

CROSS POLLINATION

Halton Master Gardeners Monthly Newsletter
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Halton Region
Master Gardeners



Spotted Bee Balm, What's All the Buzz About?

By Pam MacDonald, Halton Master Gardener

This year's "it" plant is stealing the show. It has both high fashion and high function to offer gardeners.

Spotted Bee Balm, *Monarda punctata*, has a flower that Carmen Miranda would envy. Bees and parasitic wasps adore this plant. From summer to autumn I can hear the buzz of bees and wasps nectaring and collecting pollen from the far side of my garden.

Spotted Bee Balm is beautiful from a distance and intriguing up close. It is a good choice for a mass planting.



Image: [The Telegraph](#)


It has a bushy rounded shape and from a distance the flowers appear white with a hint of pink or mauve. It is when you get up close that the flower is really intriguing. The bracts surrounding the actual flower are stacked layers of pinks, purples, white and green, and are reminiscent of a pineapple .. or Carmen Miranda's turban.

Cover Image: Pam MacDonald

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Spotted Bee Balm (Cont'd)

In the wild *Monarda punctata* grows in dry meadows and prairie environments. In a garden it does well with dry to medium moisture and full sun to light shade. At 24 to 36 inches it is a relatively short plant. I like it in front, and framing a jumble of *Agastache foeniculum* (anise hyssop) and *Monarda fistulosa* (wild bergamot). The variety of shapes in multiple shades of blue, purple and pink is a feast for the eyes and the flowers provide a feast for bees and wasps...and that is what the buzz is all about.

Some other useful info—it is short lived but self seeds, not too aggressively. Unlike many prairie/meadow plants it does *not* have a tap root. It is easy to move, split ... and share. 

- Read More:**
- [Monarda punctata](#) - North Carolina Extension Gardener
 - [Restoring The Landscape With Native Plants](#) Minnesota Wildflowers

The natural range of *Monarda punctata*



[USDA Plant Database](#)

Pollinators Attracted

Moderately attractive: bees including large carpenter bees, digger bees, and bumble bees.

Pests Attracted

Highly attractive: lygus bugs and leaf beetles.
Moderately attractive: leafhoppers.
Mildly attractive: thrips and weevils.

Source: [Michigan University](#)



Some of the pollinators visiting the author's garden. Images: P. MacDonald

JUNE 'TO-DO' LIST

by Claudette Sims, Halton Master Gardener

- Perennials** – Stake and support tall plants (e.g., peonies, delphiniums) or give them a "[Chelsea chop](#)" (e.g., [ironweed](#), asters, goldenrods) to keep them shorter and encourage more stems and blooms.
- Roses** – Prune laterals of climbing roses to 6-8" / 16-20 cm after blooming to keep them flowering. Here's a [great video](#) on how to do it!
- Prune** spring-flowering shrubs after they have bloomed as necessary. Overgrown shrubs may benefit from [rejuvenation pruning](#).
- Veggies** – Stake or cage vegetables like tomatoes and beans as needed. Mound potatoes to maximize production and protect tubers from sun exposure.
- Direct-sow** warm season veggies such as corn, beans, cukes and squash, and flowering annuals such as nasturtiums and cosmos.
- Lawn** – Feed soil with fine compost or organic fertilizer. Mow high (3" / 7.5 cm). Pull weeds on a weekly basis. More information on healthy lawns at [this link](#).
- Weeding** – Watch for [bindweed](#), [Epitactis helleborine](#), [European buckthorn](#), [multiflora rose](#) & [Norway maple](#) seedlings, and [garlic mustard](#).
- Invasive plants** – Remove the 28 invasive plants as recommended by the Auditor General of Ontario's [Management of Invasive Species Report \(p. 23 & 26\)](#).



Check our map of [nurseries in Ontario](#) to find a nursery near you. Native plant nurseries are indicated with a green star.



- House plants** – Gradually place outside for a 'holiday' to a shady protected area, then move to a suitable sun or shade location as needed.
- Pest Control & Pollination Services** – Remember that most bugs just eat other bugs. Plant native plants & small-flowered plants like dill, fennel, parsley, and alyssum to attract [beneficial insects](#) including [hover flies](#) which are aphid assassins as well as great pollinators!
- Squash bugs** – all you need is duct tape and this [cool video!](#)
- Japanese beetles** appear in June. Take necessary steps for their control: hand pick, knock into a bucket of soapy water, or use a hand vacuum to suck them up!
- Earwigs** – Trap in paper straws (paper rolled up and secured with masking tape) left in the garden where earwigs are present. Each day, tap the paper straw against a bucket of soapy water to empty the trap, then return to the garden.

Consider Adding These Native Plants to Dry Shade Areas of Your Garden

[Wild Geranium](#)



[Purple Flowering Raspberry](#)



[Bluestem Goldenrod](#)



[Elymus hystrix](#)



Naturalized Landscapes & Municipal Bylaws

by Janet Mackey, Halton Master Gardener



Milkweed in Doreen Nicoll's front yard of her home in North Burlington . [Hamilton News](#)

'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder', but sometimes there are other forces at play. Municipal bylaws and neighbour complaints can result in conflicts sometimes leading to garden plants being removed and fines levied. Many of us have listened to speakers such as Lorraine Johnson, Douglas Tallamy, or our own Claudette Sims and Catherine Kavassalis (Halton Master Gardeners and founders of [CCIPR](#) - Canadian Coalition for Invasive Species Regulation), about the crisis in biodiversity, loss of habitat and the effects of climate change. We are asked to change how we garden, include native plants for critically endangered species and care for our landscapes as though they were part of the natural areas beyond our garden. We're eager, we're ready but, we wonder, are we allowed? No one wants to be met with the bylaw officer examining our garden. Perhaps you're also thinking, "How will my neighbours feel about this type of garden?" Maybe you're more of the mind that you *want* to make a statement in spite of these possible roadblocks.

The good news is that things are changing. Municipal bylaws are slowly catching up to the science behind transforming your garden into a biodiverse oasis. Conventional neighbourhoods no longer have only vast expanses of turfgrass. This is in large part to organizations such as [Burlington Green](#), [Green Venture](#) (Hamilton), and individuals such as [Doreen Nicoll in Burlington](#) (article to left) speaking up and working together with municipal officials to make changes. Hamilton is now a '[Bee City](#)', and resources such as the [Hamilton Pollinator Paradise Project](#) and [Butterfly Way Hamilton](#) support gardeners as they transition their

landscapes. There is even recognition for ecological gardens through [The Monarch Awards](#) in the City of Hamilton.

Where Are Municipal Bylaws Now?

Here's an overview of some of the pertinent bylaws in our local communities. This month, the Cities of Hamilton and Burlington (next month, Oakville and Milton) are featured.

City of Hamilton:

- Pertinent Bylaw: [By-law No. 10-118](#) being a by-law to regulate exterior Property Maintenance, including vegetation, vegetation waste and graffiti.
- Every owner or occupant of property shall keep vegetation in the yard of their property clean and cleared up.
 - If located inside the urban boundary that is equal to or less than 0.4 ha in area, to keep all plants cut to a height of equal to or less than 21 cm, **except**:
 - ornamental plants;
 - shrubs or trees;
 - cultivated fruits or vegetables;
 - plants buffering or otherwise protecting a natural feature such as a watercourse;
- to remove all [noxious weeds](#) (open the link to see the list)

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NATURALIZED LANDSCAPES & MUNICIPAL BYLAWS

I think this bylaw allows for a great variety of gardens within the City of Hamilton. It means that **all plants**, except those on the noxious weed list, can be included in a garden landscape. Homeowners do, however, need to take care and weed out the undesirable weeds on the list from [OMAFRA](#) .

Tamara Reid, Supervisor of Operations and Enforcement for the City of Hamilton, stated in 2018 for the Hamilton Pollinator Paradise Project that:

"...demonstrating intention is key. It is helpful to have even a hand-drawn image of what you are aiming for--what your garden is intended to look like. You can show that to a by-law officer and that helps."

Tamara suggests having some visual demarcations like logs or rocks, different heights of grasses or plants, to help guide the eye so that the garden looks planned. Including borders, (i.e. using the same plant repeatedly or using an edging material) helps a garden look purposeful and organized.

Note to self:

- Create a drawing of the garden
- Include:
 - plants of different heights
 - add focal points, decorative pieces (e.g., logs, rocks, sitting area, bee bath, water feature)
 - access through paths
- Have a defined border



Paul Ruan's garden has been told it's in compliance of Burlington updated bylaws (2019) [Burlington Gazette](#)

In the city of **Burlington**, the *Lot Maintenance Bylaw* was updated recently (2019) after several confrontations with bylaw officers visiting homes with naturalized gardens, and after having received complaints from neighbouring properties. The mayor has addressed the updates on her webpage ([Mayor Marian Meade Ward](#)). There appears, however, to be some confusion between the mayor's comments and the new bylaw. Specifically, this quote from the mayor's webpage:

There are numerous examples across the City of naturalized lawns where no enforcement action is taken due to the manner in which the lawns are carefully grown, maintained and cared for and where a buffer strip is maintained.

The City's bylaw defines a "buffer strip" as cutting all grass and ground cover within three (3) feet of any adjoining property line. Similar bylaws exist across municipalities within Ontario.

However, in the actual by-law it states that a buffer strip is **only** required on larger properties (greater than 0.4 ha). The wording in the by-law is what residents should follow.

In addition it's noted that in section 5.1, residents are advised to:

5.1 ...maintain the lot on their property free from any nests of bees, wasps, hornets, rodents, vermin, insects or other pests.



Really...bees and insects? Have they not read the news recently? I know people don't enjoy 'vermin', wasps or hornets, although they do exist everywhere and have a purpose in most settings. I'm sure it was just a 'blanket statement' from years ago that was overlooked in this recent review. Insects such as bees, are exactly why most of us have begun to include naturalized gardens in our landscapes. I'm sure given time, the wording will be updated.

Continued on next page

NATURALIZED LANDSCAPES & MUNICIPAL BYLAWS

Here's a summary of Burlington's by-law.

City of Burlington:

- Pertinent bylaw: [By-Law 49-2022](#). A by-law to Repeal and Replace Lot Maintenance By-law 59-2018, being a By-law to Regulate Exterior Property Maintenance including Vegetation, Refuse and Graffiti.
- Cut vegetative growth on the boulevard whenever the height of the vegetative growth exceeds 20 centimeters in height or length and shall keep the boulevard free of all noxious weeds. (3.6)
- Every owner of property shall remove and destroy all noxious weeds, whether dead or alive, from their lot. (3.7)
- Vegetative growth shall not:
 - obstruct sidewalks or streets;
 - vegetative growth shall not conceal or interfere with the use of any fire hydrant or water valves;
 - vegetative growth shall not restrict driver and pedestrian sight lines at intersections, driveways, sidewalks, walkways, or visibility to all traffic control devices;
 - any other conditions respecting health and safety as the Director considers advisable.

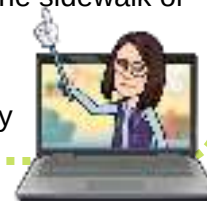
City of Burlington (cont'd)

Note: the following definitions are provided:

- "naturalized area" means an area or vegetation deliberately planted or cultivated with one or more species of wild flowers, shrubs, annuals, perennials, ornamental grasses, or combination of them, that is monitored and maintained by a person
- "vegetative growth" means woody or herbaceous plant material such as undergrowth, grass, brush, and common weeds (such as crab grass, dandelions, clovers, pigweed (amaranth), ribwort plantain, and buckhorn plantain) and includes various perennial grasses grown for lawns, of a type that forms a dense, uniform turf if mown;
- "ornamental plants" means a plant deliberately grown for beautification, screening, accent, specimen, colour or other aesthetic reasons but does not include vegetative growth as defined in this by-law.

Note to self:

- Keep groundcovers less than 20 cm. This includes plants such as non-ornamental grasses, clover etc.
- Ensure that plants do not obstruct the view for safety between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians near driveways, roads and sidewalks.
- Keep public areas such as sidewalks free from plants (i.e., plants are not flopping onto the sidewalk or your neighbour's garden).
- Plan for access open to hydrants or the water valves.
- Double check OMAFRA's list of invasive plants and make sure they're removed regularly



Hamilton Monarch Award recipient 2022



Hamilton Monarch Award Recipient 2018

Next month: a look at Oakville and Milton along with a few more 'Notes to Self'



Garden Journeys Open Days—new, inspiring, and nature-friendly

by Allyn Walsh and Bev Wagar, Halton Master Gardeners

Gardeners everywhere have begun journeys towards bio-diverse and nature-friendly gardens. Some people are well on their way and others are just getting started. Some have not yet heard about how gardens and residential landscapes can help mitigate the crises of climate change and collapsing ecological food webs. Gardens can be places that support life—not just the birds and animals we enjoy having around, but also the complex, interdependent networks of life we call [ecosystems](#).

A local response to these overarching concerns is [Garden Journeys Open Days](#), a new open-gardens event that celebrates and encourages the growing number of gardeners who are not only consciously doing things differently but also inspiring the community to follow their lead.



Jean Jacobs' Dundas garden
photo: Jean Jacobs ©



Jamie Hunter's Dundas garden
Photo: Jamie Hunter CC BY-NC-ND

Participating gardens, whether we call them ecological, sustainable, pollinator-friendly, re-wilded, or naturalized, have a lot in common. Native plants, for example, are indispensable. They're often the first step in a gardener's journey from traditional to nature-friendly.



Holly Tasker's Hamilton garden
Photo: Holly Tasker CC BY-NC-ND

Supported by the Halton Region Master Gardeners, the event takes place in the City of Hamilton over seven days in mid-August (August 10-12 and 17-20). The schedule offers flexibility for hosts (who choose among 17 three-hour time blocks) and convenience for visitors (who use an interactive map). Because gardeners want to learn from and connect with others, hosts (or their designates) will be home during open times, to answer visitors' questions. The event is free for both hosts and visitors.

Other actions include: removing invasive plants, managing rainwater, composting on site, and supporting wildlife responsibly. No step is too small. From the first tiny steps to ambitious treks, all journeys are welcome.

No matter where you live, you're warmly invited to visit these special gardens during the event. No tickets are necessary—just drop by the gardens of your choice on the posted days and times.

Check the web site for details: <https://haltonmastergardeners.com/garden-journeys-open-days/>



GARDENING

Myths

INFORMATION

DISINFORMATION

MISINFORMATION

UNDERSTANDING FACT FROM FICTION

By Kirsten McCarthy, Halton Master Gardener

MYTH: Watering plants on a hot sunny day will scorch their leaves

As summer starts, watering becomes one of the single most important tasks we do as gardeners. There is a lot of misinformation out there about watering plants, but one of the most misrepresented ideas is that we cannot water plants on hot sunny days for fear of scorching the leaves.



As a kid, I remember taking a cheap magnifying glass outside in the bright sunshine and trying to burn a dry leaf. After sitting there for a good half hour, I think there was a small scorch mark—not anything that would do any real damage. So, from a physics perspective, I can sort of see where this idea came from: sun rays + clear substance = burned material. But, when it comes to our plants, it doesn't hold any water.

Horticulturally, there are many reasons for leaf scorch: too much or too little moisture (from the roots, not on the leaves); insects; plant disease; over-fertilization; and wind or frost. Leaf scorch is never caused by irrigation.



People who follow this myth are often guilty of leaving very thirsty, wilted plants without water for fear of burning the leaves. The benefits of giving dehydrated plants water when they need it will always outweigh any risk of burning the leaves.

The only downside of watering plants in the heat of the afternoon summer sun is that it will cause the water to evaporate too fast to be effective in quenching the thirst of your plants. Therefore it is recommended that gardeners water plants in the early morning before the heat of the sun quickly evaporates the water droplets.



Learn more here:

[Watering Myths](#)

[Hot weather gardening tips](#)





By Hariette Henry, Halton Master Gardener

Growing your own herbs has many benefits beyond their culinary use: fresh taste, nutritional value in home cooking, saving money, as well as adding scent, colour and texture to your garden. In addition, herbs can attract pollinators that boost flower production and draw in beneficial insects that help control pests.

The list of [herbs](#) used in gardening is long and includes both annual and perennial plants. Because many herbs can be invasive in the garden (e.g., [oregano](#), [mint](#), thyme), you may want to consider growing them in pots. Decorative containers of herbs on your patio are convenient for kitchen use and allow you to enjoy their fragrance.

Nearly all herbs provide a wonderful flower display at some point in the season, offering a diversity of flower sizes, shapes and structures. Many of our favourite herbs make excellent nectar sources if they are allowed to flower. Gardeners will often pinch them back as they tend to lose their flavour when they've flowered. So, consider planting twice as much as you need and allowing half to flower while the rest continue producing leaves. It may look a little messy but the space will be buzzing with happy pollinators.

Most herbs need full sun to thrive, but some such as parsley can flourish in shade. Many herbs are members of either the mint family, *Lamiaceae* (basil, oregano, marjoram, catnip, rosemary and lavender) or the carrot family, *Apiaceae* (dill, parsley, chervil, cilantro, fennel). Flowering herbs not only appeal to adult pollinators, they also support their larval forms.

[The eastern black swallowtail, *Papilio polyxenes*](#) lays its eggs on members of the carrot family *Apiaceae*, including cilantro, dill, fennel and parsley.

“Are there benefits to growing herbs in the garden beyond their culinary usages?”



Eastern Black Swallowtail caterpillar feeding on flowering dill, Jenney Hanrahan, Illinois Extension

The practice of [companion planting](#) involves growing several types of crops near one another to enhance crop production, soil health and pest management. Author Jessica Walliser has written extensively about attracting beneficial insects to the garden as a natural form of pest control. Many of the combinations she recommends in her books “**Plant Partners**”, Storey Publishing, 2020 and “**Attracting Beneficial Bugs to Your Garden**”, Timber Press, 2014, feature herbs, including the classic combo of tomatoes and basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) in which the herb protects the veggie from thrips through masking. Small flowered herbs do attract beneficial insects by offering nectar resources. These traits of herbs may help reduce pests such as flea beetles and leaf-eating larvae.

Descriptions of other plant combination (info+charts), particularly important for organic vegetable gardeners, can be found through seed suppliers such as [West Coast Seeds](#) and online.

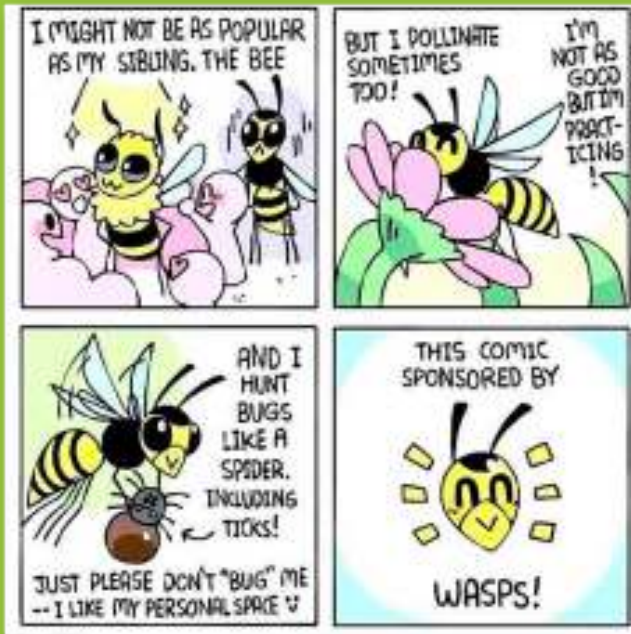
There is little research to support whether the scent of herbs detracts insects or other factors come into play. Companion planting is not an exact science and can vary in different areas. Recommendations however can be used as a good starting point. 🌸



Garden Inspiration!



Ontario Beneficial Insects



Shen Comics



Unearthed Comics.com 2016
Osara Zimmerman

#CAREFULWHATYOUSQUISH

Sean James of Sean James Consulting posted on Facebook his #CAREFULWHATYOUSQUISH Instagram link and photos. These inspired this page of beneficial insects. Hopefully you would not **SQUISH** these insects!



A house pseudoscorpion, *Chelifer cancroides*, with its arms extended, is only 5 mm small! Beneficial as they feed on smaller arthropods such as fruit flies and mites. They even ride on bats!



This insect resembling an earwig is a Rove Beetle, *Staphylinidae*. He is one of the earliest beetles identified (1802) and can be found in leaf litter, under tree bark, on decaying fruit and vegetation, and especially on carrion.

What's Growing On?

Rose Show and Garden Tours



Hamilton and Burlington Rose Society Garden Rose Show and Display

Saturday, June 24th 1:30 -5 PM
Sunday, June 25th 10 AM - 3 PM

Free with admission to
[Royal Botanical Gardens](#)



Guelph Rain Garden Tour

Saturday, June 10 10 AM - 2PM

[Learn more here](#)

Secret Gardens of Oakville Tour



Sunday, June 11th 2 PM - 8:30 PM

[Learn more here](#)

Guelph Garden Tour



Sunday, June 11th PM- 5:30 PM



[Learn more here](#)



Live the Garden Life
Vivre la vie de jardin

National Garden Day is June 17, 2023

[Learn more here](#)

What's Growing On?



Royal Botanical Gardens



[Laking Garden](#)



[Horticultural Therapy](#)



[Planting for Monarchs](#)



[Hendrie Park](#)

Did you know you can request a Master Gardener as a speaker or for advice?



Halton Master Gardeners are available to make presentations to your group on a wide variety of horticultural topics.

[CONTACT US](#) to share the details of your group and topic preferences.

We are also available to give on [site gardening advice](#) to not for profit groups in the Burlington-Hamilton area.

Visit [our website](#) for more information!



Check our [calendar](#) for events

June is the best month for a Garden French Manicure



FB Garden Humour

About Our Newsletter

Cross Pollination is published monthly from February to December and is written and prepared by our dedicated volunteers. Halton Master Gardeners are experienced gardeners who have studied horticulture extensively and continue to upgrade their skills through technical training. We strive to provide science-based, sustainable gardening information to the general public. The information in our newsletter has been verified by our volunteers to the best of our abilities, but given the scope of horticulture and science some concepts may not reflect current knowledge.

Your [donations](#) support our work!

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