

WHAT'S GROWING ON?

Fall 2000/Winter 2000-2001

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

Avalon Hamlin - Editor

Letter from the President

“There are no shortcuts to any place worth going.” How true all of us have found this to be as gardening hours slipped away this year moving, planting, nurturing, and purchasing plants to enhance our personal landscapes. The planning and the work, even now as the accumulating snow begins to cover our gardens, still makes us smile as we look out the window.

In the past three years, many hours were given by Board members and individual MG's on the fundraising trail. While many local groups are financially well off, lack of provincial finances has overshadowed the MG program and kept many of you wondering if there would be a tomorrow for MGOI. Spending was pared down to a minimum, but in the meantime the countless hours of requests for money have borne fruit. Landscape Ontario believes in the Master Gardener program, that the MG program is worthwhile enough to pay for the cost of Master Gardener education. The details are outlined elsewhere in your newsletter, but the important thing for all of us to remember is that Master Gardener groups are worth the time in every sector of the province. The battle for financing is not won so much by the Fundraising Committee, but by the stellar record of the local groups, by their reputation as a good thing in their local communities. We will secure financial stability on the personal record of local groups. It is important to have people to present a fundraising case, but when all is said and done it will be the record and reputation of the local MG group that sells us. If you haven't already done this, many of you will as a group set your goals for the coming year. THINK BIG! And above all else you might do as a MG group, have some fun!

The happiest of days during the holiday season,

Crystal Trojek
President, MGOI

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The *Spring/Summer 2000 What's Growing On?* is still available. Download by clicking on www.eagle.ca/gardens/mgoi_june4.rtf.

MG-List

As of November 23, 2000, there were 79 members subscribed to the MG List and 1 to the MG-List-Digest. The reason for establishing the List was to increase communication between MGOI members. See the Spring/Summer edition of *What's Growing On?* for more information and how to subscribe or ask your MG group coordinator.

Ontario Volunteer Honours and Awards

by Denise Edwards, OMAFRA, MGOI Bd. Rep.

OMAFRA supplies the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture, and Recreation with a list of over 4500 rural and ag organizations. 272 awards were attributed to "our list" last year; 3 MGOI groups, Algoma, Elgin, and Lake Simcoe, submitted names and 14 awards were presented. Applications for next year are going out in December and I encourage groups to participate. Information: <http://www.gov.on.ca/MCZCR/english/index.html>

North, South, East and West and Places in Between

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.

Lanark (Zone 8)

by Ankaret Dean

A Living Willow Labyrinth: An arts festival was held in June, 2000, to officially open Lanark County's living willow labyrinth with a "walk in thyme". The living labyrinth was featured on the Lanark County Master Gardeners' garden tour in the same month and enjoyed later by the group during their summer social. The labyrinth was produced as a millennium project by a local garden club with the help of 3 Master Gardeners. With a dowser consulted on the project, a 70-ft circle on an old schoolhouse grounds was prepared in the fall of 1998. Coppiced willow cuttings were planted by school children in the spring and the project was completed with seven unicursal paths, eight circles, and turns, and mother of thyme planted along the paths. A plant of silver thyme from the country estate of HRH Prince Charles was obtained for its centre. The willows will be coppiced every winter and used for basket making by a fibre arts group, and the thyme will be used for jellies, soap and herbal sachets. The labyrinth has a long history as a place for quiet meditation, and a spiritual walk for people of all faiths. It is located at McDonald's Corners which is about 20 kms west of Perth, and about 100 kms southwest of Ottawa. All are encouraged to come and visit.

London-Middlesex (Zone 3)

by Bill Ellyatt

Our 20-member group gives lectures, has an information booth at various locations, and maintains a hotline (business) yearly. A group Constitution was adopted in 1999. A technical update on March 11, attended by 100+, featured "Gardening with Nature" by Shirley Bellows, "Wildflowers by the Roadside" by Brenda Gallagher, both from London-Middlesex MG's, and "Waking up your Pond" by Lorraine Gregson of the Forest City Pond Club. Displays were solicited from some of the local nurseries and garden suppliers and in return they helped sponsor the program. Lunch was brown bag with refreshments provided. The major fund-raising effort of the year was the annual plant sale on the first Saturday in June; plants grown and potted by members. Meetings are held fall and winter on the second Wednesday of each month at the Dearness Home for the Aged; in the warmer months, they take place at field sites, this year two at water gardens; and one included a picnic/barbecue and a garden tour at the home of one of our members. Best wishes to all of our fellow Master Gardeners for the festive season and for the coming year!

Kitchener-Waterloo (Zone 4)

by Bruce MacNeil

The Kitchener Group has been offering a series of Winter Seminars for the general public for many years. There are usually 6 to 7 separate weekly seminars that begin in late January and extend into March. They take place in a central location that charges us a reasonable rent. Each seminar is offered twice (Tuesday with a repeat on Wednesday). The room accommodates approximately 60 people a night. Each night there are at least 5 Master Gardeners: to present; set up the room; and answer questions. Seminars rely heavily on slides that have been taken by members of our Group.

Costs for the seminars are \$7.00 per session or \$35 for 6 sessions. Funds generated by these seminars are used to pay the rent of the hall, cover handouts, provide slide films to members, provide bursaries for MGIT's, and for a group educational bus tour each summer.

Topics are generally suggested by surveys completed by those that attended the previous year's seminars. In 2001 seminar topics will include: Trees and Shrubs (selection and use in the urban landscape, and maintenance); Organic Gardening; Bulbs for All Seasons; Gardening on a Small Scale; Creative Ornamentation and Effective Design for Difficult Areas; and a special two week hands on Design session for a limited number (25) of participants.

For more information, contact me at bpmacneil@library.uwaterloo.ca or (519)576-6034.

Peterborough (Zone 7)

by Rachel Burrows

A Millennium Garden Tour, June 25, 2000, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - With our group's decision to refund half the cost of the U. of Guelph courses, we decided to run a Garden Tour. During August, 1999, a committee of four chose four city gardens as well as two country gardens; mine and Norma Evans'. The city gardens all provided complete contrasts. One was a tiny townhouse garden, 20' x 50', that included two fish ponds, a vine covered pergola, mirrors and over 24 varieties of roses! Another had made tremendous use of a steep, juniper-covered lot by installing decking, a waterfall and stream that flowed beside the path. The pathway led to a Zen house with oriental statues and a contemplative seating area. A third was beautifully designed with a strategically placed swimming pool, playhouse, outdoor storage facilities and yet still had room for a pond, patio and plenty of space for recreation and some wonderful plants. Norma's garden, under mature maples, had an

incredible variety of hostas, ferns, native wildflowers and other woodland plants. Mine, with very little shade, open to all weathers on the side of a hill, had 2 ponds, one ornamental and one natural as well as a woodland walk, a large herb garden and many perennials. Two Master Gardeners were at each garden to answer questions. We also had demonstrations and talks by Master Gardeners in some of the gardens. Vendors with garden related products set up in the two Master Gardener gardens were well received. The night before, it poured; however at 9:45 a.m. the sun came out and it was a lovely, hot day. The free lemonade proved to be a big hit! With the aid of our members and good advertising, we sold 425 tickets. It was a tremendous amount of hard work. We have decided that we will do it again in two or three years. We will look at other fund-raising ideas for next year.

Toronto (Zone 6)

from their "Master Gardener Gazette"

MG's who graduated in April went home with a pile of loot, donated by these generous companies. A tip of the trowel to them - and to Grace Muncaster, for her hard work, lining up freebies. *Canadian Gardening*, Cruikshanks, Dominion Seed, Garden Import, *Gardening Life*, Malcolm Publications *Harrowsmith*, Lee Valley, *Plant & Garden*, Richters, Safer's, Stokes, White Rose Nurseries... [some of the 20!] Ed.

MG Comments

On Reading the Annual Report

by Bruce MacNeil, Kitchener-Waterloo

This summer, when I was looking through the MGOI Annual Report for some information to use in a fund raising activity, I realized that it is an excellent source of information. Questions being asked by one Group are answered in a variety of ways.

Mississauga reports that while their Group is becoming well known throughout the area and there is enthusiasm for what they are doing, they are concerned about the future of MGOI. The list of their year's events - impressive! If we all, the Board included, work with the same energy and commitment as the Mississauga Group, we have nothing to worry about.

Algoma mentioned that they have fewer volunteers this year. Brooklin indicated that a priority for the coming year is to find new and interesting activities. Gananoque mentioned speaking engagements. Another Group talked about needing a permanent location for meetings.

Answers also appear in these reports such as Brooklin's night school course and Lake Simcoe's cooperation with CMHC for a large donation. Lindsay waters plants at a mall for a donation. Meeting rooms are obtained through partnerships with malls, homes for the aged, schools etc. One Group mentioned a partnership that resulted in bursaries for their Group. What a wonderful idea!

We are only limited by our imaginations. The tasks may not be as onerous as we once thought. Read the Annual Report and trade stories with other Groups in your Zone.

Plant Identification

Fagus sylvatica 'Laciniata', a serrated-leaf beech. Check it out in the *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* by Michael A. Dirr

What's Happening?

MG International Conference

"The Magic of Gardening", Orlando, Florida, May 28-June 1, 2001. The program will include nationally recognized speakers and will cover a wide range of topics. You will be able to choose from numerous breakout sessions, so there is sure to be something to spark your interest. The agenda also includes hands-on clinics and a special day at Epcot. A trade show highlighting horticultural products will let you see some of the new gadgets for gardeners. The conference is being held during the Epcot International Flower and Garden Festival, an annual event which is highlighted by millions of flowers, fanciful topiaries and educational presentations delivered by University of Florida faculty, Disney horticulturists, and experts from around the country." For more information contact your Coordinator or go to the following web site:
<http://hort.ufl.edu/mg/interconf.htm>

Fund Raising

by Bruce MacNeil, Fundraising Chair

Early in the Spring, Crystal Trojek and I had the opportunity to meet with Tony DiGiovanni, Executive Director of Landscape Ontario to discuss a number of fund raising opportunities. At that meeting, we made application for a portion of the Canada Blooms money that is distributed to worthwhile horticultural related activities. Recently, we learned that our request was successful and we were awarded \$10,000.

At the October MGOI Board meeting, the Board decided to distribute up to \$1,000 to each of the 8 Zone Directors for speakers for the 2001 Zone Technical Updates and meetings. The Zone Director will work with the Coordinators of the Groups in each Zone to set up a session for Master Gardeners to hear quality speakers and to discuss matters of mutual interest. The money is to be used to engage speakers only. Other costs are to be recovered through registration fees but we feel that speaker funds will enable the Group to keep fees to a minimum. Funds not used for this purpose will remain in the Technical Update fund for distribution in subsequent years. We hope that we will be able to continue to provide similar opportunities in years to come. For more information, contact your Zone Director.

We also anticipate that, through other fund raising initiatives that involve both donations and gifts in kind, we will be able to finish the year "in the black". These initiatives include funds realized from the sale of the RBG/MGOI calendar and the donation of an Audit.

This does not mean, however, that we can stop fund raising. Fund raising will become a regular occurrence if MGOI is to continue and your cooperation is critical.

Internet Sites

MG Group Web Sites

For a listing, see the Spring/Summer 2000 edition of *What's Growing On?*

Pest Information

<http://www.lordsenviro.com/pest.html>

Fact sheet Database from Ohio State University

<http://plantfacts.ohio-state.edu/>

Pronunciation

<http://hg.women.com/homeandgarden/refer/resor/00plen11.htm>

Shrubs to Save Heating Costs

by Amy Pokorny, Lanark

The familiar windbreaks of conifers are usually placed to windward of a house and in full sunlight. A planting of densely branched, fairly short shrubs around and close to the house foundation provides an insulating cushion of air which reduces heating costs. However, it is important to figure out which species demand maximum sunlight and which tolerate medium to minimum. Also, you should take into consideration the ultimate mature height of each bush in relationship to windows, foundation height, basement windows and possibly focal points you want at the corners of the building.

Last year Eco Perth sold very cheaply over 8000 tiny trees and shrubs, local Lanark species, of which two kinds of viburnum, mature growth 10 - 12 feet, would do nicely for tall accents and for providing food and shelter for birds. For most homes, particularly bungalows, look for densely branched shrubs, of five or six feet.

Many of the established nurseries can provide you with a list of names and descriptions of beautiful shrubs with a great choice of height, width, blossom time, fall colour, texture of foliage, etc. Well chosen plants will look like an elongated shrub garden and won't need pruning except possibly a little shaping of maverick branches. That way, you'll have maximum bloom and harvest for wildlife as well as minimum work. It's surprising how wonderful a variety of glorious blooms, gorgeous autumn colours, leaf texture and fruit you can have.

Book Review

Allergy-Free Gardening, The Revolutionary Guide to Healthy Landscaping, T. L. Ogren, Ten Speed Press, Berkley, CA, 2000. 267 pp

Reviewed by Garden Design's Bonnie Blodgett (printed with permission)

Spending almost a decade developing a system to measure the allergy potential of plants, the author used it to rate some 3,000 common landscape trees, shrubs, and grasses on a scale of one to ten (with ten being the most allergenic). In the process, Ogren came upon an unsettling trend. Urban landscapers across America, he asserts, favor dioecious species, which are separate sexed (including ash, willow, and holly), because that permits them to avoid planting female trees which shed messy seeds, pods, or fruit. Male cultivars, by contrast, are usually litter-free. According to Ogren, few realize the hidden trade-off: male plants produce huge amounts of invisible pollen. Meanwhile, females have sticky stigmas that catch airborne dust--functioning as nature's scrubbers. Ogren speculates that the rising incidence of allergies--more than 35.9 million Americans have hay fever--coincides with soaring urban pollen counts.

There are skeptics. Dr. Mark Jacobson, an allergist in Hinsdale, Illinois, says airborne grass pollens--not to mention indoor culprits like molds and dust mites--cause at least as much trouble

as trees or shrubs, and he cites factors as varied as dietary changes and breast-feeding to account for the national allergy boom. But to hay fever sufferers, any news is good news. And if Ogren's research can persuade nurseries to begin stocking more female cultivars, gardeners will soon be able to test his theories in their own back yards.

The Borax Recipe

The borax recipe mentioned in the last newsletter was said to originally come from Cornell University. Dissolve 5 tsp borax in 1 quart (1 liter) of water; covers 25 sq feet of lawn (2.25 sq. m) or 1 cup in 2 gallons (9 liters) of water. Stir well; let completely settle, then use the water only, no sediment, to spray on the Creeping Charlie. You may have to make several applications; it will kill grass so be careful; surrounding grass will turn brown on edges but will rebound.

"The more one gardens, the more one learns; and the more one learns, the more one realizes how little one knows." Vita Sackville-West

Gardening for Kids

Queen Anne's Lace Snow Flakes

You need *Pressed and Dried Queen Anne's Lace flowers, Craft Spray Adhesive, Glitter, and Metallic Thread*. Place your flowers on a smooth hard surface. Spray well with adhesive and sprinkle on glitter. Repeat 2-3 times ending with a spray coat. Between each spray lift flower gently using a straight pin working from the centre of the flower. This will stop your flower from sticking to the board. Once the first side is done repeat the same number of times on the other side. Attach a metallic thread as close to the colour of your glitter as you can get it. You can use these as tree ornaments, package decorations or window ornaments. This is a fun craft to get older children involved to make small holiday gifts.

Crossword

by Sandy Ellenor, Windsor-Essex

Crossword Solution Spring/Summer 2000

ACROSS

2 EREMUS
4 CANNA
5 TARO
6 CLIVIA
7 CAMASSIS

DOWN

1 BEGONIA
3 DAHLIA
4 CROCUS

PLANTS FOR AUTUMN COLOUR

Across

herbal tree/oldest tree on earth (6)
also known as Oregon Grape (7)
thorny shrub/used for a yellow dye (8)
8 Japanese maple genus (4)

Down

egg shaped bush/annual (6)

shrub/burning bush is a type (8)

4 colourful perennial (3)

5 both wild and cultivated flower (5)

climber/vine reddish in fall (6)

Happy Holidays!