

# OVER THE GARDEN GATE



The Newsletter of the Valley Gardeners Club

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**June 11, 2018** - Valley Gardeners monthly meeting, Kingstec. 7:30pm. John Lewis speaking on Back Yard Berry Projects. Plant treasures exchange.

**June 16, 2018** - Halifax Garden Festival, Victoria Park, Halifax. 9am-4pm.

<https://www.facebook.com/HalifaxGardenFestival/>

**June 16, 2018** - Basket Weaving Workshop led by Gerald Toney of the Annapolis Valley First Nations. 10 am - 5 pm. Cost \$50.00. All materials provided; you get to keep your basket. Kings - County Museum, Kentville. Limited to 15 people so register quickly! **SOLD OUT!!!**

**June 23, 2018** - Valley Gardeners Member's Garden Tour. Map and write-up included in newsletter.

**July 7, 2018** - House & Garden Tour Annapolis Royal. The theme is "Town and Country". Call 902-532-7018 [www.ExploreOurGardens.com](http://www.ExploreOurGardens.com)

**July 9, 2018** - Valley Gardeners Monthly meeting. Flower Arranging with Lorraine Beswick.

**July 28, 2018** - Flower arranging at Lorraine Beswick's Garden, Karsdale. \$30.00. Limited to 10.

**July 12, 2018** - Master Gardeners Convention, Truro

<http://atlanticmastergardeners.ca/documents/program.2018.pdf>

**July 14, 2018** - Champlain Garden Club Show and Tea, Legion Hall, Annapolis Royal. Tea 2-4, Show 2-5. \$7 entry fee.

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

**June 7/8, 2019** - NSAGC Convention, Louis Millet Centre

**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.

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

## FLOWERS IN THE HOUSE

Nothing perks up your house and spirits like fresh flowers in the house. My mother always timed her spring cleaning at a time when she could fill the house with sweet smelling apple blossoms when she finished. But we didn't have a flower garden from which to pick bouquets. Being a working farm, all the gardening energy went into fruit and vegetables.

It gives one a certain satisfaction to go out into your garden and fill your basket with a selection of flowers. They don't have to be big - Celia Thaxter in *An Island Garden* writes of simple sweet peas grouped together in clear glass vases as being cherished daily in her cottage.

But you do have to have enough flowers that you are not denuding the lovely show outside. If you are cutting armloads of lilac and cherry blossom in the spring and filling the house with scent it is

not a problem. But if you have one peony and a couple of roses in June with a small patch of iris, you will quickly run out of flowers and your beautiful yard will start looking very green.

The solution is to plan for a cutting garden. Not the big, fenced-in and trellised cutting gardens of the rich which you see in books (although it would be nice). Rather plan to plant in clusters so you have enough of any one thing that a few removed won't be too noticeable. Coneflowers planted in threes or fives are better than a single plant. Plant so you have something major for each season of the year. Tuck in a few plants of annual or perennial baby's breath in amongst other plants to act as fillers in your bouquets. Stick a few rows of bachelors buttons in the vegetable garden. Put as many tall delphiniums at the back of your borders as possible. Cutting will encourage more side shoots and lengthen the bloom period.

Don't forget that herbs make wonderful greenery and flowers in bouquets and an amazing scent. Dill heads lend an airiness and touch of yellow. Sage and artemesia provide a pale grey lovely with mauves and whites. Use vegetables, too. A long chain or two of cherry tomatoes can brighten up a dull bouquet. A couple of shiny black eggplant can be quite dramatic with or without tiny yellow zucchini in a bowl interspersed with dill heads. Let your imagination go wild. Your house will thank you for it and your spirits will soar when you walk into a room greeting you with the subtle scent of fresh flowers.

## CLUB NEWS

**Congratulations to Rosaleen MacDonald on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday!** On May 20 Rosaleen's family held a celebration at the Blomidon Inn at which she greeted everyone looking young and regal in her beaded navy blue suit. Wonderful time and wonderful food with a wonderful friend of the garden club over the past many years.

**Horticultural Show - August 18, 2018** Hope you have all printed off your Show Schedule by now and are poring over the various classes. Some are quite different from previous years so read carefully. Now is the time to plant seeds in order to have things in time for August. And all summer water, prune, deadhead, thin and dream about your entries. Pass the word to your non member friends. They can enter too and if not enter, encourage them to come and have a cup of tea with a backdrop of flower entries. Can't find your Show Schedule? It is also available on our website <http://www.valleygardeners.ca/> under Yearly Activities.

**NSAGC Convention 2019**- District 5 will be hosting this event next year. A planning committee was struck after the District Meeting and they held their first meeting Tuesday April 17<sup>th</sup>. There they decided to hold the 2019 convention at the Louis Millet Centre. The dates for the Convention are June 7/8, 2019. Chair of the Planning Committee is Debra Carey and Co-Chair Sandi Carroll. Committees functions were discussed at a meeting May 15. At present they are looking for a theme around which to build the program. Let Philip know if you have any ideas on themes.

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**SUMMER GARDEN TOUR** - Since only 10 can attend the Flower Arranging Workshop at Lorraine Beswick's on July 28, we feel there should be a group activity for the rest. We are recommending that we car pool to the Champlain Club's Flower Show and Tea on July 14 in Annapolis Royal followed by a visit to Bunchberry Nursery. We might even get inspired for our OWN Show in August. More on this at the June 11 meeting. Just a reminder to contact me soon to get your name on the list for the Lorraine Beswick Workshop. [sparrowsong@eastlink.ca](mailto:sparrowsong@eastlink.ca)

### ON THE NET

For those of you who went on the 2015 garden tour to Allison Smyth's garden in Granville Ferry, you may enjoy this blog written by a recent visitor to her garden. You will be amazed at how the garden has grown and matured.

<https://threedogsinagarden.blogspot.ca/2016/01/a-garden-filled-with-lavender-heather.html?spref=fb>

An interesting article on organic food and George Washington Carver:

<https://commonreader.wustl.edu/c/carvers-food-movement/>

For those of you thinking of taking the flower arranging workshop with Lorraine Beswick, have a look at this. It hasn't been updated for a while, but gives you a picture of what is coming :

<http://beswickflowers.ca/> and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/BeswickFlowers/>

### BOOKS

I have many favourite gardening writers, for various reasons, two there are two I go back to over and over for the sheer beauty of their use of language. The Canadian writer, **Patrick Lima**, who with his partner photographer John Scanlan writes from their garden on the Bruce Peninsula, *Larkwhistle*. His last book, *The Organic Home Garden*, was written in 2011. His books *Herbs*, *The Kitchen Garden*, *The Art of Perennial Gardening* and *The Harrowsmith Perennial Garden* have become Canadian classics.

The American writer **Wayne Winterrowd** (deceased 2010 at age 68) with his partner Joe Eck, wrote from their garden at North Hill in Vermont. His books *Our Life in Gardens*, *Living Seasonally* and *A Year at North Hill*, are an inspiration to anyone who wants to live from the land. His many articles in gardening magazines such as *Horticulture* were something to treasure.

Both of these wonderful writers were hands-on gardeners. They wrote from a deep love and knowledge of growing. I can highly recommend any of their books. Although they teach how to grow things in their books, they are so much more than how-to manuals. You can read and enjoy their writing like a fine novel. Both write with humour, knowledge and grace.

### DID YOU KNOW

The average caterpillar has 4,000 muscles, and 248 in its head alone!

### IN THE GARDEN

- Plant out annual summer bedding plants and plant up containers, hanging baskets and planters now the risk of frost has passed. If you have them growing on in a greenhouse move them outside to their final position.
- Lift and divide clumps of snowdrops and bluebells once the leaves start to yellow.
- Now there is space on windowsills again, think about sowing biennials for next year.
- It's not too late to sow seeds of annual flowers.
- Stake tall or floppy perennial plants to prevent wind damage.

### FROM THE GARDEN RECIPE BOX

Local asparagus is such a short lived treat, you should make the most of it as often as you can.

Here is the easiest asparagus salad in the world. Tasty too.

**COLD ASPARAGUS WITH LEMON-MUSTARD DRESSING** (Makes 2 servings)

An appealing side dish

- 12 fresh asparagus spears, washed and trimmed
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon sweet brown mustard
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest, divided

Blanch the asparagus in lightly salted boiling water for about 3 minutes or until crisp-tender; do not overcook. Remove from heat and refresh under cold water; drain well. Cover and refrigerate until chilled.

In a small bowl, combine mayonnaise, mustard and lemon juice; blend well. Stir in ½ teaspoon lemon peel; set aside.

Divide asparagus between 2 individual serving plates. Spoon 2 tablespoons dressing over top of each serving; sprinkle each with 1/4 teaspoon lemon peel. Garnish with carrot strips and edible flowers, such as pansies, violets or nasturtiums, if desired.

And if you like your asparagus hot, here's another easy recipe. Asparagus and tarragon are a natural together.

**WARM ASPARAGUS WITH LEMON/TARRAGON**

- 1 1/4 lbs fresh asparagus, trimmed
- 1 1/2 teaspoons very good virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon freshly grated lemon rind
- 1 tablespoon fresh tarragon, minced
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 pinch sugar

In a large skillet, cook asparagus with tips all facing one way in 1 inch of boiling water until just crisp-tender, about 3-5 minutes; drain.

Place asparagus on a serving plate, but keep warm.

In a small skillet, heat olive oil. Stir in lemon zest, tarragon, lemon juice and sugar. Spoon over asparagus. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**GOT NEWS???**

Send to: Editor: Donna Crawford, [sparrowsong@eastlink.ca](mailto: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>