



Newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Ontario

Inside

MGOI

Welcome to the March 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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| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
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INSIDE MGOI

March 2024

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

Editor: Isabel Belanger, Halton

Milestones

Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton

New Master Gardeners in Training



MGOC CLASS OF 24

Joining us are (left to right) Pauline Yelle, Tong Zhao-Ansari (actually started in 2023), Susan Shafer, Celia Shatsky, Nancy Mantle, Laura Lyons and Minh T. Do

These seven smiling faces entered MGOCs MGIT group as of January 1st 2024. Our recruitment process underwent a substantial overhaul in 2023, streamlining the interview and intake steps in order to focus the start date and prospective graduation into a single yearly cohort. Our goal is to better integrate and engage our new members with a series of monthly zoom sessions with specific goals each time. Welcome to our new members, good luck with your studies and enjoy the volunteering!

Pollination Steward Certification Program 2024



Over twenty MGOC members registered for the “Pollination Steward Certification Program 2024”, offered by Pollinator Partnership to empower participants with the scientific know-how to make a real difference for pollinators. Topics include an introduction to the world

of pollinators, how they live and thrive, threats to pollinators, and how we all can help.

Certification involves a 9-part virtual training module and the completion of one habitat creation and one outreach or education activity.



1000 Islands Master Gardeners

15 Year Anniversary

Astrid Muschalla

5 Year MG Anniversary

Teresa Roseboom



Halton Master Gardeners

Master Gardener Status Achieved

Elisa Bernier

Lori Kirkpatrick

by *Hariette Henry*



Elisa Bernier

Elisa is an active member of the Halton group connecting speakers with the many requests we receive for presentations from community groups and the gardening public. She does this while holding down a full-time job. Elisa developed an early

interest in growing food from her grandparents who tended a backyard vegetable garden, and the natural world from her father. She has an undergraduate degree in Environmental Sciences, an interest in food sovereignty as well as the protection of natural areas. Elisa wrote the Certification Exam. Congratulations Elisa on achieving Master Gardener certificate!



Lori Kirkpatrick

When asked what attracted her to Master Gardeners Lori says “it’s all about the learning”. Lori has been with the Halton group for the requisite two years and has more than successfully finished the required courses.



In fact, she has obtained a Horticulture Certificate through U of Guelph with a specialization in Urban Agriculture.

Her roots are deep within the agricultural community in southern Ontario as both parents were raised on family farms. She recently did her first presentation for Master Gardeners at “Halton Garden Week” on the topic of Soil Mixes for Container Gardens. Congratulations Lori on achieving Master Gardener certification!

Member Transfer

Carol Tuck-Riggs

Carol recently transferred from Niagara Master Gardeners where she was a member for six years. She is happy to be back in the Halton region where most of her family resides.

Carol is very interested in gardening topics relating to ecology and the environment. She looks forward to focusing on those topics as she gets more involved with our group.

New Master Gardeners in Training

Judith Desembrana
Michelle Morra
Diane Best
Nikolina Radulovich

A very warm welcome is extended to our newest MGITs!



Grand Erie Master Gardeners

New Master Gardeners in Training

Liz Hopkins
Erin Casey

We are pleased to have two more new members join us.



Lanark County Master Gardeners

15 Year Anniversary

Victor Wark

by Dale Odorizzi

Congratulations Victor on attaining 15 years as a Master Gardener. Victor is a popular host at Advice clinics and at presentations. Many customers have benefited from your advice at the garden centre where you work.



Niagara Master Gardeners

Returning Niagara Coordinator

Sue Lusted

Niagara Master Gardeners are happy to welcome back Sue as Coordinator of the Niagara group. A Master Gardener for over 20 years, Sue accepted the role of Niagara MG co-ordinator at our March meeting.

Master Gardener Status Achieved

Marie-Claire Groulx
Karen Epp

Congratulations Marie-Claire and Karen for becoming certified Master Gardeners! Below are some notes they wrote to mark the occasion.

by Karen Epp

Gardening has always been very therapeutic for me. My flower gardens are primarily perennials and, since joining Niagara Master Gardeners two years ago, I have added more native plants. I also have a vegetable garden that seems to get bigger every year to accommodate the new varieties I want to try. My involvement with our very



popular Seedy Saturday event has expanded my knowledge and interest in seed harvesting and planting. This year I am trying my hand at winter sowing for the first time. I have always enjoyed gardening but becoming a Master Gardener has opened my world up to so much more!

by Marie-Claire Groulx

My family's deep roots connected to the land have shaped me. Living in Northern Ontario most of my life, I had carved out gardens in the wilderness and raised a family that enjoyed the bounty and the beauty that grew in the north. Moving recently to the Niagara region, new challenges piqued my curiosity.

Niagara MGs and the U of G have opened my horizons to a wealth of knowledge and innumerable possibilities for my new home in an ever-changing environment. My goal is to make judicious choices that will leave the gentlest footprints for future generations.



The Niagara group's newest certified MGs, Marie-Claire Groulx, left, and Karen Epp, right, accept their certificates from Lois Johnson, our membership coordinator, centre



Stratford & Area Master Gardeners

Master Gardener Status Achieved

Elizabeth Spedaliere

Elizabeth passed the certification exam in spring 2023 and is now an official Ontario Master Gardener. She was an active Master Gardener in Minnesota for over 15 years before moving to Ontario. Elizabeth is an enthusiastic volunteer and has devoted many hours to Master Gardener projects since coming to Canada.

Elizabeth brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Tri-County Master Gardeners (as of April 1 - formerly Stratford and Area Master Gardeners).



Elizabeth Spedaliere (r) receives her MG Certificate from Co-Coordinator Don Farwell



Durham Master Gardeners

New Master Gardener in Training

Grace Wilton

by Norine Blyth

Our club just keeps growing! Please join me in welcoming our newest member, Grace Wilton. Grace has special interests in flower and vegetable gardens, garden design, pest management, lawn care, seed starting and propagation techniques. She has experience in helping friends, neighbours and relatives with their gardens.



Her educational background is in Business, Sales and Leadership Management. Grace has signed up for the U of Guelph courses. Grace, we all are excited to have you on our team!





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

IT'S NOT TOO LATE!!

LAST DAY TO REGISTER is March 30. Register here: <https://mgoi.ca/conference-2024/>

Cost is \$140. for Master Gardeners, and \$175 for friends and family. Friends and family can register here: <https://mgoi.ca/mgoi-conference-2024-public/>

The conference fee includes Friday afternoon sessions, Friday dinner buffet (excluding cash bar), Friday evening keynote speaker, Saturday continental breakfast, Saturday sessions and Saturday working lunch buffet.

Registration and payment are to be made by March 30, 2024.

NO REFUNDS ARE POSSIBLE AFTER MARCH 30.

Let's Share Our Success Stories at This Year's Conference – Poster Presentations

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.

If you have not already done this, sign your group up today by emailing operations@mgoi.ca

ON APRIL 2nd, a survey will be sent to all registrants so they can make choices. **DO NOT DELAY COMPLETING and SUBMITTING THAT SURVEY.** Some Friday sessions have limited space.



Friday, April 26, 2024 – starting at 12 noon – there will be 3 sessions:

Tours at the Guelph Arboretum - Please dress for the weather. **Attend the MGOI Spring Webinars via Zoom to prepare for these experiences**

TREES: this will be offered 3 times, maximum of 25 participants each time.

Darrell Bley - 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 practice skills in identifying woody trees and shrubs in their dormant state. The trees and shrubs are waiting!

BIRDS: this will be offered 3 times, maximum of 25 participants each time.

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.

RAIN GARDEN: this workshop can be visited/observed in each of the 3 sessions.

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 near the Arboretum, we'll be preparing the swale and planting the rain garden. Mulching will be done after the planting. Each session will give participants actual and theoretical experience with various aspects from siting a rain garden to after-care and maintenance.

At the hotel there will be 3 Presentations, one each session

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

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 disrupt our natural areas.

Robert Pavlis - Plantaholic. Master Gardener, well-known speaker, educator and myth buster with over 40 years of gardening experience.

Myths about soil and native plantings

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

Rethinking Beauty: Inspiring Gardeners in a Changing World

Paul believes it is a gift to care for a garden space. 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.



Saturday, April 27, 2024 – Presentations

The Survey you receive on APRIL 2nd will include a schedule for choices. **DO NOT DELAY COMPLETING THE SURVEY.**

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

Get 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!





- Tuesday May 7th: Tim Hannah-Pesticides and the Law
- Tuesday May 14th: Kris Mahoney-Using Pesticides from the Allowable List Part 1
- Tuesday May 21st: Kris Mahoney-Using Pesticides from the Allowable List Part 2

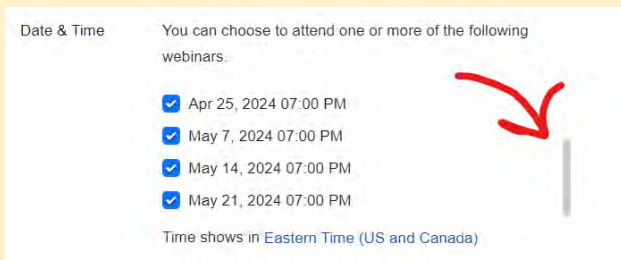
For all members, and as a lead-up to the Conference, Education Director Kate Sault has arranged for four ZOOM webinars to provide members with information that should make the Arboretum tours and Rain Garden event more enjoyable for those who attend the Conference. The three post conference webinars will deal with the use of allowable pesticides for pest control. Registration is now open for the webinars!

Registration details

The link for registration was sent to coordinators on March 23.

- Information about speakers and presentations can be found at the registration link.
- You can check any or all boxes for the 7 webinars. You will need to move the slider down to see the last 3 webinar boxes (see image below).
- Once you register, you will receive a Zoom link to join the webinar and reminders one week, one day and one hour before the webinar.

Move the grey slider bar to see the last 3 webinars:



All presentations start at 7 p.m. They will all be recorded and added to our MGOI website at the end of the series. Each webinar is worth 2 CEUs.

- Thursday April 4th: Darrell Bley - Winter Wood Identification Part 1
- Thursday April 11th: Darrell Bley - Winter Wood Identification Part 2
- Wednesday April 17th: Kevin Kavanagh - Plant Selection that's for the Birds
- Thursday April 25th: Sean James - What to do with a Downpour II: An Even Deeper Dive into Rain Gardening

Access to Past MGOI Webinars

The link is on the MGOI website, <https://mgoi.ca/>, click on member login which 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.

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



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](#)

MGOI Board Vacancies – Vice President and Director S & W

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 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

Thunder Bay & District Master Gardeners

Name: Seedy Saturday

written by Lynda Lahteenmaa

Details: The unusual spring weather which has been going on for many weeks in Thunder Bay is inspiring local gardeners to get growing. The much-awaited Seedy Saturday was held on March 2nd at Roots Community Food Centre (RCFC). It was the perfect venue where several gardening groups, home gardeners, vendors, farmers, and gardening enthusiasts were able to learn and share their love of growing in an ecologically friendly way.

Master Gardeners were on hand to give out free seeds, provide expert advice, offer information on how to become a Master Gardener and advertise our upcoming events. A poster demonstrating “How to Grow Milkweed” was the focus of attention and packets of milkweed seeds were offered to the public.



MGs Sylvia Goodheart (l) and Rosemary McNabb answered questions about Monarch butterflies & their source of food as they stood beside a poster showing how to grow milkweed

No doubt, Seedy Saturday was a timely cure for the winter blues. It was a celebration of seeds, gardening and community, offering an amazing chance to learn about seeds and growing and preparing healthy food. As well, it was wonderful connecting with seed savers and folks who are truly committed to climate actions.

There was a panel discussion on making seed choices followed by two presentations that were both highly informative and interesting: “Beans from Around the World” and “Landrace Seed Saving”.



From left to right MGs Sylvia Goodheart, Rosemary McNabb, Lynda Lahteenmaa, and MGITs Jack Van Gemeren & Hedy Koski were on hand to inspire and motivate gardeners during the recent Seedy Saturday in Thunder Bay

We appreciate RCFC’s warm hospitality for the relaxed spacious venue as well as for providing freshly baked muffins, brewed coffee and soothing warm teas that were served by the kitchen staff throughout the day.



1000 Islands Master Gardeners

Name: KASSI Seedy Saturday, March 9th

Details: 1000 Islands Master Gardeners helped celebrate a very successful Seedy Saturday in Kingston along with KASSI (Kingston Area Seed Saving Initiative), an organization in Kingston dedicated to saving open pollinated local seeds. KASSI works with Tyendinaga Mohawk Community-based Ratinenhayen:thos, which means “they are farmers of seeds”.



L to R behind the table, MGs Anna Sadura-Healey, Astrid Muschalla, Tracey Filson, Anne Bremmer



MG Cathy Christie led this event which began with opening words celebrating the 5th anniversary of the Seed Rematriation, a process where seeds are returned to their place of origin. Focusing on local seeds, other MG members offered advice, helped at the seed swap tables, and presented workshops in soil blocking and seed starting to a packed house.



MG Tracey Filson at the demonstration workshop



MG Cathy Christie

Fast forward four decades and Master Gardener Robert (Guelph) attracts more than four-million people every year to his online, science-based, myth busting content.

Interestingly Robert is focussed on the US market and writes in the US style (degrees F not C, for example). “Tomatoes grow everywhere,” he said, referring to his international reach and impact.

Robert’s work debunks myths and superstitions that have existed for centuries, or increasingly baked-fresh online every day. With more than 1100 articles (posts and videos) to date, Robert shared that it can take up to eight hours to tackle a specific myth including research, writing and online production.

Asked if he sees a common myth lately, “the big trend I see is that people are trying to make homemade liquids of things,” says Pavlis. “Last year, banana tea was one of the biggest myths. People do that with all kinds of things like compost, or manure, even all kinds of kitchen scraps. These teas are all based on one basic flaw – the organic nutrients in the material are still in the organic material, they’re not in the water. Those nutrients don’t come out until that stuff decomposes, but people love using things from their kitchen in their garden although there’s no science for it.”

Robert shared lots of practical advice on how MGs can build our online presence and increase our influence. Lots of great ideas! Big thanks to Robert and Natalie.

For more information, you can watch the TMG meeting with Robert Pavlis at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhw1o7PSf3w>



Toronto Master Gardeners

Name: March Monthly Meeting: Don’t Drink the Tea! Advice from Robert Pavlis!

Details: Toronto Master Gardeners’ March 5th meeting via Zoom featured an up close and personal conversation with North America’s leading internet horticultural influencer, Robert Pavlis, the original Garden Myth Buster! <https://www.gardenmyths.com>. The one-on-one discussion with Robert featured Toronto Master Gardeners’ social media manager, Natalie Vompa. Robert discussed his personal and professional journey in the world of horticulture.



Zoom screen capture: Natalie Vompa, left, Social Media Manager, TMG and Robert Pavlis author, speaker, educator, MG and myth buster



Peterborough & Area Master Gardeners

Name: Seedy Sunday

Details: Peterborough & Area Master Gardener Sally Rye tells us that Seedy Sunday in Peterborough, held on March 10, was well-attended with lots of enthusiastic gardeners. PMG's 11 volunteers, in their red aprons and smiles, gladly offered assistance and advice both at our advice table and at the seed exchange table. It was another wonderful day! Thank you to all the volunteers!



MGiT Grant Murphy (L) and MG Sharleen Ward



MG Jennifer Guertin (L)



MG Deb Fraser (L) and MGiT Marjorie Vendrig (R)

Name: Winter Tree ID Walk

Details: MGiT Silvia Strobl, a retired Forester, gave our group an excellent presentation on "Winter Tree ID" followed by an outdoor experience at Mark S. Burnham Provincial Park. She coached us in "putting our winter tree ID skills into practice" during a walk through the park. It was an excellent experience during which techniques such as bud placement and shape, bark appearance, growing location and leaf marcescence taught us how to make correct identifications. We also visited the world's oldest sugar maple tree which is at least 330 years old! It was an exciting and informative event. Many thanks to Silvia!



PMGs at M.S. Burnham Provincial Park



Silvia Strobl



Simcoe County Master Gardeners

Name: Seedy Saturday at the Barrie Public Library

Details: On March 2nd, the Barrie Public Library hosted 150 members of the public for its Seedy Saturday event. MGs Joan Nieman-Agapas and Joan Sundeen represented the Simcoe County Master Gardeners with a hands-on activity. Fifty up-and-coming gardeners made seed-starting pots and mini greenhouses from recycled materials and took home seeds to get started. Questions were fielded from the public about pruning, vegetable gardening, invasive plants and roses. It was exciting to see the interest and enthusiasm from both adults and children.



Simcoe County MGs Joan Nieman-Agapas (l) and Joan Sundeen at Seedy Saturday, Barrie Public Library



Photo: MG Janine Robertson

Name: Potting Up for the Plant Sale!

Details: Hard at work on March 1st getting ready for the May plant sale are MGs Dorothea Stephan, Sharon Leggett, and Margaret Stewart



Photo: MG C. Hamilton

Guelph Master Gardeners

Name: Day in the Garden, February 25th

Details: Wonderful turnout this year with over 120 guests! Great speakers, food and a nice selection of vendors.



l-r, MGs Bob Newman, Heather Rajotte, Sharon Leggett, Denise Jupp. Photo: MG Janine Robertson

Lanark County Master Gardeners

Name: Almonte Seedy Saturday & Perth Seedy Sunday

Details: Lanark County Master Gardeners were well represented at two Seedy Saturdays, one on March 4th and the other on March 16th. The place was so packed, no chairs were allowed!





Lanark MGITs Jordan Scott-Richer (l) and Tim Deslippe

Grand Erie Master Gardeners

Name: GEMG Food Growing Committee

Details: The GEMGs have created a second committee (besides the Gardening for Nature committee) which is dedicated to providing information to the public on growing food. MGs / MGITs Katie, Kim, Christa, Erin and Len will meet separately to start discussions on this initiative.

Mississauga Master Gardeners

Name: Home and Backyard Show, The International Centre, February 2nd – 4th

Details: MMGs and Etobicoke Master Gardeners (EMGs) shared working this event with an advice table, a children's garden, a table about good bugs & bad bugs as well as who are the pollinators, and how you can attract them to your garden.

The activities we had were making a pine-cone feeder, creating a grass head and growing a bean plant. All items were able to travel home with the children.

It was wonderful working with another Master Gardener group and sharing our enthusiasm and expertise with those who attended the show.



MMG Emma Chow instructing how to grow a bean seed

Name: Mississauga Seedy Saturday

Details: MMGs had a table at the Unitarian Congregation for Seedy Saturday on February 24th. We came with new packets of seeds collected by our members last fall. As always we offered advice and problem solving for the eager gardeners. Growing your own bean seed was the activity at our table.

Stratford & Area Master Gardeners (Tri-County Master Gardeners as of April 1)

Name: Seedy Sunday, Sunday 25th of February

Details: Tri-County Master Gardeners enjoyed getting together to answer questions and provide information at Seedy Sunday. The event was held in Stratford at The Local Community Food Centre.



MGs Leslye Glover, left and Carolyn Schmidt help a member of the public at Seedy Sunday





Left to Right: MGs Karolina Marques and Diana Westland, Jeanne McRight (Blooming Boulevards) and MG Jennifer Beale



Left to Right: MGs Susan Quirk and Donna Hormozian

Name: Mississauga Seed Library

Details: The MMGs were present at the Mississauga Seed Library's 10th Anniversary located in the Small Arms



Martha Kantorczyk

Inspection Building on February 24th. It was a busy day answering lots of gardening questions! MMG member Martha Kantorczyk was one of the guest speakers. She presented the topic Growing vegetables in pots, growing vegetables in plots.



MGs Ramona Christiansen and Stuart Plummer

Name: Brampton Seedy Saturday

Details: The Brampton Horticultural Society in partnership with the City of Brampton hosted their 12th Annual Seedy Saturday on March 9th at the Century Gardens Recreation Centre. MMGs were in attendance with an advice table along with unique seeds collected by our members.



Left to right: MGs Emma Chow and Donna Hormozian



Left to right: MGs Maureen Neglia and Donna Hormozian

Name: Credit Valley Horticultural Society (CVHS)

Details: MMG member Ramona Christiansen had the pleasure of being a guest speaker for the CVHS on March 13th. The topic presented was Communication between Trees through the Mycorrhizal Network.

MMG member Diana Westland was on hand at an advice table answering gardening questions from CVHS members.





MG Ramona Christensen

Alexia listed things we can do to help combat hemlock woolly adelgid such as: report sightings; treat trees if possible; and join local initiatives to pressure the province and local MPPs to do more, and faster.

You can get more information at the [Invasive Species Centre](#).



MGs Diana Westland, left and Ramona Christiansen



The Eastern Hemlock offers important habitat for many interesting birds such as long-eared owls and Blackburnian warblers, along with bears and other creatures.

Name: Hands On at Niagara Parks

Details: The Niagara MG volunteers helped out at a Hands-On session at Niagara Parks Greenhouses in February. The Hands-On events, organized by Niagara MG Barb Johnston, happens monthly, from fall into the spring.

These events are supervised by Niagara Parks staff. There is always something new and interesting to learn!

Niagara Master Gardeners

Name: Monthly Meeting: Tree Invaders

Details: At our March meeting, member MG Alexia Shoalts gave an informative and interesting talk on forest pests and pathogens. As an example, the Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), which offers important habitat for many birds and other creatures, is a target of hemlock woolly adelgid (*Adelges tsugae*), an invasive insect that can move through a stand of hemlocks, killing most of it if left untreated.

There are solutions, but the current Ontario government spends only \$4 million annually to fight invasive species, despite the \$3.6 billion economic impact they create (from Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk).



Niagara MGS tour a Niagara Parks greenhouse full of canna lilies and Colocasias destined to be planted in gardens outside

Here is Colocasia growing in one of its native habitats, courtesy of Wisconsin U.

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/elephant-ears-colocasia-alocasia-and-xanthosoma/>





MGs Mary-lyn Hopper and Kit Thompson worked at cutting back some over-eager Colocasias, among other tasks

Stratford & Area Master Gardeners (Tri-County Master Gardeners as of April 1)

Name: Spring Workshops: Pollinator Gardens 101: *Design, choose native plants and create a successful pollinator garden.*

Dates, Locations, & 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

Participation fee: \$15.

Etobicoke Master Gardeners

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

Date & Time of 3rd and Final Lecture: Tuesday, April 16th, from 7pm-9pm.

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

Cost: donation/pwyc

Details: Join our well travelled and experienced horticulturist Frank Kershaw for this timely and informative slide show as the final presentation of our winter lecture series.

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.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Grand Erie Master Gardeners

Name: Haldimand Seedy Sunday

Date & Time: April 7th, 10am – 4pm

Location: Caledonia Fairgrounds, 151 Caithness St. E.

Details: Three GEMG members – Laura, Lynne and Carolyn – will represent the group at this event. They are busy preparing a table with information for the public, and seeds, signs and bookmarks for fundraising. The Simcoe Seedy Saturday volunteered by Laura last month was a good preparation for this larger event.

Name: Bite of Brant

Dates: April 10th & 11th

Details: Anne, Marilyn, Katie, Christa, Lynne and Liz will volunteer for this event, demonstrating how to “grow your own pizza” by teaching grade 5 students how to plant tomato and basil seeds.

Name: Create Your Own Pollinator Paradise

Date: June 22nd

Details: The Gardening for Nature Committee is planning to hold a pollinator kit sale for creating a pollinator paradise at Kim’s property.

Name: Walk in the Woods Technical Workshops

Details: Kevin is creating two “Walk in the Woods” technical workshops to be held later this year in conjunction with Eco Adventures in Turkey Point and Birds Canada in Port Rowan.



1000 Islands Master Gardeners

Volunteer Opportunities:

Timeframe: Thursdays at 1:00 for *Ask a Master Gardener* ZOOM series.

Description: We are requesting MGs and MGITs to volunteer for presentations. Our dedicated members offer outstanding advice and information in these 30-minute sessions. Their wide audience engage in the following categories:

- 1) Edible Gardening
- 2) Back to Basics, Gardening 101
- 3) Climate Smart Gardening
- 4) Biodiverse Gardening
- 5) Native Plants
- 6) Bonus Week, topics of seasonal interest

Name: Screening of *Planet Soil: the Power of the Underground*

Date: Saturday, April 20, 2024 at 1:00pm

Location: The Screening Room, Kingston ON

Details: Please join us!



THE FILM

PLANET SOIL is a groundbreaking documentary that unveils the vital, yet often overlooked, world beneath our feet. With more living creatures in a teaspoon of soil than there are people on Earth, this ecosystem is essential for supporting all life on our planet.

By showcasing the interconnectedness, immense potential and strength of soil organisms, the film inspires us to reimagine our relationship with nature. It offers tangible solutions to improve soil health, combat climate change, and enhance food security.

PLANET SOIL is a global wake-up call, urging us to protect and restore our soils for a sustainable future. This film challenges viewers to embrace the power of the underground and make a positive impact on our planet.

London Middlesex Master Gardeners

Name: Seeds to Table

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.



Peterborough & Area Master Gardeners

Technical Update: A Day For Gardeners 2024

Date & Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024, 9:30am – 3:00pm

Location: Westdale United Church, 1509 Sherbrooke St., Peterborough ON

Cost: \$60

Registration / Information: Please see the poster below.

PETERBOROUGH AND AREA
MASTER GARDENERS PRESENT:

A DAY FOR GARDENERS 2024



Saturday May 4, 2024

Westdale United Church
1509 Sherbrooke St, Peterborough, ON
9:30am to 3pm (estimate)

Four Seminars,
lunch & door prizes

Cost: \$60 early bird
\$75 after Apr 15

Come join us for a fun day of
learning, lunch and
friendship!

All seminars are presented by Peterborough Master Gardeners.

Session 1:
☒ Creating a Garden Sanctuary OR
☒ Sustainable Gardening and Xeriscaping

Session 2:
☒ Container Gardening (Hands-On) OR
☒ Attracting Wildlife to Your Garden

Session 3:
☒ Winter Sowing (Hands-On) OR
☒ Grow Me Instead: Replacing Invasives with Natives

Plenary: Explore the Future of Gardening

For more information and registration, see:

peterboroughmastergardeners.com



Guelph & Wellington Master Gardeners

Name: Plant Sale

Date & Time: May 25, 2024, 9am – 1pm

Location: Guelph Legion (parking lot and inside) on 57 Watson Parkway South, Guelph

Details: As in past years this will be a joint sale with Pollination Guelph, Nature Guelph, and the Enabling Gardens



Northumberland Master Gardeners

Name: Master Gardener Technical Update

Date & Time: Saturday, May 25, 2024, 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 NMGs will also host an advice clinic on the Millennium Trail during the festival weekend. More details on the topic, cost and registration to follow in future newsletters.

Niagara Master Gardeners

Name: 18th Annual Shaw Guild Garden Tour

Date & Time: Saturday, June 15, 2024, 10am – 3pm

Details: This year the tour will feature 8 fabulous private gardens, several of which are on historical properties. Master Gardeners will be on hand in every garden to answer your questions. Music and plain air artists will enhance your visit. This year, you may take photos for personal use. Plan your day in beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake to see all the gardens and enjoy all that the area has to offer! To purchase tickets, please visit

<https://shawguild.ca/garden-tour/>. The Garden Tour is the major fundraising event for the Shaw Guild.

Cost: [BUY EARLY BIRD TICKETS NOW!](#)

Early bird tickets until March 31 = \$25

Regular tickets April 1 - June 14 = \$30

Tickets purchased at the gardens on June 15 = \$35

[Watch a short video of the Shaw Guild 2023 Garden Tour on YouTube.](#)

[Download the 2023 Shaw Guild Garden Tour Magazine here.](#)



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:

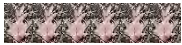
- via **root grafting**, where the fungus travels through the interconnected roots of infected and healthy trees growing in close proximity;
- via **insects**, such as sap and bark beetles that carry spores of the fungus from an infected tree to a healthy one; and
- human-assisted spread through the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



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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