



What's Growing On?

The newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Ontario, Inc.

Winter, 2004

Spotlight on...

Zone 5 Garden Conference

Master Gardeners from 45 localities across the province gathered at the Paris Fair Grounds Exhibition Hall on November 5 to take part in the Zone 5 Garden Conference. Speakers included Beckie Fox talking on container gardening, David Tomlinson on the environmentally friendly garden and Denis Flanagan on trends.

Encouraging us all to "be bold, be brave", Beckie Fox provided a checklist of 10 points to keep in mind when designing containers, including breaking out of a routine and trying a container of all foliage or all black or lime. Not only will it be a change from your usual containers, but you'll add drama to your designs.

David Tomlinson spoke about how urban wildlife adapts to the alien plants in our gardens and parks, and how we must plant lushly for birds -- diversity is the key for supplying year-round food for wildlife.

Denis Flanagan provided a roundup of exciting trends in gardening and plants for 2005.



David Tomlinson, Denis Flanagan and Beckie Fox spoke at the Zone 5 Garden Conference on November 5.



And, not to be outdone by the speakers, the hot lunch was scrumptious, especially those homemade pies! Three cheers to the Brantford and area MGs who organized such a great event!

Executive notes

... from the MGOI board Niagara Flower & Garden Show, 2006

Together with the Niagara Parks Department, MGOI is now organizing the Niagara Flower and Garden Show, so successfully inaugurated in 2004 by the Niagara Master Gardeners. To allow enough time to plan this huge event, the show will return in 2006.

Four New Groups

Several new MG groups have been formed, including Cambridge (Liz Stacey), Elgin West (Susan Patterson), Etobicoke (Diane Pettet) and Oakville (Mary-Lynn O'Shea). Welcome to all!

Zone 9 Director Wanted

Durham Region, Lindsay and District and Peterborough are still without a zone director. Those interested in the position should contact Mary Beverley-Burton at marybb@sentex.net.

Board Meeting

A meeting of the MGOI board was held in Guelph in October. A synopsis of the minutes have been circulated to

co-ordinators. Agenda items for the next board meeting in early January should be submitted to Wendy Chrystian at bchrysti@interlynx.net.

Saskatoon MG Conference

Linda Adamson (adamsonb@shaw.ca) is organizing a group excursion to the International MG Conference in Saskatoon in July. See **Calendar** on page 4 for details about the conference.

AGM in North Bay

The next MGOI annual general meeting will be held as part of the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) conference in North Bay on August 12 to 14, 2005. Details will follow in the next newsletter.

Happy Christmas & New Year

"What are you going to do with snow instead of dirt under your fingernails?" asks President, Mary Beverley-Burton. "Whatever it is, have fun and laugh a lot! Best to everybody and have a Happy Christmas and a Wonderful New Year!"

Zoning in

... news from our 11 zones

Zone 1

Twenty members of the Thunder Bay and District MG group attended a Technical Day on Saturday, October 16. In the morning, Paulette Viera spoke on the principles of landscape design, stressing that when you know the elements of design, it's possible to appreciate good design, even if the style is not to your liking. After a potluck lunch local arborist Vince Rutter gave a presentation on tree care that demonstrated his enthusiasm for the value of urban trees and his knowledge of their care.

Zone 3

A new group in West Elgin has been formed under the leadership of Susan Patterson. Four new MGITs have already signed up and five more are preparing to register for the Guelph courses.

Zone 4

The Zone 4 Technical Update was held at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute during the fall. Restricted to Zone 4 MGs, the day was devoted to technical matters and included talks by Rob Witherspoon on lawn care (the most popular topic on the hotline) and Peter Kevan (Environmental Biology) who spoke about pollinators and their role as vectors of biological control agents.

Zone 6

One hundred and forty MGs attended the Technical Session held on October 2 at Humber College and hosted by the Mississauga Master Gardeners. The three speakers shared their knowledge of plants using slides and Powerpoint presentations. Tony Fleishman talked on trees, Ken Parker spoke on native plants and television personality, Marie Gelletti spoke on alpiners. Following the speakers, Sid Baller led a tour of the Humber College Arboretum.

Zone 8

Weed salad

At the Technical Seminar and Potluck Social held on September 18, biologist Martha Webber treated Lanark County MGs to a review of the structure of plants. She explained what information is important in plant identification and pointed out the value of many of the plants that we try to eliminate from our gardens. Her contribution to the potluck lunch was a salad made entirely from weeds, some dandelion jelly and basswood flower tea!

Start 'em young!

Lanark County MGIT, Cheryl Nash, in conjunction with her role at ecoPerth, visited Queen Elizabeth elementary



Meet Thyra Mitchell, MGOI Vice President & Zone 3 Director

Thyra has been a Master Gardener for four years and is into her second year as a director of MGOI. She's been gardening all

her life and her first memories are of picking up garter snakes and giving them a ride on the swing in the garden, one on each side of her. Now a retired public school teacher, she conducts a teaching garden at her home at Wee Acres in Wardsville, Ontario. Once a week, from May to October, children come to tend their gardens and learn about nature. "I have to say that the teaching garden is the most rewarding thing I have done in the garden. The children call themselves "the gardeners" and I just love having "the gardeners" come." The most rewarding thing that she's done as a Master Gardener? "Meeting a bunch of people who are as passionate about various aspects of gardening as I am."

school last May to show students how to pot-up bare-root native shrubs. With instructions for looking after them, the students went home for the summer, then returned to school in the fall with their plants. Ninety-five percent of the shrubs made it back and Cheryl showed the students how to plant them in the schoolyard as part of a long-term naturalization project.

Ottawa-Carleton Co-ordinator

In Ottawa-Carleton, Kelly Noel became group coordinator on September 1. The group also welcomes new member, Cindy VanderTol.

News to use

... tips for Master Gardeners

Mentoring MGITs

Prince Edward County Master Gardeners have initiated a Master Gardener Mentors (MGMs) program to help mentor Master Gardeners In Training by providing advice, guidance or a friendly word.

Course Fees Increase

Fees for courses provided by the University of Guelph for the Master Gardener program will increase to \$495 per course, an increase from \$225. The old prices are being guaranteed until April, 2006 *providing* MGITs register with U. of G. by December 31, 2004.

A Partnership Germinates

On November 17, representatives of MGOI met with the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture to discuss a potential partnership to deliver the MG educational training program. After meeting with senior management at the Niagara Parks Commission, Superintendent Liz Klose

indicated that "an approval in principal" was granted pending the completion and results of a business plan on this initiative.

Technical help from OMAF

OMAF operates 12 resource centres which have been established to handle questions from the field and from Master Gardeners. The majority of questions deal with agricultural issues, but specialists are willing to help MGs as well. To contact OMAF, call 1-877-424-1300 or email ag.info@omaf.gov.on.ca and please identify yourself as a Master Gardener.

OMAF group training

The Crop Technology Specialists at OMAF are available to provide technical training to groups. To inquire, consult the list of advisors at www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/crops/resource/stafcrop.htm. Specialists include those in organic crop protection and horticultural crops.

OMAF Factsheets

An extensive list of factsheets provided free by OMAF is available at www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/crops/index.html. For a catalogue of all horticultural publications for sale from the Ministry, visit www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/products/hort.html.

Tributes

... activities & achievements

Lawn Gone Lecture

Zone 8 Director Fleurette Huneault will be delivering a lecture, entitled Lawn Gone, at the International Master Gardener Conference in Saskatoon. See **Calendar** on page 4 for details of this event.

Civic Award Goes to Mississauga

On October 5, 2004, Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion presented a Civic Award of Recognition to the Mississauga Master Gardeners for their commitment to volunteerism. In presenting the award, the Mayor stated, "Your enthusiasm for volunteer work has resulted in more than 10 years of community involvement. Our city has benefited from the countless hours devoted to providing the public with gardening education. This is a greatly appreciated service for which you are to be commended. Congratulations on this special achievement and best wishes for future success."

Celebrating 15 Years

Two members of the Ottawa-Carleton group, Darleen Scales and Doug Bruce, are celebrating 15 years as Master Gardeners. Darleen has a two-acre garden listed in Patricia Singer's, *Great Gardens to Visit: A Guide to Ontario's Outstanding Private Gardens*. Her gardens are a must see for any MG planning a trip to Ottawa next summer.

On the wires

... the electronic MG

Thunder Bay Website

Check out the Thunder Bay MG website at www.tbmastergardeners.homestead.com for tips on container gardening and ideas for gardening with kids. The site also includes a list of links to some great gardening websites (especially helpful are those to research and educational sites).

Students Design Kitchener Website

The Kitchener MGs had a

clever idea; they submitted a proposal to students at Conestoga College who took on the project of designing the MG website. Launched this summer, the site serves as both a communications tool for the group as well as a source of gardening information for the public. The group is already using the site for inputting volunteer hours, meeting agenda items and minutes and copies of their newsletter. Visit this attractive, innovative and informative website at www.kitchenermg.ca.

London/Middlesex Revamps Website

Webmaster Ron Rossini has been busy revamping the London/Middlesex website. You'll find all the information from the former site, including monthly gardening tasks, Q&As and interactively generated lists of best roses, tomatoes and kids' plants, and lots more. Visit the site at www.ontariohorticulture.com.

MGOI part of OHA website

The MGOI website is now part of the Ontario Horticultural Association's website at

www.gardenontario.org/mas. The site includes MG hotlines across the province, lists the MGOI executive and provides information about volunteering.

Calendar

... upcoming events

January 28, 30, 2005

North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) Eastern Winter Study Weekend

Register before December 15 for discounted fees to this world-class event hosted by the Ontario Rock Garden Society. Speakers include John Good from England, Jim Jermyn from Scotland, Erich Pasche from Germany and the Montréal Botanic Garden's René Giguère. Details at www.onrockgarden.com/specials/workshop2005.htm.

February 29, 2005

A Day in the Garden

Guelph & Wellington County MGs

Speakers include David Tomlinson on ponds and bog gardens, Stephanie Morris on designing a small garden and Paul Zammit on containers. Information: Frances Schwenger

519-822-8466 or fran.schweng@sympatico.ca

March 9 - 13, 2005

Canada Blooms

Metro Toronto Convention Centre, South Building
Among the speakers at this annual show are Ken Druse and Lorraine Johnson. Over 30 feature gardens will be on display and plenty of events and activities are planned.
Information:
www.canadablooms.com

April 15, 16, 2005

For the Love of Gardening

Evinrude Centre, 911 Monaghan Rd., Peterborough
Presented by the Peterborough and Area Master Gardeners and the Peterborough Horticultural Society, this year's show features speakers Marjorie Mason, Jennifer Bennett, Paul Zammit, Marion Jarvie and Alexander Reford.
Information: Rachel Burrows, 705-799-2065 or rburrows@nexicom.net or at www.peterboroughmg.ca as details become available.

July 24 to 27, 2005

International MG Conference Saskatoon, SK

Highlights of this conference include internationally renowned speakers, educational sessions and hands-on gardening workshops, a gardening trade show, an art show and sale, tours of local and community gardens, guided tour of the Canadian Light Source Synchrotron, a pre-conference tour of the Northern Boreal Forest and Prince Albert National Park, post-conference tour of the Canadian Rockies via Calgary, Banff, Jasper and Edmonton and much more! For details visit www.mastergardener2005.usask.ca.

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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 gardenmart@sympatico.ca.