

WHAT'S GROWING ON?

Spring/Summer 2000

What's Growing On? is a publication of **Master Gardeners of Ontario Inc.**
Avalon Hamlin - Editor

+This edition is dedicated to the memory of Neil William Thomas.

Letter from the President

Greetings All,

Spring seems to be under way at last! Suddenly many things to do for ourselves and as Master Gardeners; gardening plans, new plants to try, and plenty of opportunity for learning and fun.

News from the May 27 Board meeting includes Bruce MacNeil being tentatively appointed as Zone 4 Director. The new budget with revised expectations of revenue has been approved. The addition of an educational component will be pursued for the next AGM. I will be sending out a more detailed report to the group Coordinators.

We have had a lot of rain this year in southern Ontario, and we will likely be looking for some come summer, but so far a really good jump on the season in the garden. Lots of things growing by inches every day. Have a great gardening season this year!

Crystal Trojek
President, MGOI

From the Editor - The name, *What's Growing On?*, was suggested by a Simcoe County MGIT and endorsed by other MGOI members subscribed to the MG-List. I hope the rest of you will be happy with the choice.

+ In Memoriam

Neil Thomas' strong presence will be remembered in the Ontario Master Gardeners' association. He had a booming authoritative voice which many were introduced to when he emceed the annual Ontario Master Gardener conferences.

*Neil passed away on February 23, 1997, on his 59th birthday. I think he epitomized what Master Gardeners is all about. Remembrances of Neil by Sandy Ellenor can be found under **Windsor-Essex Master Gardeners**.*

MG-List

The reason for establishing the MG-List was to increase communication between Master Gardeners and their groups. When subscribed to the List, you will see all messages posted. If you have gardening questions which you cannot answer, and do not have the research facilities available to find an answer, field that question to a larger audience. Let everyone know about the special events or fundraisers that your group is sponsoring. Sharing of information helps us grow. We are interested in hearing about your speakers, your meeting format, etc.; perhaps, there could be a submission from each group after monthly meetings. If you hear of any new great gardening products, seminars, or new plants, let everyone know. Encourage all Master Gardeners you know

with email access to subscribe. If you don't have a personal computer; you can set up a personal email address through one of the internet sites such as www.netscape.com or www.hotmail.com; ask at your local library for instructions. Once you have your email address, subscribe to the MG-List: Email majordomo@eagle.ca and in the body of the email, put the following: subscribe mg-list. (no period) Make sure your email format is in Plain Text so that the request is received correctly. When emailing to the List, use Plain Text so that everyone can read it.

North, South, East, and West

Algoma, Brantford, Brooklin, Burlington, Dundas, Dunnville-Haldimand, Elgin County, Gananoque, Geraldton, Grey, Guelph-Wellington, Huron, Kitchener, Lake Simcoe South, Lanark County, Lindsay, London-Middlesex, Mississauga, Muskoka-Parry Sound, Niagara, North Bay, North Bruce, Ottawa-Carleton, Oxford, Peterborough, Prince Edward County, Quinte-Tweed, Rainy River District, Renfrew County, Sarnia-Lambton, Simcoe County, South Bruce, Stratford, Sudbury, Temiskaming, Thunder Bay, Toronto, and Windsor-Essex.

Across Ontario, there are 38 Master Gardener groups, including the satellite group of Thunder Bay, Geraldton. This issue highlights the activities of two of these groups.

Windsor-Essex (Growing Zone 7a)

by Sandy Ellenor

Neil Thomas was a broadcaster, a journalist, and a Master Gardener. He had lived in many parts of the world, but his time with Master Gardeners was very special.

Neil started up the Plant a Row program in Windsor in 1994 after learning of the idea from Jim Wilson of the Victory Garden who was in the area for the International Master Gardener Conference held in Detroit; Neil had the job of chauffeuring Jim around to local tv and radio stations for interviews, etc. To quote Neil, "The beauty of this campaign is that it involves no overhead to administer, no full time employees to take care of it and no funding from any agency other than the gardeners themselves." In one of Neil's articles, he had some stories about stuff brought in; for example, how acid free tomatoes were such a hit because many people down on their luck develop ulcers-- who would think of that? Some people thought they have so little to offer, why bother? He told us that just 3 cucumbers would go to 3 families; I remember once he told us that people sometimes would bring in a few extra flowers and how that could cheer someone down on their luck; some people even took in an extra jar of home made jam. To those that said some of these people were too lazy to grow a garden, which could be the case in a small percentage, his response was think of the children who need the fresh produce in their growing years and who have no control over their situation. The last few years, the Hort students at St. Clair College start the tomato plants from seed. This year we are going into the schools to help kids plant seeds too. A committee, including Karen Batke, our Coordinator, along with the Unemployed Help Centre and the radio station works on the project; this year we will be handing out kits that will include donated seeds, fertilizer, hats, key chains, magnets, and recipes, as well as a 4 pack of tomatoes May 6 and 7. The food is distributed to 19 area food banks.

In his gardening, Neil was beginning to seek out alternative means to chemicals; he was a hit with the Borax recipe for killing Creeping Charlie. He always said he had a natural dislike of lawns, saying in one article, "I will once again urge people to tear out their lawns and put in some real plants for a change. Lawns are the greatest consumer of water, fertilizer, herbicides, pesticides and fungicides of any kind of landscaping. They also seem to occupy the greatest amount of time and

concern of any garden feature among too many people. And for what ? A blank green space which could be achieved by laying Astroturf or painted concrete. The same time and effort put into developing beds of annuals, perennials, shrubs and small trees will give you a much healthier environment and relieve a lot of tension you feel when your lawn is less than perfect, particularly when I tell you no lawn is perfect. It would probably be cheaper and easier to get that same expanse of green by sewing together \$20 bills and carpeting your lawn with that." Don't you love those quotes? My, how this has reminded me how much I really miss him. He had been such an inspiration. What a loss to the community and Master Gardeners!

Dundas (Growing Zones 4 - 5)

by Nancy Jordan

From Vankleek Hill, Cornwall, Morrisburg, Iroquois, Metcalfe, Morewood, Chesterville and Winchester. We meet monthly, except in July, in Winchester, the half-way point, some members having to drive 40 - 60 km to get to the meetings. A small group of 11, we're hoping to grow. Every year we have at least one plant sale to raise funds for our speakers, new books for our library and for our aprons and T-shirts. We also volunteer at the yearly Upper Canada Heritage Plant Sale, judge gardening contests, speak to various horticultural groups, judge and speak at the different fairs around the area, have a booth at the Agricultural Day for grade 3 students, and speak to seniors' groups. This year we will be providing gardening advice and help in the garden of a Senior's Support Centre in Winchester and will enjoy a free meeting room once a month in the process. They are very excited to have us as a part of their centre, and we were glad to have a new meeting facility--an extremely nice one too!

We have one social event in the summer and a gift and baking exchange party at Christmas. Every year we try to take a tour of an interesting garden or garden centre; and we have several very interesting speakers; this year a fruit grower who trained in Italy speaking on grafting; and an area garden centre owner speaking on gardening trends for the 2000's.

Internet Sites

MGOI Web Page

By Ted Reed, North Bay

The MG Home Page is at: www.interlog.com/~onthort/mg/mg.html

MG groups who have an existing web page on the internet, not listed below, please send me your URL and any other general information you wish to add. If you don't have a home page, send information as an attached .HTM file, and it will be added to the MGOI home page. Questions about home pages, contact Ted Reed at tedreed@onlink.net

Group Web Sites

North Bay - www.interlog.com/~onthort/dist18/callande/mastergd.html

London-Middlesex - www.execulink.com/~wilson1/MG/main.htm

Sarnia-Lambton - www.sarnia.com/mastergardeners

Guelph-Wellington - <http://ntserv1.chembio.uoguelph.ca/mastergardener/>

Brantford - <http://www.bfree.on.ca/comdir/alh/gdmaster/test.htm>

Gardening Tutorials www.etera.com/school/TutorialCreator/view/tutorialdefault.asp

Lots of Resources

www.virtualgarden.com

Time-Life Plant Encyclopedia, how-to, locate your zone, botanic gardens, forums, FAQ's, etc.

MG Comments

The membership fee and fundraising by Bruce MacNeil, Kitchener-Waterloo

What do we get for our \$12 membership fee? It goes towards the administration of MGOI including the Administrator's salary; insurance; materials for the groups including MGOI Resource Book, name tags, and certificates; board meetings including the AGM; Annual Report; Auditors fees; and newsletter. ***Editor's Note:*** The groups have been asked this year to assume the responsibility of newsletter distribution to their members.

The 2000 Budget included fund raising of \$11,000 but this amount was reduced by \$6,000 at the AGM. This means that expenditures will have to be reduced by \$6,000 leaving us with \$5,000 to raise towards expenses.

It is generally agreed that individual groups may find it easier to raise funds than MGOI as most funding agencies, e.g., Loblaws, Landscape Ontario, White Rose, etc. are looking for return on their money; i.e., the use of our expertise. I think we can raise the \$5,000, with the help of each group. Chris Graham of RBG also offered help in the form of advice from RBG's fundraiser.

Lorraine Holding (OMAFRA), a strong supporter of the Ontario Master Gardeners, is retiring this year and as a result will be stepping down from the MGOI Board. She suggested that if 30 Master Gardener groups could come up with \$200 each for MGOI, in addition to our fees, we would have \$6,000 towards the year's income. The Board of Directors would like to express their sincere appreciation and thanks for donations from the following groups: Guelph-Wellington; Kitchener; Lake Simcoe South; Niagara; North Bay; and Simcoe County. I'd like to challenge all groups to do likewise or to help in whatever way they can.

Should the Master Gardener Groups be funding MGOI? by Stewart McCombie

No – in the long term they should not. MGOI should be providing funds to the Groups.

Over the past two years I have convinced three government ministries that MGOI's purposes are charitable. It exists to "*advance the horticultural knowledge of the home gardener and of the general public in Ontario by carrying out such activities as conducting seminars and workshops, providing gardening information via the media and telephones, information sessions at malls, fairs, etc., and advancing therapeutic benefits of horticulture among long-term hospital patients and seniors in senior's homes, etc.*"

These activities can only be carried out by the Groups who make up MGOI. Charitable funds raised by MGOI must go to these activities and therefore must go to the Groups. When the Master Gardener program was under the care of OMAFRA, new Master Gardeners were provided with course material at no cost to them. Groups received funding toward update clinics annually. New Groups received a collection of reference books and assistance with funding. These, in my opinion, should be some of the goals of MGOI. These are things that would help forward the

goals of the organization. There are others. These things cannot be accomplished instantly. MGOI just had its second birthday in March. Its charitable status was just obtained in February of this year. Now is the time for us all to work as a unit to make these things happen; not as 38 Groups or even 8 zones. Should the individual members be willing to pay a membership fee to belong to MGOI? It certainly seems reasonable to me.

The Asian Longhorned Beetle

by Elma Vanags, Gananoque

Welcomed by Kingston Mayor Gary Bennett and introduced by our flamboyant Town Crier, Dr. David Roden, Research Scientist at Canadian Forest Service, delivered a timely and interesting talk about the Asian Long-horned beetle (ALB), a stow-a-way from China. ALB kills healthy hardwood trees. The only control method today is quarantine and cutting and burning of infested trees. In a quarantined laboratory at Sault Ste. Marie, David is researching methods to control ALB. He felt biological control could be the most promising method. Initial field tests by US Department of Agriculture in which Imidacloprid (Merit) was injected in the soil at the base of the tree, were disappointing.

About 200 people listened attentively; many asked probing questions. ALB and look-alike specimens at various life stages, as well as damaged wood samples brought by Dr. Roden and members of Canadian Food Inspection Agency created a lot of interest.

The Master Gardener Public Information project to raise public awareness of ALB was a resounding success. The project required several months of intensive work mainly by the Project Committee. We recommend ALB as a subject for Technical Update. For more information contact Dorothy Elston, Chair Public Information Project at 613-544-8880 or elston@kos.net.

Gardening for Kids (from the MG-List)

LifeSpin (from the MG-List) - LifeSpin, of London, Ontario, has produced the "Pocket-Sized Farms Kid's Garden Book". Organized around the seasons the book is designed for children to use as members of a school garden club or in their own backyards. The book uses a Crow and a scarecrow, in a rhyming story format to guide children through a series of important organic gardening principles. It is intended both as a source of inspiration and a learning opportunity. The book includes a number of journal pages to make garden notes as well as space for kids to design their own garden plan.

The book is part of a package of materials that LifeSpin is developing to encourage London area schools to develop productive, inspiring gardens on currently barren school yards. We believe these spaces can be a source of healthy, organic food. The second part is a Teacher's and Parent's Guide to Organic Gardening that will be available soon. This will include organic gardening advice, a number of educational activities, and specific tips for gardening with young kids.

The Kid's workbook - Pocket-Sized Farms sells for \$10 each or \$8.50 each for five or more copies. The "Teacher's and Parent's Guide to Organic Gardening" will sell for \$15 each. Call Rob Barrs at LifeSpin (519) 438 8676 ext.31 to order copies.

Hostas? www.hostalibrary.org

Did you Know?

Thunder Bay Master Gardeners with the T.B. Art Gallery are planning a "Millenium Tour", June 3, featuring four gardens with different educational themes. Lecture and demonstration included. \$20 (100 available) Contact Ralph Bullough at 807-767-2331.

Peterborough Master Gardeners, will hold a Millennium Garden Tour, June 25, 10- 5, with 4 city and 2 country gardens covering a wide variety of garden styles and environments. Informative talks and demonstrations plus garden items for sale. \$10. Contact Rachel Burrows, 705-799-2065.

Simcoe County Master Gardeners present A WALK AROUND THE GARDEN, 4 seminars, Sundays in June and July. June 4, 2 - 4 p.m., "Eclectic by Nature!" A country garden with a bit of everything... Learn what grows well in sun or shade, dry or wet areas. June 18, 2 - 4 p.m., "A Naturalist's Delight" indigenous flowers ...marsh marigolds, irises, roses and vegetables. Plants for sun and shade. July 9, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.. "Work in progress!" ...over 12 gardens including a rock garden, children's garden, mixed borders and island bed. July 30, 10 a.m. - 12 noon and 2 - 4 p.m. "Established Garden by the Lake" Many years of innovative gardening has produced this lovely garden by the lake. Learn how to build a rock garden, cascading stream, lily pond, rose garden, modified Japanese garden, lathe house, solarium, perennial garden, containers, raised bed square foot vegetable garden, plus pruning instructions. \$10. per person per seminar. Each Seminar limited to 25 persons. Contact Jane Blackstock, 705-721-0483.

Plant Identification

Sorbus thuringiaca, a Mountain Ash you wouldn't expect. Check out the non-pinnate species in a good reference book or the picture at http://herba.msu.ru/pictures/Living_pictures/lp_061.jpg

Computer Info - Claire Therrien, Sarnia-Lambton, provides the following tips on using HTML formatting: When you create messages using HTML formatting, only mail programs that support HTML can read the formatting. If the recipient's mail or program does not read HTML, the message is displayed as plain text with an HTML file attached. To use HTML formatting on all outgoing messages: In the main window, click the Tools menu, click Options, and then click the Send tab. In the Mail Sending Format, click HTML. To use HTML formatting on an individual message: In an email message window, make sure HTML formatting is turned on by clicking the Format menu. HTML formatting is turned on when a black dot appears by Rich Text (HTML). Notes: To edit the HTML source tags, click the View menu and make sure a check mark appears next to Source Edit. Then, select the Source tab and start editing. To set up Outlook Express so that your message replies are sent in a format that the originator's mail program can read, in the main window, click the Tools menu, click Options, and then click the Send tab. Check the Reply to messages using the format in which they were sent check box.

U.S. Northwest MG Conference

www.wvu.edu/~agexten/mgconf.htm

Book Review

Great Garden Companions. A Companion-Planting System for a Beautiful, Chemical-Free Vegetable Garden, S. J. Cunningham, Rodale Press, Inc., Emmaus, PA, 1998. 278 pp
Reviewed by Shirley Bellows, London-Middlesex

The book that I would have liked to have written! The author describes and recommends so many things that I have been doing successfully in my garden. Cunningham, a Master Gardener, manages the Consumer Horticulture and Master Gardener programs at Cornell Cooperative Extension. She has a weekly television appearance on Channel 4, WIVB-TV in Buffalo, where she gives information and answers call-in

questions. In her garden at Wonderland Farm she puts into practice everything she recommends.

This well-illustrated book gives much more information than the title implies. The 'companion' part refers not only to what plant grows best near another but how to attract other friends into the garden. Chapter 5, 'Bringing in the Good Guys' is an excellent reference guide on beneficial insects including how to attract them and how to keep them in your garden. In addition, there is a further 10 pages of charts of 'Plants for Beneficial Insects' near the back of the book. Organic gardening practices are explained thoroughly. There is an instructional section on vegetable crops with a one to two page explanation of her growing methods on each vegetable plus informative 'Sally's Tips & Tricks' captions.

Initially, I borrowed this book from the public library but liked it so much that I purchased it. It is a reference guide for organic gardening that will be kept near at hand.

Tufa Containers: *equal parts perlite, peat, and Portland cement. Another recipe: Mix Portland cement, sand and sieved peat in proportions of 1-2-1/2. Add water until it is moist but not runny. Cover the container mold with plastic. Wearing gloves, press handfuls of the mixture on to the container mold until the top part is covered. Let dry for a few days.*

Leave for about a week and brush with a wire brush. If big pieces fall off, reapply the tufa. When well dried, you can paint the surface with live yogurt to encourage the growth of lichen and moss. A summer project; frost affects the hardening process.

Crossword

by Sandy Ellenor, Windsor-Essex

Down

- 1 tubers, container or hanging plant (7)
- 3 classes incl. pompom, decorative and cactus (6)
- 4 harbinger of spring (6)

Across

- 2 Foxtail Lily (8)
- 4 mass plantings, tall, tropical appearance (5)
- 5 ear of a jungle (4)
- 6 orange flowers, pot plant (6)
- 7 wild hyacinth (8)