

OVER THE GARDEN GATE



The Newsletter of the Valley Gardeners Club

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Until July 28, 2018 - Nova Scotia Native Floral in Art: Acadia art gallery, in collaboration with Botanical Artists of Nova Scotia Association present an exhibition of botanical illustrations of native plants. Art of the Plant Regional Show is a part of the Botanical Art Worldwide Exhibition."

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.

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.

Please advise us if you know of upcoming events of interest.

LOW MAINTENANCE GARDENING

Picture this: It is a sweltering hot day and you are sitting in your Adirondack chair, bare feet nestled on soft and spongy moss, deep shade from the tree overhead, and surrounded by cool green banks of hosta. Life is good. Even better, there is no lawn to mow or weeds to pull. The giant hosta leaves hide the fact that there are no edges to have to keep pristine. With the shade from the trees, there should be little problem with the moss dying up. A soothing green oasis.

However, not all of us have such a space for moss lawns and hosta hedges. And bear in mind that there is no such a thing as a NO maintenance! Even a gravel garden requires raking and weed removal.

How many times have I heard the novice gardener say that perennials are the answer. "You can just put them in and they produce every year". Hah!!!. Wouldn't it be nice. Perennials, especially those lovely showy ones, are the most labour intensive gardens you can plant. At least with annuals you can remove them in the fall, compost and till the bed, start out fresh in the spring. Perennial beds require constant weeding, dividing, fertilizing, cutting back, etc. For those of you who love to be in the garden fussing pruning, collecting seeds, and have the backs and time for it, it is an absolutely wonderful, joyous occupation.

In these busy times, many want a property that looks good, but which does not take all your waking hours to tend. Sitting on the deck with a glass of wine or a beer after work, with a trouble free vista is often more the life style now.

Some tips on how to achieve this:

- The secret is to learn to eliminate or reduce repetitive chores, from mowing, trimming, and edging to watering and feeding plants. Keep it simple.
- Surround trees with plants instead of lawn. The best choice is woodland plants that don't mind the company of tree roots.
- Replace a fast-growing hedge that needs constant pruning with a fence.
- Use a deep layer of mulch. A 2-to-4-inch layer applied to a bed twice yearly will conserve moisture and suppress weeds.
- Trees and shrubs tend to be the lower maintenance choices in most gardens. Pick ones suited to your soil and climate,
- Ground covers such as vinca are great under trees and in out of the way areas you don't want to maintain. Keep the edges strictly mowed to prevent rampant spreading.
- Plant bulbs under ground covers for early spring colour.
- Got a large property to mow? Let some of it grow up with a few meadow flowers amongst the grass. Just mow paths through the wilderness.
- Make solid path edges between flowers beds and lawns to eliminate edging and make mowing easier. Keep paths straight or slightly curved where possible.
- Instead of a sharply edged, mulched garden, try an English cottage style garden. The close planting inhibits weeds and the mixture of plants discourages insect pests.
- Got a hot, dry corner? Have you tried a succulent garden? Many are winter hardy.

Take a good look at your property and see how you can make slight changes to enhance your enjoyment in these busy times.

CLUB NEWS

The Executive of the Club met on June 28. President Philip Longmire led a discussion on how to improve the overall health, membership, finances and visibility of the Club. Philip will be circulating some of the suggestions which arose for feedback from members.

Our fiscal year ends at the November AGM. A whole new slate of officers is required plus members to sit on Committees. You are all encouraged to have a talk to yourself and take on one of the positions. The club will not exist if new people do not step up to the plate. In particular, a Program Chair and committee members willing to be hands on are needed for the club to function. If you are at all interested and need answers do not hesitate to ask some of the current executive to fill you in.

The executive positions which are vacant are:

Vice President Secretary Treasurer Program Chair and Committee members

Communications Chair and committee members. Next year's president will be Sandi Carroll and Philip Longmire becomes Past President.

HORTICULTURAL SHOW

Now is the time!!! Our Show is just a month away so start 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? 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 show, or just to come for a cup of tea. You don't have to be a member to put in an entry.

ON THE NET

Do you realize our webpage is active and up to date? Lots of info, program notes, etc. Check it out <http://www.valleygardeners.ca> . The Show Schedule for the Show is posted there as well.

For those of you interested in Rock Gardens:

The Ontario Rock Garden and Hardy plant society: <http://www.onrockgarden.com/>

Nova Scotia Rock Garden Club: see their Facebook page

SMILES

From a letter to a friend: I contemplated buying a gnomy type "garden sculpture' the other day. Reality set in when I realized that I myself had become the gnome statue, standing still more than moving, while waiting for the various aches and pains to subside. Short, fat and wrinkled and dressed in weird old clothes should just about do it for the gnome describer....

DID YOU KNOW

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.

The Kings Courthouse Museum heritage veggie and flower gardens in front of their building were honoured with the David White Trophy! They were designed and planted by museum volunteer gardener Kathrin Grace and fence builder and “bench renewal” person, Harold Redden. Drop by and have a look.

IN THE GARDEN

- If you're growing eggplants pinch out the growing tip once they have 5 or 6 fruits. Pick fruits while they are young. You can expect to start harvesting in mid to late summer.
- Nip off the growing tips of squash and zucchini to encourage branching.
- Boost your tomato crop by regularly feeding them with dilute tomato fertiliser once a week. If leaves look pale and yellow feed more regularly.
- Apply a high-potash fertiliser once fruits start to form on peppers, cucumber and tomatoes. You can use this on sunflowers too.
- Harvest garlic when the tops start to bend over and yellow.
- Clear away any diseased and spent foliage on and around your vegetable plants to keep them healthy.
- Prune the fruited stems of your blackcurrant bushes after harvesting.
- Raspberries are shallow rooted so they will appreciate being watered generously in hot, dry weather.
- Keep your flowers deadheaded to encourage new blooms.
- Water your containers and baskets thoroughly in hot weather. Continue to feed them with a balanced liquid fertiliser every 2 to 4 weeks.
- 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.
- Don't forget the birds. Make sure you clean your birdbath and keep it filled with water.

FROM THE GARDEN RECIPE BOX

This is the month for strawberries and raspberries. So many wonderful things to do with them. The following recipe was presented at the 2007 Maritime Fall Fair by Chef Hans Wicki from Nova Scotia fall bearing strawberries, but is equally good with June bearing berries..

CREPES WITH PEPPERED STRAWBERRIES

Serves 12

Crepes:

- 1¼ cups Flour
- Pinch of salt
- 3 medium Eggs
- 1 ¼ cup Milk
- 1 tsp Orange peel, grated
- 2 Tbsp Butter, melted

1. Combine eggs, milk, grated orange peel with a wire whip and stir in the sifted flour/salt and beat until smooth, mix in the melted butter and rest for 30 minutes.
2. Heat a medium size non-stick frying pan or crepe pan over medium heat. Brush lightly with oil.
3. Ladle about 3 Tbsp of batter in the middle of the pan. Tilt the pan and swirl the batter over the surface to the edges.
4. Cook the crepe until the edges are brown and the underside is golden. Flip and cook the other side. Place onto a plate and repeat procedure with the remaining batter.
5. Fold and/or fill the warm crepes with your favourite fillings.

Peppered Strawberries:

- 1 ½ Tbsp Butter
- 4 cups Strawberries fresh, sliced (reserve some strawberry halves for garnish)
- 2 Tbsp Maple syrup
- 1 Tbsp Brandy
- 3 Tbsp Orange juice
- 1 tsp Black pepper freshly ground from the mill

1. Melt butter in a frying pan over medium heat, add the sliced strawberries and cook for 2-3 minutes until lightly warmed.
2. Pour the maple syrup over the berries and flambé with brandy.
3. Grind black pepper over the berries and add the orange juice, bring to a quick simmer and serve with crepes
4. Garnish with whipped cream and mint or serve with ice cream.

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 Gardners is a member of the Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs.
<http://www.nsagc.com>