



*Newsletter of the Master Gardeners of
Ontario*

Inside

MGOI

Happy New Year!

Welcome to the January edition of *Inside MGOI*, the Master Gardeners of Ontario, Inc. (MGOI) newsletter.

The Newsletter aims to be the voice for Master Gardeners! This is your venue for providing updates, insights and the inside scoop from MGOI Board & Committee members, Directors, and the 28 Master Gardener groups throughout Ontario. *Inside MGOI* features member milestones, group projects and activities, short member profiles, upcoming events such as webinars/conferences – anything about the functioning and happenings of our groups and our members. Please feel free to submit pictures – they are most welcome!

Contributions to future editions of *Inside MGOI* may be sent at any time to the Newsletter Editor, Isabel Belanger, newsletter@mgoi.ca.

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In This Issue

- Master Gardeners
 - Milestones
 - ON MG Spring Convention
 - Access to MGOI Webinars & Members Private FB Group
 - Master Gardeners Out & About
 - Upcoming Events
 - CFIA Seeds Alert
 - Live the Garden Life 2024
- MGOI
 - AGM 2023 Update
 - Messages from the Webmaster
 - Board Vacancies: Vice President & Director, SW

INSIDE MGOI
January 2024

**Newsletter of the
Master Gardeners of Ontario, Inc.**

Editor: Isabel Belanger, Halton

Milestones

Northumberland Master Gardeners

Master Gardeners Emeritus

Ann Slemming
Margot Cox
Mark Gordon
Marguerite Long

Ann became a Master Gardener in 1996 and received her 25 year pin in 2021. Ann was a founding member of Northumberland Master Gardeners in 2005. She rarely missed a meeting and was always available for advice clinics. She also enjoyed helping members of the public with the design and maintenance of their gardens. Ann was an accomplished flower arranger and frequently shared her knowledge. Ann continues to garden at her Cobourg home.



Margot has very fond memories of the wonderful bus trips we took to Pennsylvania and Whistling Gardens. Margot recently left her large country property behind and moved to a smaller urban home where she continues to garden on a much smaller scale.

Mark joined Northumberland Master Gardeners in 2005. Mark had already completed the 3 required University of Guelph courses and was readily welcomed as our first male member. Mark never missed a meeting and has served as Coordinator and Treasurer as well as a member of the program and membership committees. Mark participated in many advice clinics. In Mark's own words he says he always enjoyed his time with Northumberland Master Gardeners and found our meetings interesting.



Mark at the Port Hope Fair



Margot joined Northumberland Master Gardeners in 2003 and just recently received her 20 year pin. Margot is a very knowledgeable gardener and was an active member of NMG. She served as Coordinator and as a member of several committees as well as

participating in many advice clinics. She was often found at the Port Hope Farmer's Market wearing her MG apron and giving advice.

Marguerite joined Northumberland Master Gardeners in 2006. Marguerite was an active member serving in several executive roles and on many committees. She enjoyed sharing her vast garden knowledge at many advice clinics. The highlights of Marguerite's time with NMG were the bus trips she helped coordinate and the many new friends she made. Marguerite continues to garden on her large country property.



15 Year Anniversary

Suzi Gabany

Congratulations Suzi on receiving your 15 year service pin!



Co-Coordinator V. Freiberg presenting Suzi with her 15 year pin



Prince Edward County Master Gardeners

Master Gardener Status Achieved

Quentin Wyne



Quentin is a very enthusiastic member who is filled with great new ideas. He brings a military precision to his work and has stepped up into numerous roles. Quentin has done many radio talks on our local radio station 99.3 County FM and has participated in lots of events. We're lucky to have him!

Congratulations Quentin on your MG Certification – and on your recent marriage to Dianna!



Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton

2023 Volunteer Service Awards

Claire Leduc (right) and Amanda Carrigan (left) received the 2023 Volunteer Service Award for their dedicated service to our Ottawa-Carleton group.

Claire's passion has been to facilitate the intake and integration of Master Gardeners in Training in her MGIT Coordinator role.



Amanda has patiently listened to our meetings and produced top quality minutes in her role of MGOC secretary. She's also the lead for our showcase garden at the Kitchissippi United Church. Well done, mesdames. You deserve every bit of your award!

Thank You to Our Previous Coordinator



Our Coordinator, Rebecca Last, seized the opportunity offered at our Seasonal party on December 9th to properly thank our previous Coordinator, Anne Price, who had to resign suddenly for health.

Here they both are with Anne (right) and Rebecca (left). Anne's leadership and commitment to MGOC were recognized, especially her efforts to help the transition during the early pandemic period.

Master Gardener Status Achieved

Shazia Hussain

Andrea Knight

Rebecca welcomed two new MGs to our roster. Shazia and Andrea both fulfilled the requirements to achieve Master Gardener status. **Andrea** is the Article Manager for our Trowel Talk publication and Main Street Market co-coordinator.



Shazia has been assisting with our Continuing Education Program, document management, and is a regular volunteer at the Carp Market.



Shazia, left and Andrea, right with Rebecca



Peterborough and Area Master Gardeners

Master Gardener Status Achieved

Sharleen Ward

Sharleen has proven to be a very keen and hard-working member of our group. Joining in September 2021, Sharleen has been a member of our Program Committee, is now a member of the Volunteer Committee, and also worked to receive her Pollinator Stewardship Certification. She taught an elementary school class about plants for pollinators and helped the students plant a pollinator garden with her own native plant seedlings! Sharleen was also a speaker at our yearly *Day for Gardeners* presenting on 'Native Plant Garden Design'. Congratulations Sharleen on a well-deserved Master Gardener Certification!



Guelph Wellington Master Gardeners

New Master Gardener in Training

Michelle McCarthy

Welcome Michelle!



Grand Erie Master Gardeners

Retirement

Eva Kuehlem

After 20 years as a Master Gardener, we are sorry to lose Eva and grateful for all of the work she has done as an MG. We wish her all the best on her well-deserved retirement!



Thunder Bay & District Master Gardeners

Retirement

Linda Hugli



After 29 years as an MG, Linda Hugli has decided to retire. She was a member of the Sudbury Master Gardeners for 26 years and then was adopted by the Cochrane District Master Gardeners group. In 2023, she was welcomed by the

Thunder Bay & District Master Gardeners group.

She spent five years serving on the MGOI Board of Directors, developed and managed the original MGOI website, and created the MGOI Facebook group which is now managed by a team of very knowledgeable MGs. She spoke on a variety of topics to horticultural groups and other organizations, including two speaking engagements at Canada Blooms. We wish her all the best.

More Retirements *(written by Lynda Bobinski)*

Linda Rintamaki

Gwen Third

Linda Sharp

We would like to honour the hard work and dedication of three Master Gardeners who recently retired from our group and wish them happiness beyond all that they have achieved as Master Gardener volunteers. We thank each of them for their contribution to TB&DMGs and our gardening community as teachers, mentors, and friends.

Linda Rintamaki joined our group in September 2000 and was not only happy but proud to receive her twenty-year badge. We are reminded of all that she has shared with us during these years. She served as Education Coordinator, preparing and organizing programs to support the needs of group members. She readily signed up to divide and pot plants for our plant sales, work at the sale, help with





Gwen Third joined our group in January 2005 after being encouraged to do so by friends who were Master Gardeners. She preferred using a hands-on approach to the presentations she gave at churches, community centers or group events. She liked to get right into the “dirt” giving talks on soil components and amendments with her talk “The Dirt on Dirt”.

Needing someplace to put the “dirt” afterwards she discovered the art of making hypertufa pots. Keeping true to her hands-on approach, you could always find Gwen at our plant sale pushing a wheelbarrow helping people who had purchased plants get them safely to their cars.

She volunteered in the program headed up by Master Gardener Carol McCollum to maintain gardens at the hospital. A memorable early November event for Gwen was helping another Master Gardener plant a late season donation of over two hundred tulip bulbs while the snow swirled and chilly winds blew across the garden....and to her surprise many survived the winter!

presentations and staff advice tables at yard, garden, and community events, as well as being available to provide advice in gardens at many of the Art Gallery Garden Tours.

With a medical background and quiet, kind approach it was not surprising that Linda was drawn to volunteer from 2013 to 2019 as a Master Gardener in the Hogarth-Riverview Manor Horticultural Therapy program that was headed up by Master Gardener Lynda Lahteenmaa.



She was on planning committees for technical update days and community events, as well as serving as Membership Coordinator. Prior to her recent retirement Gwen served as Treasurer.

Linda Sharp joined TB&DMG in May 2014 and demonstrated she would be an involved member of the group by immediately volunteering to be on the planning committee for our Technical Update. She graduated from the Guelph program, received her Master Gardener certificate in 2018 and proudly accepted her five-year pin.



Linda had a love for vegetable gardening and readily shared her knowledge and expertise in this area with our gardening community by participating at MG events and answering many questions. She volunteered at our plant sales, advice tables, Seedy Saturday events and in a garden at the Art Gallery Tours, and was always ready to help where needed.

She volunteered from 2016 to 2019 as a Master Gardener assisting with gardening events and projects for seniors in the Hogarth-Riverview Manor Horticultural Therapy program that was headed up by Master Gardener Lynda Lahteenmaa.

Linda served as secretary from 2019-2021 and kept us up to date and on track with well documented minutes outlining project progress and plan timelines.

A special thank you to Linda, Gwen, and Linda for your dedication to Thunder Bay & District Master Gardeners, for all the fun times and great memories – we wish you the best!



Mississauga Master Gardeners

15 Year Anniversary

Martha Kantorczyk



Coordinator Diana Westland (left) presenting Martha Kantorczyk with her 15 year pin

Master Gardener Status Achieved

Ramona Christiansen



Coordinator Diana Westland (right) presenting Ramona Christiansen with her certificate

Blooming Boulevards 2023 Garden Steward of the Year Award

Diana Westland



Congratulations to our MMG Coordinator, Diana Westland, on her award from Blooming Boulevards, 2023 recipient of the Garden Steward of the Year!



Stratford Master Gardeners

New Master Gardener in Training

Krista MacMillan

We are so pleased to be joined by MGiT Krista MacMillan and hope that we will have lots of opportunities to work together. Many of us can identify with how she got started as a gardener:

I have been interested in gardening since I was a child helping my grampa in his veggie garden.



In Dec. 2023 Krista completed her Horticulture Diploma at the University of Guelph. Congratulations Krista!

Her interests include native plants, eco-design, foodscaping, sustainability and biodiversity which are a

wonderful fit with Master Gardeners.





She is very much interested in ecological practices and wants to improve her knowledge of native plants in order to be able to recommend and incorporate them into future plantings. Krista is looking forward to our 2024 workshop about why and how to

plant native species, followed later in the spring by our native plant sale which she sees as being a great learning opportunity.

We hope that Krista has found a place where she can increase her knowledge and use it to the benefit of gardeners in Huron, Oxford, and Perth counties.



Halton Master Gardeners

Master Gardener Status Achieved

Kirsten McCarthy
Luba Dobrianskyj

by Hariette Henry

Kirsten is very busy most days teaching English as a second language to adults. She has always been interested in education and in being a life-long learner. In January of 2021, during the Covid era, she began taking courses at the University of Guelph in the Horticulture Certificate Program. While taking her first course, Soils and Plant Growth, she happened to hear about Master Gardeners. She was curious about the group and as a first step attended a meeting with Halton MGs. She liked the group's focus on native plants and ecologically sustainable gardening. After discussions and further orientation she joined Halton MGs. Congratulations Kirsten on achieving MG status!



Kirsten McCarthy, left with Treasurer Patty King

As the child of new Canadians, who for many years tended an extensive garden plot with many fruit trees and a huge vegetable garden, **Luba** had the opportunity to develop gardening skills early. When she left home and established her own family, the tradition continued. Eventually she put her skills and experience to use and began a business offering gardening advice to neighbours and friends. She says this is where the real horticultural learning began. Eventually wanting to be part of something bigger she enrolled at the University of Guelph and earned a Diploma in Horticulture. After finishing her diploma, she held jobs at Gage Park with the City of Hamilton. She likes to stay current and being a part of Master Gardeners helps her to be aware of important issues. In her spare time Luba loves hanging with her husband, four boys and dog Stella.

Congratulations Luba on achieving MG status!



Luba enjoying some "me" time in the Gage Park Tropical Greenhouse!

New Master Gardeners in Training

Shayla Harbridge
Carley Prior
Tyler Brown
Alice Hwang

A very warm welcome is extended to our new MGITs!

Returning Member

Sheelagh Rowland

Sheelagh is a qualified Master Gardener and was a member of the Halton Group some years ago. She stepped away due to time constraints and family responsibilities. She has always had a great love for gardening and for wildlife, particularly birds. She says that gardening is in her family's DNA and she looks forward to re-engaging with the group. Welcome back Sheelagh!



Simcoe County Master Gardeners

New Master Gardeners in Training

Maggie Dilworth
Scott McIntaggart



Maggie, a resident of Nottawa just outside of Collingwood, joined Simcoe County Master Gardeners in November, 2023. She has already proven to be an enthusiastic new member of the Group. Maggie says that one positive outcome from the pandemic was that it

allowed her to spend more time working in her garden than ever before, and she soon discovered how exciting it was to share her new found knowledge with others.

Her previous career was in Digital Advertising after studying Marketing Management at the University of Guelph and Lingnan University in Hong Kong. These days Maggie is currently a gardener, a yoga teacher, an elementary school supply teacher, and a busy Mom.

Maggie is pursuing her Master Gardener accreditation because she enjoys learning about gardening and is looking forward to volunteering in her community. She says she is eager to advance her horticultural knowledge and is excited to learn from members of Simcoe County MGs.

Scott joined Simcoe County Master Gardeners in the fall of 2023. He is currently studying Horticulture at the University of Guelph and plans to complete his Certificate Program in the Spring of 2024. He is a retired hospital administrator and has always had a commitment to life long learning.



Scott has also always had a keen interest in gardening and for many years had a small deck garden at his home in Toronto. In 2008 Scott purchased a 3.5 acre property in Tiny Township which was used as a cottage until his recent permanent relocation there in early 2023.

Since purchasing the property Scott has progressively expanded his gardens. Scott's gardening experience to date has focused on perennials, but recently he has taken a keen interest in native plants and vegetables.

As a Master Gardener in Training, Scott is looking forward to the opportunity to work with experienced Master Gardeners in expanding his knowledge and expertise in all types of gardening. Scott's ultimate goal is to be in a position to assist, teach and guide others in establishing and maintaining gardens, both at home and in the community.



Lanark Master Gardeners

15 Year Anniversary

Kevin Long

Kevin has been a member of our group since 2008. Container gardening on his deck at Mississippi Lake has been very successful with amazing results. If you attend the Perth Farmers' Market you will likely see Kevin hosting an advice clinic and giving his expert gardening advice to all who ask. As our group's Zoom expert he has kept our group connected.

Congratulations on 15 years as a Master Gardener!



Dale Odorizzi, left presents Kevin Long with his 15 year pin



New Coordinator

Gerda Franssen

After 17+ years as our Coordinator, Dale Odorizzi has stepped down and Gerda Franssen is taking over the reins. Thank you, Dale for your service and thank you Gerda for stepping up.



London Middlesex Master Gardeners

Master Gardener Status Achieved

Tyler Deline

Heather O'Shea

Beth Warner

Congratulations Tyler, Heather and Beth for receiving your Master Gardener certificates!

Tyler joined our group in January 2022. Tyler currently works in sewer and watermain restoration but has had 7 years in the field of Horticulture prior to this, doing everything from garden installations to large commercial engineered retaining walls. He attended Fanshawe College's Horticulture Apprenticeship program in 2019 and kept expanding his knowledge of Horticulture. Tyler likes to keep an open mind while he pursues more knowledge and while he shares his current knowledge with anyone and everyone he can.

Tyler has a large interest in rare/uncommon plants such as giant groundsel (*Dendrosenecio* sp.) and bat flower (*Tacca* spp.), and would say that obscure knowledge is what he knows best. Aside from the basic knowledge Tyler also likes to know why plants grow as they do and why they create certain features for certain purposes.

Tyler successfully completed the MGOI Certification exam.



Tyler, left with Coordinator Sandra Elfman

Heather joined our group in January 2022. She has a diploma in Horticulture and is a nature lover who is often found outside taking in the wonders of the world around her.

Her passion for designing and creating beautiful landscapes is only surpassed by the desire to make them planet friendly with ecologically sustainable gardens that attract as many native critters as possible – from bees, butterflies and birds, to spiders, worms and yes, even skunks are welcome to visit (as a long as they don't take up residence).

Heather enjoys creating presentations and speaking to the public. She has been a very active member of our executive as our Communications Captain.



Heather, left with Coordinator Sandra Elfman

Beth joined our group in January 2022. She is an owner of a small farm growing native plants and native plant seed.

Beth believes that we can enact change by ensuring native plants are in abundance in both urban and rural environments. She loves all styles of gardens and hopes to ensure all of them have at least a few native plants in them.

Her areas of expertise and interest are native plants, permaculture, seed saving, and seed collecting. Beth has jumped in with both feet by chairing our Seedy Saturday event for 2024 and has also joined our executive in the Treasurer role.





Beth, left with Coordinator Sandra Elfman

New Master Gardener in Training

Andrea Felker

Andrea joined our group in November 2023. She moved back to London in 2021 after spending 9 years abroad in Singapore with her family, where she volunteered with non-profit organizations like *Free the Bears* and Jane Goodall's *Roots & Shoots* program.

Andrea has a lot of projects on the go with her large property. She is starting to grow vegetables in raised beds, perennials in large landscape beds, and building a front garden bed. Andrea is an avid backyard cut flower gardener, and she starts many annuals from seeds, tubers, and corms. She loves the joy that her bouquets bring to her family, neighbours and friends. Andrea appreciates the cottage garden feel of perennial gardens, where one can relax, and enjoy the views, sounds, and textures. She gets so much satisfaction from seeing her two boys harvesting veggies to eat for their dinner and being curious about what grows in the garden.

Andrea has a Master of Education (M.Ed.) and years of teaching experience with children and adults. She enjoys public speaking and writing articles.

Welcome to our group! We look forward to working together!

Resignation

Sherree Mahood

Sherree joined our group in April 2020. She will be moving out of town to Kitchener, Ontario.

Sherree was a very active and dedicated member. She has been involved in the secretary and the communication roles. She was our Eventbrite coordinator. Sherree initiated the New Member Orientation Session last year.

She will be greatly missed, and we wish her the best!





Master Gardeners of Ontario Spring Conference
**Ecological and Biodiverse Gardening
Practices, Habitat Above and Below the Soil**

April 26-27, 2024

at the

Delta Hotels by Marriott Guelph Conference Centre
50 Stone Road West
Guelph, ON N1G 0A9

Important Conference Information

1. Conference Registration

The conference includes Friday afternoon sessions, Friday dinner buffet (excluding cash bar), Friday evening keynote speaker, Saturday continental breakfast, Saturday sessions and Saturday working lunch buffet. **Conference cost is \$140.**

Here is the online registration link that will go live as of February 1, 2024:

<https://mgoi.ca/conference-2024/>

Follow the instructions to complete your registration information. As soon as you have registered you will receive an email with an invoice and payment instructions. You can pay by e-transfer or cheque. Once your payment of the conference fee has been received your registration is officially complete and you are considered registered. You will then have the opportunity to indicate your choices for concurrent tours and sessions.

Registration and payment are to be made by March 4, 2024.

2. Booking Hotel Room Reservations

Book your hotel reservation **directly** with the hotel. To get the special conference rate when booking use the **“Master Gardeners of Ontario 2024 Conference”** title and be sure to book before March 4, 2024. The special rate for a 1-bedroom suite with king size bed and pullout is \$229 and the rate for a standard guest room with 2 queen beds is \$199. After March 4th these rates will not be available. (Rates are PLUS HST and 4% Municipal Accommodation tax and include high-speed internet, use of Movati Athletic Facility, overnight parking and bottled water in room.)

**To Book, call Marriott reservations at 1-844-496-8549 or the
Delta Hotels by Marriott Guelph Conference Centre directly at 1-519-780-3700**



3. Let's Share Our Success Stories at This Year's Conference

During the 2-hour lunch break on Saturday, groups will have the opportunity to showcase their success stories in a separate breakout room. This is your opportunity to network with other Master Gardener groups sharing ideas, projects, technical updates, and local group management practices (recruiting new members, retention of Master Gardeners and Master Gardeners in Training, fundraising activities, etc.). On top of this, we will have a fun activity to encourage participation and win some prizes.

Choose your topic, bring your display on a tri-fold presentation board (available from Staples, Amazon, or Dollarama) that will stand on the table and recruit a member(s) from your group to describe your project and answer questions from other group members.

Sign your group up today by emailing operations@mgoi.ca

4. Highlights – What to Expect

Friday, April 26, 2023 – Tours at the Guelph Arboretum

Darrell Bley - *Instructor/Curator of Woody Plants, Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture and Botanical Gardens*

Winter Identification of Woody Trees and Shrubs *(Limited participation of 25)*

This tour will be a great opportunity to use the outdoor space and collections at Guelph Arboretum to practice our skills in identifying woody trees and shrubs in their dormant state. In our Canadian climate, deciduous woody plants are without their summer identification features for about five months so being able to identify these plants during that time is important. This tour will build on the information that will be shared with you during two virtual winter seminars that are being planned for later this winter. We can take the information that is covered during these winter seminars and practice what we have learned. Dress for the weather. The trees and shrubs are waiting!

Sean James - *Graduate of Niagara Parks School of Horticulture, Master Gardener, writer and teacher, Sean focuses on eco-gardening techniques.*

Rain Garden Workshop *Limited participation (10 or so 'helpers')*

On an already graded/prepared site at the Arboretum, we'll be preparing the swale and planting a rain garden. Mulching will be done after the planting. Each session will last 1 ½ to 2 hours, giving participants actual and theoretical experience with all aspects from siting to after-care and maintenance.

Kevin Kavanagh - *B.Sc. (Hons.) from McGill University, M.Sc. from York University, and several years of post-graduate research in Botany at the University of Toronto. Member of the Grand Erie Master Gardeners.*

Great Plants for Attracting Birds to Your Garden *(Limited participation of 25)*

An interpretive walk through part of the University of Guelph Arboretum highlighting trees, shrubs and native habitat features that can be incorporated into bird-friendly garden designs. We will review how each plant species can play a role in helping support our native bird populations.

Friday, April 26, 2023 – Presentations

Michael J. McTavish - *PhD, B.Sc. (Hons.); Postdoctoral Research Fellow, S.M. Smith Forest Health Lab*

Invasive Worms and Weeds: Update on Jumping Worms and Biocontrol of *Phragmites* and Garlic Mustard in Ontario

This presentation will provide an update on what we know about the invasion of jumping worms in Ontario, and an overview of the first several years of the new biocontrol programs to help manage invasive *Phragmites* and garlic mustard.



Freyja Whitten - M.Sc., Program Manager, Terrestrial Restoration & Credit Valley Conservation

Management of Invasive Garden Plants

Discussion of management options for common invasive plants that not only disrupt gardens, but also our natural areas.

Friday, April 26, 2023 – Evening

Enjoy a fun evening with dinner & Keynote Speaker Paul Zammit – School of Environmental and Horticulture Studies, Niagara College and CBC radio.

Rethinking Beauty: Inspiring Gardeners in a Changing World

Do you ever question why and how you (or we) garden? Are we just striving for something that is aesthetically pleasing to the eye? Paul believes it is a gift and an amazing opportunity to care for a garden space. With 35 plus years of experience in the horticulture industry, Paul finds himself questioning some traditional gardening practices as we face global climatic and biodiversity challenges. He believes we must all have a closer look at the important roles that both private and public gardens play in order to develop a better understanding of the impact and potential of our actions, actions that can reach far beyond defined property lines. Join Paul for an energetic presentation where he will share his views on what he believes makes a garden beautiful in these changing times.

Saturday, April 27, 2023 – Presentations

Jeanne McRight - Founding President and Chair of Blooming Boulevards

Growing the Future

Discover how Blooming Boulevards is connecting people to pollinators by growing native plants and making gardens happen city-wide.

Sean James

Talk Dirty: Soil, and the Things Living in It

We are continuously learning about soil and its importance to plant health and climate change. The latest information and research will be discussed, including 'worms: good or bad', how invasive plants change the soil to the detriment of native plants, and even the pros and cons of peat moss. Learn the answer to several trend-setting questions such as: How do we steward the soil microbiome? We'll cover beneficial bacteria and fungi. What activities harm the soil and therefore the plants? Can better soil stewardship also mean lower maintenance? It's a dirty topic, but someone's got to cover it!

Claudette Sims – Master Gardeners of Ontario Past President, Halton Master Gardeners

A Gardening Conundrum: Why are invasive plants sold in nurseries?

Invasive plants are a threat to biodiversity, human health, and our economy. They threaten native plants, insects, animals, and our forests. So why are they still sold in nurseries? This talk will answer that question and suggest actions that we can all take to safeguard biodiversity.

Kevin Kavanagh

The Growing Importance of Gardening for Nature

With the challenges of the climate and biodiversity crises as a call to action, this talk will present examples of meaningful and often simple steps gardeners can take on their own properties to both help nature and motivate others to build a better landscape.

Sean Fox - Seed Acquisition Manager & Field Botanist – Verbinnen's Nursery; Reyna Matties - Manager – Ontario Native Plants

Propagating Native Plants at Verbinnen's Nursery/Ontario Native Plants.

Come take an inside peek into the world of Verbinnen's Nursery and their associated retail operation, Ontario Native Plants, to see how over 1 million native plants are grown each year!

The Lunch Break has added time built in for attendees to review the Poster Presentations and learn what Master Gardener groups across our province have accomplished over the past year!



MGOI Annual General Meeting, November 2023: President's Report

Karen Sciuk, President

- **Coordinators' Conference** – we decided that it works better for ensuring a quorum for voting that the AGM will continue to be held by Zoom. An in-person conference will be held in the spring and allow more members to attend; a heavy emphasis will be on continuing education.
- **Finance** – we hired a new Bookkeeper who conveniently lives within the vicinity of our Treasurer.
- **Membership fees** – unless the topic was specifically brought up at the AGM fees would remain at \$35 per member. In former recent years either a rebate or grants for groups or regions was offered, but this year we will use the monies to help fund our spring conference.
- **Public Facebook Group** – with over 40,000 participants from the wider community we always welcome more MGs willing to help moderate the posts and answer questions. Please PM one of the administrators or moderators on the forum if you are interested in helping out. It's a great way to interact with the public and learn more about horticulture in the process.
- **X (Twitter)** – we do provide this social media platform but lately it seems underused. If anyone has any ideas for improvement the administrator is looking for input. Please contact president@mgoi.ca.
- **Kahoot** – thank you to all the groups who have taken up the challenge of creating a monthly quiz.
- **Honorary Master Gardeners** – the London-Middlesex group welcomed an honorary member at their January AGM, and the Niagara group is in the process of welcoming another. Please check the website for details of these well appreciated individuals. For those groups interested in nominating a worthy candidate please check the Coordinators Handbook for instructions.
- **MGOI Board Positions** – we still need a **SW Director**. Coordinators and MGs of the SW please nominate someone from within your ranks to take on this communications role. You will not be adequately represented at board meetings without one. We still need a candidate to take on the **President's position for 2025** as I will be stepping down at the end of 2024. The new government rules stipulate that board positions cannot exceed four years now. Ideally a **VP** should be training a year in advance of the succession.
- **Education** – MGOI-offered webinars are worth 2 CEUs each. The upcoming conference seminars, workshops, and tours will grant CEUs too! We are asking preliminary questions in the Annual Survey, Part 2 about the webinar series and Niagara summer workshop. Stay tuned for a more in depth education survey to be sent out to each MG later this spring.
- **Code of Conduct/ Conflict Resolution Protocol** – the board has been working on revamping our current documents found on the website and in the handbook due to recent input from groups in need of the Board's help. Each group is welcome to create their own policies, but they must be robust enough to include the baseline outlined by MGOI. Stay tuned for further details. All Coordinators were sent a working copy for input and were asked to discuss it with members.





Access to MGOI Webinars

This is a reminder that all webinars organized by our Director of Education, Kate Sault, have been taped and have been uploaded to the MGOI site. All past webinars are also uploaded.

The link is on the MGOI website, <https://mgoi.ca/>; members' login is on the far right. Your Coordinator will be able to provide you with the password. Once in the members' section, scroll down to the bottom and click on workshops/webinars.

The MGOI Members Facebook (FB) Private Discussion Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1329062317277822/>.

This is a private group: 'A discussion page for registered members of the Master Gardeners of Ontario Inc., Canada. This includes current active Master Gardeners and Master Gardeners in Training. To join this group, you must be an active member of the Master Gardeners of Ontario and belong to a local MG group. To join you must answer 2 questions that you would know the answers to.

The group is:

Private

Only members can see who's in the group and what they post.

Visible

Anyone can find this group.

History

Group created on January 3, 2020. Name last changed on October 12, 2023.

See more

May include flagged content.

Admins may allow some posts and comments to be visible in the group even if they're flagged by Facebook's systems. [Learn more](#)



Messages from the MGOI Webmaster, Jim Cook



Advertising Technical Updates

Does your group have a technical update you'd like to advertise on the MGOI home page? We can link to your website. Please forward information to Jim at webmaster@mgoi.ca. Thanks!

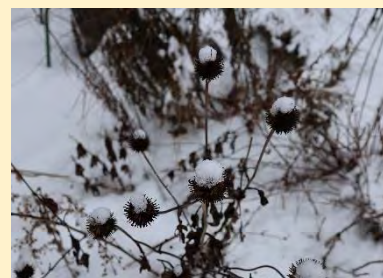
Master Gardener Group Websites / Links

The MGOI website lists current links to group websites, and social media such as Facebook and Instagram: <https://mgoi.ca/groups/>.

This is a reminder to please inform me of any changes to your links to keep them up-to-date. My address is: webmaster@mgoi.ca.

Thanks!

Jim



MGOI Board Vacancy – Vice President

Karen Sciuk, President MGOI

MGOI currently has 2 board vacancies: Vice President (VP) and South West Director. The job description for the VP position follows below.

Interested candidates should contact me, Karen Sciuk at president@mgoi.ca.

Board Vacancy – Vice President

I do not expect to continue my term past the end of 2024 and would like to find a VP to start as soon as possible so that they will be well aware of how the Executive functions prior to becoming President.

We like to appoint MGs interested in this position to the Board as VP before they transition into the President's position.

Please see the VP job description below and feel free to contact me, Karen Sciuk at president@mgoi.ca.

Job Description – Vice President

- Supports and works closely with the President to assist with his or her duties, especially regarding governance
- Monitors the progress of the organization's goals and objectives
- Reviews information submitted in Annual Reviews and in the Annual Report in order to recognize achievements, share best practices, and identify potential areas of concern
- Assists the relevant Director to resolve potential areas of concern, and if necessary, bring them to the attention of the Board of Directors
- Works with the Director of Membership and others to fill vacant Board positions
- Assumes the duties of the President in his or her absence
- Succeeds the President



Master Gardeners Out & About

Projects & Events

Northumberland Master Gardeners

Name: December 13th Christmas Potluck

Details: At their regular monthly meeting, Northumberland Master Gardeners enjoyed a festive potluck. There was plenty of food and lively conversation.



Prince Edward County Master Gardeners

Name: Annual Christmas Lunch, December 9th, 2023

Details: We are a small but mighty group, and we took some time out to get together for our annual Christmas Lunch at The Royal in Picton.



L-R, Susan Warrack, Ren Duinker, Andie Wiens, Sandy Goranson, Margot Rivers, Kim Beaugrand with Eveline, June Crocco, Barbra Stock.
Missing: Quentin Wyne

This year we welcomed our newest – and youngest – honorary member, Eveline. We look forward to Eveline's participation in future Children's Garden Awards.



Kim Beaugrand with Eveline



Toronto Master Gardeners

Name: TMG Seeds and Shortbread Social

Details: On December 2nd 2023 Toronto Master Gardeners hosted their December "Seeds and Shortbread" social at the Toronto Botanical Garden. More than 70 members attended to catch up, reconnect, enjoy some amazing home baked goodies, and especially to swap native seeds.

Seeds were collected from the gardens of TMG members who are part of our TMG Native Plant Working Group. One member collected seed from more than 50 plants in her garden! Most plants are herbaceous but a few interesting shrub seeds were also collected. One stand-out seed that was gathered locally by Henry Lee, a new Master Gardener in Training, was *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* (dawn redwood).

Henry collected the cones at Kew Gardens in the east side of Toronto. "I spent maybe an hour and a half scouring the grounds for cones around the *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* as they are mostly covered in the dropped needles of the trees at this time of year", says Henry. For more information Henry recommends the Metasequoia Geeks Facebook group.

Members packaged their seed in everything from standard coin envelopes to brightly coloured origami seed packages and even lovely holiday wrapping paper.



Seeds were labeled with common and botanical names, and some provided germination information. Plant lists aided with making the difficult selection decisions, although everyone was welcome to take whatever they wanted – provided they commit to CMS (cold moist stratification) and grow the plants!

Toronto Master Gardeners will enjoy some of these plants in their own gardens, and some are growing them to give away to community gardens, or at farmers markets. If we have surplus plants, we will be thinking about a native plant swap among members, or even a native plant sale. For more information on TMGs Native Plant Working Group contact Pat Concessi at pconcessi@icloud.com.



Just some of the many seeds available at the TMG Seeds and Shortbread Social
Photo credit Tina Cesaroni



The native seed table was the centre of the action at the TMG Seeds and Shortbread Social
Photo credit: Pat Concessi



Henry Lee, Master Gardener in Training, in front of one of Toronto's Metasequoia trees
Photo credit: Henry Lee



Metasequoia cone.
Photo credit: Henry Lee



Niagara Master Gardeners

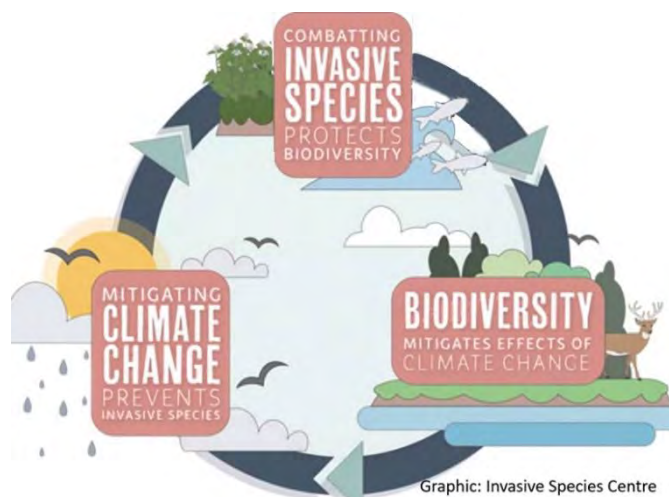
Name: Monthly Meeting: Invasive Plants

Details: Claudette Sims (Halton Master Gardeners) spoke at our last meeting. Her topic was invasive plants sold at nurseries. She offered convincing arguments (for Master Gardeners when speaking to the public) against buying invasive plants.



Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*), for example, crowds out native plants in wooded areas, plants such as *Trillium*, mayapples (*Podophyllum peltatum*) and tree seedlings, and offers no pollen for pollinators, food for insects, or supports caterpillars that birds depend on for food. And Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergia*) supports twice the number of blacklegged (deer) ticks that carry and transmit Lyme disease.

There's lots of general information on the CCIPR (Canadian Coalition for Invasive Plant Regulation) website: ccipr.ca. It offers many ways to [Get involved](#) and many helpful [Resources for Outreach](#).



POINT OF SALE LABELLING

For plants like burning bush, New York requires plant tags to state:

Harmful to the Environment

Recommend alternative species

Consider Virginia sweetspire

Planting cautions

**Do not place this plant near natural areas;
Deadhead; Do not share**

Name: Hospice Niagara Workshop

Details: Niagara MGs led a Christmas décor workshop in December that was a big hit with residents at the Hospice Niagara centre in St. Catharines.

Beckie Fox and Kendy Steeves ran the workshop where residents assembled charming indoor holiday planters.



Beckie, left with Kendy



Halton Master Gardeners

Name: 2023 Halton MG Christmas Party

Details: A wonderful time was had by all at the Halton MG Christmas party on December 6th. Claudette Sims graciously offered to host the party at her home in Hamilton. Those attending were asked to bring a beverage of choice and a plate or dish of their favourite festive goodies.

The entertainment portion also had an exciting holiday theme. Grapevine wreaths were provided by the hard-working Program Committee (Lynn Courtney, Allyn Walsh, and Kirsten McCarthy), with the able assistance of Giuliana Casimirri, and were made available to all for personalizing. Everyone had a great time, and some truly beautiful Christmas wreaths were created. See below!



From left to right, Giuliana Casimirri, Harlette Henry, Kirsten McCarthy, Alice Hwang, Allyn Walsh



Elisa Bernier



Olga Leonenko



Hedia Balkhi



Grand Erie Master Gardeners

Name: Grand Erie Master Gardener Christmas Party

Details: On Sunday Dec 3, 2023 the GEMGs held their semi-annual in-person holiday get-together at MGIt Laura Rodger's house in Port Dover. It was great to see everyone in person and a lovely time was had by all.



Name: Gardening for Nature Committee

Details: The Gardening for Nature Committee continues to meet monthly and is working hard to create simple information sheets answering common questions about native gardening, individual native plants, shrubs and trees, the benefits of native gardening, removing invasive species, etc. Kim Hutten is doing a fabulous job updating and improving our website: granderiemg.org. Laura Rodger continues to post and share content on the Grand Erie Facebook and Instagram pages. Kevin Kavanagh is a popular speaker and presenter for gardening and environmental groups including many horticultural societies. He is seeing the growing demand first-hand for local mentorship and assistance with learning about environmentally beneficial native gardening (i.e. Gardening for Nature). Committee members are: Kevin Kavanagh (leader); Anne Saunders; Laura Rodger; Kim Hutten; Carolyn Bennett; Lynne Goulet-Smith; and Nancy Lee-Colibaba.



Name: Grand Erie Master Gardeners Zoom Meeting

Details: The Dec 7, 2023 GEMG zoom meeting was held and many topics and much business was discussed. Lynne Goulet-Smith submitted an article she wrote on Soil Colour.

Grey County Master Gardeners

Name: "The Eco-Responsible Gardener" Seminar Series

Details: The first of our three winter seminars, "The Eco-Responsible Gardener", kicked off on January 20 with a primer on how to successfully germinate seeds outside in winter. Co-presented by Grey County Master Gardeners Jennifer Deeks and Vicky Thompson, "The ABCs of Winter Sowing" explored different approaches to winter sowing – with advice on timing, equipment, seed selection, soil, what to do, what not to do(!), including a demonstration of the "pop-bottle" mini-greenhouse method. It was clearly a timely topic, with lots of engagement from the almost 300 participants, both in the chat and Q & A afterwards.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Northumberland Master Gardeners

Name: Seedy Saturday

Date & Time: February 17th, 2024 from 11am to 3pm

Location: 54 Toronto Rd., Port Hope

Details: Vendors include: Seeds of Diversity, Muscutt Seeds, Gaia Organics, Cathy's Crawlers, Terra Edibles, Kitchen Table Seedhouse, Junco Seeds, and more.



Grand Erie Master Gardeners

Name: Seedy Saturday Norfolk

Date & Time: February 17, 2024 from 10am-12pm

Location: Simcoe Public Library

Details: This is a relatively new small Seedy Saturday event. Grand Erie Master Gardeners will have a table to make local people aware that we exist, to answer gardening questions, and to let the public know about our Gardening for Nature Project.

Niagara Master Gardeners

Name: Seedy Saturday Seed Sale

Details: Niagara's big seed sale and exchange event is on **Saturday, Feb. 17!** There will be speakers, various vendors, and a large seed-sale table with thousands of seeds for sale and trade.



SATURDAY FEBRUARY 17, 2024
Meridian Community Centre
Hwy 20 & Rice Road - Fonthill
Free admission & parking
10 am - 3 pm

HUNDREDS OF VARIETIES OF SEEDS FOR SALE!

Please bring non-GMO seeds for swap

- Vendors
 - Speakers
 - Children's Activities
 - Free draw - \$50 Lee Valley e-Gift Card
 - Ask a Master Gardener Clinic
- **NON-PERISHABLE FOOD DONATIONS APPRECIATED!**

There will also be a Children's Activity area -- so families are welcome! It's the third time the Niagara MGs will host this fun event. Coffee and snacks will be available. **Do not miss it!**

Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Location: Meridian Community Centre, Hwy 20 and Rice Rd. in Fonthill. Free admission and parking.

Etobicoke Master Gardeners

Name: Winter 2024 Lecture Series: An Evening of Design with Frank Kershaw

Dates & Time: Tuesdays, February 20, March 19, April 16. From 7pm-9pm.

Location: Kingsway Lambton United Church, 85 The Kingsway, Toronto, Main Door

Cost: donation/pwyc

Details: Frank Kershaw, a well travelled and experienced horticulturist, will lead the three Tuesday night sessions in February, March and April.



Tuesday February 20th – The Artist Garden

Inspirational, unique gardens often owe their origins to accomplished artists from the creative fields of painting, sculpture, pottery and recycling. These artful undertakings reveal the artists' mastery of scale, proportion,



perspective, colour and lighting. For the gardening public, we can learn a great deal from these gardens, gardens that unite artistic composition with the challenges and mystery of designing with nature.

Join our experienced and well travelled horticulturist, Frank Kershaw, as he leads us through the beauty of these unique gardens.

Tuesday March 19th – Creating Garden Mysteries



Who doesn't enjoy a good mystery? Such mysteries, with a little creativity and visual technique, can be easily achieved in garden settings. These techniques include garden and object concealment through plantings, garden rooms, elevation change, viewing distance and meandering paths,

all of which heighten anticipation and surprise. The inclusion of unique historic, cultural and spiritual objects, possibly unfamiliar to the viewer, stimulate the desire to learn more. Recycled objects and garden mirrors further add to the surprise. Join our experienced garden designer, Frank Kershaw, as he showcases exciting examples of adding mystery to the garden.

April 16th – Oft Neglected Front and Side Yards

Smaller backyards, the result of larger homes, home additions and tight setbacks to neighbours, and front and side yards are gaining more importance in garden planning.

Increasingly, front and side yards are accommodating functions formerly the domain of the back yard. Improved path linkages and coordinated theming integrates the property as a totality.

A close collaborative relationship with neighbours is a further key to front and side yard success. Join our experienced horticulturist, Frank Kershaw, for this timely and informative slide show as the final presentation of our winter lecture series.



Grey County Master Gardeners

Name: The Eco-Responsible Gardener: The Dirt on Soil

Date & Time: Saturday, February 24 at 11:00 a.m.

Venue: Zoom

"The Eco-Responsible Gardener"



Seminar 2: The Dirt on Soil

Saturday, February 24, 2024 at 11 a.m.

Building the foundation of your garden starts with soil. In this seminar you'll learn the whys and how-tos of creating a healthy and vibrant garden ecosystem. You'll also explore the fascinating world of a diverse group of microorganisms called the soil microbiome. Current research has uncovered just how significant these tiny microbes are to the health and well-being of plants.

Join well-known speaker and horticulturist [Jon Litwajny](#), as she shares the latest science along with practical strategies for the home gardener to support this all-important relationship.

To secure your registration for this free Zoom Seminar, please click on our website link. Registration will close on February 20, 2024 or when our maximum capacity is reached, so register early!

[greycountymastergardeners.com](https://www.greycountymastergardeners.com)

Please share the date with fellow gardeners!



Details: In keeping with this year's focus on the home gardener, our next seminar "The Dirt on Soil" is presented by Jen Llewelyn. Jen is a plant health specialist, horticulturist and arborist who is passionate about trees, nature, and mentoring.

She has delivered 100s of interactive lectures and workshops across the province, written extensively for many industry publications, and is co-author of "BugFinder", the free ultimate scouting app for nursery and landscape professionals.



In 2022, after more than 20 years as a provincial nursery and landscape specialist with OMAFRA, Jen started a new career in consulting arboriculture and plant health care with husband, Johl Anderson, at Beautiful Trees and Green Bird Horticultural based in Caledon, Ontario. She holds a B.Sc. and M.Sc. in Horticulture from the University of Guelph. She is also an ISA Certified

Arborist and a Personal Empowerment Coach.

Guelph Wellington Master Gardeners

Name: A Day in the Garden (DITG)

Date: Sun. Feb. 25, 2024

Location: Victoria East Golf Club, Guelph, (Puslinch) ON

Details: All tickets are through Eventbrite (no ticket sales at the door). Plan to attend! 6 CEUs for Master Gardeners! Please see the poster for more info.

A Day in the Garden:
Garden to table: Planting and Harvesting Together

FRESH FOOD. HOW AND NOW!

Mike Smith
Planning a successful community garden

Amy Bowen
Sustainable food production

Steven Biggs
Edible garden makeover

Sunday, Feb 25th, 2024
8:30am - 3:00pm
Victoria Park East Golf Club
1096 Victoria Rd South,
Puslinch, ON

- Breakfast and lunch
- Vendors and door prizes
- \$70/ticket

(early bird pricing ends Jan 31st, ticket sales close Feb 15th)

Buy tickets on Eventbrite
www.gwmastergardeners.ca

6 CEUs

Speaker Info:

Mike Smith - Farm Coordinator, University of Guelph Centre for Urban Organic Farming

- Invaluable insights on planning and nurturing a thriving community garden. In this engaging talk, discover the key principles, practical tips, and community-driven strategies that lay the foundation for a successful and sustainable community garden.

Amy Bowen - PhD, Director, Consumer Insights, Vineland Research Station

- Defining sustainability: How does it relate to food production and why does it matter?

Steven Biggs - Horticulturist, college instructor, broadcaster, speaker, and author

- Recognized by Garden Making magazine as one of the "green gang" making a difference in horticulture, Steven's passion is helping people grow food. His own Toronto yard includes a driveway straw-bale garden, rooftop kitchen garden, wicking beds, and an edible-themed front yard.

London-Middlesex Master Gardeners

Name: Seeds to Table

Dates: Mar. 12 to Apr. 30, 2024

Details: The ever popular 'Seeds to Table' course is being run again for our London community.



We have been running this course for over 10 years for individuals in London who want to learn how to grow their own food from their own backyard or balcony. We provide them with the knowledge and confidence to grow their own veggies and fruit and to increase their food security.



Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) Seeds Alert

Canadians are encouraged to connect with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) before sending seeds abroad.

As Canada's plant health regulator, the CFIA plays an important role in making sure seeds from Canada meet internationally agreed upon regulations. The CFIA has seen an increasing number of notifications of non-compliance from foreign countries about seeds exported from Canada without proper phytosanitary (plant health) certification.

Seeds can potentially be invasive in some countries or spread plant diseases or other pests. Not meeting requirements has consequences such as the destination country destroying the seeds and issuing Canada a notice of non-compliance.

All seeds, including those in small packets for gardeners, must comply with the import requirements of the destination country.

Please share this information with the Canadian public to increase awareness of the important steps to take when shipping or exporting seeds to protect international plant resources, our economy and the environment.



The CFIA has spokespeople available for interviews, people who are experts in plant health imports and exports. CFIA experts are also willing to write and submit a piece if that is of interest. Please contact us if you have any questions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Media Relations, Canadian Food Inspection Agency / Government of Canada:

cfia.media.acia@inspection.gc.ca

Tel: 613-773-6600

Additional Links & Background information:

- [Shipping and exporting seeds from Canada](#)
- [Plant health at the CFIA](#)
- [Chronicle 360 plant health](#)
- [Canada's plant health hero challenge](#)
- [Join the plant health movement](#) (Chronicle 360)

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Live the Garden Life
Vivre la vie de jardin



Let's #LiveTheGardenLife

français

International Garden Tourism Conference



The 2023 International Garden Tourism Conference took place from November 1-4 and we are thrilled to have welcomed over 90 delegates representing over 40 gardens from 14 countries to Canada's Garden City in Victoria, BC. All the world's leading experts presented various ways of '**Seizing the moment**'. Together, these remarkable gardens attract over 17 million annual (ticketed) visitors and are on a continuous upward trajectory. We look forward to the next conference in 2025!



VIA Rail Garden Getaway

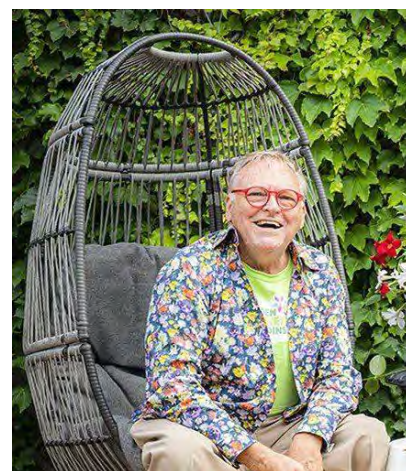


As the winner of the 2023 VIA Rail Garden Getaway, Jennifer Kim and her husband got to embark on a botanical adventure at the Montreal Botanical Garden last October! Special thanks to VIA Rail and the Montreal Botanical Garden for making this all possible!

Michel Gauthier's Retirement

After many years of dedicated service, our beloved Executive Director, Michel Gauthier, has embarked on a well-deserved retirement journey as of November 30th. Michel's impact on advancing Canada's garden experience sector is immeasurable, leaving behind a remarkable legacy that includes Canada's Garden Route and Garden Days, along with the immensely successful marketing campaigns benefiting the entire garden-related industry – "Live the Garden Life" and "Year of the Garden."

Let's come together as the Canadian Garden Council community to express our heartfelt gratitude to Michel and wish him the very best in his future endeavors!



Happy New Year!

As winter blankets some of our landscapes in a serene white, the Canadian Garden Council extends heartfelt greetings to you and your loved ones. May 2024 be filled with abundant joy, love and laughter as we continue to embrace and #livethegardenlife.



Mailing address is:

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Canada

[Add us to your address book](#)

