



What's Growing On?

The newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Ontario, Inc.

Summer, 2006

Executive notes

... by James Lee

Your MGOI directors have been very busy with several important issues, including the the Trillium Grant application, the approval of an Interim Exam format until a new curriculum is developed, the recognition of our 20-year members and the Niagara Flower and Garden Show. These and many other areas were topics of discussion at the May 14 meeting at the Toronto Botanical Garden.

In preparation for the Trillium application, due July 1, 2006, the board evaluated the positive features of the Master Gardener organization and discussed and developed a three-year strategic plan, which included goals, strategies, actions and responsibilities for our organization. The application for a Trillium Grant has forced us to take a serious look at our group and to conclude that we make a significant impact on the horticultural community and can soar even higher with the further education for our members.

An Interim Exam has been approved for new Master Gardener certification until future courses have been developed. Fees for the Interim Exam are \$100, and \$50 will be remitted to the MGIT's local group. The exam is comprised of questions extracted from the texts of the former University of Guelph Horticulturist I, II, and II courses,

and may be taken in open-book format. Gary Westlake and Barb Stock are to be commended for the time they spent developing this exam. For more information about writing the exam, contact your local coordinator or zone director.

The Master Gardener organization in Ontario began in 1985, and in recognition of its founding members who have dedicated 20 years of service, the board voted to award them with silver badges. Continued discussion of volunteer recognition will be undertaken by the Human Resources Committee, chaired by Edythe Falconer.

One month from the opening of the Niagara Flower and Garden show we had approximately 200 volunteers and 77 tent spaces occupied. A questionnaire was developed by the Communications Chairman to assist in making future shows even better. This well-attended event showcases Master Gardeners, and is an example of how we can organize a large scale event by partnering with others.

Discussion also included hosting the International MG Convention in 2011, the creation of an Associate MG membership, the Exemption Exam and our budget proposals for the upcoming year.

Because time and finances do not permit MGOI directors to convene more frequently, we have developed an Internet voting process where executive members



Lanark MGs Renai Rennick, Ankaret Dean, Joan Tosh and Paul Pospisil were among many Master Gardeners recognized by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration for their volunteer contributions.

can engage in lively debate, and where votes can be made on future motions.

We appreciate the input received from coordinators and members, and continue to welcome your concerns and helpful hints to further improve our organization.

Zoning in

... news from our 11 zones

Zone 3

After an eight-month vacancy, **Zone 3** has appointed Ron Rossini as zone director.

London/Middlesex held a Spring Garden Seminar, which included a series of talks on native and invasive plants, landscaping, lawn care and organic gardening. The day was so successful that the group has been urged to hold it again next year.

Elgin County MGs held their annual Digging in the Dirt public workshop. Each member of the group made a presentation. Prizes, auctions and good food and company made this a successful day.

Sarnia/Lambton MGs held a technical update at the home of Bill and Marjorie Prieksaitis who have created a five-acre arboretum, including sweet gum, paw paw, tulip, Kentucky coffee, Kousa dogwood and sweetbay. The day focused on identification, pests, value, rate of growth, preferred growing conditions and propagation of trees. Sarnia/Lambton MGs were also busy preparing for their annual June Garden Tour.

Zone 4

Betsy Rowclif has been appointed coordinator for the **Huron** MG group, and as one of the coordinators for Zone 4.

Huron MGs Leigh Selk, Susan Beatty, Marianne More and MGiT Marg Delaney, in

conjunction with the Bayfield and Area Horticultural Society (BAHS) have spearheaded a project to revitalize historic Clan Gregor Square in Bayfield. Ideas have also been submitted to add sculpture to this garden in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Bayfield Lion's Club.

The hugely successful **Guelph and Wellington County** MG plant sale netted the group \$6,500, which will fund two scholarships: one to the University of Guelph and the other to a local technical high school, as well as subsidizing members' education.

Stratford MGs held an advice booth at the Stratford Garden Festival. Proceeds will help purchase coir and baskets. Members also provided advice at five locations on the July 2 Stratford Garden Tour.

Zone 5

The **Halton** MGs heard two speakers at their meetings. One from Jim Lounsbury of Vineland Nurseries on the use of trees and shrubs in the landscape and one

from Carl Rothfels, Herbarium Keeper and Interim Natural Lands Stewart and Field Botanist for the RBG. In addition, the group set up Garden Information Desks at the Oakville Home Show, Burlington Home Show and the Ontario Garden Show.

Spring has been a busy time for the MGs of **Niagara**. In addition to co-hosting the Niagara Flower and Garden Show, they've answered questions from the public at Broadway Gardens/Rice Rd. Gardens; held library clinics on herb planting and garden design; gave advice to the Alzheimers Society of Canada on the clean-up of existing gardens and plantings; and served in six gardens on the Shaw Festival Garden Tour.

Zone 6

Etobicoke MGs have been helping to re-establish the neglected gardens at Broadacres Junior School. The project includes advising teachers, involving children in weeding and assisting in pruning existing shrubs and with the purchase of new plant material.

Gardening Tips

Recycling Water

Save, save, save the water from air conditioners and de-humidifiers. Placing a bucket or container under the outflow pipes of air conditioners, and using the water from de-humidifiers can save up to one to two gallons of water a day during humid weather. This is pure distilled water, so add an all-purpose water-soluble fertilizer before using to irrigate the garden. It works wonders and helps with the water bill! – *Courtesy Niagara MGs*

Wormwood Tea for Slugs

Cut back wormwood (*Artemisia*) and put a handful of the stems in about a gallon of boiling water. Let it steep until cool. Strain and put the water around hostas to control slugs. -- *John Tripp*

Slug Spray

Mix one part liquid ammonia to seven parts water. Spray directly on the slugs or pour onto the soil in early spring to kill overwintering eggs (when the pips are three to four inches high). - *John Tripp*

Do you have a gardening tip that we can publish in future issues? Submit to lorraine.flanigan@sympatico.ca

They have also helped plant and maintain new gardens in the Carsbrooke Park playground, which opened June 17.

In March, **Lake Simcoe South** MGs hosted Kurt Crist from the Backyard Naturalist who spoke about attracting wildlife. In April, June Yates talked on digital garden photography; and in May, Charlie Dobbin presented, What's New in 2006. David and Cathy Cummins, authors of *The Rusty Rake Gardeners* spoke at the June meeting and graduation party.

Oakville MGs provided gardening advice at Bulow Garden Centre. The group also presented Martin Galloway, environmental biologist and former host of HGTV's *The Secret World of Gardens* on June 19. His talk focused on plant adaptations and how they survive strange and inhospitable environments.

Toronto MGs participated in advice clinics at Canada Blooms and Sheridan Nurseries. They were also on hand at the Toronto Botanical Garden Plant Sale and participated in Through the Garden Gate, a tour of Toronto Island gardens.

Zone 7

The **Prince Edward County** First Annual Gardeners' Gala was a success! Speakers included noted author Lorraine Johnson and Mary Pratte, President of the Canadian Peony Society.

The Prince Edward Lilac Festival and Birding Festival were also successful events and the MGs were happy to be a part of each.

Prince Edward County MGs also received a donation of \$300 from the Prince Edward County Green Trust. The money will be used for education and information.

Zone 8

The North American Rock Garden Society's conference is in

Ottawa in 2008. Lanark County's Purdon Conservation Area, one of five sites to be visited, is coordinated by **Lanark County** MG, Judy Wall. In preparation for the conference, Lanark MGs will be trained by botanists as guides to the unique and delicate plants that grow at Purdon.

Ottawa-Carleton MG Heather Lee has been teaching classes at elementary schools on pollination, germination and seeds and plant parts, lifecycle and bugs. The MG group conducted advice clinics at the Kanata Landscape and Garden Show, and held a Spring Plant Sale in association with the West Carleton Red Trillium Spring Studio and Garden Tour. Members of the group also conducted presentations for the Ottawa-Carleton Public Library and three seminars for the Library Lecture series at the Gloucester North and the Blackburn Hamlet public libraries.

Zone 11

Haliburton MGs are developing and planting gardens at Pritchard House, a local craft shop and home of the Haliburton Highlands Spinners and Weavers. The group has also been working with Grade 3 students at a local school, in conjunction with the Minden and District Horticultural Society, to teach them about plant propagation, soil types, and the differences between annuals, biennials and perennials.

Education

...news & updates

MGiT Training

As a reminder, there are two options available to current MGITs:

1. Open Learning, University of Guelph: The three approved courses (replacing Horticulture I, II and III) are:

Cultural Practices for Plants, Introduction to Plant Identification and Growing Plants. Courses are delivered electronically, with weekly interaction among students and instructors. The fee for each course is \$495. Start and finish dates for each mirrors the university semester. (All enquiries should be directed to Office of Open Learning at the University of Guelph at www.open.uoguelph.ca, 519-767-5000 or info@open.uoguelph.ca.)

2. MGOI Interim Exam:

This is a MGOI-designed test based on the recent "Need to Know" list which has been forwarded to all coordinators. The exam paper and the regulations are available on application of the group coordinator to Wendy Chrystian. The paper will be marked by an independent assessor.

Questions relating to training and education for MG Certification and the MG Advanced Certificate should be directed to Mary Beverley-Burton at marybb@sympatico.ca or 519-824-1057.

MGs who have not yet completed the MG Advanced Certificate courses and who registered by December 31, 2004 can still send in assignments but the deadline is April 30, 2007.

On the wires

... the electronic MG

New Website

Guelph and Wellington County MGs proudly announce their new website, at www.ontariohorticulture.com/gwmg. The site features an extensive list of fact sheets, questions and answers on topics such as lawn care, ponds and roses, as well as book reviews.

Tributes

... activities & achievements

Congratulations to the following MGs for their achievements during the last quarter.

Exemplary Volunteers

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration recently recognized many volunteers for their contributions to our communities. They include:

Lanark: Renai Rennick, Ankaret Dean, Joan Tosh, Paul Pospisil, Alice Graf

Parry Sound/Muskoka: Linda Dronseika, Lynne McIntosh, Moira Paine, Betty Good, Patty Butler, Sue Smith

London/Middlesex: Bill Shuter, Elmer Jorgensen, Donna Hickmott and Eve Norman-Vestergaard

Our Grads

Cambridge: Mike Stacey, Sue Willemssen, Bernice Uebele

Etobicoke: Nine Etobicoke MGs received a gift bag, flowers and cake as graduation gifts.

Lake Simcoe South: Janet Trezise

North Bay: Pam Hansen, Monica McLaren, Hariett Madigan

Oakville: Linda Brentnall

Ottawa-Carleton: Kathleen Teahan

Peterborough: Cathy Tapner, Stewart McGarr, Don Nicholson, Mary Witalis

Prince Edward County: Kathleen Bazkur, Phil Kennedy, Tricia Daley, Pat Burry

Stratford: Janice Mciver, Penny Keegan, Kerry Hackett, Carol Dufton

5-Year Pins

Jennifer Walton, Valerie Liney (Lake Simcoe South)

15-Year Pin

Ferne DeBaeremaeker (Peterborough)

20-Year Member

John Simkins of Halton was recognized at the MGOI Annual Meeting for his 20 years as a Master Gardener. John was a founding member of the Halton Region Master Gardeners (formerly Burlington). He is an internationally recognized tree peony expert and was instrumental in starting the RBG tree peony collection.

Emeritus Status

Marion Warburton (Lake Simcoe South)

Sonia Day (Toronto)

Calendar

... upcoming horticultural events

August 11 to 13

OHA Centennial Convention

This three-day convention in Ottawa, open to all members of the OHA, features speakers, bus tours, a visit to Rideau Hall and floral competitions. For information, visit www.gardenontario.org.

September 15

Plant Sale & Auction

Cambridge MGs are holding a fall Plant Sale and Auction at the *rare* Charitable Research Reserve at Lamb's Inn, Cambridge. The historic inn will house the *rare* organization's research and education facility, and an interpretive centre. For more information, visit www.raretome.ca.

September 23

A Walk on the Wild Side

This native plant seminar, presented by the Simcoe County MGs, features Scott Martin of WILD Canada, Graham Buck of Nith River Native Plants, Larry Lamb of the University of Waterloo and Darcie McKelvey, North American Plant Society. For information and to register, contact Linda Peacock at 705-424-2179 or peacockfamily@sympatico.ca.

October 21

Wild, Woody & Captured!

The Toronto MGs invite you to a fun and information-filled technical update featuring seminars by Anna Leggatt on Great Plants that Spread, Marion Jarvie on Small Trees with Big Impact and Pat Anderson on Digital Garden Photography. An optional tour of the TBG gardens will be conducted by horticulturist, Cathie Cox. \$20 for MGs other than Toronto. To register, contact Pat de Valence, 416-383-1648 or pat.devalance@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.