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Autumn 08



District 17 Newsletter

District 17 Newsletter is Published three time yearly. Members are encouraged to submit short articles of horticultural interest and news of club/societies and send electronically to the editor.

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Autumn 08



A Window Away

I look out my window what do I see,
a cardinal, a blue jay and a chickadee.
They sit on my feeder or in my tree
they're fun to watch and company.

When singing their pretty song
my worries and cares are gone.
Hummingbirds enjoy my flowers,
succulent nectar they love to devour.

The chipmunk fills his cheeks
with the seeds that he seeks.
He scurries away back to his den,
then comes back for seeds again.

Rabbits run, hop, and play
on this wonderful sunny day.
Mother Nature is a window away;
I am thankful for this every day.

Sandi Vander Sluis



Photo by Phyllis Davis

OHA
www.gardenontario.org

If you would like to receive the D17 Newsletter electronically, please contact the editor...
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Out and about District 17



Comings and Goings of an Acting Director

The September resignation of Ann Best as District 17 Director has thrown everything, and everyone for a loop.

Previous to this Jenny Lynn and I scrambled to have representation for the District at the August OHA Convention. Between us we worked it out and managed to attend the board meetings.

As a Director or Acting Director your time is taken up with meetings, committee's, reports, emails, and giving or receiving information. With lots and lots of paper...so much for the computer saving on paper

when you have to print off the reports that come in. We haven't even talked about the District business.

At last week's Presidents' meeting someone said everything is so officious. They are right...we are governed by the Act (for Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations) as well as three sets of constitutions (OHA, District, Club/Society). There are rules and regulations for us to follow so we have to be aware of what is required of us, follow them and we'll be fine.

The fun, and yes there is a fun part...it's visiting the clubs/

societies both officially and unofficially. Enjoying the wonderful dinners, or just showing up for no reason to visit with the members...that's the best part.

November and December is a very busy time for everyone with AGM's, and the reports that are due and...we can't forget Christmas.

Thanks to everyone for supporting Jenny Lynn and myself, as we continue to conduct the business of the District.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Bonnie White, Acting Director

A Brief History

The District 17 Shows & Competitions Committee (The S&CC)

"Let's Go To The Show"



Several years ago, a Committee was struck to write the Show Schedules for the D17 Annual General Meetings (AGMs), to help host Clubs/Societies stage the AGM Show, to provide Show-related assistance to Clubs/Societies, and to organize information Seminars for updating both Judges and Exhibitors. The *"Let's Go To The Show"* Seminars have been very successful and the S&CC has more plans more for the future....

watch the 2009 D17 Newsletters for details.

Most members of this Committee are certified and/or accredited Judges, as well as experienced "show people". All are "organizers extraordinaire". Each year, the President & Show Chairs for the upcoming AGM are invited to sit on the Committee in order to coordinate the AGM Show; planning for the 2009 AGM is already underway & the Show Schedule has been sent out.

Members of the S&CC represent several Clubs/Societies throughout the District: Kathryn Carnegie – Past Director, Brooklin HS/Georgina Brock GC; Bonnie White & Jenny Lynn Gasperek– Acting Directors &

Oshawa GC/Brooklin HS; ; Iris Hazen – Beaverton HS; Judi Denny & Mary Ellen Simerson – Brooklin HS; Phyllis Davis-Cannington; Isabel Hart – Newcastle HS, Sharon Bogner – Uxbridge HS. In preparation for AGM 2009, Julia Noakes, President Pine Ridge GC & their AGM 09 Show Committee have been incorporated into the Committee.

Members of this Committee are available for consultation regarding any aspect of Shows: writing Show Schedules, Showing & Growing...please do not hesitate to contact anyone on the list which will be sent out to you electronically.

Kathryn Carnegie

Judging Course Report

After having finished all the lectures on bulbs, plants, blossoms and design, we spent a day in late July learning about judging gardens as a whole. We did this curb-side at various locations around the Port Perry area. Some were posh communities, others not so; some newer, and one was a long-established heritage-style type. Keenly aware of environmental concerns, Kathryn Carnegie pointed out both the good and the bad: xeriscaping attempts (good) and plants too close to the curb where salt and/or snowplows would require many plants to be replaced each year (bad). We also touched on commercial properties and their unique situation regarding beau-

“Last August, a whole year seemed such a long time!”

tification.

In late August we wrote our final exam. Besides the courses and exams we were also required to “shadow” qualified judges at two large shows plus we ourselves had to produce two first-place wins from a club other than our own. Last August a whole year seemed such a long time, but here we are, a new crop of judges! It turned out to be such an interesting experience that it hardly seemed that long. Official graduation will occur sometime in the autumn or 2008 after which the names of all successful candidates will be released.

Christa Marton, Pine Ridge Garden Club

Here Come the Judges”

After a year of seminars, lectures, mini Shows, field work & several 2-hour examinations, District 17 is proud to announce that a group of newly-certified OHA Judges has graduated. On the 21st October, candidates were presented with their credentials at a luncheon held at *Crabby Joes’ Restaurant* in Port Perry.

Judging School Coordinator, Kathryn Carnegie & Acting Directors Bonnie White & Jenny Lynn Gasperek were on hand to congratulate all for their hard work, dedication & achievements.

A completed, up-to-date list of judges will be sent electronically.

Kathryn Carnegie

The Bookworm

Every true gardener I know is always on the verge of being overwhelmed, at least for three seasons of the year. Thus I suddenly realized that though I had agreed to do book reports for the Newsletter, the deadline date had approached and I had not read a single garden book – or any other – since the lazy days of April! All I had taken time for now and then was an article in one of my numerous gardening magazines whenever I needed a break, because my back or legs were creaking too loudly to ignore the warning.

Then I realized that if all gardeners are in the same boat, not having time to read during the summer months,

I should be writing about some of the publications out there with which our local Greenthumbs might not be too familiar. Both magazines listed below are published in Western Canada, however, they apply to the Prairies rather than the balmy BC climate.

Understandably, an occa-



sional article will refer to fauna or flora that is not found in Ontario, most of what is contained in these magazines applies as well to our own gardening conditions.

The Gardener for the Prairies

Content of this magazine is developed with advertisement from Saskatchewan Horticultural Society, Saskatoon Horticultural Society, and the University of Saskatchewan. All the articles have a straight-forward educational edge, and though the photos are lovely in their own right,

Continued on Page 4

Word Search Puzzle

Species of Trees

The oldest living thing on earth is believed to be a bristlecone pine tree in California named Methuselah, estimated to be 4,7000 years old.

A C C U Y J U N I P E R B K
T U N L A W M C E V L A J Z
W P P W B L E Z E A M H S A
W H A E A D S N F R O U E G
V D E P A E I O I H X E Q N
A C D R L P E X G R C T U W
H H U P N C C G E O H R O D
C K A O U Y W O F G A D I H
R M M R E C C I Y V N K A B
A E P T E L B P L B H A B D
L S D S C Q P O P L A R R I
K I T E C A M P P T O E V O
C H E R R Y L U A B I W B I
U X A U Z E E S T B E B B J

APPLE
ASH
BEECH
BIRCH
CEDAR
CHERRY
ELM
FIG
JUNIPER
LARCH
LEMON

MAPLE
OAK
ORANGE
PALM
PINE
POPLAR
SEQUOIA
SPRUCE
WALNUT
WILLOW
YUCCA

answers on page 6

Bookworm cont'd from p3

the magazine's purpose is obviously not one to bring readers pretty pictures, but to illustrate a thoughtful topic. Subscriptions are \$18 a year (4 issues) or \$34 for 2 years. To order call 1 (888) 477-5593.

Gardens West

This publication offers 2 different editions, one for the lower mainland, and one for the Prairies (which I subscribe to). Some articles are the same in both editions. This magazine is

one of my favourites because it is really different from all the others. The editorial reads like a letter from Aunt Mary, scientific articles are written casually and with a great deal of humour, and several pages are devoted to letters and pictures sent in by the readers themselves. When advice is needed, the editors are generous with their solutions and these often apply to things which you yourself, may have wondered about. An atmosphere of friendliness wafts through this

magazine that is tangible but hard to describe. Nine issues cost \$29.90. To order call 1 (800) 263-1088.

Christa Marton,

Pine Ridge Garden Club

*If I keep a green
bough in my heart,
then the singing bird
will come.*

Chinese proverb

Meanderings with Granny Greenthumbs

"Lo! Sweeten'd with the summer light
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow
Drops in a silent autumn night."

Alfred Lord Tennyson,
The Lotos-Eaters, Choric Song



Ahhh Autumn! The quiet joys; the earthiness; the sharpening of the air; the haze of early morning fogs lifting over russet-coloured country-sides; the drawing-in of the nights...

As John Updike so aptly puts it, "*The breezes taste of apple peel. The air is full of smells to feel...*". Granny & Grumps have been savouring the quintessential apple harvest... plenty of the sweet-yet-tangy fruits this year...visions of steaming pies, spicy apple crisps, and jugs of warm cider are still dancing through our heads.

At no other season are there such sublime contrasts... sights and sounds: hushes and rustlings; tinctures and tones; fires and frosts. On a day like today, Granny is reminded that the autumn garden is indeed the crowning glory of the year. The air is crisp; the sun is shining; the inevitable killer frost has yet to descend...soon enough, though, branches will stand entirely naked in thought, silenced for yet another season, caught in the relentless, uncompromising brunt of Old Man Winter.

The signs are upon us...the jack-o-lanterns are caving in, wizening up like wrinkled, apple-doll faces. Mellow autumn afternoons are giving way to cold shadows and twilights with

heavy frosts... frigid blasts will soon prevail. Indeed, for 2008–2009, the *Canadian Farmers' Almanac* is forecasting a body-numbing Winter, which, despite this

mild November, is supposed to be colder and snowier than normal. Granny shivers under her afghan at the very thought of it all. And there is, as always, the inevitable straggler...this year a solitary robin has tarried too long. Granny ponders its fate; Grumps is, I fear to-no-avail, conjuring up ideas on how to over-winter this malingerer with the rest of the household's avian population. What will become of Robin once Winter's icy fingers dishevel its feathers? Be on your way, my red-breasted friend.

Ever mindful of winter's "regulars", Granny and Grumps have selectively cut and cleared, divided and relocated. In the sheltered niches, foliage still clings to branches; seeds and berries are intact. Soon, there will be so little to do...or, at least, one can be permitted the luxury of thinking so.

"Suddenly the sky turned gray. The day, which had been a bitter chill grew soft and still. Quietly, from some invisible blossoming tree, millions of petals cool and white, drifted and blew, lifted and flew...fell with the falling night." (*Snow Towards Evening* - Melville Cain)

And ever so quietly, Winter

can be upon us! ...a lingering season: a time to gather golden moments; a time to embark upon sentimental journeys; a time to enjoy idle hours. Winter can be a listening season too; it has so much to say. Sounds of winter will call out in ways never imagined...the echo of the woodpecker knocking a spruce cone against a tree... There are new tracks now; and raised ridges - superhighways just beneath the snow... all are not in states of repose.

Well, Granny is off to brew another pot of tea...to ruminate upon how long will it take for all the dawdling and dilly-dallying to become tedious; how long will it take, this year, for us to jolt ourselves out of a winter torpor.

In the meantime, "*May peace and plenty be the first to lift the latch on your door, and may happiness be guided to your home by the candles of Christmas.*" (*Olde Irish toast*)

"Grumps, Quickly! Shh! Shh! Grab the camera...that woodpecker is back at the suet block!" (A not so quiet, shuffling and grumping follows.)



Miscellany



Mystery plant

Can anyone name this plant? It came up in a neighbour's garden, and I am stumped. It was almost seven feet tall and the leaves were almost one foot across. The stem was quite thick and woody at the bottom. Please, if you know what it is, email me and let me know. Thanks.

Phyllis
phylhort@rogers.com

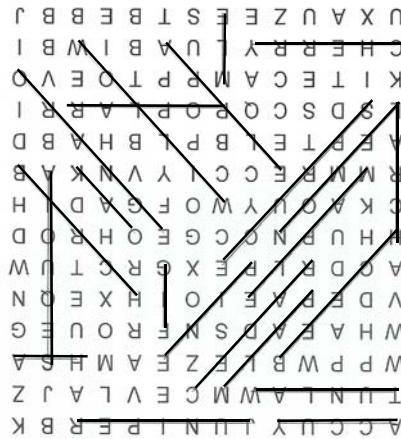
Get your copy of the O.H.A. Newsletter "Trillium" electronically

Contact Linda Hugli, editor,
if you wish to be added
to the list.



lhugli@hotmail.com

Completed Puzzle



*The best way to
make your dreams
come true is to
wake up!*

Toronto Master Gardeners' Seminar

Saturday, January 10, 2009

8am– 9am registration, coffee and tours

Toronto Botanical Garden

777 Lawrence Ave. East

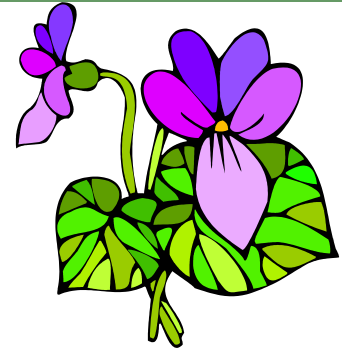
Toronto

If you have any questions about registration
please contact Linda Boyko at 416-699-4308 or
lboyko@kpmg.ca

The Ten Commandments of Good Gardening

1. Thou shalt not plant too early
2. Thou shalt not transplant too early
3. Thou shalt not work the ground when it is too wet
4. Thou shalt not plant too much
5. Thou shalt not plant seed too close together or let seedlings grow too close together
6. Thou shalt not plant too deeply
7. Thou shalt not grow the wrong vegetables for thy area
8. Thou shalt not water too little
9. Thou shalt not overwater
10. Thou shalt not lose interest too early

Viola odorata



Sweet violet, garden violet or English violet...with over 500 species to identify, the variety of names can be overwhelming. For our purposes, sweet violet will do. You may have that refrain playing in your mind as a result: "...sweeter than all the roses, covered all over from head to toe, covered all over with sweet violets."

Once again, a very common and only modestly praised plant has been revealed as a traditional staple from ancient times through the centuries, and now as a potential cancer fighting agent. Jupiter is said to have caused violets to spring from the ground to feed his beloved whom he'd turned into a heifer.

The Athenians used violets to moderate anger, and the ancient Britons transformed them into a cosmetic. A tenth century herbal touts their effectiveness against "wykked sperytis". Violets apparently originated in the Himalayas, but Great Britain has a history rich with their use in herbal remedies as well as cultivation. The latter of which is evidenced in contemporary on-line violet farms.

Although one recognized resource (The German "Therapeutic Guide to Herbal Medicine") states, "...no studies are available on the preparation of the drug...and its therapeutic use cannot be recommended", the majority of resources describe *Viola odorata* as being

edible and remedial. In salads, the young and tender leaves add a sweet, nutty flavour as well as a high concentration of vitamin C. Even the above guide admits that the traditional use of sweet violet as an expectorant is well documented. Whooping cough and various cancers are recorded as being treated with success.

The fact that violet contains salicylic acid (aspirin) would explain its being used for the treatment of headaches, migraine and insomnia. At first, claims of cancer relief were treated as myths, but reports on present day medical studies cover page after inter-net page in reference to certain chemicals being isolated from *Viola odorata*. These chemicals then play a "crucial role in the cytotoxic (cell-killing) effect which may eventu-

**Please!!!
Never use herbs or
plants without proper
instruction from
an expert!**

ally lead to a remedy for cancer.

Two sources mention the use of violet leaves to thicken soup in a way similar to that of okra. A tea can be brewed from the leaves, and the flowers are attractive in a salad or sugared as cake decorations.

The whole plant is said to be anti-inflammatory, diaphoretic, diuretic, emollient, expectorant and laxative. The plant can be used fresh or dried and the roots have a much stronger but similar effect. Even the seeds are utilized as a diuretic in the treatment of urinary tract complaints. Homeopathic practitioners concoct a mixture from the whole plant, and an essential oil from the flowers is used in aromatherapy in the treatment of bronchial and skin problems and exhaustion.

A recent study in Punjab, India, revealed *Viola odorata* as being the most effective out of twelve other medicinal plants for its antibacterial properties. Popularity for the violet reached a peak during Victorian times when it was used to adorn fabric, wallpaper, greeting cards and embroidery, and symbolized modesty in the language of flowers.

Resources: A modern Herbal, Mrs. M Grieve, 1959. Alternative Nature On-Line Herbal, Karen Bergeron; Plants for a Future, Cornwall, England (website); Guru Nanak Dev University, Daljit Singh Arora, Gurinder Jeet Kaur: www.virtualmagazine.com.

Legends & Lore...Origins of the Jack-O-Lantern



During the Potato Famine in Ireland in the 1800's, 700,000 people immigrated to the Americas. They brought their old ways with them, including such Halloween traditions as the use of Jack-O-Lanterns. Originally, they were carved from turnips, potatoes or beets, and lit with a burning lump of coal. The lanterns were placed in windows or on porches and represented the souls of deceased loved ones. Also, the lanterns were used as a protection against goblins and bad spirits freed from the dead. Pumpkins were found to be more readily available and were easier to carve out, so they replaced the turnips. They have been an essential part of Halloween celebrations ever since and is now a universal symbol.

There are many legends about the origin of the Jack-O-Lantern. The most popular legend tells of a ne'er-do-well Irishman by the name of Jack. He was known for his drunkenness and on Halloween he got so intoxicated that his

soul began to leave his body. The devil saw his chance to claim a victim and promptly came to earth. Jack was desperate to avoid his fate and begged the Devil to allow him one last drink. Consenting, the devil stated that Jack would have to pay for his own drink because he carried no money. Jack claimed to have only a sixpence left and asked that the Devil assume the shape of the same amount to

Originally carved from turnips, this well known symbol of Halloween can come in quite handy...

cover the cost. After the drink was paid for the Devil could change back. Considering this not unreasonable, the devil turned himself into a sixpence. Immediately, Jack took the sixpence and put it in his purse which had a cross-shaped clasp. The devil could not get out. Jack agreed to let him out if he would leave him alone for one year.

Jack tried to reform, but soon his old ways were back. The devil returned the next Hallow-

een and demanded Jack's soul. Jack was desperate to save himself and tricked the devil again. He suggested that the devil might like to try one of the delicious apples hanging in a nearby tree, offering to lift him up on his shoulders. As soon as the devil was in the tree, Jack took out his knife and carved a cross on the tree and the devil could not get down. The devil was furious, but resentfully agreed to leave Jack alone forever.

Jack again returned to his old habits but passed away before the year was out. He was turned away from the gates of Heaven because of the meanness in his life. The devil refused to let him enter into hell, stating that he had promised leave Jack alone forever. He told Jack to return from whence he came. To help Jack see on his journey, he tossed him a lump of coal from hell. Jack put it inside of a turnip and it has been Jack's light on his wanderings ever since. Maybe you saw him wandering on October 31st!

Phyllis Davis

*Article Resources / Credits
Encyclopaedia of Ghosts and Spirits,
And The History Channel
Pumpkin carved by grandson Andrew Davis
Photo by Ken Davis*