foliage with water to replace what is being lost above. Under these conditions plants can actually suffer drought stress if the root zone remains frozen into early spring. Keeping stems and foliage shaded in late winter and spring until the ground is FULLY thawed can make a significant difference in the amount of foliage retained or the amount of bark split observed on the stems of smooth-barked trees (e.g. magnolias, Japanese maples, lindens and young fruit trees). To check if the ground is fully thawed, try inserting a metal rod or thin stake into the ground to a depth of 30cm or more. Until the stake can be easily inserted without resistance from frozen ground, plant protective devices should remain in place.

Here are some additional tips to help dormant plants adjust to spring:

If not done earlier in the season, now is the time to place a white plastic tree wrap on the trunk...this also affords great protection from damage by rabbits and rodents. Stems between 2 – 8 cm diameter (1-3 inches) are especially vulnerable to late-winter sun scald. The lower 2m or approximately 6 feet of the stem should be wrapped.

For broad-leaved evergreens, placing a white fabric (a bed sheet or the product 'Better than Burlap') in

a position to shade the plant from mid-morning to mid-afternoon sun will help reduce heat stress on the foliage until the ground is fully thawed in spring. Do not wrap the plant too tightly, it is sometimes better to create an upright screen to the east, south and west of the plant.

For small specimens, inverted containers (e.g. large pots) can be placed overtop sensitive plants, but this should be done carefully so as not to break branches. MAKE SURE to then cover the container with a white or otherwise reflective material, otherwise you can literally "cook" the plant inside a dark container on a sunny early spring day. Also, placing a brick on top helps prevent it from blowing away.

Alleviating the crushing effect of snow and ice on shrubs. Slowly pour mild or tepid (never warm or hot) water to gently melt ice and snow that may be weighing down branches on days when the temperature is at least +4°C. For practical reasons, this somewhat tedious procedure is best reserved for your highest valued specimens but it can be effective in helping to prevent branches trapped in ice and crusty snow from being pulled down and causing major stem breakage. DO NOT try to take a short cut and pull or tug branches out of the snow as this invariably will lead to more damage (I speak from personal experience!). Some severely bent stems (especially main leaders) can be staked in spring to enable proper growth form to recover.

When Spring Arrives, Steps to Help Plants Recover

Broken branches. After the ice storm and heavy snows this winter, there may be broken or severely bent limbs that need pruning. Use the proper tool for the job (pruning saw or secateurs) to make a clean cut back to the closest main stem or branch. It is good practice to disinfect the blades between cutting different trees so as not to spread fungal diseases. This pruning can be done as soon as it is safe to manoeuvre in the

garden without slipping on ice while holding a sharp implement! SAFETY FIRST!

Brown foliage on broad-leaved evergreens. Despite what may look like considerable winter damage early in spring, don't take any drastic action. Patience is key. Broad-leaved evergreens may completely defoliate after a harsh winter but the woody tissue often survives and by early summer the plant may be in full leaf again. Some loss of Rhododendron flower buds may occur as these too can be more sensitive to cold temperatures than the wood. Once new foliage and shoots begin to emerge, dead areas will become more apparent and can be trimmed back at that time. Often, the bark on dead stems will look quite a bit more shriveled and desiccated than on wood that is re-budding. By the first week of June, if the plant remains lifeless then it has no doubt succumbed to the harshness of winter.

Bark split. At South Coast Gardens, we generally allow plants to heal naturally. In some cases, wounds can gently be cleaned out in mid-summer as the dead bark and wood tends to soften by then and is easier to remove. By mid-summer, new wood should have begun to close the wound. Removing the dead wood reduces the chance for secondary infection.

Spring feeding. For winter-damaged plants, attention to good cultural practices will be key to enabling plants to better recover. While specific requirements for feeding and watering will vary depending on the species or cultivar, as a general rule ensure that the root zone is kept free of weedy competition, keep it evenly moist (mulching will help) and ensure that the plant is well (but NOT overly) fed. If stem die-back has been significant, providing an early season feeding with a little higher nitrogen (N) may help with new vegetative growth. As always, please seek professional advice and carefully read labels to ensure that applications are beneficial and appropriate for the plant in question.

While it is disappointing to see a cherished plant get set back after exposure to a cold winter, it also affords gardeners an opportunity to observe and document the degree to which plants recover from these harsh winter conditions. . By early summer, we hope to post on our website (www.southcoastgardens.ca) a list of the biggest winners and, no doubt, a few of the biggest losers. We would appreciate hearing of your successes as well! With every season, we learn more about the plants we love!

Upcoming Events

Leave Winter Behind

Enjoy a free series on gardening, landscaping, trees and natural areas hosted by Oakvillegreen. All events to be held at Oakville Town Hall, South Atrium, 7:30–9:00pm

Thursday, March 6

Allan Arthur, St. Williams Nursery & Eco Centre

Advice on tree selection and care

Adam Koziol, Earthgen Native Tree Nurseries

Interesting and unusual natives that can thrive in this area

Thursday, March 27

Sheridan Nurseries

Shrub selection

Sean James, Fern Ridge Landscaping

Discuss pruning

Thursday April 10

Discover Wild Oakville

Explore the world of bees

Thursday, April 17

Fabulous Flowers and Plants for Pollinators

Basic Garden Design

Successful Gardening Show

March 6-9, 2014

Celebrate the beginning of spring, OHA Plant and Floral Design competition

Metro Toronto Convention Centre

Canada Blooms

March 14-23, 2014

Brilliant floral displays and engaging events and speakers

Direct Energy Centre, Toronto

Getting the Bugs Out: Gardening without pesticides with Ed Lawrence

March 20, 2014

Presented by the Applewood Garden Club

Tickets \$15, available in advance, contact David Pavanel Lakeview Golf Course, 1190 Dixie Road, Mississauga

Outdoor Living and Garden Show

March 28-30, 2014

This event will provide you with insight and education for creating the very best for your gardens, landscapes and outdoor living

Royal Botanical Gardens, RBG Centre

Rocks and Trees, Trees and Rocks Planning a New Bed...

John Comber

This may be old hat to many of you but there are often tricks to be learned from any fellow gardener.

One of the most back breaking but potentially enjoyable things about gardening is installing a new bed. It allows a fresh look to your home and is of itself a fresh, clean piece of paper as it were upon which you can write anything.



Once the size and shape are determined it is necessary to shave off the grass. Using a commercial grass killer is often ineffective. Digging off the top layer is the best way to insure the roots are gone.

Now is the time for a nice clean edge to clearly mark your new masterpiece. While a shovel can be used and sharp half moon lawn edger is the real trick here. Once that is complete and you are satisfied it is time to refill with good triple mix. The new dirt should be higher than the lawn in the middle and lower the edges than the lawn as it will pack down with time and rain

However a little forethought can go a long way towards making the finished product look how you want it to and be easy to maintain.

The open lawn shown here lacks a focal point. It also makes the house look smaller than it is due to the large open space in front of it.

There is a need to break up the long open space with a point of interest to lead you to the house. One thing to remember is that you will still need to cut the grass. One way to make sure that is easy to do is define your shape with your lawn mower. Let the grass grow a bit longer than normal and simply cut the new bed shape with your lawn mower.

