



# What's Growing On?

The newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Ontario, Inc.

Autumn, 2005



*Brenda Swindell and Gail Jacques (both from Elgin), literally on top of the world in the Sunshine Meadows, 7,600 feet up the mountain.*

## Spotlight on...

International MG Conference  
by Diane Vaughan

Imagine this if you can. Ordinary gardeners have volunteered to open their gardens for a Master Gardener bus tour. After the bus has emptied a gentleman comes over to thank them for opening their garden and to tell them how lovely everything looks. They suddenly realise the gentleman is David Tarrant of television fame and the look on

their faces is precious. Where did this happen you might ask? At the International Master Gardeners Conference in Saskatoon of course, and it was only one of the surprising things that happened. The Conference officially opened with a rousing

talk from David — his best to date — it was both humorous and informative. Lots of seminars, bus tours and workshops followed during the next couple of days, with a variety of topics that would appeal to everyone. Then the famous photographer David

Cavagnaro gave a closing speech, along with slides, sending us off in high spirits.

To chronicle all of the events of the conference would be impossible. Some things just cannot be reported as actual facts, like the kinship you feel towards friends you've just met or been reacquainted with from past conferences, or the fun of doing things like Indian dancing or bobbing up and down in a salt-water spa.

The next conference is in 2007 in Little Rock, Arkansas. Why don't you make arrangements within your group to attend — I know my group has already started planning for it. If anyone has any questions about the next convention in 2007 in Little Rock, Arkansas please don't hesitate to get in touch with me at [dvaughan@sympatico.ca](mailto:dvaughan@sympatico.ca).



*Some of our group out on the Columbian icefields in Alberta.*



*On the garden tour in Saskatoon, Brenda Swindell from the Elgin County group and some of the lovely ladies from the States.*

## Executive notes

... by Mary Beverley-Burton

International MG Conference

The International Master Gardener Conference, which took place in Saskatoon from July 21 to 24 this year, was the first time I had attended such a conference and I hope it will not be the last. There must have been some 600 attendees from all over the U.S. and Canada, including about 20 from Ontario. The conference was full of "good vibes". David Tarrant and David Cavagnaro were the "star" speakers – both were stunningly informative, amusing and breathtaking (I'm talking about their pictures!). There were tours of all sorts; I favoured the science tour, which visited Canada's Light Source (Cyclotron). Both the gardens on tour and the city's planters were spectacular. The organization and hospitality of the Saskatchewan organizing group was outstanding. The next IMG meetings take place in Little Rock Arkansas in 2007 and in Las Vegas in 2009. Dare we hope that MGOI might be able to host an IMG conference in the future? Perhaps 2011 – I think we have a super site in Niagara *but* we would need an enormous fund-raising drive. Most of the U.S. Master Gardeners work with the university extension departments (as does Saskatchewan). Ontario has no such funding, so we must find sponsors, grants and profits from our flower and garden show. MGOI is inquiring about costs and requirements of such a venture, so stay tuned.

MGOI AGM in North Bay

One big advantage of having held the AGM at the OHA annual meeting is the fact that the attendance was very good. The major item at both the AGM and the board meeting that preceded it

was education. The board is well aware that MGs and MGITs are anxious to get started on the new educational program. Although we are ready to roll, we *must* await the outcome of our Trillium Grant application, which won't be known until November. Meantime, we are seeking sponsorship and other means of fundraising. Almost \$6,000 has been pledged by MG groups – a sure indication that Master Gardeners want to help in this great venture. Liz Klose, Superintendent at the Niagara School of Horticulture, is already thinking of topics that might be included in the certification package. Although things are moving along behind the scenes, and we will keep you informed, post-secondary education initiatives have become expensive. Costs for the MG training program are constantly under review but we hope the first phase of the program will be available by early 2006.

Annual Report

We now have 41 groups and almost 800 MGs.

## Zoning in

... news from our 11 zones

Zone 5

Focus on speakers

The focus at the Brantford MG spring meetings was on speakers rather than group business. Tony Zammitt from the Grand River Watershed spoke on endangered species; Nancy Lee Colibaba, a member of the group, spoke on horticultural therapy; Sean Fox from the University of Guelph demonstrated the three ways of grafting; and Dave Collins conducted a hands-on demo on getting roses ready for spring that included a group pruning of his own roses. (What a brave man!)

Niagara MGs

Niagara MGs have been busy planning and planting the gardens at two local Homes for Humanity as well as conducting workshops on floral design and making herbal tussies. The Hotline was busy over the summer, and the advice clinics held at a local nursery this spring were well received. The group also

### Meet Carol Dunk – Zone 11 Director & MGOI Treasurer

When Carol retired from 21 years of teaching at Georgian College in Barrie, she was ready for a full-blown hobby – gardening was it! She joined her local horticultural society, eventually becoming assistant director of District 16. Six years ago she joined the Master Gardeners and although she maintains that she's bitten off more than she can chew, she's doing a great job as Zone 11 director, MGOI treasurer and co-ordinator of the Simcoe County MGs. Carol was also instrumental in leading the MGOI Trillium Application to fund the development of our new educational program for MGITs.

A self-proclaimed plant collector, Carol is always looking for a plant she hasn't grown yet. Judging by her small garden in Barrie she's found quite a few. The garden has overtaken the lawn, both front and back, and two years ago she claimed the boulevard. Her motto: whether it's gardening or other interests, if it isn't fun, stop doing it!



holds garden advice clinics every Saturday at the St. Catharines library.

#### Zone 7

Over the summer, the Prince Edward County MGs conducted garden tours at Macaulay Heritage Park in Picton.

#### Zone 8

##### It's Twins!

Lanark County MGs are forming a twinning relationship with the MGs in Franklin Tennessee. Carleton Place, a town in Lanark County, has formed the umbrella organization and have invited MGs to participate. The relationship may develop into an exchange of information or involve visits between the groups.

#### Zone 9

##### Northumberland MG Group

The newest MG group covers the Northumberland County region, from Newtonville to Brighton and north to the southern shores of Rice Lake. Co-ordinator Ann Slemming can be contacted at 905-342-5462.

#### Zone 10

##### Communities in Bloom

Bruce South MGs have been involved in judging the front yard gardens contest in support of Kinkardine's Communities in Bloom efforts.

## News to use

... tips for Master Gardeners

##### Plant Hardiness Survey

At the AGM, MGOI supported the revitalization of the Plant Hardiness survey. Dr Dan McKenney of Environment Canada and John Valleau (Valleybrook Nurseries) will soon provide information about gathering data on the hardiness of perennials in Ontario and how MGs can

participate. This is an important way for Master Gardeners to raise their profile among the Ontario horticultural community.

##### Revised Co-ordinator's Handbook

The revised version of the co-ordinator's handbook is available for all the groups (including a CD version for easy updates to the by-laws). Thanks to Wendy Chrystian, Denise Edwards and Linda Adamson for the revisions! For a copy for your group, contact Wendy at bchrysti@interlynx.net.

## Tributes

... activities & achievements

##### Retiring directors

Thanks to the following retiring MGOI directors for all their hard work: Joanne MacLellan (Zone 2), Thyra Mitchell (Zone 3), Errol Falconer (Zone 6) and John Hethrington (Zone 10).

##### Emeritus Status

Emeritus status has been granted to Chris Bremner, Ken Phipps, John Simkins, and Elma Vansgs.

##### Advanced MGs

Congratulations to Jennifer Walton and Valerie Liney of Lake Simcoe South who have completed the advanced MG course, to Zone 8 director, Edythe Falconer, and to Brantford MG Sharon Blaney.

##### MG Grads

Congratulations to our newest fully fledged MGs: Virginia Mitchell, Joyce Young and Sandra Dowds, all from Prince Edward County, and Sheila McVey from Zone 8.

##### Condolences

After a lifetime of gardening, 92-year-old Prince Edward County MG Winnie Rightmyer died on April 3, 2005. She was an inspiration to all.

## On the wires

... the electronic MG

##### Learning from MG-List

Last fall, on one of the MG-listserv discussion groups, Ron Rossini explained how he harvested tomatoes four to six weeks earlier than normal. His tip was to use a Kozy Koat, a plastic cover with tubes that can be filled with water. The sun warms the water, keeping the plants frost-free, even to -9°C. Lanark County MG Dale Odorizzi took note and placed Kozy Koats on her Christmas list. On May 7 of the following spring, she planted and protected a tomato plant, and cucumbers and cabbages too, with a Kozy Koat. On the morning of May 9, the water in the Kozy Koats froze solid, but the tomato plant grew happily. By the middle of July, Dale was overwhelmed with cucumbers, and while the tomatoes were not ripe yet, they were ahead of the others that she had planted later. The point of all of this is that the MG-listserv provides a lot of useful information, and usually someone can help to answer any question that you might have.

Of the 800 MGs in Ontario, 581 are missing out on this useful communications tool. An email exchange that helps you keep in touch with other MGs across the province, the MG listserv is free, as easy to use as email and exclusive to Ontario MGs. To join, send an email to Avalon Hamlin at hamlin@ebtech.net and she'll sign you up!

##### Brantford MG Website

Brantford Master Gardeners have launched a website at [www.brantfordmastergardeners.com](http://www.brantfordmastergardeners.com). Check out the great information on the Asian Longhorn beetle, complete with photos.

# Calendar

... upcoming horticultural events

September 10  
Guelph Arboretum Plant Sale  
Great selection of perennials and woodies at very reasonable prices. Gates open at 9 a.m. but plan to be there by 8 a.m. for best selection. More information at [www.uoguelph.ca/arboretum/ProgsWrkshps/PlantSale1.htm](http://www.uoguelph.ca/arboretum/ProgsWrkshps/PlantSale1.htm)

September 9 to 11 (Picton)  
September 17 (Milford)  
Prince Edward County MGs will be appearing at the Picton Fall Fair and the Milford Fair. After this summer's challenging weather, questions are sure to be numerous.

September 24  
Niagara Technical Update  
Reserve your spot at the Niagara Fall Technical Update at the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens and School of Horticulture. The day includes guest speakers Darren Schmahl on Designing your Garden and David Hunt on Pruning Trees for Long-Term Health and Beauty as well as guided tours through the gardens and the Butterfly Conservatory. There are a few seats still available.

Contact June Streadwick at 905-934-6137 or [streadwick@sympatico.ca](mailto:streadwick@sympatico.ca).

October 18  
Green Roofs & Sustainable Garden Design  
Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, recipient of the Order of Canada, will discuss the importance and benefits of designing buildings and gardens that are sustainable and environmentally responsible. Toronto Botanical Garden [www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca/lecture.htm](http://www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca/lecture.htm)

October 22  
Ottawa-Carleton Technical Update  
A full day of lectures is planned, including speakers Bruce Henbest of Upper Canada Village who will be talking about heirloom plants, and Suzanne Patry of Whitehouse Perennials who will be discussing techniques with perennials. To register, contact Lee Boltwood at 613-836-1491

November 5, 2005  
Zone 4 Technical Update - The Changing Landscape  
School of Architecture, Cambridge. Topics include: Changing Landscapes of Southern Ontario, Carolinian Canada

Conservation, Green Roofing, The Four-Square Garden, Roots of Canadian Garden Landscape, and Why We Worship Turfgrass. Contact Mary Ann Gilhuly (519) 746-8456 or [magilhuly@rogers.com](mailto:magilhuly@rogers.com)

November 18  
Wild Ways, John Brookes  
Landscape Ontario presents a special lecture at the University of Toronto's Convocation Hall. Tickets, \$25 by calling 800-265-5656.

May 2 to 5, 2006  
International Master Gardener Conference, Little Rock  
Mark your calendar and plan to attend! Watch for details on the Arkansas MG website at [mg2007.uaex.edu/default.htm](http://mg2007.uaex.edu/default.htm)

June 9 to 11, 2006  
Niagara Flower & Garden Show  
For details about the Niagara Flower and Garden Show, visit the website at [niagaraflowerandgardenshow.com](http://niagaraflowerandgardenshow.com). Anyone wishing to volunteer should contact Wendy Chrystian at [bchrysti@interlynx.net](mailto:bchrysti@interlynx.net).

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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](mailto:lorraine.flanigan@sympatico.ca).

## Cover Your Assets!

OMAFRA is offering a series of seminars to volunteer groups, including MGs, horticultural societies and community groups on how to manage your organization's insurance costs, risk, funding, responsibilities and liabilities. October seminars will be held in Thunder Bay, Wyoming, Orillia, Metcalfe, Odessa and Rostock. Cost is \$45 (or three for \$100) and includes resource materials, breaks, lunch and speakers. For dates and to pre-register, click on the Up Front section at [www.omafra.gov.on.ca](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca) or call 1-877-424-1300.