

OVER THE GARDEN GATE



The Newsletter of the Valley Gardeners Club

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UPCOMING EVENTS

August 11, 2018 Botanical Painting Workshop with Twila Robar Decoste, Harriet Irving Botanical Workshop, 10 AM - 3 PM. \$70 per person includes all materials. Register at (902) 847-9847.

August 13, 2018 - Valley Gardeners meeting: Winter Hardy and Houseplant Succulents with Jane Blackburn of Woodlands and Meadows Nursery. **NOTE LOCATION:** Room 213 Patterson Hall (Building 24, Acadia just below the Irving Centre). There is an elevator.

Aug 15, 2018 Prescott's Busy Bugs, Prescott House, 1 pm. Fun-filled afternoon exploring the grounds of Prescott House to learn all about ants, beetles, earwigs and other creeping critters! Cost: \$8.00 per child, For children ages 5 & up. Rain Date: August 16th, 1pm to 3 pm Snack provided

August 18, 2018 - Valley Gardener's Horticultural Show, Kingstec. Show Schedule is on our website <http://www.valleygardeners.ca/yearly.php>

September 4, 2018 - 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm, Rhododendron Society Annual Steele Lecture. "New Hydrangeas for Cold Climate Gardens" with Maurice Foster, Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St. Halifax.

June 7/8, 2019 - NSAGC Convention, Louis Millet Centre, New Minas.

SUMMER READING

A good summer read is one where you can curl up on a day which is too hot or too wet to garden and become completely lost in the story. Not for me the how-to books of the reference shelf - they make my eyes start to water and glaze over. I want the gardens of gossip and cocktails, of love and romance, of mystery and terror. I do love to read about the history of landscapers and the great gardens of the world, but that is for another day - maybe in the deep of winter. So here are a few garden inspired books I have enjoyed at various times in my life and for various reasons. They are not in any order of preference and are no means an exhaustive list.

1. **Our Life in Gardens by Joe Eck and Wayne Winterrowd** Even if you never aspired to be a gardener, these refined, witty, and personable duo will convert you. Also worth a read are their *Living Seasonally* and *A Year at North Hill*.

2. **The Lost Garden by Helen Humphries** A beautifully written novel by a Canadian writer about the war years in Britain.

3. **Sunlight on the Lawn by Beverley Nichols** Picked at random from any of Nichols many garden humour ramblings written by our most loveable British snob with mischievous malice and pure joy from 1932 to 1968. Delicious with a chuckle.

4. **The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett** The iconic British novel (written in the USA) which has coloured the notion of a garden in the minds of many children. Worth another read by adults, too.

5. **The Lost Gardens of Heligan by Tom Smit** A real life mystery on the search and discovery of one of the great gardens of pre-war Britain. A real spellbinder.

6. **The Prickotty Bush by Montagu Don** The story of well known garden writer Monty Don's first garden; a story of obsessive passion, love of the land, hard work, and loss.
7. **Elizabeth and Her German Garden by Elizabeth von Arnim** The witty story of an Australian who built a garden in Pomerania while married to "the Man of Wrath" and having 5 children. The fictional Elizabeth finds consolation in the beauty of the garden, and maintains her sanity by ignoring the conventions of the day. Born Mary Annette Beauchamp in Australia in 1866, Elizabeth Von Arnim was a member of the literary glitterati: her cousin was Katherine Mansfield; her children were tutored by E M Forster and Hugh Walpole; she was a lover of H G Wells.
8. **Green Thoughts: A Writer in the Garden by Eleanor Perenyi** Bold and brash, Perenyi holds forth on gardening with an eccentricity which belies the rather boring title.
9. **The Potting-Shed Papers by Charles Elliott** A collection of 31 essays from soup to nuts. So absorbing you will find yourself taking it as a bedside book. Sure to put you to sleep or keep you awake in a good mood.
10. **The Morville Hours by Kathering Swift** Beautifully written story on how she came to create a garden at the Dower House at Morville, and a backdrop of the many people who lived in the same Shropshire house over th generations. A meditative and magical book.

I will stop at 10, just enough to give you a choice but not too many to overwhelm. Do try to go beyond the essential reference books. You will go to a whole new appreciation of gardening when seen through other's eyes. Send me your favourites. I will print a list next issue. No how-to books, please. We will save those for another day.

HORTICULTURAL SHOW

Now is the time!!! Our Show is happening this month so continue cruising your garden for entries. To prepare yourself be sure and read the show schedule carefully - all of it. Don't skip the regulations. Make sure your tags are filled out properly and that you are entering the correct category. No flowers? In the design category you may purchase flowers. No veg garden? Why not enter a photo or some cooking? There really is something for everyone. If you cannot enter, make sure you come and see what others have done. Listen to Allison's talk. Have some tea and goodies.

This is your show - your chance to show the public and your fellow gardeners things of which you are proud. Make the most of it. Invite friends to enter the show, or just to come for a cup of tea. You don't have to be a member to put in an entry.

Note: In the 2018 Show Schedule Design section #27 refers to a "**pavé horizontal design**" What the heck is that?, you say. In floral arranging, a pavé arrangement is one where the designer trims off leaves, cuts the stems fairly short and places the flower heads very closely together. Horizontal indicates it should be flat, not rounded. A finished pavé arrangement should have a fairly smooth, even surface. Flowers with dense, compact heads such as carnations or roses are best. Use the same flowers in different shades to make a patchwork quilt-like pattern. Have fun doing it.

LEAVES

Karl Capek on ordinary garden soil in *The Gardener's Year* : "Generally consists of particular ingredients which are: clay, manure, rotten leaves, peat, stones, shards from pint bottles, broken bowls, nails, wires, bones, Hussite arrows, foil from chocolate wrappers, bricks, old coins, old smoking pipes, sheet glass, mirrors, old labels, tin pots, bits of string, buttons, shoe soles, dog dirt, coal, pot handles, wash-hand basins, dishcloths, bottles, railway sleepers, milk cans, buckles, horseshoes, tin cans, insulating material, bits of newspaper and countless other constituents which the astonished gardener wrests from his flowerbeds every time that he hoes. Perhaps one day he

will unearth an American stove under his tulips, Attila's grave or the Sibylline Books; in a cultivated soil everything can be found."

John Ruskin on poppies in *Proserpina*: "But the poppy is painted *glass*; it never glows so brightly as when the sun shines through it. Wherever it is seen - against the light or with the light - always it is a flame, and warms the wind like a blown ruby..."

DID YOU KNOW

During Jacques Cartier's second voyage to the New World, he reported finding cucumbers growing in an area where Montreal now stands. (The Gardener, Summer 2018).

IN THE GARDEN

- Now is the time you see those great end of summer sales of expensive trees and shrubs. How often do those severely pot-bound, summer-sale, garden-centre plants survive to maturity despite all the root slicing, teasing, and other horticultural manipulations? **Sometimes a bargain is nothing of the sort.** If a container-grown plant is a little crowded in the pot, that's one thing. When it comes out of the container as a black hole of compacted roots, it might be better to use it as future compost.
- Seed a fall crop of peas and spinach and keep harvesting.
- Pick herbs for fresh use and for drying. Most herbs have a more concentrated flavour if they are not allowed to flower and frequent harvesting will accomplish that. Harvesting will encourage them to send out fresh, new growth and keep them growing longer.
- Order spring bulbs for planting and forcing. You won't be able to plant them until later in the fall, but you will get the best selection if you order early.
- Check that your mulch hasn't decomposed and add more as needed. While organic mulches are meant to continue decomposing on your garden beds and help feed the soil, you do not want to leave your soil uncovered at the end of the season. Bare soil is an invitation for weed seeds.
- Spread a mid-season layer of compost or manure. Your plants will appreciate the extra boost to get them through the final growing months and your soil will need some amendments, too.
- Leave some annual seeds to self-sow. Many annual flowers, like cosmos, nigella, and cleome, will seed themselves throughout your garden. You'll be delighted next season with an abundant, natural scattering of flowers. Don't worry, any that seed in unwanted places will be easy to pull out early in the season.
- Start saving seeds and taking cuttings. Focus on your top performers and sentimental favourites, so you will have them to grow again next year.
- Remove any diseased foliage now, so it doesn't get lost in the fall leaves. Dispose of diseased plants in the garbage or burn them. Don't put them in the compost pile unless you are absolutely sure it will get hot enough to kill any lingering spores.
- Cut back the foliage of early bloomers like Brunnera and hardy geraniums, to revitalize the plants. They are probably looking a bit tired and removing the older leaves will encourage fresh new growth.
- Prune summer flowering shrubs as the flowers fade. This will help put the energy back into the leaves and roots of the plant, rather than into setting seed.
- Trim and feed hanging baskets to prolong their beauty. Sometimes we take hanging baskets for granted since they tend to be planted with profuse bloomers. However, they will need some TLC after working so hard setting flowers all summer.

- Take pictures of your garden at peak. Take pictures of container combinations you'd like to repeat. This will give you reminders next season of what worked and which areas of your garden need some tweaking.
- Make sure the cold frame is ready to go. Whether you plan to overwinter some tender plants in it or you won't need it until the early spring, you will want it set up and in place before the ground is suddenly covered in snow.
- Begin dividing perennials. Start with the bearded iris. You will want to get your perennial divisions in the ground at least a couple of months before the ground freezes, so they will have time to set down roots.
- Pot up perennial divisions for spring plant swaps. Sink the pots into the ground this fall and they'll be one less chore in the spring. (An empty spot in the vegetable garden is perfect for this. By the time you're ready to plant vegetables next spring, it will be time to lift the pots.)
- Plant trees, shrubs, and perennials now, so they can take root. Keep them well watered, until the ground freezes, since they have a limited root system.
- Get your fall-blooming crocus and colchicum planted so they'll bloom on time. They bloom in the fall, but they need to be in the ground several weeks earlier.

FROM THE GARDEN RECIPE BOX

August is the time for an explosion of zucchini. Here's yet another recipe for your collection:

ZUCCHINI BROWNIES

1/2 cup vegetable oil
 1 1/2 cups white sugar
 2 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 2 cups all-purpose flour
 3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
 1 teaspoon salt
 2 cups shredded zucchini
 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
 1/4 cup butter
 2 cups confectioners' sugar
 1/4 cup milk

Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease and flour a 9" x 13" baking pan. In a large bowl, combine the oil, sugar and 2 teaspoons vanilla and mix until well blended. Combine the flour, 1/2 cup cocoa, baking soda and salt and add to the sugar mixture. Fold in the zucchini and walnuts. Spread the batter evenly into the pan. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until brownies spring back when gently touched. To make the frosting, melt together the 6 tablespoons of cocoa and butter; set aside to cool. In a medium bowl, blend together the confectioners' sugar, milk and 1/2 teaspoon vanilla. Stir in the cocoa mixture. Spread over cooled brownies before cutting into squares.

GOT NEWS???

Send to: Editor: Donna Crawford, sparrowsong@eastlink.ca.

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Valley Gardener's Club. There are purposely no coloured pictures in the newsletters to allow for less expensive black and white printing. The Valley Gardeners is a member of the Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs. <http://www.nsagc.com>

