



Oakville Horticultural Society June 2020

June Monthly Meeting

Date:

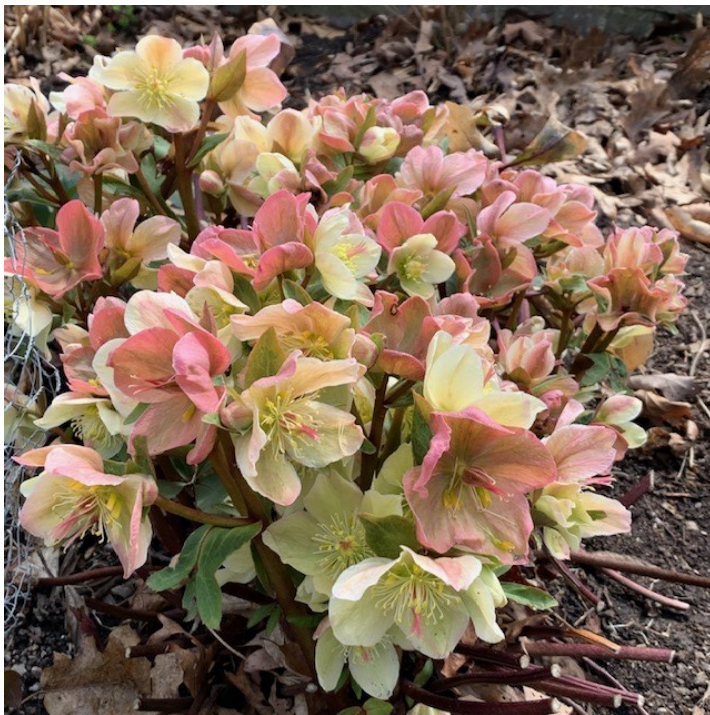
June 8, 2020

Location:

Knox Presbyterian Church, 89 Dunn Street

Set-up Volunteers:**Hospitality Volunteers:****Flower Show Clerks:**

The Oakville Horticultural Monthly meeting has been cancelled due to health risks of COVID-19. We do not have a specific resumption of activities date to share with you today. We will continue to assess the environment and make the decision that is best for our membership.



a beautiful Hellebore
in the garden of Paula Clayton

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I hope this newsletter finds all of you well and coping with our new realities. At least as gardeners, we have the activities and pleasures of the season to enjoy.

We will not be meeting on June 8th and we miss seeing all of you! We regret that we will not be having our annual Strawberry Social, but we want to give you an interesting and informative newsletter all the same, so please read on.



President's Remarks ...

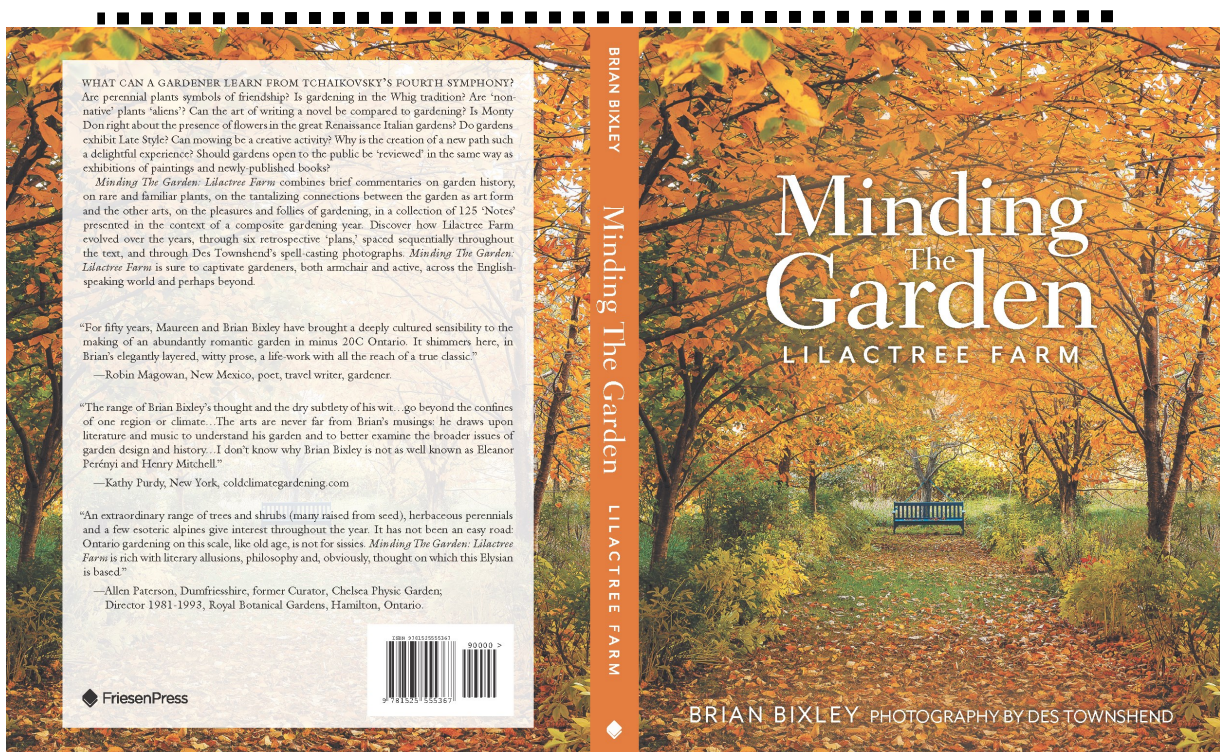
We are also busy behind the scenes with new initiatives. These include the **Share the Beauty** project recently launched by Aki that is sure to bring a smile to shut-ins and their support workers over the summer. In addition, we will be introducing a new private Facebook group called *Oakville Hort Sharing* which will allow members to ask questions, get or give advice, let folks know about new discoveries or plants and garden accessories they have available.

The executive will be meeting soon, so if you have ideas about ways we can connect and fulfill our Society mandate, please let us know by contacting me, Paula Clayton, at president.ohs@oakvillehort.org.

In the meantime, please take lots of pictures of your favourite specimens and be sure to get out in your garden as often as possible!

Stay well,

Paula



let's talk about

Minding The Garden: Lilactree Farm combines brief commentaries on garden history, on rare and familiar plants, on the tantalizing connections between the garden as art form and the other arts, on the pleasures and follies of gardening, in a collection of 125 'Notes' presented in the context of a composite gardening year. Discover how Lilactree Farm evolved over the years, through six retrospective 'plans,' spaced sequentially throughout the text, and through Des Townshend's spell-casting photographs. Minding The Garden: Lilactree Farm is sure to captivate gardeners, both armchair and active, in the English-speaking world and perhaps beyond. We are pleased to announce the publication of our book, Minding The Garden: Lilactree Farm. It may be purchased now through Friesen Press: www.friesenpress.com/bookstore <<http://www.friesenpress.com/bookstore>> 1-(888) 378-6793 or subsequently through Amazon or Barnes and Noble.





Oakville Horticultural Society

Where Gardeners come to flourish

Share the Beauty

Hi fellow Horticultural Society members.

This message is for people who have extra beautiful blooms in their garden! No pressure to participate, this is completely voluntary.

I am collecting garden flowers for delivery to Long Term Care Homes and shut-ins in Oakville who have expressed an interest in participating.

This is something that I feel will lift the spirits of residents and staff and will help us as a Horticultural Society to reach out to the people of Oakville in a safe and generous manner.

I am:

- calling receivers before I deliver for special instructions
- wrapping the flowers in newspaper and twine
- delivering by drop off outside the facility or at the location designated by the facility or person

If you have garden flowers that you feel you can spare,

- please contact me by email Aki Tanaka (akitanaka1983@gmail.com) with your location and convenient time for pickup and I will arrange to get them from you and deliver them to some deserving people.

- If you could cut the blooms and leave them on your front step that would be ideal, otherwise I can come and cut for you. I will bring a container.

In the coming weeks, I will be looking for:

- lily of the valley
- irises in bud
- peonies barely showing (I will brush off the ants)
- alliums

And any other blooms that make good cut flowers

If you are not well, please understand, we can't take your blooms at this time. Enjoy them and get better soon!

If you would like to help with delivery, please let me know.

Many thanks,

Aki Tanaka



Life is not about making others happy. Life is about sharing your happiness with others.

society news.....





A new Facebook group has been created so that members of the Oakville Horticultural Society may post and share information as a private online group.

To join all you need is a Facebook account and request to join the group name "Oakville Hort Sharing" or contact our Administrator Veronica <https://www.facebook.com/veronica.heiderich> .

Access will be given as soon as possible upon request. Non Facebook members can post information by asking someone who has a Facebook account and is in the group to post on your behalf or contact Veronica by email bvervah7@gmail.com .

Share what is happening in your garden with photos. Have gardening questions, ideas or concerns? Need local or online resources identified? Want to share plants that you are digging and dividing? Do you have advice or proven methods? Anything gardening goes, meeting current bylaws and public health guidelines. The content is only limited by our imagination of what we would like to communicate with other members. The group will be moderated by Veronica our Facebook Administrator.

Let's dig in!

Thank you,
Veronica



Since the Pandemic has restricted our travels, I hope you will enjoy some virtual gardening travels.

<https://www.housebeautiful.com/lifestyle/gardening/g31746949/gardens-you-can-virtually-tour/> Kew Gardens, Monet "s Garden and much more

<https://www.housebeautiful.com/lifestyle/gardening/g31746949/gardens-you-can-virtually-tour/>
virtual tour of 9 gardens

<https://www.gardensillustrated.com/gardens/gardens-to-visit/virtual-garden-tours-best/> move
down the screen till you locate #1 National Trust's Hidcote 11 gardens to visit

<https://ngs.org.uk/virtual-garden-visits/> Start with Vann, Surrey, next Cadendam Manor, Wiltshire,
and continue on your journey.

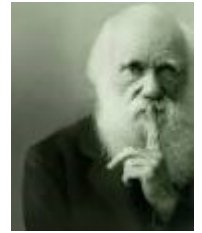
Enjoy your tours and have a safe wonderful summer!





Think global warming is scary? Almost everyone agrees except perhaps for a few blockheads down south, and it certainly is scary, but we still have a chance to adapt to a lot of the coming changes, although it will not be pleasant or easy, but there is another huge threat to our survival that far fewer people are aware of.

In 1828 a teenager named Charles Darwin started a letter to his cousin with "I am dying by inches not having anyone to talk to about insects". How times have changed. The world is



now buzzing with stories of "Insect apocalypse" or "Insect Armageddon". Insect extinction is leading to a catastrophic threat to our survival, and it is happening now.

Big cats, elephants, rhinos, polar bears, and other biggies get lots of attention because they are glamorous, but although sad, their decline does not threaten our existence, but insect decline does not get more than a casual mention because they are just well, insects aren't they?

Here are a few examples from recent studies.

- The mass of insects in the world far exceeds the mass of all other living things.
- The rate of extinction of insects is eight times greater than that of mammals. The total mass of insects in the world is declining by 2.5% a year.
- There are about six million named species of insects in the world, and many times that not yet investigated by taxonomists.
- A German study showed a 75% reduction of flying insects over a thirty year period.
- The loss of insects is reflected in the loss of birds, lizards, and frogs which feed on them.
- 40% of insect species are in decline.

Why are insects declining at such a high rate? The most important reason is habitat loss caused by increased urbanization and intensive factory farming, destruction of forests and uprooting of hedgerows to make huge fields. Next is increased usage of herbicides, insecticides, fertilizers, monoculture and emissions from factories, cities, and vehicles. Then comes parasites and diseases, and finally global warming, because many insects have a narrow tolerance to temperature ranges. Scientists say that we must radically change the way we produce our food, and what we produce.

Why are insects so important? It is because insects are at the heart of the food web. They pollinate many of our crops. They provide food for birds, animals. And yes, people. They clean up our environment by consuming and recycling our waste and decaying vegetation.

There is much that we do not know, and one problem is that meaningful studies take decades, and research funding works on a much shorter time scale. Also most studies have been done in Europe or North America and that may skew predictions.

There is little doubt that human activities are responsible for much of the insect decline. Here is an extreme example. Rocky mountain locusts used to gather in such great numbers that they sometimes obliterated the sun on the Great Plains. In 1876 an estimated 100 billion locusts took nearly a week to pass through Plattsville, Nebraska but in the following decades ranchers and homesteaders developed the land on which the locusts used to breed, and thirty years later they were extinct, removing the food source for many other species.

So what can we do about the problem? Use less fertilizer and pesticides, plant insect friendly plants, build insect hotels, and raise your voices to the politicians who make the decisions. Small scale stuff I know, but there are a lot of us.

Happy gardening, David Marshall.





On April 30, I received permission to rework the junior garden to grow food for the local food banks. The following is an update of what I have been up to since then.

As many of you are aware, it has been an interesting start to the gardening season. Blistering heat, followed by a cold snap and then damaging rains with hail, all before June. I started planting radishes and spinach May 3 and thanks to the generosity of the members of the Horticultural Society, I have since planted peppers, corn, squash and tomato plants, lots of tomato plants. The bulb onions, green beans, beets, carrots and bunching onions are all starting to break through the soil. Of course, so are the weeds. Luckily, I received a tarp to cover some of the garden space and keep the work manageable.

I have also used the space to film myself planting various crops to help other new gardeners.

Check out the Halton Environmental Network YouTube channel if you want to see me in action – or have a laugh as I become noticeably frustrated sowing the spinach seeds.

I am in contact with some of the junior gardening families, offering them extra plants or seeds and advice – lots of advice! In return, I am getting regular updates as to the how their gardens are growing (very well!).

Until next time, happy gardening!



Balcony Gardening Tips & Tricks

Balcony gardening presents new challenges. One must subscribe to the use of containers, limited plant material selections, smaller spaces. Consideration must be given to building regulations, sun and wind exposure, container size, plant material, soil, fertilizer, and winterizing. Each of the factors will be individually addressed.

Building regulations

Before starting a balcony garden, check with your building superintendent for restrictions and/or regulations concerning growing plants on the balcony. Do not assume that growing plants is okay. Ask about hanging planter boxes on the inside of the railings and attaching planter boxes and trellises to the wall.

Balcony size and access

The balcony size and configuration will be a large determining factor in selection of container types and plant material. Not all balconies are created equal. Placement of furniture such as tables, chairs, and ease of access to water and maintain the plants are also important considerations.

Environment exposure

Sun and wind exposure are the two most dominant environmental factors to consider. Each side of a building presents its own unique challenges. Northerly exposures will receive limited amounts of sunlight whereas southerly exposures will receive 6 to 10 hours of full sun in the summer months. Reflective heat from the wall of the building will increase the intensity of the heat in south and westerly exposures. Wind can be a significant factor. A 10 km/h breeze at ground level will feel much stronger on balconies of tall buildings. Adjacent building may provide some protection but also may create a wind tunnel effect. Every situation is different.



Container selection

Container types range from plastic, to resin, to fiberglass, to wicker, to decorative ceramic. Containers should be a minimum of 10 inches for stability and moisture retention but not too large if you want to move them around. The container must have drain holes to prevent the plants from becoming waterlogged, leading to root rot. Place the containers in drain trays to catch excess drainage water. If permitted, planting boxes with a minimum width and depth of 6 inches could be hung on the inside of the railing and/or mounted to a wall. Free standing raised boxes can also be utilized on a balcony. Hanging baskets can be used but caution needs to be taken in locations susceptible to windy conditions.



Potting mix

Potting soil is a blend of peat moss, compost, perlite, limestone, and a wetting agent. The potting soil mix has been sterilized to kill pathogens and diseases. The raw mix has no nutrient value. Some manufacturers enrich their product with nutrients. The bag will be labeled accordingly. **Do not use regular garden soil** as it is will compact in the container and may harbour unwanted pathogens and disease. Choose potting soil bag sizes of 10, 20 or 30 liters for ease of handling and transport. When filling the containers, put a piece of plastic under or around the container to catch spillage.



Balcony Gardening Tips & Tricks continued.....

Plant material

Plant materials should be chosen based upon the available space, type of planters to be used and the sun and wind exposure. One can choose from containers already planted up or choose a mixture of plants to transplant.

Annuals for sun: geranium, lobelia, bacopa, petunia, calibrachoa (million bells), scaevola (fan flower), marigold, verbenas, lysimachia (creeping jenny), blood grass, fountain grass, ipomoea (sweet potato vine)

Annuals for shade: begonia, 'New Guinea' impatiens, coleus, athyrium, lamium

Perennial: hosta, heuchera (coral bells), Alchemilla (lady's mantle), sedum, roses

Herbs: rosemary, thyme, basil, sage, savory, mint, oregano, parsley, tomatoes

Think not only flowers but also foliage texture, size, colour and variegation. A selection of foliage types can create a dynamic impact. Tropical plants can be included but must be brought indoors in winter.

Feeding the Plants (fertilizer)

Fertilizers come in a variety of types both organic and chemical. The type used is a personal choice. Always read the labels and apply as directed. Remember the organic types may have a lingering odour.

For chemical type use a water-soluble balanced such as 20-20-20

Organic types are fish emulsion, kelp, seaweed, apply as directed

Watering

Plants on a balcony will dry out very quickly. Always water thoroughly, preferably in the morning. Water until the drain tray is full. Leave the water in the tray to be wicked up into the container. Do not allow excess water to run over the edge of the balcony.

Winterizing

At the end of the season when frost threatens, cease watering, and move tropical plants indoors. For winter storage of the containers, remove the annual plant material, cover with plastic to keep out rainwater and place against the wall. Prune perennials and cover to protect from the rain and place against the wall. The containers may be damaged and crack if they fill with water and freeze.

"Where flowers bloom so does hope"



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Check it out! Lots of interesting news and information!



Cross Pollination June 2020 Issue

haltonmastergardeners.files.wordpress.com/2020/05/cross-pollination-2020-06.pdf



<https://mailchi.mp/e37de6a326c7/latest-from-oha?e=20c241d0cc>





A few words about food security concerns in NL will help
Provide the context for our choices of food
production.

These statements are from a recent report issued by Food
First NL:

- ❗ NL has the lowest number of farms of any Canadian province.
- ❗ Separated from the mainland of Canada by the Cabot Straight, we import 71 % of the food we eat.
- ❗ We have a 2-3 day supply of fresh produce if adverse Weather causes delays in ferry crossings.

❗ Unfortunately, there is a high burden of obesity, and chronic illnesses as well as food insecurity.
The NL government is actively engaged in increasing local food production. We are growing crops in partnership with the Department of Agriculture Vegetable Transplant Program.

This season we will be planting broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, turnip, onions, kale, romaine lettuce, kohlrabi, Brussels sprouts and Mary Washington asparagus. The asparagus transplant program is a new initiative this year. We must have our soil tested at the government's soil laboratory to see if we meet certain fertility parameters prior to receiving our order of 600 crowns.

In addition to our main crop of garlic, we also grow perennial crops of strawberries, rhubarb and Jerusalem artichokes. We have diversified our production of fruits and vegetables to meet the demands of the chefs of restaurants in the city of St. John's and to offer fresh food locally.

Kent and Albion everbearing strawberries grow well in our cool short season. Rhubarb is a hardy perennial loving cool temperatures and is the first crop we harvest in the spring. Our rhubarb field is the result of many years of dividing and transplanting a root originally brought here from Ireland more than 100 years ago. We care for this crop with spring and fall feedings of chicken manure. It is a heavy nitrogen feeder.

We are not sure of the market conditions this year because of Covid. The province has not yet opened up to tourist travel and this is a big part of restaurant traffic in the summer months. We may be selling our produce locally and supporting local food banks.

Here is the link to a recent radio interview with Jane Adey of the CBC in Newfoundland regarding the fishery and also our use of kelp for growing plants: <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-122-the-broadcast/clip/15777312-after-many-complications-harvesters-finally-fishing-oceans-secret-ingredient-for-growing-seaweed-in-your-soil>

In the next update, we will be showing how we plant our brassicas and grow them under hoop houses in tunnels. Fortunately, we love learning and experimenting with new crops.

Some surprises when we arrived home:



Marlene's Garden Pages

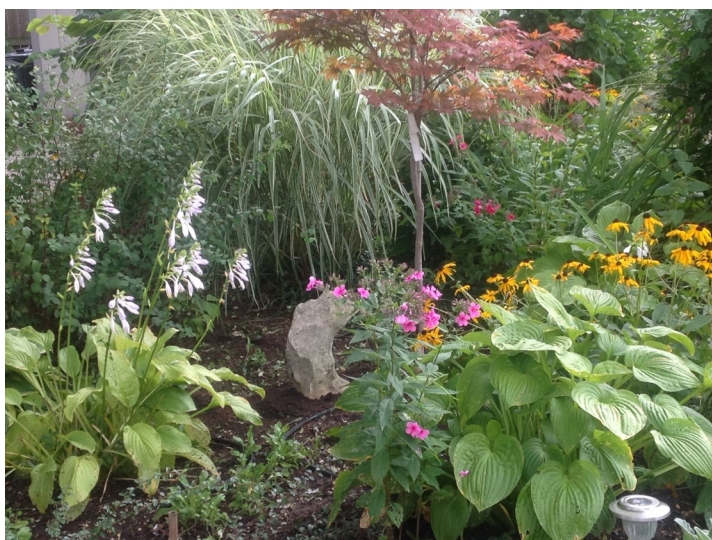
Arriving in Stratford seven years ago, I had high hopes for our piece of hard packed clay. Dreams can come true with sheer dogged determination and a lot of help from my friends. The help from the members of the SPHS has fuelled my passion for gardening. Meetings and workshops have given me a great source of local knowledge.

With the heavy lifting and hard landscaping finished, a garden emerged from one lonely Rose of Sharon, which has proudly taken centre stage since the 50's. After years of learning, truckloads of compost, and mistakes, the garden has taken on a life of its own and I am relaxing into it. Plants landed in the wrong places, were moved and babied, but through it all the beautiful hosta plants generously gifted from friends and family, have taken me on an unexpected journey.

The hosta is a hardy, bold sculptural species with versatility, from the first shoots unfurling in the spring to the last slimy frost bitten leaves in the fall. They have taken me on a rare journey through each of our challenging seasons. Spring comes on slowly, and my eyes search for the emergence of this season's fresh green shoots, pushing through the cold spring soil. The complete retreat of the plant from the surface makes you think they never existed. Patience. The fresh shoots in the spring are similar to asparagus but have a milder taste. I was a wee bit nervous to taste my first spiral sautéed shoots. Of course eating all the shoots wouldn't afford me the leaves for my paper making. In mid-summer I enjoy the lovely scented flowers which are a haven where birds and rabbits snooze. It is a restful time for sitting and sketching in the garden.

As a book artist and paper maker, I stumbled upon the fact that hosta are good specimens with interesting texture and colour. It excites me to create something from my own garden which I can use in my bookbinding. To plant, to watch, and then create something that continues to live, treasured forever in the pages of a book, reminds me of Monet's garden, where he planted only what he wanted to paint.

The paper making season begins in the summer with a bubbling pot of green hosta leaves on the bbq. The paper is a lovely shade of sap green. The heat of summer, and the chill of autumn produce a less than appetizing aroma. The question of what's for supper has come up from time to time. Waiting until after the first frost allows nature to do the retting for you (no cooking required). These leaves produce a soft yellow sheet of paper. By mid-October the slippery fibres left behind fill the freezer with bags of mushy leaves. Food what food? There was once a close call in the soup pot! The lovely slimy fibres thawed during the cold dark month of February and pulped into slurry for the vat, where the wooden screens dipped. The sheets are then couched onto felts, pressed and hung to dry. They will become pages in my books and cards. The smell permeating from the paper studio keeps the gardener's heart buoyed up until the spring. There is no waste in this plant. Any slurry at the bottom of the vat after papermaking goes into the compost to return once again to nature and begin the next season's rotation.



Marlene's Garden Pages continued....

The non-native plant is not invasive, so I relax about moving towards a naturalized garden. The semi-annual splitting of the hosta provides more fibres and compost. Needs must.

The garden also provides, lily of the valley, iris and grasses for my paper fetish. My garden in profusion, as I call it, provides pure artistic pleasure. Whatever happens, it's always an interesting journey with lots of surprises and joy. The fresh shades of summer greens and the warm autumn yellows promise beautiful paper when all else has faded away. The memories of four seasons.



For more information about paper making, I can recommend a book that covers lots of plants but it is a lot of work to be sure. Cooking, pulping and screening is no simple task.

Papermaking with Plants, Helen Heibert (Story Books)

Marlene Pomeroy, is a book artist and paper maker from Stratford Ontario, who also shares a love of gardening.



The Government of Ontario is fast-tracking development on farmland and greenspace in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, while keeping Ontarians in the dark. In April alone, Minister Steve Clark issued at least four Minister's Zoning Orders, one of them allowing the destruction of three provincially significant wetlands in Vaughan, unfairly circumventing the planning process.

Minister's Zoning Orders eliminate public participation in land-use planning and are not subject to appeal to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal. While we are dealing with the pandemic and preparing for recovery, the government should prioritize community and environmental health.

Please [join Ontario Nature](https://ontarionature.thankyou4caring.org/emailviewonwebpage.aspx?erid=5386708&trid=186520e9-c81a-4339-b67f-83c43d48af9e) in urging the Government of Ontario to curtail its use of Minister's Zoning Orders for land-use planning, and in demanding greater public accountability and enhanced community resilience to climate change. For more information , please visit our website:

<https://ontarionature.thankyou4caring.org/emailviewonwebpage.aspx?erid=5386708&trid=186520e9-c81a-4339-b67f-83c43d48af9e>

Sincerely,



Anne

Anne Bell,
Director of Conservation and Education



Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any other agency, organization, employer or company. Assumptions made in the analysis are not reflective of the position of any entity other than the author(s) – and, since we are critically-thinking human beings, these views are always subject to change, revision, and rethinking at any time.



government news news...

Winter Gardening

by
Sue Lawler

Bread Making

I'm lucky. I've been subjected to home isolation before. A couple of times.

Then, I learned that almost any mood could be lightened with a shovel, considerable sweat, and a warm shower – the triathlon of gardening. If outdoors was bleak, then indoor plants, especially flowering ones, saved me from pacing the cage.

And then a year ago, I fell upon 'winter gardening' – I mean baking bread.

Think of the similarities:

Digging into dough – or dirt - with unadorned fingers is transformational. There is something other worldly therapeutic here. It takes time. Things slow down to the task at hand. You notice stuff. Outdoors: toads and bird song. Indoors: the dough's pillowy feel, and of course those orchids....

Adventurously frizzed hairdos result from enthusiastic digging, or leaning into a 450 degree oven to spin a loaf.

Adding the simplest of elements creates a virtual playground – in the garden: colour and height. In the kitchen: herbs and fruits. Heady stuff for a regulator!

Any screw up can be pretty much repaired with more shoveling, another ½ kg of flour, and more wait time.

The downside? Bread dough and mud are as tenacious as any defiant executive of a staged bank. They permeate every crevice! Washing



them clean takes grit and determination (the crevices, not the executive).

Here's my recipe: give it a go.

Bakers prize a few things: a long process to develop flavour, with minimal commercial yeast (toss those breadmakers aside!). Maximum rise. A golden brown crust (caramelization adds more flavour). An even "crumb". Purists taste the bread only after its fully cooled – hah – who can wait?

Spoiler alert: there is no way back.

You will take on curious habits: frequent steps to the patio, just to return to the heady fragrance of that just-baked loaf. Armed with a thermometer, you will commandeer the warmest room in the house and unabashedly furnish it to maximize that rise.

And once all this is over, bereft neighbours will happily resume their roles as official tasters.

PS - commercial yeast is hard to find. Fear not! You adventurous types can make a sourdough starter with me. Amazingly easy, with a tad of patience.

Happy baking!



Kenneth C. Brown Dallying In The Dirt, Issue #363

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=rm#inbox/FMfcgwxHNWJQdBFWwmhpbKNSvLIGbVrR>

NATIONAL GARDENING ASSOCIATION

[https://garden.org/newsletter/view/2020-05-30/?](https://garden.org/newsletter/view/2020-05-30/?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=mail&utm_campaign=nl_2020-05-30)

[utm_source=nl&utm_medium=mail&utm_campaign=nl_2020-05-30](https://garden.org/newsletter/view/2020-05-30/?utm_source=nl&utm_medium=mail&utm_campaign=nl_2020-05-30)

Garden Making newsletter:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=rm#inbox/>



How North America's Botanic Gardens Are Growing Without Visitors

Watering and weeding can't wait until the pandemic has passed.

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS SHUTTERED countless workplaces for the foreseeable future. But a botanic garden isn't like most offices: The flowers and trees that live there don't pay any mind to human health or anxieties, and they need a hand from their caretakers, especially at this time of year. "Right now is the season when everything has to happen with garden collections," says Tim Johnson, director of the botanic garden at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts.

At Smith, students are learning remotely, and the college grounds are closed to the public, but the plants and trees are of course staying put. The botanic garden team is navigating the thorny question of how to take care of them in an era of social distancing. "Everything is waking up, everything is demanding attention, from the indoor collections to the outdoor collections," Johnson says.

To keep up with botanic gardens from a distance, you can peruse the Morton Arboretum's at-home educational offerings or check in on the Conservatory of Flowers's current stunners, including the giant water lily. The [Smith College Botanic Garden](#) and [Chicago Botanic Garden](#) are both blooming on social media. In the meantime, Atlas Obscura asked four botanic garden employees (including two Tim Johnsons—no relation!) how they're caring for their leafy green charges in the midst of a tumultuous spring.

How has COVID-19 changed your work?

Johnson, Smith College: On campus, we're spacing people out. We have an outdoor horticultural team and an indoor horticultural team, and both are temporally and spatially distancing—so they're working at different times during the day, and they're working in different parts of campus or different greenhouses. They have their own equipment—they're not sharing—and then we have space gatekeepers, so that before an employee enters indoor spaces, they need to get a hold of other staff, to make sure that they're not going to be there. As much as possible, they're using different doorways, even entering through different corridors.

Most of our teams aren't yet working on-campus full time—they're working remotely some of the time. Half of all our gardeners' work is actually curatorial, so at home they are making sure that their records and databases are up to speed. They are always in planning mode, always looking at what material they need to be bringing in, what they can source, and how the collection might evolve over the long term. Those roles don't go away.

Kris Bachtell, vice president of collections and facilities at The Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois: The Morton Arboretum is working with a skeleton crew on the 1,700-acre grounds. Very small crews come in later in the day than normal. When grounds crew employees are on-site for work, they wear face masks. They keep their distance from one another, many wear gloves, and they are sanitizing everything that they touch, from doorknobs to tools.



did you know.....

How North America's Botanic Gardens continued.....

Maryam Nabi, director of marketing and communications at the Conservatory of Flowers in San Francisco, California: The Conservatory only has four master horticulturists on site daily to address critical needs for the plant collection, including watering, climate control, and making sure the Conservatory remains in operation. Horticulturists are isolating themselves at work and are vigilant about disinfecting shared surfaces.

Tim D. Johnson, senior director of horticulture at the Chicago Botanic Garden: Most staff are receiving communication through email. Meetings are conducted either via Zoom or in parking lots to adhere to social distancing recommendations. Critical staff are taking the same preventive measures as in any other public space, such as washing hands or using hand sanitizer often and maintaining the recommended six feet of social distancing.

What's a typical day like for the horticulturalists right now? What needs to be completed every day?

Johnson, Smith College: They're sort of down to what is actually essential—watering, critical weeding. We have a large arboretum on campus, and horticulturists are scanning the entire arboretum every two days, making sure that everything is safe and they're not seeing any wind damage or new tree damage.

Bachtell, Morton Arboretum: The most time-sensitive and critical tasks are the only ones being done during this time. We're keeping plants alive by monitoring for pests and diseases, and we're controlling invasive species and the maintenance of plants.

Taking care of the Arboretum's greenhouse plants requires daily care. Young plants are vulnerable and they have to be monitored more carefully. Our routine checklist includes checking the cooling systems generators, because if they stop working and it gets too hot, all of the plants could die. Checking the cooling systems is a 365-days-a-year task.

Johnson, Chicago Botanic Garden: Tasks with a high priority include time-sensitive pruning, cleaning up garden beds, and planting perennials, trees, and shrubs before the warm weather comes. We have also emphasized displays in the Regenstein Fruit & Vegetable Garden because of the increased interest in growing food this year. The food produced there will be distributed through our Windy City Harvest urban agriculture program. The Chicago Botanic Garden manages the Farm on Ogden and 17 Windy City Harvest urban farms, which are also closed to the public—but we are still operating and growing produce at those locations. With aquaponics, we're harvesting approximately 2,500 heads of lettuce a week, and also harvesting overwintered carrots, spinach, arugula, and other winter crops. As we retool our distribution model to support emergency food needs, we are adjusting to crops that are more approachable for a broader audience and can be stored for longer periods of time.

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Education is very important, and the botanical garden is the place to do that. I grew up in a semi-rural area and learned from that being my playground.
— Nell Newman



How North America's Botanic Gardens continued.....

Are there other tasks you'd typically be doing that are a little more lax right now?

Johnson, Smith College: We've cut back on new plantings and new garden spaces because we don't want to commit to watering and managing those spaces this year. We typically plant dozens and dozens of new trees every year, but we've cut back to only those trees which have to be moved right now, lest they become too tall and too large to actually move.

Bachtell, Morton Arboretum: Routine grooming is not happening. For example, there are no natural area burns happening that are otherwise routinely done.

Johnson, Chicago Botanic Garden: We have eliminated tasks that require more than one person, such as moving large containers and planting large trees. We are not mulching beds as much or mowing the lawn as frequently. We want to avoid letting the grass go to seed, so we have not eliminated mowing altogether.

Are any tasks easier without other people around?

Bachtell, Morton Arboretum: Not having visitors around has been unusual—it's so quiet. But it's easier taking down hazardous limbs or trees, with less safety concerns.

Nabi, Conservatory of Flowers: With visitors gone, it's easier to complete some significant pruning to ensure the collection remains healthy—mostly palms in our [lowland tropics gallery](#)—and to complete some deep cleaning.

Johnson, Chicago Botanic Garden: While we are temporarily closed, there is no need to worry about blocking paths or cleaning up debris while working—we can clean up at the end of the day instead of as we go. We have also taken this opportunity to renovate some of our turf grass areas that see a lot of foot traffic from visitors. After being seeded, they will benefit from no one walking on the lawn while they establish good growth.

Some scientists who work with living organisms have taken them home from labs, so they're now hunkering down with dozens of cockroaches or spiders. Did anyone wind up taking plants home with them?

Johnson, Smith College: We don't have anything that's so finicky that it really has to be cared for that way, and we have horticulturalists that are taking care of the collection every single day. But when I was able to safely do so, and before the campus was closed down, I did grab some of my office plants just because I missed my space. I missed being so close to so much green. I have a Peperomia that I was neglecting, and my curators took it because I was killing it in my office. I thought, during this time, I'd bring it home, and it's doing okay—it's a little unhappy with me. Then I have an unidentified ericaceous plant, a little relative of blueberry; it lost the plant tag long ago. I macraméd a little plant hanger, and I've got it hanging in a window. I think a lot of members of our team have increased their gardening at home, or have maybe indulged in a few more houseplants than they do normally.

Accredited to: **JESSICA LEIGH HESTER ATLAS OBSCURA**



Visit the Chicago Botanic Garden virtually by entering the following address:

<https://www.chicagobotanic.org/spring>



did you know.....

History of the Apricot Chapter - 2

Mohamed el-Shalati, whose Damascus company makes a popular brand of *amardine*, is one of many manufacturers who process and market the paste today. The "rotund, mustachioed, and avuncular" el-Shalati, as writer Ken Gould describes him, has sometimes gone to dangerous lengths to snare the fruit. He and his son, Ahmed, have traveled to Mataya, the apricot capital of Turkey, near the Syrian border, in search of their prize.

"Between avoiding Turkish army checkpoints and local brigands levying tolls on mountain passes, Mohamed and Ahmed have to cope with heat of more than 40 degrees C and narrow roads," Gould recounts. In el-Shalati's Damascus factory, the apricots are reduced to a pulp in copper pots and then put through huge sieves. Steady heating and stirring finally yields a paste that is dried under nets on the factory roof for 48 hours.

Most of us do not get to experience the glories of a succulent, ripe apricot. Instead, we make do with dried or canned fruit. We are deprived of this joy because modern shipping and marketing practices demand that the fruit be picked before it fully ripens on the tree. "I get docked for ripe fruit," grower George Bonacich tells fruit expert David Karp. As a result, shoppers are confronted with a pallid apricot. "Those harvested early to make them easier to transport are often a woolly, watery disappointment," English food writer Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall observes.

A few farmers have attempted to break the mold and develop a fruit closer to the apricot's Eastern ancestors. John Driver, a Northern California agriculturist, has hunted for Central Asian varieties where the old Silk Road kingdoms were located. In this "hub of diversity," the home to the widest spectrum of the fruit, Driver found sweet, intensely flavored apricots in many shapes and colors: "There really is a tremendous amount of different apricots out there," he told Adam Gollner, a Canadian food writer. "Unlike Western apricots—invariably tawny or orange-yellow, occasionally flecked with reds—Eastern ones range in color from purple-black to cream-colored with a rosy blush. They can be small as a pea or as big as a tennis ball, as sweet as honey or [as] acrid as cat pee on burnt toast."

Driver took the seeds back to his Northern California farm and soon was growing several varieties. Because Eastern apricots usually required colder winters than California's, his achievement was all the more stunning. Driver marketed his apricots as "CandyCot Apricots: The Sweetest Thing on Earth," twice as sweet as the typical fruit. Contrary to industry convention, he shipped his products fully ripe. His apricots traveled in foam-padded boxes to prevent bruising. "Maybe I'm crazy, but I think the industry needs to reexamine how they're selling fruit," he told writer Karp. "If I were a consumer, this is what I'd want."

While we wait for a more ideal apricot, we can still appreciate the yearlong pleasures of *amardine*. I remember waiting expectantly while the sheet of apricot steeped in a bowl of cold water in my apartment. The liquid gradually took on a bright orange hue. I waited expectantly. Sipping the thick, rough-hewn drink, with its intense apricoty flavor, I felt a strong kinship with the English writer Edward Bunyard, who wrote a rapturous ode to the fruit: "... In some Persian Palace whose quiet garden hears only the tinkle of a fountain, it would seem to find its right setting."

Accredited to: **Joel S. Denke:** Excerpt adapted from *The Carrot Purple and Other Curious Stories of the Food We Eat* (2015)



Apricots are those beautifully orange colored fruits full of beta-carotene and fiber that are one of the first signs of summer. Although dried and canned apricots are available year-round, fresh apricots with a plentiful supply of vitamin C and are in season in North America from May through August. Any fresh fruit you see during the winter months have been imported from either South America or New Zealand.



The Plight of the **Blenheim Apricot**

North Americans may lose the Blenheim apricot to their own ludicrous standards for produce. These petite morsels, modest in blush and often mottled of skin, bruise if you look at them the wrong way. They also soften from the inside out, not only compelling farmers to pick those with a green tinge but concealing perfectly ripe fruit beneath a squeeze-check that says “not yet.” They are finicky and unremarkable-looking fruits in a world of dazzling, uniform produce.

Behind these “imperfections,” however, lays the sublime: One writer claims Blenheims are “the apricot that reminds you of what [the] fruit is supposed to taste like.” They neatly balance sweetness and acidity while carrying an aroma of honeysuckle. Prized for drying and canning, velvety Blenheims are perfectly delicious out of hand as well. What this varietal may lack in size, durability, and presentation is more than made up for in flavor.

These understated apricots once dominated the American produce aisle. When European fruit sources ran dry during World War I, U.S. demand for heretofore imported apricots skyrocketed—no easy task to resolve domestically for a fruit with highly specific soil needs and a short peak-harvest window. California’s Sacramento Valley proved a happy home for the picky fruit, blanketing the region by the end of the 1920s. However, with competition from dried Turkish apricots and the increased suburbanization of farmlands in the latter half of the 20th century, industry waned: 32,000 tons of Blenheims produced in 1988 dropped to 4,000 tons in 2007.

With their backs against the wall, Blenheims must now make their stand, at the farm-stand. Much to the dismay of East Coasters and Middle America, the bruise-prone fruit travels poorly and turns quickly, discouraging Californian growers from shipping out of state. Thus, the arena of the Blenheim’s survival is limited to the Golden State, where a handful of farmers, purveyors, and restaurants are working to maintain this perfectly imperfect varietal.

Attributed to: **Gastro Obscura**



did you know.....



Disappearing delicacy: The beloved Blenheim apricot is vanishing!!



The Triumphant Return of France's 'Forgotten Vegetables'

Chefs are helping hardy roots overcome a World War II stigma.

At the onset of the Occupation in 1940, Nazi troops seized about 80 percent of French food production, including about a quarter of its produce and half of its meat. They focused on choice products like potatoes, leaving the French with scraps. Before World War II, vegetables such as rutabaga and Jerusalem artichoke had been relegated to animal feed, but they soon became the centerpieces of French tables.

It's no surprise that the French, who survived off of these hardy vegetables for nine years, could no longer bear the sight of them when rationing finally ended in 1949. Eggplants, zucchini, and potatoes returned to market stalls, but many other easy-to-grow root vegetables were palpably absent, so much so that when they finally started to appear on restaurant menus decades later, they were dubbed *les légumes oubliés*: the forgotten vegetables.

Fred Pouillot, owner of the Parisian culinary school Le Foodist, grew up in central France. To this day, he says, his 86-year-old mother "despises rutabagas."

"She said that *topinambours* (Jerusalem artichokes) were the only thing she remembers eating during the war that was good," he says. "But she has never cooked them again."

Culinary historian Patrick Rambourg echoes this experience. "In families where grandparents had lived through that difficult period, there was absolutely no question of them appearing on their tables," he explains. "They just contributed to the idea of everything that was so horrible about the Occupation."

The war was just the nail in the coffin for many of these vegetables. Jerusalem artichokes, in particular, were small, difficult to peel, and caused digestive distress when eaten in excess, as did kohlrabi, which was usually only consumed by France's poorest.

Still others had been replaced by tastier stand-ins long before the Occupation. When the potato was first introduced to France in the 17th century, it was rumored to cause leprosy and the plague. Thanks to the marketing genius of [Antoine-Augustin Parmentier](#), potatoes later began to take the place that had been occupied by parsnips on French tables since the Middle Ages. As a result, the white winter root began its long fade into oblivion. r cooked them again."

It wasn't until the early 2000s that many of these vegetables once again took root in the hearts and on the menus of the French. Loïc Martin, owner of wine bar Martin and restaurant Robert, claims their renaissance arrived with the "bistronomy" movement. The term, coined by French journalist and food critic Sébastien Démonand in 2004, refers to a trend away from fussy cuisine towards honest bistro food made with local products. Humble, old-fashioned root vegetables turned out to be "ingredients corresponding with this philosophy," he explains.

Compounded with the influence of Japanese and Anglo-Saxon chefs, "forgotten" vegetables soon began appearing with startling regularity on French tables. Liran Tal, the Israeli chef of Baba Marais, is a "big fan of forgotten vegetables."

"My cuisine is based on local, seasonal ingredients combined with Mediterranean influences and cooking techniques from around the world," he explains. "When it comes to forgotten vegetables, I like charring kohlrabi or rutabaga in a charcoal oven, slicing it thinly like a carpaccio, and serving it with olive oil and date vinegar."

But part of this trend is also about a return, not just to root vegetables, but to the historical roots of French cuisine. Kristen Beddard, the American founder of the Kale Project, which sought to reintroduce kale to French farms and tables beginning in 2012, recalls how much easier it was to sell locals on kale's history, rather than the health benefits that so captivated its American proponents. "At the end of the day, the French don't fall for food fads," she says. This attitude,



The Triumphant Return of France's 'Forgotten Vegetables' continued....

Explains Rambourg, is part of a greater trend: one of finding the exotic, not from far-flung lands, but from home. "We hold onto something that's linked to our own land, to our own agriculture," he says. "It's reassuring to eat something like that, because the global environment, in recent history, is not reassuring."

This culinary nostalgia is far from a uniquely French issue, according to Ken Albala, food historian and professor of history at the University of the Pacific. "My mother's generation, who grew up in the Depression, ate just unspeakable things," he says, citing lungs, which are now illegal to sell for consumption* in the U.S. "She kind of looked at those with nostalgia but would never make them for the family," he says. "Even though she didn't leave the home to work, she used convenience foods. She was totally into modernity and technology and science and instant everything." The generation that followed, he explains, "is exactly the opposite," with their love for everything from sourdough to home-made charcuterie.

But Albala believes that the current subsistence cooking trend is approaching its end. "It's been at least 15 years or so now that the do-it-yourself, craft, cook-from-home movement has been going," he says "Since the first economic downturn." He believes that we are poised for another period of high-tech cooking, like the convenience foods of the 50s or the molecular gastronomy of the 90s. "Once this is all over and the economy is back, I think people are going to get tired of the do-it-yourself again," he muses.

In France, the pendulum will likely swing as well, but perhaps not so violently. As is often the case in France, trends are more subtle and tend to leave their mark for longer than in the U.S. "Consumers have found their way back to the farm," says Martin. He doesn't think they will leave that behind so easily. And after all, despite being back on the culinary landscape for a few years, Jerusalem artichokes and rutabagas are still only eaten occasionally, Rambourg explains. "They aren't common vegetables."

"As far as Paris is concerned, I personally find that the offer at markets is very limited," echoes Pouillot. "I can always find red beetroots, somewhat easily *topinambours* and parsnips, sometimes crosnes and salsify. Rarely original beets or *cerfeuil tubéreux* (turnip-rooted chervil), and never *ficoide glaciale* (common ice plant) or *pourpier* (purslane)."

But even if these vegetables remain uncommon, one thing is for certain: They have successfully been dissociated, if not in collective memory, at least in individual memory, from times of hardship.

"Maybe we needed to wait for the second or third generation," remarks Rambourg. "We're moving away from this history and this painful past of the Occupation. In time, you know. Not in our memories."

did you know.....



In Hawai'i, researchers work to slow the rapid death of a beloved tree



'Ōhi'a lehua trees are the most biologically and culturally important native tree in the Hawaiian Islands. They comprise most of the trees in native forests and support a variety of wildlife, including endangered Hylaeus bees and Hawaiian birds.

Rapid 'ōhi'a death, a fungal disease, has affected more than 71,000 hectares (175,000 acres) of forest on the Island of Hawai'i since around 2008, and has been detected on the islands of Kaua'i, O'ahu, and Maui.

Researchers say they are hopeful in the fight against ROD because some trees seem to show resilience against the disease, and they are exploring ways to limit its spread.

Hawaiian myth says that 'ōhi'a lehua trees were created by Pele, the goddess of fire and creator of the Hawaiian islands. Spurned by a handsome young warrior, 'Ōhi'a, she turned him into a twisted tree; the other gods, out of pity, turned his heartbroken lover, Lehua, into a flower, so that they would be joined

together forever.

Today, 'ōhi'a lehua trees are suffering for a different reason: a fungal disease called rapid 'ōhi'a death (ROD) is spreading swiftly through Hawaiian forests and killing the trees.

When the pathogen was first identified in 2014, the potential damage seemed catastrophic.

"The future looked bleak," said Lisa Keith, a research plant pathologist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service. "We really thought in a matter of years, there wasn't going to be a healthy 'ōhi'a forest."

There's still a lot scientists don't know. But now, there are some bright spots in eradication efforts. Scientists have successfully implemented decontamination stations in sensitive areas on the Big Island, where ROD is more widespread, and there's a better understanding about why trees are vulnerable to it.

ROD works by blocking the transport of water through trees; the leaves die first, followed by the rest of the tree. The fungus is comprised of two strains of Ceratocystis pathogen: *C. lukuohia* and *C. huliohia*. *C. lukuohia* is more widespread and aggressive than *C. huliohia*, but both result in the death of the trees.

ROD mortality was first observed aerially on Hawai'i Island around 2008-2010, and Keith estimates it was introduced at least a decade before that. It's possible *C. huliohia* was present even earlier.

"The current thinking is that *C. huliohia* has been in the islands much longer than *C. lukuohia*, and while capable of killing 'ōhi'a trees, went unnoticed until the more aggressive *lukuohia* was discovered," she said.

The pathogens first came to public attention in 2014, when large swaths of trees were infected on the Big Island. ROD can only infect trees if the bark is damaged and the inner wood exposed, said J.B. Friday, extension forester at the University of Hawai'i (UH), in an interview. He said he believes that damage to trees from Hurricane Iselle that year might have left them open to infection by the pathogen.

Since ROD arrived, it has spread to more than 71,000 hectares (175,000 acres) on the Big Island, and has been detected on Kaua'i, O'ahu, and Maui as well.

Because it is more prevalent on the Big Island, efforts there focus on containment rather than eradication.



In Hawai'i, researchers work to slow the rapid death continued

But scientists respond to every report of the pathogen on other islands, and in Kona and Kohala on the Big Island, where it hasn't yet proliferated. Most of the time, infected trees are felled so that they're less likely to spread pathogen spores, unless the forest is dense and other trees would be damaged.

Researchers are also working to understand more about the disease and how it spreads.

"One of the key principles that we study is called the disease triangle," Keith said. "You have your fungus, you have a susceptible host, and you have the environment." She is assessing each of these to determine whether there's a way to combat the pathogen.

In her lab, she is inoculating seedlings with the fungus and studying their response. Some show resilience against it, which means they might be able to be used for future replanting efforts.

The fungus seems to prefer humid, low-elevation environments. Keith has tested trees at various elevations and found that those higher up seem to be protected somehow. "They're susceptible, you have the pathogen, but because of the environment they don't actually get the disease," she said. "On the other hand, a tree at sea level could be dead in 45 days."

Keith is also involved in the testing of samples, and recently developed a molecular test that can determine within hours whether the fungus is present, and if so, which strain. Previous testing methods could take up to a month.

Scientists are studying ways to reduce damage to the trees' bark. Everyday human activity such as mowing grass or trimming trees can leave gashes, Friday said. "We've seen many cases where, for example, someone puts in a driveway and they prune all the trees along the driveway, and they'll all die," he said. And in areas without humans, natural events such as winds or storms can still cause branches to come down.

Beetles and wild ungulates are also thought to play a role in the pathogen's spread. Boring beetles are attracted to dead and dying 'ōhi'a wood, and they create dust that can spread and contaminate other trees. Cattle and goats can cause damage to bark, and researchers are studying whether feral pigs may also make the trees more susceptible by damaging their roots.

A [2016 study](#) found that feral pigs were introduced to Hawai'i by Polynesians up to 800 years ago, not by Captain Cook, as was widely believed. But the pigs pose a danger to Hawaiian forests, because when they root among the dirt, they dislodge native plants, which can then leave forests more vulnerable to invasive species.

The damage done depends on how healthy the forest is, Friday said. For example, losing a single tree in a native forest wouldn't have a large impact. But in a location where invasive species are growing in the understory, loss of a native 'ōhi'a tree would leave an opening for those species to grow.

Hunting pigs is a popular pastime among many residents, and officials have also allowed it as a means to control populations.

ROD can additionally be transported through vehicles, people, and wood from infected trees. But it doesn't spread in a clear pattern, and not all trees are affected, even at low elevations.

"You will see brown leaves on one tree, but its neighbor right next door looks healthy," Keith said.

New developments in eradication efforts include a remote-sensing system and a branch-sampling device that can take wood samples in remote locations. Both were created in 2019 by Ryan Perroy, an associate professor of geography and principle investigator at the UH Hilo Spatial Data Analysis and Visualization lab. For the sampling device, he modified an existing drone from Swiss researchers at ETH Zürich.

The branch sampler still has some technical problems to work out before it is fully operational.

Sometimes ROD doesn't spread all the way out to the tips of branches, or if it does, the branches become so brittle that they can't be transported. However, sawing off larger branches would create dust, which researchers want to avoid.

did you know.....



In Hawai'i, researchers work to slow the rapid death continued

Still, the device would allow researchers to verify the presence of the disease. "We could then send people in if it was determined to be worthwhile to do so," Perroy said.

The scientists encourage residents to avoid transporting wood or injuring 'ōhi'a, and to clean tools, clothing, shoes and even vehicles before and after entering forests. They successfully implemented a program to decontaminate hikers and tour operators in sensitive areas, which tourists enthusiastically comply with, Friday said.

In 2011, Hawai'i enacted "The Rain Follows the Forest" Watershed Initiative, which protected critical watersheds from invasive species. For example, invasive strawberry guava forests lose 27% more water than native 'ōhi'a forests. The project included fencing to exclude feral ungulates.

Friday envisions something similar to protect 'ōhi'a, while allowing less sensitive areas to remain open for hunting.

There are still more questions to answer. For example, how far can the dust spread? Can it infect only nearby trees, or can it travel between islands? Why does ROD infect some trees and not others?

There is another bright spot, according to Friday. "Nobody likes Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death," he jokes. "There are people defending strawberry guava, people defending mangroves when we've tried to do mangrove eradication, but there are no fans of Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death here. Everybody's on the same page with that."

Accredited to: Shannon Brown Mongabay News and Inspiration from Nature's Frontline

did you know.....

Do you have these pretty flowers in your garden? Guess what!!!!



Garlic mustard is an invasive herb native to Europe. It was brought to North America in the early 1800s for use as an edible herb. Available in the early spring and high in vitamins A and C, it has a strong, distinctive smell similar to garlic. Since its arrival in North America it has escaped into the wild and is now one of Ontario's most aggressive forest invaders.

Garlic mustard has two distinct life stages over its first two years. In the first year, it grows only a cluster of leaves shaped like a rosette, while a strong root system develops. Plants that survive the winter produce flowers and hundreds of seeds in their second year. Dense stands produce more than 60,000 seeds per square metre. Stands of garlic mustard can double in size every four years.

Garlic mustard seeds are easily spread by people and animals. They can remain in the soil for up to 30 years and still be able to sprout. The plant can grow in a wide range of sunny and fully shaded habitats, including undisturbed forest, forest edges, riverbanks and roadsides. Garlic mustard does not provide a valuable food source for native wildlife.

For more information, please visit the following sites:

[https://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/](https://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/OIPC_BMP_GarlicMustard.pdf)

[OIPC BMP GarlicMustard.pdf](https://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/OIPC_BMP_GarlicMustard.pdf)

<http://www.invadingspecies.com/garlic-mustard/>



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June 1, 2020

Katharine Smyth
President
Ontario Horticultural Association
pres4oha@gmail.com

Dear Katharine;

Today marks the beginning of Local Food Week in Ontario. This year's recognition is very different from the celebrations that we have enjoyed in the past. However, what remains the same is my thanks and appreciation to you for being agri-food heroes during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Thank you for continuing to work under difficult circumstances to ensure that Ontarians have access to healthy, locally grown and produced food. You are the agri-food heroes that we are recognizing and celebrating this Local Food Week in Ontario.

As you know, Ontario's agri-food sector has been a major contributor to the province's economy for many years. This year more than ever, your hard work is critical to keeping the food supply chain strong, ensuring locally grown and made food is available in grocery stores and on kitchen tables across the province. The level of reassurance and comfort your work has provided for all Ontarians during this unprecedented time can't be measured and we are grateful for your efforts.

While the province begins to cautiously and carefully reopen workplaces, nothing is more important than the health and well-being of Ontarians. To support our farming and food processing sector in delivering the essential service it provides, we're enhancing training and educational safeguards in these workplaces related to stopping the spread of COVID-19. We remain dedicated to protecting the health and safety of workers throughout the food supply chain. Without the commitment of our farmers, food processors, grocery store workers, truck drivers and restaurant staff, Ontario would not have the strong agri-food sector that it does.

During Local Food Week, we are reminding consumers to buy locally grown and made food. When shopping online, in grocery stores, at farmers markets or on-farm markets, looking for that Foodland Ontario logo has never been more important. Buying and supporting local food makes a difference in communities across the province because it supports our agri-food sector and the re-opening of Ontario's economy.

As we begin to establish a 'new normal' in Ontario, we all have a role to play in Ontario's local food system. By supporting each other and working collaboratively, we will move forward and be stronger – together.

Stay healthy and safe.

Ernie Hardeman
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs



Good things grow in Ontario
À bonne terre, bons produits

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