

# OVER THE GARDEN GATE



The Newsletter of the Valley Gardeners Club

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 12, 2018** - Valley Gardeners Plant Sale. Starts at 9:30 am (new time). This is our main fundraiser so start thinking now what you will be able to bring to sell. Larry Marsters is Plant Sale Chair. See more under Club News below.

**May 12, 2018** - Rare and Unusual Plant Sale. Farmer's Market, Annapolis Royal. 1-4 pm. Freeman Patterson is the guest speaker and will be giving his presentation at Kings Theatre after the sale. <https://www.facebook.com/events/2091242284437711/>

**May 12, 2018** - Valley African Violet Society's Show and Tea 2-4pm at the St. John's United Church Hall in Middleton, NS. Admission; free.

**May 14, 2018** - Valley Gardeners are pleased to welcome David and Susan Smart, owners of the much anticipated **Bessie North House Restaurant** in Pereaux outside Canning, to speak to the Club. All are welcome; bring your friends. The Smarts, who are proponents of using local products in their menu planning, are speaking on "Growing the Menu" which will feature the measures they have taken to develop vegetable gardens on their own property. 7:30, Kingstec.

**May 18, 2018** - Members of the Botanical Artists of Nova Scotia Association (BANSAs) will be taking part in a worldwide botanical art show. 10 am-4pm in the foyer of the K.C. Irving Environmental Sciences Centre and Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens. Nova Scotia Native Flora in Art is a regional show of members art work of the Botanical Artists of Nova Scotia Association (BANSAs). It is part of a simultaneous worldwide art exhibition opening around the world on May 18, 2018.

**May 19, 2018** - Plant Sale in support of the Merritt Gibson Memorial Library at 10:00 am on Main Street in Canning

**June 1 and 2, 2018.** - NSAGC Annual Meeting, Days Inn, Bridgewater. Program, registration form and other info on the NSAGC Website under Convention.

**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! Contact 902-678-6237.

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

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

**July 14, 2018** - Champlain Garden Club Show and Tea, Annapolis Royal. More on time & place later.

**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

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

### THE SNOW HAS GONE!

**SPRING???** April 24 - Well, it's late and a lot of plants are still hiding in their nice warm beds, but for gardeners once the snow is gone it is spring. I have donned my woolly socks and lined clogs, wrapped up in my warmest sweater and lined gardening gloves and finally headed out to the yard. Oh my...where to start? All the plans made over the winter seem to go into hiding when I look at the goutweed showing its frilly green leaves in unexpected places. The plastic barriers I installed are being pushed out of the ground as the roots make their way to the surface. First stop: to the hardware store to get a better quality barrier. The dollar store variety is not up to facing the challenge of goutweed. Next to gather up my soil sifter and spade to tackle the beds before things get out of hand. I did plan to move some large leafed hosta which are taking over the vegetable garden. I don't think they would appreciate being moved into the goutweed neighbourhood. Onwards and Upwards!!

**SPRING!!!** It is only 2 days later and suddenly people's lawns are awash with blue. I am out in my shirtsleeves, but still digging out goutweed. However, even in my small yard the spring bulbs are showing colour and there are a few pulmonaria in bloom. Amazing...they were all just holding their breath just waiting to jump up at the first warm rays of sunshine. Now the race is on to get everything done. Suddenly the veg garden is dry enough to turn over, and I am madly trying to get compost worked in to spots so they are ready to seed. I keep telling myself not to get too much ahead of the game. There may still be a frost.

**SPRING TREES:** Let's diverge from the trials and tribulations of my poor little patch and think about the wondrous things which are beginning to fill the landscape. Are you one of those who were wise enough to plant a **witch hazel** in your yard? What a glorious spring tree! Early blooming and somewhat scented. There are four main species, two from Asia (Hamamelis mollis and Hamamelis japonica) and two from America (Hamamelis vernalis and Hamamelis virginiana). Witch is from the old English 'wych' meaning pliant and hazel because the leaves resemble a hazel (Corylus). Nothing supernatural at all.

Most garden varieties are the Asian kind, with a hybrid of mollis and japonica (h.x intermedia) being favoured. There are reds and oranges as well as the more traditional yellow, with blossoms looking like bunches of coloured string in early spring. Cold does not seem to bother them.

All prefer acid soil and plenty of organic matter. They do not like to be waterlogged so add a little gravel and plant in a mound for drainage. Full sun encourages flowering. Most hazels are grafted onto the American virginiana and can sucker. Cut the suckers off at ground level if they appear.

Another spring blooming tree of note is **Cornus mas**. There is a beautiful specimen to your left as you start up the driveway to the research station. Bright yellow blooms. I do love it for flower arranging with daffodils. As it does not flower to the tips of its branches, it easily gives a beautiful Japanese look to arrangements.

What are your favourites? I'm sure you have something, large or small that makes your heart sing as the snow recedes and the world is seen in technicolour again. We seldom share our spring gardens. What a shame. It is the time when the world and we come to life after a frozen sleep and we should rejoice together.

### CLUB NEWS

**LAST CALL FOR OUR PLANT SALE** - Our one and only fund-raiser is coming up on May 12. The plant sale funds not only our speakers and philanthropic activities but the general costs of running the club. The doors of the fire hall will open at 8:30 am to bring your donations. All plants should be at the fire hall before 9 am. Doors open to customers at 9:30 am.

Only good quality plants should be donated. No goutweed! or other invasive things. We want a reputation for having the best quality and assortment around. Don't bring huge clumps. Divide and

wrap in damp newspaper or pot. Label everything with name (common or botanical or both) sun or shade, height and colour if you know it.

You may bring perennials, herbs, shrubs, trees, alpines or rock garden plants, annual transplants of flowers or vegs, . There will be a white elephant table for quality gardening items or books. Larry Marsters is coordinating the sale. Contact him at 902-681-5129 or amarsters@ns.sympatico.ca if you have questions or you would like to help on the day. He is counting on you all to make this a successful sale. We need to make over \$2,000 if possible. This was do-able last year so should be now, despite the competition.

**Provincial Gardening Week:** Starting in 2013 gardeners in Nova Scotia began to celebrate the first week in June as 'Provincial Gardening Week'. Let your executive know if you have an idea for something we can do as a club to celebrate it.

**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. Next meeting of the planning committee is May 15 at 7pm at Kingstec, room 2200, if anyone is interested in volunteering.

### ON THE NET

**Garden Making Magazine's newsletter** is at <https://gardenmaking.com/>

**The Gardener Magazine** (Canadian) is at <https://www.gardenermagazine.ca/>

**Country Life Magazine** is at <http://www.countrylife.co.uk/>

**NSAGC Plant Sales** <http://www.nsagc.com/plantsale.htm>

### LEAVES

Nothing to do with gardening, but I always loved this little poem. Simpler times....simpler pleasures.

The Tea Party

I had a little tea party

This afternoon at three.

'Twas very small-

Three guest in all-

Just I, myself and me.

Myself ate all the sandwiches,

While I drank up the tea;

'Twas also I who ate the pie

And passed the cake to me.

— Jessica Nelson North. *American writer, 1891-1988*

### DID YOU KNOW

John Frederic Herbin acquired the property at Grand Pre in 1907. His vision was to raise money to make it an Acadian and Longfellow Memorial Park. In 1909 he erected a stone cross. This and the French well were all that was achieved of the vision by the time the land was sold to the Dominion Atlantic Railway in 1917. The DAR offered the Acadian community a small parcel, as required by Herbin, for the erection of a memorial structure. The cornerstone for the church was laid in 1922. It was designed by Acadian R.A. Frechet. The bronze statue of Evangeline was commissioned by noted sculptor Henri Hebert and unveiled in 1920.

The original landscape design for Hebert's statue was given to Scottish educated Canadian architect Percy Erskine Hobbs who completed his drawings in 1919/20. It was he who set out the axis of the park and originally the focus was on the statue, not the church as it is now. The grand tearoom and gatehouse which marked the entrance was built, but replaced by the reception area

when the federal government took it over in 1956. Also in the original Hobb's plan was the wilderness water feature, still there, on the southern border near the rail tracks. Although much of Hobb's design has disappeared, it is still his brilliance which formed the landscape of the park and for that we owe his memory a debt of gratitude as we do to Herbin as a torch keeper of the Acadian past.

### IN THE GARDEN

- Chit potatoes to give your crop a head start. Place tubers eyes upwards in container like an egg carton on a light, cook windowsill.
- Lift large clumps of snowdrops after flowering and divide bulbs before replanting.
- Mulch beds and borders to lock in spring moisture.
- Clip deciduous grasses to the ground before new growth appears.
- Clip old foliage from hellebores to allow room for new growth and blossoms.
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### FROM THE GARDEN RECIPE BOX

The rhubarb is peeking through the compost and I can't wait for the season. When I moved it was the wrong time to transplant my rhubarb, but Alice Goodwin kindly provided me with some roots. This should be the first year for a crop of any size.

I never did develop a taste for rhubarb jam; not with strawberries, not with pineapple. I keep trying but I always found it slimy. So no jam recipes here. My favourite recipe is rhubarb cream pie. I think everyone has their version of this. Another favourite is rhubarb relish - a recipe from the renowned Magnolias in Lunenburg (served there with fish cakes). If you would like either of these, just contact me for the recipe. What I am offering here today is the simplest of uses -

Rhubarb muffins.

2 c. finely chopped rhubarb

$\frac{3}{4}$  c. sugar

1 tsp. grated orange peel

2 $\frac{1}{2}$  c. flour

1 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. baking soda

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt

2 beaten eggs

$\frac{3}{4}$  c. buttermilk

3 Tbsp. melted butter or margarine

sifted powdered sugar.

Combine rhubarb,  $\frac{1}{4}$  c. sugar and orange peel; let stand 5 minutes. In separate bowl, stir together flour,  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. sugar, baking powder, soda and salt. Combine eggs, buttermilk and butter together and add all at once to dry ingredients. Stir just until moistened. Gently fold in rhubarb mixture. Fill paper lined muffin tins. Bake at 375° for 20 to 25 minutes. Dust warm with powdered sugar. Makes 16.

### 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>