

PETERBOROUGH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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February 24 @7pm: Carlotta James, Monarch Ultra



Carlotta James is an eco-landscaper, community outreach specialist and long-distance runner. Carlotta graduated from the University of Toronto with an Honours Bachelor of Arts in international relations and political science, where she subsequently was awarded a scholarship under the Canada-China Scholars' Exchange Program to study advanced Chinese at Yunnan University.

In addition to her academic interests, Carlotta's natural

curiosity in the global community have led her to work and travel in China, South Africa, England, Australia, and Mexico for six years. Carlotta currently lives in Peterborough with her family, where her passion for environmental sustainability is evident through her community work with Peterborough Pollinators. Carlotta is co-founder of Three Sisters Natural Landscapes, an eco-landscaping social enterprise dedicated to creating pollinator-friendly gardens in Peterborough and the Kawarthas. Carlotta is also co-founder of the Monarch Ultra, an international relay run, documentary and conservation project aimed at connecting communities across North America with common goals of Earth stewardship and biodiversity conservation. When Carlotta is not building gardens, she is found running along forest trails with her family and friends.

President's Message

As I write this, it's early February and we're celebrating another day of blue sky which we didn't see for much of January. The sun is getting a bit stronger, and the pavement is bare. Our snow cover remains everywhere else and apparently more will be joining us soon. But -- some days we can see the beginning of the melting process and that, to me, means that YES, spring is actually around the corner. Although SPRING does technically



Update on Zoom: We're now virtual, as you should already know. We'd like to thank the 63 members who joined us for a fun hour on January 27. We chatted, we laughed, we learned. Bea Chan did a great job as our speaker, talking to us about her cut flower farm, and growing flowers for cutting. If you haven't tried Zoom, it's not too challenging, and you do not have to have a camera to participate!

Works on ipads, laptops, cellphones and desktop computers. Go to zoom.us/download and then zoom.us/test to be ready for our February meeting.

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begin partway through March, we won't really see its effects until into April, but we're closer to it already than we've ever been this year of all crazy years repeated.



There have been a few changes to our board of directors this year: As you already know, Susan Gomez-Duran and Cauleen Viscoff have both stepped down, and it's my pleasure to let you know that longstanding flower show organizer Shaun Pyper has joined us. Newer in our midst, Sandra Caswell is currently sitting with the board with a view to joining. It's great to be able to both give long-standing officers a break but to also provide opportunities to others to get involved. Welcome, Shaun and Sandra!

I'm looking forward to our February speaker: Carlotta James. You may remember that Carlotta spoke to us briefly in late 2019 about the Monarch Ultra -- an incredible journey she shared with a few others travelling on foot from Peterborough to Macheras, Mexico, to mimic the flight of the monarch butterflies each year. She will be sharing with us the vision behind the journey, show us a short video clip of the trip, and will also discuss monarchs, other pollinators, and eco-landscaping.

Please know that the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority is again offering their tree seedling program. If you wish to order 25 trees of a wide variety of options, please visit their website: <https://www.otonabeeconservation.com/programs/tree-planting/>



Tree seedling sales are now open for the 2021 year. Deadline to order is March 21, 2021. The PHS will not be purchasing a batch of trees this year but depending on demand, may be available for this role in 2022. Let us know.

Please do consider joining us for our February general meeting on the 24th to hear about the Monarch Ultra. We've purchased extra Zoom capacity for the meeting, so our participation is not limited to 100 members. Let's use it!

❖ **Mary-Jane Pilgrim**

Tomatoes: A Short History

The tomato may have originated in the Andes of South America. There is no evidence of where it was first cultivated but by the time the Spanish reached Mexico in the early 16th century, markets were full of them in every size and colour. When first introduced in Europe they were not well received. This may have been because, identified as a member of the nightshade family, it was presumed they were poisonous. However, Mediterranean cultures were more accepting of tomatoes. By 1550 they were regular fare in



Italy. Once accepted in European culture, tomatoes were carried back to the Americas. Surprisingly though, they didn't become popular until early in the 20th century when they were likely grown as a healthy food during WW1.

❖ **Shaun Pyper**

What Message are you Sending?



Planning on sending flowers to a special someone this Valentine's day? Ever wondered where the tradition of sending flowers originated? The tradition actually dates back to the 17th century when it became common for friends and lovers to exchange small gifts and handwritten notes in the UK. Since fertility is associated with agriculture, flowers became the Valentine's Day gift of choice. The history of giving your loved one Valentine's Day flowers also comes from the old-fashioned custom of sending floral bouquets to pass on non-verbal messages, as introduced in the 18th century by Charles II of Sweden. According to custom, many flowers have a specific meaning, making it possible to have an entire conversation using only flowers.

Red: a symbol of love, romance, desire, strength and courage (two important characteristics when you are about to go on a first date!)

Orange: for a person who is grieving, feeling under the weather or facing hardship. It brightens up a room and brings cheer.

Yellow: symbolizes understanding and a willingness to renew broken relationships. They make a great workplace gift to a friend or co-worker to show your appreciation of their hard work.

Green: represent new life, good fortune, and renewal. The first sight of green is always a sign of spring to come.

Blue: to communicate trust, calm worries and signal support. They make an appropriate gift for grieving or sick friends. A bouquet of blue flowers can act as a calming presence in the room.

Purple: associated with signs of royalty, wealth and elegance. A popular alternative to red bouquets as they can represent an important transition in life, such as a move, engagement, or major life change.

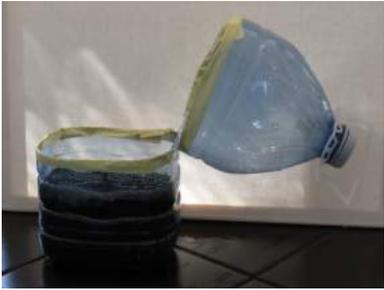
Pink: a popular alternative to red or yellow flowers. They strike a good balance between intense love and friendship, and can represent openness to life's possibilities, convey gentleness and delicacy.

White: purity, innocence, thoughtfulness, and fidelity. Popular for a bride's bouquet or ceremonial displays, white flowers can stand alone as single bouquets or pair well with other

romantic-colored flowers like red or pink. In addition, fixing white with other colorful blooms enforces the authenticity of a meaning, expressing the highest levels of understanding. Happy Valentine's!

❖ **Mary-Rose Daigle**

Simple Winter Sowing



I received my poppy seeds from Vesey's and started sowing them this week. Plastic water jugs are good containers as they provide height for your seedlings. I created a hinge (photo 1) and taped the sharp edges for safety. Drill a few drainage holes in the bottom and sides of the bottle and remove the cap for ventilation. Add soil, moisten, and sprinkle the seeds. Tape cut areas of jug together well and place outdoors in a sunny spot. (photo 2). Last year I started my seeds in a plastic salad container with drainage holes in the top and bottom of the container; they started sprouting at the end of March (photo 3). "Amazing Grey" poppies sowed in March! (photo 4)

❖ **Anita Clifford**

Roses 101

This spring I want to put some time into making sure my roses are strong and healthy. First, I need to identify what I have. Turns out identification is not so easy: there are approximately 150 species of roses and over 20,000 varieties. How to narrow it down? Look at colour first and then various other characteristics:

-Petals: single (4-8 petals), semi-double (9-16), double (17-25), or full blooms (26-40)



-Blooming: repeat all summer or bloom once in mid-summer?

-Fragrance: sweet, spicy, fruity, musky; strong, heady, light or no scent at all?

Roses need at least 6 hours of sun per day, morning sun preferably, and to be protected from wind. Roses need a lot of water: you really can't over-water them so long as they have good drainage, and mulch to help retain moisture.

Roses need to be fertilized with organic matter such as compost. Ideally, fertilize in spring after pruning, a second time after the first blooms finish and finally about a month before the first frost. If using commercial fertilizers, reduce nitrogen by the end of July. Stop dead heading 4-6 weeks before first frost. To plant a new potted rose, prepare the soil by turning an area at least 2 feet wide and 2 feet deep, and amend the soil: a common practice is to add 25-30% compost or well-rotted manure of soil volume at a one foot depth.

Prune annually to remove dead, diseased, damaged, or overlapping canes, favouring younger shoots over older. Trim at ¼ inch above an eye bud, the bump where a leaf would meet the stem, and trim so the growth is outward leaving the center of the shrub open and airy. This will help combat fungal disease, like blackspot – a problem in my garden. For repeat bloomers, prune in spring about 30 days prior to the last frost. For single bloomers, prune after blooming.

❖ **Sandra Caswell**

Take a “bath” in the woods...all year round!



My daughter has always said “you can work a lot of problems out by taking a walk amongst the trees”. Most of us know that taking a walk in a forest is good for us. We take a break from the rush of our daily lives and enjoy the beauty and peace of being a part of nature. Now, research is showing that visiting a forest has real, quantifiable health benefits; both mental and physical. Even five minutes around trees or in green spaces can improve health. Think of it as a prescription with no negative side effects, and it’s free!

Exposure to forests and trees:

- boosts the immune system
- lowers blood pressure
- reduces stress
- improves mood
- increases ability to focus, even in children with ADHD
- accelerates recovery from surgery or illness
- increases energy level
- improves sleep

There is even a term for it: shinrin-yoku. It means taking in the forest atmosphere or “forest bathing”. So, grab a bar of bio-degradable Ivory soap, get out there, and hug a few trees! Being Valentine’s season, you may get a hug back!

❖ **Donna-Marie Fennell**

“In all things of nature, there is something of the marvelous” Aristotle 322 B.C.



I have been thinking about our first, great, PHS virtual members meeting and MJ's quiz questions.

One of the questions was -- What is the purpose of a flower? Well, most of us got that one right!

Flowers pop up, unfurl their petals and entice all manner of bees, insects and birds to come and gather their pollen and nectar, and in doing so, help move the pollen from the anther to a stigma so that pollination can occur and new seeds will form to carry on the species. But enough about sex!

Flowers through the ages have also brought people together to admire their beauty, scent and even their taste. We grow all kinds of them. We cherish old favourites and cross pollinate them to create new varieties to amaze all kinds of gardeners like us. Flowers bring us all together, milling and buzzing about, like bees, at meetings, garden shows and tours. We share our knowledge and experience like pollen. We exchange seeds and germinate ideas to inspire us. We create new friendships all along the way, as we cross paths with each other. Flowers offer so much more than a tryst in the garden ☺

◆ **Laura Jack**

“I'll have sprouts with that!”



February is the time that I start to really miss the garden. This year, I've wanted to supplement my salads without the added costs associated. I've been reading and learning about sprouting. Some of the ways I use sprouts is to add them to my salads, put them in my sammies, top my homemade soups as a fancy garnish, blend in my smoothies, or add to a salad dressing, and sometimes I'll even add them to dips and sauces.

Here is the easiest way I have found to pack a nutritious punch with very little effort. I have to say I love a big return on investment!

1. Find an empty glass jar, one that has a wide mouth is definitely easier to handle for rinsing, draining, and removing the sprouts.
2. Choose your seeds. I went to a local health food store and picked up broccoli sprouts as my first go. In the future I'm going to try pea, lentil, mung bean, alfalfa and radish.
3. I used ¼ cup of broccoli seeds and added them to my jar. I covered it with cheesecloth and used the ring to secure the cheesecloth. Rinse the seeds with water and then leave enough to cover them. Let them soak for about 12 hours.
4. Rinse your sprouts twice daily, and in three days the jar should be almost full of sprouts ready for harvest, depending on the seeds used.

Try to find a spot that doesn't have a lot of light, or just cut your cheesecloth super-long to cover the entire jar as the wee spouts don't like a lot of light.

Seriously, it's THAT easy. Happy sprouting!

❖ **Elane Kalavrias**

Garden Journaling

Before



After



"A gardener's best tool is the knowledge from previous seasons. And it can be recorded in a \$2 notebook." Andy Tomolonis

I'm a beginner so I learn things I might not if I become an expert. One idea could change my life or work in a heartbeat... I don't want to miss that. Learning has to stick: it's experience from gardeners like me and experts not like me sharing why to do this or stop doing that: it's about what works or doesn't. There are no scientifically researched or peer-reviewed papers in private gardens; just generations of gardeners with anecdotal family jottings of trials and tribulations; photos and scribbles, seasons of successes and important failures. Let's keep that ball rolling.

"Science moves forward because of statistically significant research. But it also moves forward because of observation and eureka moments". Mary Pipher (Called Citizen Science)

So I keep track. My garden notebooks are full of what I planted and where: where it came from, the cost and guarantees (if any) and what happened to it in my garden. It can be as simple as scribbles and jottings in a notebook or if you are technically inclined, a tablet or computer. I like the feel of paper and a nice pen. I see my handwriting - all wobbly when I am excited about something, or calm and upright like my school notebooks. Both make me laugh, conjuring up memories on cold winter afternoons when I can only dream of gardening.

Make sure you can read your writing... Don't be like Jane who scribbled "phone bill" on a scrap of paper. When she checked; her phone bill was paid... A few days later, Bill phoned to see why she hadn't called.

My journals are scuffed with a bit of dirt (my geologist daughter insists it is soil - but when I come in from the garden, my hands are dirty, not soil-y) ... some pages have rose petals and 4-leaf clovers or an unknown leaf to research.

My first journal is a lovely, leather-bound Italian thing of beauty... stuffed so full of tags, photos and pressed leaves that it's held together with ribbons. I also have a 3-ringed notebook with 'before and after' photos, awards, notes and plant tags —still grubby. Who'll remember what worked here or didn't there: the random dramas overcome after diggers leave or a cranky Black Walnut making my roses pout? And what about the costs? My journals remind me that mistakes are merely messages and serendipitous surprises are worth a note or three. We may think our gardens won't matter in the big scheme of worldly things, but if we keep track of our places in the world and share what we learn, we will make a difference.

We have solutions, lessons and challenges to share and overcome. And yes, laboratory science is essential but so is feedback from our gardens.

... we are the change makers, one garden at a time.

Keep tracking.

❖ **Cauleen Viscoff**

Marcescence. - Answer to a Mystery



These days many of us are walking through the woods and you may have noticed along the snowy trails that some of the trees have not shed their leaves yet. The bleached, withered leaves of the beech rustling in the breeze and the sturdier, crunchy brown leaves of the oak still linger on. Skiing along the trails of Kawartha Nordic, I have often wondered - WHY? Why do these leaves not shed with the rest?

Recently I've read about this winter retention of leaves in some deciduous trees. It's called **MARCESCENCE**. Scientists have a few theories. First, it happens with younger, smaller trees. The desiccated leaves are bitter and have low food value and may discourage browsers, while also hiding the tasty, nutritious new twig growth and buds beneath them. The dried leaves may also protect the young trees by trapping falling and wind-blown snow at the base, and also providing more moisture.

Another advantage to the young trees in not releasing their dried leaves until the spring is that these leaves will fall at the base of the tree. Decomposing into the soil at its root zone, brings nutrients to their smaller root systems at a time needed for spring growth. Something to notice and think about on your next wintry walk in the woods.

❖ **Pat de Villiers**



National Garden Bureau: "Year of the" Program

The [National Garden Bureau](https://nqb.org), a US-based garden marketing organization, recently announced the five plant classes that will be featured in the 2021 "Year of the" program.

- For the bulb crop, 2021 will be the Year of the **Hyacinth**.
- For annuals, 2021 will be the Year of the **Sunflower**.
- For edibles, 2021 will be the Year of the **Garden Bean**.
- For perennials, 2021 will be the Year of the **Monarda**.
- For flowering shrubs, 2021 will be the Year of the **Hardy Hibiscus**.

The "Year of the" program chooses crops specifically for the North American market that are easy to grow, genetically diverse, and with a lot of new breeding to showcase. You can view a lot of pictures from each class, as people have been encouraged to share theirs with the world. See them all at <https://nqb.org/year-of-plants-2021/>

***Images courtesy of The National Garden Bureau.*

Canada Blooms names Aurora Borealis Rose Plant of the Year



The Aurora Borealis has been named 2021 Plant of the Year by Canada Blooms, Canada's largest flower and garden festival. Named for the Northern Lights, this rose captures the bright dancing lights of the aurora in its dramatic, sunset pink blooming clusters. This rose is low-maintenance and grows to one metre tall with a one metre spread. It's also black spot resistant and winter hardy across Canada.

❖ **Mary-Jane Pilgrim**