



What's Growing On?

The newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Ontario, Inc.

Summer, 2005



The North Bay Waterfront Garden is one of the highlights of the garden tours that take place during the OHA convention.

Spotlight on...

OHA Convention & MGOI AGM

Reflections of Ontario is the theme of this year's Ontario Horticultural Association convention in North Bay during which the MGOI Annual General Meeting will take place. From August 12 to 14, 2005, the conference will feature a full roster of guest speakers as well as afternoon bus tours, a silent auction, floral competitions and lots of fun and entertainment.

Two years ago when they

learned they would be hosting this year's convention, Vickie Wiemer and her organizing committee started contacting the best speakers they could find. It must be very fertile ground in North Bay, because they managed to round up 20 great speakers, including naturalists Angela Martin and Dick Tafel, gesneriad guru John Beaulieu, alpine gardener Jim Merrick, and Master Gardener John Tripp. Three plenary sessions have also been planned: OMAF's Denise Edwards will address issues of charitable status and strategic planning; Larry Hoffman extols the virtues of gardening for health and wellness; and humourist David Hobson looks at the lighter side of gardening.

That's not all. Bus tours on Friday and Saturday afternoons travel to some unique public and private gardens in the area. These include a docent-lead walk through the North Bay Heritage Gardener's Waterfront Gardens for a view of the gardens restored 50 years ago and still maintained by dedicated volunteers. You'll be amazed at the achievements of the gardeners of the Living Quilt Community Garden who, in a single year, have transformed a small, sparse plot wedged between two tall buildings into an award-winning garden brimming with

vegetables and flowers. Community efforts have also been hard at work at a local senior citizens building where residents tend individual plots that are woven together with pathways to create a single unified garden. The tours also take you behind the gates of six private gardens, and one "surprise" city garden, that feature everything from English country style to ponds, unique ironwork and collections of heucheras, daylilies and roses.

No OHA convention would be complete without the competitions. This year, there'll be floral and horticultural shows as well as categories for photography, artists and youth.

And did I mention fun? Organizers have pulled out the stops for a barbecue bash on Friday night, complete with the music of a popular local country and western band, skits and plays. Afterwards everyone is invited to a wine and cheese social at Nipissing University's Chancellor's House – a great incentive to wrap up the MGOI AGM in good time! As District 18 organizer Vickie Wiemer puts it, "We're gonna have a ball!"

Full details and registration information are available online at www.gardenontario.org/show/up_conf.php. Register before July 13 and save \$10.

Executive notes

... by Mary Beverley-Burton

In the Spring 2005 issue of *What's Growing On* I announced that MGOI is applying for an Ontario Trillium Grant to support our MGIT education initiative. The application is due by July but we will not hear the result until November. An incredibly slow and frustrating process – this means we cannot move ahead quickly. However, we have finalised a draft agreement of collaboration between MGOI and the Niagara School of Horticulture and, once this is approved and we know we have funding, we can begin the process of design for the new Education Initiative. So, it seems that the new courses will not be ready until next spring.

An added delaying factor is that the various developmental phases will be sent out to *all* MG groups for appraisal and comment. These evaluations will take time but we feel it is necessary to have as much local involvement as possible. Hence the delay in being able to start the new training program.

I was pleased that we had over 50 percent response to the curriculum questionnaire. The “votes” for each topic are being evaluated and *all* comments recorded. We will prepare a report for consideration of the Curriculum Developer, NSH staff and the MGOI Education Committee. We *are* moving ahead.

I am also pleased to report that we have received a good number of pledges (17 of 40) to the education initiative fund with the promise of over \$4,000. This will be a very positive point on our Trillium

grant application.

At MGOI we were all saddened to hear that our treasurer Barbra Stock is stepping down for health reasons. She will continue as a Zone 7 Director and I would like to express my personal thanks to Barbra for her outstanding contribution to MGOI. We are fortunate that Carol Dunk has agreed to step in as treasurer pro-tem until the AGM when I hope she will be duly elected to this position.

To end my message to you all, I was recently given a copy of *Time and the Gardener: Writings of a Lifelong Passion* by Elisabeth Sheldon. Elisabeth is now in her 80s and describes how her gardening experiences have changed in concert with her own life cycle. I found the book remarkably perspicacious and also, as I grow older and less mobile, a great solace. Let me recommend it to you – read it in your hammock on a nice summer's day. Let the grass and the weeds grow a bit and relax!

Zoning in

... news from our 11 zones

Zone 4

A new group of three MGs and five MGITs has been formed in **Cambridge**. Together with regular meetings, they have been helping the Galt Horticultural Society with its plant sale have organized a plant exchange.

Zone 6

The **Etobicoke** MG group, formed in November 2004, has grown from 14 members to 18. Eleven MGITs are taking the Guelph Independent Study courses and five are waiting to begin the new courses at the Niagara School of Horticulture.

Lake Simcoe South MGs have been conducting advice clinics at fairs and farmers markets where they set up Ask the Expert booths. They've also speaking to groups throughout the community.

Mississauga MGs will be busy over the summer with local horticultural society garden

Meet Barbra Stock, Zone 7 Director

A Cockney transplanted from London to Prince Edward County, Barbra Stock won't be slowed down by a stroke, which she suffered before Christmas last year. Used to moving pretty quickly, Barbra is slowly teaching herself how to walk again; meanwhile, she manoeuvres an electric cart around Home Depot with glee!

A lifelong gardener who learned her skills as a child in London during World War II, Barbra now grows herbs which she sells to local restaurants, and is looking forward to moving to her new home and garden which is out

in the baking sun on solid bedrock – quite a difference from her current site in Sandbanks Provincial Park where she has amended the sandy soil over the years with as much mushroom compost, horse manure and other organic matter as she could lay her hands on.

She has been a Master Gardener since 1990 when she passed the exam with ease and joined the Tweed Master Gardeners (now Quinte-Tweed). She has held the position of co-ordinator of that group, and until her illness, was Treasurer of MGOI. Currently she holds the title of Director of Zone 7.

tours and plant sales and running advice clinics at the Southdown Canadian Tire Store and at Sheridan Nurseries locations (in conjunction with **Halton and Etobicoke** Groups). Members will also volunteer at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto.

Readers of *Oakville Today* are pleased about the garden advice provided by **Oakville** MGs in a weekly column that provides answers to questions sent in by email.

Toronto MGs have been conducting clinics at three Sheridan Nurseries locations during May and June. They have also been sowing the seeds of unusual and hard-to-find annuals to sell at the Toronto Botanical Garden's Annuals Plant Sale.

Zone 8

Every Saturday from May until September, **Lanark County** MGs will conduct clinics at farmers markets in both Perth and Almonte. If you're visiting Lanark County, drop by to say hi.

Ottawa-Carleton's Spring Lecture Series, co-ordinated by Nancy Seppala and presented in cooperation with Friends of the Farm, was a great success.

The **Ottawa-Carleton** group also assisted the Ottawa Food Security Council by presenting 15 workshops about vegetable gardening.

Zone 9

More than 5,000 people attended the spring garden show organized by **Peterborough and Area** MGs and the Peterborough Horticulture Society. Well done!

The **Northumberland** MGs, formed by some of the members of the Peterborough and Area MGs, has applied for approval as a new group.

News to use

... tips for **Master Gardeners**

Build It & Butterflies Will Come

Etobicoke MGs are participating in a project for the Assembly Hall, a community cultural centre operated by the City of Toronto. The group has submitted a design for a butterfly garden that will replace a grassy area near the building. The MGs plan to help plant the garden and teach Grade 3 children and city staff how to maintain it.

Communities in Bloom

The Peterborough and Area MGs will be involved in activities supporting Peterborough's first Communities in Bloom bid.

Fact Sheets on the Internet

Under the guidance of project co-ordinator Linda Fischer and with the help of MG Pat Anderson, the Toronto MGs will be writing fact sheets to update and supplement the ones on the Toronto Botanical Garden website at www.infogarden.ca/mastergardenerfactsheets.html.

MGs in Bangladesh?

How do farmers in Bangladesh grow vegetables without chemical pesticides? Lanark County MG Lloyd Strachan knows first hand through his visits to farmers in the developing world. Lloyd travels as a Master Gardener and consultant in international agriculture to places like Bangladesh where he monitored a project that helped 8,000 farmers in kicking the chemical habit to grow organically. He is humbled at the depth of knowledge these people have of their region. These are the Master Gardeners of the World!

Organic Gardening Fact Sheets

A proposal drafted by Janet Ballantyne scored the Toronto MGs a project for the City of Toronto to develop a series of fact sheets about organic gardening. A workshop is also being developed on pesticide-free organic gardening which will be presented to horticultural societies and community groups.

Teamwork Aids TBG

In support of the Toronto Botanical Garden's Capital Campaign, the Toronto MGs have been answering gardening questions from Loblaws customers on the TMG Infoline and website during the months of May and June. In return for their volunteer efforts, Loblaws will make a donation to the TBG's redevelopment plans, which include the renovation of the building and the creation of innovative display gardens. www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca/infoline.

Terra Greenhouses Clinics

Oakville MGs negotiated to provide paid advice clinics at Terra Greenhouses on Saturdays in May. Group co-ordinator Mary-Lynn O'Shea reports that what worked for the group was a written proposal outlining the benefits for both Terra and the MGs. Terra provides a banner with the group's name, and makes P.A. announcements publicizing the event.

Tributes

... activities & achievements

Advanced MG

Congratulations to Lanark County MG Dale Odorizzi who has completed her Advanced Master Gardener Certificate.

Lake Simcoe South Grads

Eight MGITs of the Lake Simcoe South MG group have passed their courses and are now full-fledged Master Gardeners.

Ottawa-Carleton Tributes

Ottawa-Carleton MGs welcome three new members: Jay Ladell, Rebecca Last and Mary Ann Van Berlo. Congratulations go to Heather Lee who has completed her courses, and to Mary Reid, Ruth Martin and Kelly Noel who have become full-fledged MGs. Five-year pins go to Monique Pare, Bob Duff and Edythe Falconer.

On the wires

... the electronic MG

Missing Out?

Did you miss out on the lively moderated discussions that took place on the MG list-serv during 2005? Topics included house plants, home remedies, and trees. Upcoming topics include herbs, native plants and kitchen gardens. Contact list-serv monitor, Avalon Hamlin at hamlin@ebtech.net if you are

interested in volunteering to moderate one of these topics.

Talking Roses

The next scheduled discussion on the MG list-serv is about roses, and will be moderated by Thunder Bay MG Ralph Bullough. Watch for details during the month of June.

Join the MG List-Serv

Join the more than 200 MGs already subscribed to the MG-list, an email discussion forum provided for Ontario Master Gardeners. If you're interested in subscribing (or have questions about how it all works), contact Avalon Hamlin at hamlin@ebtech.net.

Calendar

... upcoming horticultural events

July 24 to 27

International MG Conference Saskatoon, SK

Plan to attend this international event which features keynote speakers David Tarrant who takes a global look at gardens, and David Cavagnaro who will be making a

presentation on heirloom plants. For details and registration: www.mastergardener2005.usask.ca

August 12,13,14

OHA Convention

Held at North Bay's Nipissing University, the OHA convention features an impressive roster of guest speakers, garden tours and horticultural competitions. For information, contact Vickie Wiemer at 705/476-0859 or iceberg-e@sympatico.ca. Registration and full conference details: www.gardenontario.org/sho/up_conf.php.

September 24

Niagara Technical Update

Guest speakers include Darren Schmahl (Designing your Garden) and David Hunt (Pruning Trees for Long-Term Health and Beauty). The day also includes tours of the gardens led by Tom Laviolette, Superintendent of the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens and a behind the scenes look at the Butterfly Conservatory. Information and registration: June Streadwick 905/934-6137 or streadwick@sympatico.ca.

November 5

Zone 4 Technical Update

Kitchener MGs host a technical update on The Changing Landscape. Keynote speakers include Virgil Martin (The Changing Landscape of Southern Ontario) and Professor Paul Eagles (The Role for Gardeners in Preserving Carolinian Canada). \$30 (includes a morning snack and beverages) Details and registration: www.kitchenermg.ca or email [Mary Ann Gilhuly at magilhuly@rogers.com](mailto:MaryAnnGilhuly@rogers.com).

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What's Growing On? is published four times a year for Master Gardeners in Ontario. To submit news about your Master Gardener group, contact Lorraine Flanigan, Editor at lorraine.flanigan@sympatico.ca.