

# OVER THE GARDEN GATE

The Newsletter of the Valley  
Gardeners Club

August 2017  
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Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Valley Gardener's Club. There are purposely no pictures in the newsletters to allow for less expensive black and white printing. Always looking for submissions, critiques or suggestions. Send to: Editor: Donna Crawford, [sparrowsong@eastlink.ca](mailto:sparrowsong@eastlink.ca).

## *HAPPY CANADA 150 !!!!!*

*OUR CLUB IS CELEBRATING! THE BIG EVENT IS OUR  
HORTICULTURAL SHOW. HOPE ALL WILL BE THERE TO  
PARTICIPATE, SEE THE FRUITS OF OUR LABOUR, LISTEN TO THE  
TALK AND ENJOY THE TEA ON AUGUST 12.*

### **THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER**

We are in the midst of the dog days of summer in the garden, when the flowers wilt from the heat and we wilt from trying to keep up with the watering. It is not the time of the freshness of spring, full of hopes and dreams, nor is it the fullness of autumn when the earth smells of ripeness and our dreams are lulled by the fruits of our labours.

No, the dog days are simply drowsy. The cicadas sing, the pea vines shrivel and need to be pulled out, the lettuce goes to seed and we feel like sleeping in the hammock under a tree.

Even the colours of the garden change. The pastels of roses, delphiniums and foxglove morph into colours to match the heat of the day. Bright yellows, oranges and reds start to predominate reflecting the heat of the sun as Sirius, the dog star, rises and sets with the sun. Dies caniculares to the Romans, or plain old dog days to us.

Although there is a brief respite from the more onerous gardening chores, and we have time to go to the cottage or vacation one more time before school starts, there are still many things which should be done before fall harvest is upon us. That being said, for those of us who can and preserve, now is the full flush of tomato and cucumber harvest so there is no rest from pickles, tomato sauce and madly trying to find that recipe you saw last spring and meant to try.

## THINGS TO DO IN AUGUST

### In the Flower Bed:

- By the end of August take a little time on a rainy day to order your spring bulbs and fall planted perennials such as peonies to be ready for fall planting.
- Dead-head bedding plants and perennial plants to stop them self-seeding and to encourage further flowering into the autumn.
- Stop fertilizing your roses to allow them to stop the growth of new soft foliage.
- Trim your lavender plants after they've finished flowering to keep them compact.
- Prune summer flowering shrubs once they have finished blooming.
- Prune your Wisteria after flowering by removing all the whippy side-shoots from the main branch framework to about 20cm from their base (about five leaves from the main stem).
- Finish dividing clumps of Bearded Iris now so they have time to form roots and flowers buds for next year before the cold weather arrives.
- Keep your Rhododendrons well watered at this time of year to ensure that next year's buds develop well
- Collect ripened seed and store for next year. Leaving some seed heads in place can be attractive and allows the plant to self-seed in the surrounding soil.
- Keep an eye out for scarlet lily beetles on your lilies - remove and crush any you see. Also check for the sticky brown larvae on the underside of leaves.

### In the Veg & Fruit Garden

- Keep harvesting zucchini before they become too big!
- Cut back herbs now to encourage a new flush of tasty leaves you can harvest before the frost.

- Seed a crop of fall spinach, lettuce, radish, etc for fall harvest.
- Apply a high-potash fertiliser such as tomato food once fruits start to form on peppers, cucumber and aubergines.
- Pinch out the top of tomato plants to concentrate the growth into the fruit that has already formed. Aim to leave 5 or 6 trusses of fruit per plant.
- Start harvesting your maincrop potatoes as the leaves yellow and die back. Try storing your potatoes in burlap sacks which exclude light but allow adequate ventilation.
- Pinch out the tips of your runner bean plants once they reach the top of their support. This encourages side-shooting and more beans at a manageable height for picking.
- Pick runner beans regularly to prevent them becoming stringy and to make room for developing pods. Leaving mature pods to set seed can prevent further flowers developing and reduce your crop.
- Lift and dry onions, shallots and garlic once the foliage has flopped over and yellowed. Leave in a warm shady place to cure for 2 weeks prior to storing. Store them in onion bags in a dry place to prevent moulds developing.
- Established clumps of chives can be divided now
- Keep an eye out for potato and tomato blight and remove and destroy any affected plants immediately to prevent its spread.
- Clear away any diseased and spent foliage on and around your veg plants to discourage pests and diseases spreading.
- Keep on top of weeds as they compete with your crops for nutrients and water
- Plant out any rooted runners of strawberries for a good crop next year.
- Prune the fruited stems of your blackcurrant bushes after harvesting.
- Cut back the fruited canes of your summer raspberries, leaving the new green canes for next year's crop. Tie in next year's raspberry canes to support wires or fencing.

### Lawns

- Don't feed your lawn with a high-nitrogen fertiliser now as this will encourage lots of lush new growth which is easily damaged by autumn weather
- Save water. Don't worry if your lawn is looking brown, the autumn rains will soon make it green again.
- Lawn growth slows down in late summer so raise the cutting height of your lawn mower to help the grass cope.
- Recut any lawn edges if needed. Try installing lawn edging to make future maintenance easier.
- Hedges can be given a final trim now before they stop growing

- Use boiling water as a weed killer on your paved areas. Weeds wilt and die within a few days.

I am tired just writing about all there is to do. I guess it is only dogs who can rest in the dog days of summer. Look at him out there stretched out in the shade. Oh well. Before we leave, don't forget to get your camera and record the garden at the height of the season. You will appreciate it when you are dreaming over seed catalogues this winter, planning to change things around. It is amazing how fast one forgets when that prized perennial bloomed or how horrible that orange thing looked in the middle of the red roses. And keep up your garden journal, with your successes and failures, your hopes and dreams.

As if that is not enough, the horticultural show comes in the middle of it all. Do take time to show off the results of all your hard work. The praise will set you up for next year.

### START YOUR READING LIST

On the desktop of my computer is a file "Books to Read". Whenever I see or read about a gardening book I haven't read I add the title, author, publisher, brief description (fiction or non fiction, etc) or as much info as I can find. It is amazing how fast the list has grown and how little time I have to read. It sits there, waiting for the snowy days of winter. This saves me from the unfulfilling task of trying to remember titles. Some may be good, some horrible, such is the way of things you stumble upon. Send me your favourite finds. Here are a couple from my current list:

- Beatrix Potter's Gardening Life: The Plants and Places That Inspired the Classic Children's Tales By Marta McDowell
- Gardens of the High Line: Elevating the Nature of Modern Landscapes By Piet Oudolf and Rick Darke A wholly enchanting celebration of the transformation of one sliver of urban industrial landscape.
- It's Not Just About the Hat: The Unlikely Journey of a Plantsman (Allan Armitage)

### ON THE WEB

Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens - <http://botanicalgardens.acadiou.ca/welcome.html>

Catherine Parr Trail wildflower drawings

<https://gardenmaking.com/canadian-wild-flowers-book/>

Savvy Gardening <http://savvygardening.com/>

Panoramic view of Quatre Vents. Sorry, tour no longer available on website without reality viewer. <http://www.etpanorama.com/QuatreVents/VR/index.html>

**SEED/PLANT EXCHANGE**

Donna Crawford is looking for geranium "Johnsons Blue". Anyone have one for sale or trade? sparrowsong@eastlink.ca

**DO YOU KNOW**

Frank Cabot, whose Canadian garden in Malbai, Quebec called Les Quatre Vents is world renowned, came from an old and distinguished Boston family (see The Cabot Family in Wikipedia). After college he and his wife began their first garden, Stonecrop in Cold Spring, New York. A garden of succulents and Alpines, that was open to the public in 1992. Les Quatre Vents was a Cabot family home from the 1840s. Frank began seriously gardening there on a grand scale in the 1970s. He lived and worked there until his death in 2011 at age 86.

In the late 1980s he visited Ruth Bancroft, renowned in horticultural circles for the "dry garden" — thousands of cactuses, succulents and shrubs — she began in the 1950s on her property in Walnut Creek, Calif. (<http://www.ruthbancroftgarden.org/>) By the time of his visit, Mrs. Bancroft was in her early 80s. Worried that her garden would die with her, Mr. Cabot founded the Garden Conservancy.

To date, the organization has helped preserve more than 90 gardens, including those of the Longue Vue House and Gardens in New Orleans, ravaged by Hurricane Katrina, and the gardens of Alcatraz, which were tended by prison inmates and their guards for more than a century.

The conservancy's inaugural project, the Ruth Bancroft Garden, continues to thrive and is now open to the public year-round. (In this case, at least, Mr. Cabot's preservationist zeal may have been a trifle premature: Mrs. Bancroft, now 108, still visits the property.)

**CLUB NOTES**

From our very first Year Book: "The Valley Gardeners Club was formed in February 1983. Great Interest was shown by local residents when Peter Harvey and Tim Amos of Kentville organized the first meeting."

» The first BBQ was held n August 1983. It was a family fun outing with games and fun for all.

- » The first annual garden show was held on September 24, 1983. Flowers ( An individual rose, 3 arrangements), fruit (8 classes including apples, pears plums and peaches), vegetables (15 classes), house plants and childrens. It was open to the public from 1 to 8 pm!
- » Rosaleen MacDonald was one of the speakers (on herbs) that first year.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **August 12, 2017** - Valley Gardeners Flower and Vegetable Show celebrating Canada 150. Kingstec. Entries from 8 am to 10 am. Open to the public from 1-4 pm. Special historical display. Allison Magee speaks on “Historical Gardening” at 2pm. Free will offering tea. Contact [sparrowsong@eastlink.ca](mailto:sparrowsong@eastlink.ca) for copy of the Show Schedule. Entries from the general public or members welcome.
- **August 14, 2017** - VG Meeting. 7:30 at the Irving Centre, Acadia. Lower Level classroom to the right of the auditorium. Av Singh speaking on “Soil Amendments and Beneficial Microbes”. Av is well known to farmers for his knowledge of organic farming, having worked as a consultant with the Department of Agriculture, Perennia and the Small Farm Centre.
- **August 16, 2017** - 3rd Annual Medicinal & Edible Plant Walk’ fundraiser for North Mountain Animal Sanctuary starting at the library in Wolfville at 10:30 am. \$15 per person \$30 family with all proceeds going to the animals. Info at [singingnettsclinic@gmail.com](mailto:singingnettsclinic@gmail.com)
- **August 19, 2017** - Charing Cross Flower Show at the New Ross Fair Grounds.
- **August 19, 2017** - Valley Gardeners Summer Tour (replaces the bus tour) to the Tangled Gardens and Grand Pre Park Gardens. Entry to the Tangled Gardens is \$5.00. Meet at Grand Pre at 1 pm sharp for guided tour.
- **September 20, 2017** - Al Whittle Theatre, Wolfville. 7:00 pm, \$9.00. In filmmaker Sébastien Chabot’s feature debut, influential gardener and horticulturalist Frank Cabot recounts his personal quest for perfection at Les Quatre Vents, his twenty-acre English style garden and summer estate that was opened to a film crew for the first time ever, shortly before his passing at the age of 86. The Gardener is a documentary reflecting on the meaning of gardening and its impact on our lives.

## LEAVES

An old garden is full of subtle witchery. It seems to be peopled, in a particular living way, by the memories of those who long since tended it and had a gentle delight therein - presences, it may be, nameless to us but all pervasive. And the spell of the garden is the more potent the more it recalls well-known and honoured personages who once frequented it.

Harold Donaldson Eberlein, *Arts and Life Magazine*, 1919

### CLASSIFIED

Troy Built Pony roto tiller for sale, like new (paint still on tines). \$1,000 non negotiable. Contact [sparrowsong@eastlink.ca](mailto:sparrowsong@eastlink.ca) for info.

### FROM THE GARDEN RECIPE BOX

A great soup for a hot day and a way to use up bits and pieces from your garden in the dog days of summer:

#### **GASPACHO**

A food processor may be used to chop vegetables but do not over-chop

1 cup finely chopped, peeled, tomatoes

½ cup chopped green peppers

½ cup chopped cucumbers

¼ cup finely chopped scallions

1 Tbsp chopped parsley

3 or 4 cloves minced garlic

2 Tbsp minced chives

3 to 4 Tbsp tarragon vinegar (You don't have to buy this: just steep a few sprigs of tarragon in a jar of vinegar for a while)

2 Tbsp olive oil

1 tsp salt

¼ tsp freshly ground pepper

1 tsp Worcestershire sauce

½ tsp Tabasco sauce

3 cups tomato juice

Mix above ingredients in glass bowl (to make it look pretty and to keep the acidic tomatoes from reacting with the container) and chill well.

### KNOW YOUR CLUB EXECUTIVE AND CHAIRS

The following people work hard at keeping our club up and running. Feel free to express your opinions to any of them. There are only names, no contact info.

Should you wish to contact one of the named people please drop me a line or call and I will provide the info.

Executive: President: Philip Longmire. Vice President: Janet Herbin. Secretary: Cinda Kaulkman. Treasurer: Gerri Robertson. Program Chair: Robin Whidden. Communications Chair: Donna Crawford.