

WHAT'S GROWING ON?

Spring/Summer 2001

What's Growing On? is a publication of **MASTER GARDENERS OF ONTARIO INC.**

Editor: E. Avalon Hamlin hamlin@ebtech.net

Assist. Editor: Anna Madajczuk madaanna@ebtech.net

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the members of MGOI, I would like to express our appreciation to Crystal Trojek for her leadership over the last year. I am very honoured to be asked by the Board to serve as President and it is my intention to dedicate my efforts over the next year to the betterment of the Master Gardener organization. There are some important issues to contend with and we will need the help of all 740 Master Gardeners to achieve the kind of progress that we are hoping for.

We need to strengthen the cohesiveness, the confidence and pride which we associate with being a Master Gardener. We are all members of the very same team, Master Gardeners of Ontario Inc., and we all benefit when we assist improve-ments elsewhere in the organization. We need to improve the sense of belonging and participation. We must do whatever is necessary to get MG's to know and understand each other in order to improve communication and teamwork. We have to face up to the issue of funding and realize that we can only improve our circumstances through a partial increase in membership fees.

Many groups have demonstrated their strength in financial and operational terms. There is still a widespread problem of insufficient volunteering for positions of responsibility. Are your neighbouring groups doing as well as you are? Perhaps, the more successful groups could assist in the development of smaller, less successful ones. New MGIT's comprise about one-third of our membership. Are they receiving the assistance that they deserve?

These concerns will certainly be prominent items on my agenda. I also have to find out the inputs and objectives of the other Board members to determine how we can best work together to advance the interests of the Master Gardeners of Ontario. The Board members, particularly your own Zone Director, will require your contributions and assistance. Together we can resolve our problems, but we will need a stronger sense of purpose and commitment to seek the solutions.

May I wish you all a very successful year ahead, and may we find out how we can extend some of these successes across our entire organization.

On a more personal basis, have a great gardening summer!

Errol Falconer
President, MGOI

Index

Letter from the President	1
North, South, East, and West	2
MG List, A MG Hotline	2-3
MG Features	3-6
MG Clothing	6
What's Happening?	6
Book Review	6-7
Plant I.D., Internet Sites	7
OMAFRA Info	7-8
Gardening for Kids, Crossword	8

What's Growing On?

Please submit Fall Winter 2001 Contributions by October 15.

Previous editions can still be downloaded:

Fall 2000 Winter 2001: www.eagle.ca/gardens/mgoi_fall_winter_2000_newsletter.rtf

Spring/Summer 2000: www.eagle.ca/gardens/mgoi_june4.rtf

NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST AND PLACES IN BETWEEN

Algoma, Brantford, Brooklin, Burlington, Dundas, Dunnville-Haldimand, Elgin County, Essex-Windsor, Rideau 1000 Islands (previously 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, and Toronto.

Burlington (Zone 5)

by Barbara Phillips-Conroy

At Canada Blooms, we were privileged to work with many Master Gardener groups in partnership with the Royal Botanical Gardens in the "Ask the Experts" booth. The RBG helped us prepare new MG information pamphlets and a wonderful new calendar which we had available. Bruce MacNeil and Lorne Sparrow have original copies, if you'd like some for your group.

Our membership is 33 strong. One of our "founding members", John Simpkins, was recently featured in the March April issue of Gardening Life for his outstanding work with peonies. His peony collection is simply remarkable, as is his personal assortment of floral ties! David Marshall has been working on many projects; one that is quite "out of this world" is his experiment with the Junior Oakville Horticulture Society where they are comparing tomato seeds that have voyaged into outer space to those in packages that haven't left the ground. Molly Fuller, our secretary, was in charge of the "Annual" table for the RBG Annual Plant Sale, held on May 5 and 8. There were some fabulous new plants. Keep this event in mind for next year.

Elgin (Zone 3)

by Richard Cartwright

In the past six years, the Elgin County Master Gardeners have worked hard in promoting themselves across the region. Members have spoken to horticultural societies and service clubs. A collection of gardening articles, originally written for the county newspapers, was published and made available for sale. Also, several small booklets on a variety of topics have been very popular with the public. For the past few springs, we have held a day of gardening talks and displays including a plant auction. Last November, over 2,400 King Alfred daffodil bulbs were planted at the St. Thomas Anglican Church, Walnut St., St. Thomas. We are looking forward to attracting new members in one of the best gardening districts in the province.

Muskoka-Parry Sound (Zone 4)

by Laurie Miller

The Muskoka Parry Sound Master Gardeners is a dynamic group of fifteen individuals who are energetic,

vibrant, hardworking and dedicated volunteers. The area we cover spans just south from North Bay to almost 200 kilometres to Gravenhurst, while taking in Parry Sound and surrounding areas within the Highway 69 corridor.

Every spring we host a guest speaker, who usually performs to a sold out crowd of garden enthusiasts. Mark Cullen, Marjorie Mason Hogue, Patrick Lima, Frank Kershaw and Graham Beakhurst "Gorilla Gardener" have been our guests in the past and this year our ticket sales are going through the roof with Ed Lawrence as our speaker. The money we earn from this event allows us to donate funds to our four local hospitals, purchase a garden book for over fifteen different libraries in the area as well as cover our costs for an annual technical training session for our group. These training sessions can consist of a workshop on pest and diseases to a trip to the Royal Botanical Gardens.

We provide a telephone hotline, a gardening Q & A column for three newspapers, on site advice for two weekly farmers' markets and annual fall fairs; members have spoken to local horticultural societies and a few judge at the flower shows.

Sarnia-Lambton (Zone 3)

by Gail Ellison

A successful Technical Update was sponsored by our group on April 7, 2001. Presentations included "Marketing Your Organization", "Horticultural Therapy", and "Gardening Trends".

+ In Memoriam

Dorothy Hallett (Brantford) 2000
Eula Kirk (Sarnia-Lambton) 2001

MG-LIST

On May 1, there were 77 subscribers to the MG-List, and 1 to the MG-List-Digest. To subscribe to the List, send an email to majordomo@eagle.ca with the word "subscribe mg-list" in the body of the email. (Leave off the quotes.) See the Spring/Summer edition of *What's Growing On?* for more information or ask your group Coordinator.

From the MG-List

by Scott Olan, Guelph-Wellington

I thought that you might like a little taste of what is coming so I want to bring to your attention two bits of info.

The Perennial Plant for the Year 2001 is Feather Reed Grass 'Karl Foerster'. You can see a description of this plant at the homepage of the Perennial Plant Association: <http://www.perennialplant.org>.

Another interesting site is the GTI Advisor, which is put out by the Guelph Turfgrass Institute and can be found on their web site at <http://www.git.uoguelph.ca/advisor/>. Select the current issue or search previous issues for a topic. There's a new issue every two weeks from spring to fall and a couple in the winter. It is written by Rob Witherspoon, Director of the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, Pam Charbonneau, OMAFRA Turfgrass Specialist, Jennifer Llewellyn, OMAFRA Nursery Crop Specialist, Anne Marie Van Nest, Instructor, Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens and School, Marilyn Dykstra, Pest Diagnostic Lab, and occasionally other very qualified people. The January issue features attracting wildlife with annuals and perennials, the perennial plant of the year, and some of the latest research in turf. Once it gets going it will list what areas of the province are experiencing which problems, and the stage of development of insects and diseases on turf, woody plants, annuals and perennials. It is a good source of the most up to date information. It is directed towards golf courses, tree nurseries and other landscape managers. The Advisor, now provided free, is helpful in answering all of those lawn questions.

A MASTER GARDENER HOTLINE

by Brenda Jones, Sarnia-Lambton

Question: I have a small garden in front of my house. It's about 8 feet long and 1 1/2 feet wide. I get mid-day sun and mostly shade. I now plant annuals every spring and more in fall and bulbs for spring. It gets pretty expensive. I

am looking for some perennials to plant that will give me color in spring, summer and fall. Could you suggest something? I like to plant things that have already been established at a nursery. I have no green thumb and I need all the help I can get. How many plants could I put in this space? I'm not fussy, so specific plant names and where to put them would be absolutely fantastic.

Answer: Dear Gardener: Thank you for your question. All you need to purchase will be 5 plants. They are 2 Hosta 'Medio-variegata' (grows 35cmH 45cmW), 1 Daylily 'Stella d'Oro' (grows 45cmH, with bright golden, yellow flowers), 2 Speedwell - *Veronica spicata* 'Red Fox' (30-35cmH with rose-red flowers) and *Veronica spicata* 'Blue Boy' (30-35 cmH with blue flowers). Plant the Stella d'Oro Daylily in the centre. About 25 cm (10 inches) on each side of it, plant the Hostas. Place the Speedwell one at each end about 25-30 cm (10 - 12 inches) away from the Hostas. I hope you like this suggestion. A Master Gardener of Sarnia-Lambton

MG FEATURES

Garden Patches for Predators and Parasites

by Anne Morgan, Kitchener-Waterloo

We read a lot about creating butterfly gardens, but it is important to look beyond butterflies and consider all the other wonderful insects that are (or should be) out in the garden. Over the years I have become aware of certain plants which are always covered by a variety of insects and are obviously offering a rich supply of nectar to those insects. Goldenrods, asters, dill, mountain mint and purple coneflowers are some of the best insect attractants in my garden. It turns out that most of these plants fall into one of two types of flowers: they are either "umbels" or "composites" and they are all composed of numerous smaller flowers which look like one large flower.

A typical "umbel" would be Queen Anne's lace; not the sort of weed we want in our gardens (although it IS good for insects), but dill or fennel are great substitutes. Many of the other herbs such as coriander, chervil, parsley and lovage all have an umbelliferous flower head, composed of many tiny flowers, which attracts insects with its nectar.

A typical "composite" would be a Black-Eyed Susan, a sunflower or anything else that looks like a daisy. They all have the ray flowers (petals) around the outside and the central dome of tubular florets producing the nectar and pollen.

In both examples, the insects can gather a good supply of food in one place without expending a lot of energy flying between individual flowers. Many of the insects visiting these plants will be wasps and flies that feed on or parasitise other insects. There are thousands of different parasitic wasps and flies and it is no surprise to find that several of them are used as commercial biological controls. Greenhouse operations often use little *Encarsia* wasps to kill the whiteflies, and other types of wasps are used to kill off cutworms or hornworms in field operations. There is one wasp that is so small that it develops completely inside the egg of a moth!

Of course, these insects that are available to purchase for biological controls are better than using chemical pesticides, but they are expensive, often not native species and usually broad spectrum in their destruction. It is cheaper and more satisfying to create a garden that will provide suitable habitats for as many of the native predators and parasites as possible. We want a garden that has a diversity of native trees, shrubs and perennials and that has flowers in bloom from early spring to late in the fall. An ideal garden has rich soil, mulch, gravel, rocks, decaying logs, water, open sunny spots, cooler shady areas, and as many native perennials as possible. We are trying to create a diversity in our landscape. Lawns represent a decline in diversity, in the same way as agricultural fields, and when we have a lack of diversity certain pest species are able to multiply out of control.

Our native plants have evolved with the insects over millions of years and we are trying to create conditions in our gardens where the plants and insects can find the right balance to survive without some species reaching epidemic numbers. Perhaps those American painted lady caterpillars we are watching on our pearly everlasting will turn into beautiful butterflies, but they may also be the perfect food that a female wasp needs to feed her young. It's a war out there in the garden and the less we interfere with it, the better the outcome!

Lawn Maintenance Principles

by Scott Olan, Guelph-Wellington

Home lawn care has become more about what people think is best as opposed to what is really required for a healthy lawn. The present regime of high fertilization requires a high volume of water in order for the grass to utilize it. The excess water causes weed seed to germinate and grow. The new weeds require a herbicide to eradicate it. This cycle is never-ending. Therefore, the lawn has become a high maintenance marker in how much care is put into one's home.

Grass was not meant to grow this way. Before humans populated the earth, grassland Savannas existed around the world. These grasslands were generally in drier climates with poor soil. Therefore, present lawn care practices should be re-evaluated.

The general prescription for a healthy home lawn is as follows:

Water when the grass looks dry (slightly dark green colour with little shine). This results in fewer weed seeds germinating and those that do will die.

Fertilize in the fall. Use natural or slow-release fertilizer; e.g., sulfur coated urea.

Leave all clippings on the lawn. This is natural fertilizer.

Mow grass at a height of 5 to 8 cm. Grass is a tall plant; the higher it is mowed, the more likely it will out compete the weeds.

If the lawn has weeds, **treat the lawn, not the pest.**

Knotweed - lawn is compacted and needs to be aerated.

Clover - lawn is slightly compacted, high in potassium, low in nitrogen and is over watered. Fertilize with a 5:1:2 organic fertilizer and reduce watering.

Chickweed - lawn has been over watered and is being cut too low. Stop irrigating and raise cutting height.

Crabgrass - lawn is low in fertility and the cutting height is too short. Fertilize, raise cutting height, rake out all crabgrass in the fall or early spring, top dress and overseed.

If weeds are excessive and the above treatments do not work, herbicides may be required. Spot treat when the soil is moist and the weeds are growing. Herbicides are growth hormones that need growing weeds to work. Spray at night and spray only on the weeds.

Insect pests can be numerous. It is important to remember that specific conditions are required in order for them to be out of control. A healthy lawn will conceal most insect damage; however, if damage is severe, overseed the lawn in the spring and it will fill in quickly. If pesticides are needed, spot treat only.

When overseeding a lawn, use quality seeds. Canada #1 Common Seed may have up to 100 weed seeds per 15 grams. Certified Seed will have much less. Look for Certified Seed that contains 30% or 100% Perennial Ryegrass.

There is a need to reduce lawn care. By following the preceding prescription, lawn care maintenance should decrease over the growing season(s).

Looks Can Be Deceiving

by Avalon Hamlin, Sarnia-Lambton

One June evening, pointing out a Euphorbia to a new member, I broke the stem of *Euphorbia cyparissus*, Cypress spurge, allowing the seeping latex to drip onto my finger. I'd heard of people getting dermatitis from latex but I hadn't experienced a problem before. This time, my skin disappeared like in a science fiction movie. I've heard of other possible negative exposures to euphorbias where a gardener received burns on her face and eye and another on her arms while transplanting them.

Often attracted to pretty berries or flowers that resemble candy, a high number of poisonings in young children occur because of ingesting plants.

It has been common knowledge since ancient times that Hellebores can cause severe vomiting if eaten. It's

a perfect no-maintenance evergreen for shady sites, an early bloomer, has handsome foliage, a long blooming season and is deer-resistant. Squirrels and deer don't eat certain spring-flowering bulbs, such as daffodils, hyacinths, snowdrops and star-of-Bethlehems because they're toxic. Star-of-Bethlehem bulbs are brought to the surface when cultivating and are mistaken for spring onions or wild garlic. Children, in particular, have unknowingly ingested them. The symptoms of eating these bulbs are nervousness, a stomachache and other gastric distress.

Cherry tree twigs and foliage contain a compound that releases cyanide when chewed by people or livestock. Therefore, choose another tree's twig for roasting marshmallows. Camping out in California or Florida? Know that the Oleander is a common plant in these areas. Its branches, the perfect shape for roasting wieners, reportedly kills yearly many people who prune it for that purpose; all parts of this plant are deadly.

When the beautiful, fragrant flower clusters fade on the wisteria, a few of the seeds from the pods is all it takes to cause extreme digestive problems that can send a child to the hospital. Children also are attracted to the yew shrub's juicy red berries. The foliage of the yew is more toxic than the berries and has been known to kill livestock. Animals also can become sick from boxwood, azalea and privet.

Daphne has a wonderful fragrance; an intense lilac that drenches the air when it blooms in late winter. All parts can be extremely dangerous; the berries are corrosive and will burn your mouth and digestive tract, the sap can irritate your skin, and just a few berries can be fatal to a child.

Many people are thrilled with the huge white fragrant flowers of Datura. There have been too many incidents of serious poisonings and deaths of young people who experimented with the hallucinogenic properties of the seeds. At least one province, Nova Scotia, has banned its sale.

Despite the potentially terrible physiological effects of these plants, we shouldn't feel obliged to exclude them from our garden; but we should learn all we can about them. These plants should, however, be excluded from schools, day-care centres or other places where children play. We should learn the names of all our plants and label them or at least have a list of plants that grow on our property. Children playing near poisonous plants should be carefully supervised or the plants should be removed until the children are old enough to understand their danger. If a child ingests any part of a plant, call the number on the inside front cover of the phone book: the **Poison Information Centre, 1-800-268-9017**. If you know the plant or have it to describe to the Centre, this will help them with identification. They will tell you the correct action to take; local hospitals do not have a poison control centre but will appropriately treat any person ingesting any poison. The Poison Information Centre will want to know: the parts eaten, time ingested, how much, and noted symptoms. If you know the plant is poisonous, immediately seek medical attention, taking the plant with you to confirm a proper identification. If there's a list of all the plants we grow, it could prove to be a very valuable starting point. For further information, check out the website, Canadian Poisonous Plants Information System, <http://www.res.agr.ca/brd/poisonpl/>.

Better but Less Lawn

by Amy Pokorny, Lanark

Too much lawn to mow? Lessen the job by rounding corners of flower beds or hedges and using ground covers. Some low ground covers that can take a little walking on are Ajuga, some clovers, dwarf thyme and some sedums. For a ditch, daylily is attractive and capable of slowly conquering the grass. Avoid injuring young trees by mowing too close by having a patch of lily-of-the-valley around their base.

If you allow your lawn to remain two or three inches high, you will have a few mowings less. The taller the grass the more you discourage and smother weed seeds from growing. Plan your benches, fountains, swings and patios to one side.

The ideal way to escape the chore of spraying is to lay drip hoses on or below the surface. Instead of ritual applications of liquid fertilizers, use one slow-release application early in the season; one of the produced-in-Canada bone meal mixtures with kelp or blood meal is good. Enhance interest and decrease mowing effort with flagstones (not gravel). This means there is less lawn to be trampled on.

The initial effort to make such changes, or to thoughtfully plan ahead in the case of a new property, will pay off in several ways. You will have an easy-care, informal design with rounded, natural landscaping. You won't even have gravel paths with weeds growing through them.

Master Gardener Clothing

Brantford and Sarnia-Lambton members wear items of clothing with the MG logo when representing Master Gardeners. Sarnia-Lambton has a natural coloured golf shirt and sweatshirt with a green MG logo. Brantford has a number of items that they offer for sale to other MG groups; these include golf shirts in a choice of green or white, natural coloured sweatshirts, green nylon windbreaker jackets, and baseball caps. Contact Dave Collins, at flwplus@execulink.com.

Black Spot on Roses

by Mary Moulden, Sarnia-Lambton

Try spraying with a solution of 1 liter (1 qt) water, 10 ml (2 tsp) baking soda, and a drop of dish soap. It really works for me!

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Simcoe County Garden Seminars

Learn to Prune with the Master June 9, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., BHS Arboretum, Barrie. Master Gardener Alistair Crawford will share his expertise through demonstrations, followed by hands-on practice by the participants.

Creating A Woodland Country Garden July 15, 2-4 p.m. 44 Brambel Rd., Shanty Bay. Mature trees, shade-loving plants and sunny cottage gardens overlooking Lake Simcoe. Growing annuals from seed. Gardening naturally.

How Do They Do That? Tending Stephen Leacock's Gardens June 23, 9:30-11:30 a.m., 50 Museum Drive, Orillia. Learn how to create a colourful, all-season display, while strolling through the gardens of this national historic site. A wide variety of perennials and annuals will be in bloom. Marilyn Nielsen, Head Gardener, will discuss a variety of topics pertaining to maintenance of these gardens.

Drought-Tolerant Gardening August 12, 2-4 p.m. 96 Concession 15 West, Tiny Township, Penetanguishene. Light soils, little water and low maintenance are defining characteristics of the large rural gardens. Trees, grasses, shrubs, herbs, familiar and unusual perennials. Labour saving tricks, and effective plant choices.

\$10 each. J. Blackstock, 705-721-0483, heavytreehouse@sympatico.ca

Sarnia-Lambton Garden Tour June 17, 12:30-5:00 p.m. \$10.00. 519-344-2084 or mastergardeners@ebtech.net

Essex-Windsor Garden Tour June 23 & 24, 12:30-5:00 p.m. \$8.00. 519-776-6328 or garden2@attcanada.ca

Grey County Technical Update

Sept. 29, 2001, 10:00 a.m. A Zone 4 Update. Other MG's are invited. *A glance into the future*. Speakers from the University of Guelph, including a hands-on activity in the afternoon. Lamlash, (near Hanover). Bring lunch; beverage and dessert, provided. Contact: Verna Beckenhauer, 519-363-3922 or vbeckenhauer@hotmail.com

Zone Reps - New appointments: Zone 6, John Hetherington, Toronto; Zone 8, Elma Vanags, Rideau 1000 Islands (formerly Gananoque). Resignation: Zone 3, Crystal Trojek, Elgin.

BOOK REVIEW

Rosemary Remembered, Lavender Lies, Etc. - Mysteries, Susan Wittig Albert

Reviewed by Sandy Ellenor, Essex-Windsor

Like a good mystery? Like to learn more about herbs in an interesting and different way? Check out the

herbal mystery series by Susan Wittig Albert. Her series of mysteries are based around the investigative antics of one China Bayles, and always involve a murder to be solved. China is the proprietor of a herb shop in a little town in Texas and between making herbal vinegars and putting in her herb garden, she does some serious criminal investigating using skills she learned as a lawyer. Throughout these books you will find valuable information on different herbs, their lore and their uses. Titles include *Witches Bane* featuring monkshood, *Thyme of Death*, featuring thyme of course, *Hangman's Root*, catnip, *Rosemary Remembered*, *Rueful Death*, *Lavender Lies*, and *Chile Death*. I have read all of these and enjoyed them immensely. These are available at most bookstores and your local library. Light reading for those of us who like to learn something and be entertained at the same time.

The Plant Hunters - Two Hundred Years of Adventure and Discovery Around the World, T. Musgrave, C. Gardener, and W. Musgrave, ISBN 1 84188 001 9
Reviewed by Norma Evans, Peterborough

Captain Cook returned from the South Pacific, but it was Joseph Banks who was the hero of the trip. He described, catalogued and named 1,300 new species of plants. The first recorded plant hunt dates from 1495 BC when an Egyptian queen sent men to Somalia to collect incense trees. Robert Fortune went to China around 1843 to look for blue peonies, yellow camellias, double yellow roses and various types of tea. He brought back 120 new species including Japanese Yew, Magnolias, Wisteria, Japanese Anemone, and Cypress. During one expedition, although suffering from a fever, he used his pistol to threaten his helmsman from quitting his post and fended off 5 pirate junks. Malaria, bugs, leeches, starvation, uprisings, robbers and death by pirates were all threats. David Douglas walked over 9000 miles on the North American west coast in the 1820's describing and collecting seed from many evergreens; he is best known for the tree which bears his name, the Douglas Fir. These seeds changed the English landscape which had few native evergreens. Plant hunters of the 18th and 19th centuries changed gardening forever. They had exciting and perilous adventures; few lived to a ripe old age and many did not return. Their stories are guaranteed to appeal to gardeners of every ilk. Our love of plants would be greatly enhanced if we knew where the plants we grow came from and how they were collected.

Green Thumbs The Canadian Gardening Book, R.A. Fillmore

Browsing in a used bookstore or through old gardening books at a garage sale, keep an eye out for this one. Published in 1953. "...written specially for the small home owner, the person who wants to potter about and experiment on his own...prepared by a man who spent a lifetime among the things he describes with so much enthusiasm." Great information and a great find!

PLANT IDENTIFICATION

Cryptotaenia japonica, commonly called Japanese parsley or Mitsuba. Another plant for your shade garden; prefers moist, partly shady locations. Additional benefit, it's edible. Unique flavour of leaves and leafstalks, either fresh or blanched, is pleasing in soups, salads, and fried foods.

INTERNET SITES

Gardening on the Web

by Judith Miller, Ottawa-Carleton

Garden websites offer information on an enormous range of topics, from starting a first garden, why and when to prune, to tracking down an exotic variety to enhance a specialized collection. A recent search for gardening resulted in over 7,000,000 hits! Chosen were general interest sites with links to other gardening websites; categories: Canadian Gardening Sites, Canadian Perennial Help, Composting, General Gardening Resources and References, Herbs, Organic Gardening, Plant Disease and Pest Information, Trees and Shrubs, Vegetable Gardening, and Weeds. On the MGOI Web Site, www.interlog.com/~onthort/mg/Z8_Items/gardens.html.

INFORMATION FROM OMAFRA

submitted by Denise Edwards

Specialists in the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) provide technical advice through workshops, seminars, internet, technical publications, newsletters and factsheets.

ACCESSING OMAFRA PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Technical publications: 1-888-466-2372

Current resources and information, factsheets & newsletters: www.gov.on.ca/omafra

Agricultural Information Centre provides technical information: 1-877-424-1300

Weekly insect and disease updates and commercial production management information: 1-888-290-4441.

www.gov.on.ca/omafra/english/crops/.

OTHER RESOURCES OF INTEREST

The GTI Advisor: www.chipcocanada.com

Healthy Lawns: www.healthylawns.net

- Pest Management Services: 1-800-267-6317 or www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pmra-arla/

NEW OMAFRA FACTSHEETS AND PUBLICATIONS

00-095 Insects, Diseases & Disorders of Asian Vegetables

00-035 Guide for Spraying Fruit Trees

00-005 Pruning of Fruit Trees

00-0031 Pumpkin and Squash Production

Soil Fertility Handbook – Publication 611

- The Gardener's Handbook – Publication 64

GARDENING FOR KIDS

Making stepping stones, a fun way to get children interested in gardening...There are many possibilities for molds. They should be 5 cm (2") deep with straight sides. A pizza box or cake pan will work well. A face mask for everyone is essential to keep inhaling dust to a minimum. You need a fast-setting concrete and a bucket for mixing. The children can be responsible for collecting a variety of decorations such as buttons, old jewelry bits, tiles, stones, etc. Cookie cutters make nice designs on stepping stones; spray vegetable oil on the edges of the cutter and insert it about 1/2 cm (1/4") into the concrete mixture. Leaves and/or flowers can be pressed into the concrete to make a lovely design as well.

The kids can help stir the concrete but an adult should pour the mixture into the mold. Make sure to leave about 1/2 to 1 cm (1/4 to 1/2 ") of space at the top. The children can tap the molds to eliminate any air bubbles and help level the mix.

Once the mold is ready, the kids can add decorations; make sure they press them far enough into the concrete so that they will stay in place after the concrete has dried. Make sure that there is nothing projecting from the surface that might be caught by people walking on them. Work quickly so that the decorating is finished before the concrete hardens.

When completely hardened, put your hand on the top of the decorated surface, turn the pan upside down, and the stone should come right out. Plant level with the soil's surface so that no one trips over it. A fun project for kids and adults that will last a lifetime in your garden!

Oakville's Horticultural Society's Junior Program received many helpful suggestions from Master Gardeners in 2000. Sessions involving demonstrations and hands-on instruction were developed for the younger grades for both schools and local libraries. Projects included hands on creation of miniature terrariums (in a plastic sundae cup and particularly appreciated by younger children), planting of paper whites in see-through containers, planting of seeds (both annuals and perennials), transplanting of herb seedlings to create a herb pot, and the creation of initials using water cress. (Contributed by Len Monkman, Oakville Horticultural Society)

Master Gardeners of Ontario Inc. gratefully acknowledges a donation of \$500 from the Oakville Horticultural Society.

CROSSWORD

by Sandy Ellenor, Essex-Windsor

Crossword Solution Fall 2000 Winter 2001

ACROSS

3 GINKGO
4 MAHONIA
7 BERBERIS
8 ACER

DOWN

1 KOCHIA
2 EUONYMUS
4 MUM
5 ASTER
6 HEDERA

TREES

Across

also called white walnut; hardest of all nut trees (9)
5 Canadian species, produces smoke-flavoured bacon (7)
wood is so hard and strong, was used as sleigh runners (8)
survived 200 million years; a herbal tree (6)
disease has plagued this huge tree (3)

Down

native Carolinian; beautiful flowers (5)
one of largest hardwoods, mottled green, grey, yellow bark (8)
4 native, purple pink flowers (6)
mighty tree (3)

HAPPY GARDENING!