



Newsletter of the Master Gardeners of
Ontario

Inside

MGOI

Welcome to the February 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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INSIDE MGOI

February 2024

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

Editor: Isabel Belanger, Halton

Milestones

Thunder Bay & District Master Gardeners

Master Gardener Emeritus

Eloise Rodger



by Andrea Steinhauser

We are thrilled that Eloise has rejoined the Thunder Bay & District Master Gardeners as a Master Gardener Emeritus. She originally joined in 1998 and completed her studies with the University of Guelph in 2001. She became involved by coordinating speakers and presentations for the monthly meetings which led to her learning how to research and deliver presentations. For several years she helped with setting up the annual plant sale. She became the Coordinator in 2012-2014. Along the way she has developed her public speaking skills as well as skills in marketing and sales. Over the years her gardening experience has increased, and she has specialized in peonies. She has over 80 varieties in her garden!

Becoming a Master Gardener for her has been a rewarding experience. She finds the diversity and interests that the other members share to always be educational. Welcome back Eloise!



Master Gardener Emeritus

Wyoma Fauconnier

by Andrea Steinhauser



We are delighted that Wyoma has rejoined as an Emeritus MG. She originally joined Master Gardeners in 1996 and was actively involved until 2018. In the past, she was the local Treasurer as well as serving on the MGOI Board as a Zone 1 Director in 2014-2015. She has also participated in planning our Technical Days.

She has a love for day lilies and her beautiful garden displays over 300 Hosta varieties! She has graciously shared her garden for many events including the Thunder Bay Art Gallery Garden tour as well as hosting our yearly plant sale and *Look, Listen & Learn* presentations. Every year she shares her perennials by dividing and donating them to our plant sale. She has also been a valuable mentor to our members, and we are happy to see her again. Welcome back!



Stratford & Area Master Gardeners

New Co-Coordinator

Lorraine Kuepfer

We welcome Lorraine as co-coordinator with Don Farwell. Lorraine is keen to help us grow our membership and broaden access.

Name Change

We are pleased to announce that at our February MG meeting there was unanimous agreement to change our name to something more inclusive reflecting the area we cover. The new name will be effective from April 1, 2024 and will include the watering can logo.

Tri-County Master
Gardeners
Huron | Oxford | Perth



Durham Master Gardeners

5 Year Anniversary

Sharon Rabenda

by Norine Blythe

Wow, Sharon where did the time go! Since you joined you have hit the ground running. Sharon has been involved with the executive as one of our Program Committee Members starting in her first year as a MGIT and has been doing an amazing job.

Thank you, Sharon for being on DMGs team and looking forward to many more years.



Rita has been a wonderful asset at DMG as a MGIT by joining in on various volunteer opportunities and sharing her knowledge. We look forward to keeping Rita busy and engaged now that she is a MG. Once again, congratulations Rita!



London Middlesex Master Gardeners

New Master Gardener in Training

Christine Rickey

Christine has mostly flower beds with many old time favourites – irises, peonies, bleeding hearts and climbing roses. Gardening is therapy for Christine. She loves the "journey", learning as she goes, and the satisfaction of maintaining a healthy, happy garden. She has reached a time in her life when she has taken stock and decided to pursue agility with her dog, and expand her gardening knowledge. Her desire is to learn, glean and share. Welcome Christine!



Master Gardener Status Achieved

by Norine Blythe

Rita Barrell

Congratulations to Rita for completing her courses with Guelph University and fulfilling the volunteer requirements and becoming a full fledged MG!





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. for Master Gardeners.** The Conference is now **open to friends and family**; cost is \$175. The full conference cost must be paid for one-day Saturday only participants – i.e. there is no discount.

Here is the online registration link for members: <https://mgoi.ca/conference-2024/>

(Note: Registration is now open to non-members as well – fee is \$175. If your spouse or a friend would like to attend – give them this link: <https://mgoi.ca/mgoi-conference-2024-public/>)

Follow the instructions to complete your registration information. After you register 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 link below. 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, or when all blocked rooms are booked, these rates will not be available.

<https://www.marriott.com/events/start.mi?id=1703105440866&key=GRP>



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 that will stand on the table (available from Staples, Amazon, or Dollarama) 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, 2024 – Tours at the Guelph Arboretum (each offered more than once)

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. Please 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 the 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, 2024 – 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, 2024 – 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, 2024 – 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 Spring Webinars

Coming soon! Details will go out via email.

Access to MGOI Webinars

All webinars organized by our Director of Education, Kate Sault, have been taped and 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 Vacancies – Vice President and Director SW

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

Toronto Master Gardeners

Name: January Monthly Meeting – Celebrating the Master Gardener Movement

Details: The January 9th meeting of Toronto Master Gardeners featured a fascinating and informative look into the history of the Master Gardener movement, including a deep dive into the creation of the Toronto group.

Judith Lavin, TMG Communications Coordinator and Dianne Azzarello, TMG Member Education and Experience Coordinator, had an informative conversation about the origin and history of Master Gardeners, from the founding by Dr. David Gibby at Washington State University extension, (see video:

<https://mastergardener.wsu.edu/who-we-are/50-years/>)

to the origins in Ontario with OMAFRA (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs), and finally the creation of our own Toronto Master Gardeners group.

Dianne said that Rosemary Dobson and Tina Cesaroni, former Executive Coordinator of TMG, were a great source of information, particularly about two early members who played a big role in establishing our group, Anne Marie Van Nest and Vivian Jenkinson.



(l to r) Dianne Azzarello, TMG Member Education and Experience Coordinator and MG Natalie Vomba at the Toronto Botanical Garden

Following this conversation, three members, Maureen Hulbert, Marjorie Lenz, and Kathy Martin shared their stories about what TMG means to them. They inspired us with their experiences of stepping up to new roles, making new friends and learning more about gardening!



Niagara Master Gardeners

Name: Seedy Saturday

Details: The Niagara MGs hosted a Seedy Saturday seed-exchange event on February 17 in Fonhill that included speakers, vendors, and children's activities. The main event, of course, was seeds!

Over 800 people attended and everyone was eager to connect and talk about seed planting and the season ahead. Many of those who attended donated generously to our food drive for the local food bank.



Seed-sale tables were at the centre of the action, organized and manned by hard-working MGs (including Kandy Steeves at front left)



The St. Catharines' Public Library brought lots of information and suggestions for books on gardening





Among the many MG volunteers were, from left, Chris Clark, Barb Johnston and Marie-Claire Groulx

Name: Hospice Niagara Workshop

Details: Niagara MGs led a *Living Well at Home* Valentine's Day workshop on February 14 at Hospice Niagara in St. Catharines, featuring little watering cans and mini roses which were donated by Vermeer's Garden Centre in Welland.



From left, Sue Lusted, Kendy Steeves and Karen Epp ran the workshop at Hospice Niagara in St. Catharines in February, where residents assembled beautiful Valentine's planters



Kids Activity Area crafts included 'egg heads' and potato prints, as well as seed planting and garden journals



Vendors included Rice Road Nursery and Seeds of Diversity (which facilitate seed exchange events across Canada)



UPCOMING EVENTS

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.

Next Session

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 backyard. 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.

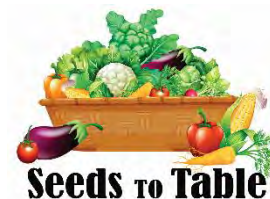


London Middlesex Master Gardeners

Name: Seeds to Table Course

Dates: March 12 to April 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.



Stratford & Area Master Gardeners

Name: Spring Workshops: Pollinator Gardens 101:

Design, plant and love native species in your garden

Participation fee: \$15.

Locations, Dates, Times: Workshops will be held at the following locations:

April 13: MacKay Centre, Goderich, noon - 3 p.m.

May 4: Avondale Church, Stratford, 9 a.m. - noon

May 11: Drop-in Centre, James St., Innerkip, 9 a.m. – noon

Northumberland Master Gardeners

Name: Master Gardener Technical Update

Date: Saturday, May 25, 2024

Time: 10:00 a.m. – noon

Place: The Gathering Place (St. Paul's United Church) in Warkworth, Ontario

Details: Save the date and keep a spot open in your calendar for the Master Gardener Technical Update during the Warkworth Lilac Festival.

Our speaker will be Sean James of Sean James Consulting & Design (<https://www.seanjames-consulting.ca/>). As usual, the Northumberland Master Gardeners will also host an advice clinic on the Millennium Trail during the festival weekend. More details on the topic, cost and registration information to follow in future newsletters.

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) – Oak Wilt Disease

This is a reminder that Oak wilt disease has been found in Ontario. Oak Wilt, or *Bretziella fagacearum*, is a fungal disease that can kill oak trees within one year. Red oaks are particularly susceptible.

The Ontario government advises 'you should not prune or wound oaks between April and November, when the sap beetles that spread the disease are active'.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/oak-wilt#:~:text=Oak%20wilt%20is%20an%20introduced,Falls%20area%20of%20Southern%20Ontario>. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is strongly advising against **pruning oak trees until November** to help prevent the spread of oak wilt.

This disease can cause serious damage to Canada's oak tree population. Pathways by which oak wilt can spread include:

- via **root grafting**, where the fungus travels through the interconnected roots of infected and healthy trees growing in close proximity;
- via **insects**, such as sap and bark beetles that carry spores of the fungus from an infected tree to a healthy one; and
- human-assisted spread through the **movement** of things such as firewood and **pruning** during high-risk periods.

How You Can Help: Given Master Gardeners' expertise in the industry, and because we are a leading voice in the field of tree and plant health, the CFIA would like us to share this message with the public, our clients, and staff. Please review the **links** and incorporate messaging into your own communications. Content could be promoted in various ways including your website, newsletter and social media. Further information including photos can be found here:

<https://inspection.canada.ca/plant-health/invasive-species/plant-diseases/oak-wilt/eng/1325624048625/1325624535106>.



Oak wilt disease in an oak tree.
Photo credit: Joseph O'Brien, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org
https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/oak_wilt_diagnostics_and_prevention



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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