

PETERBOROUGH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

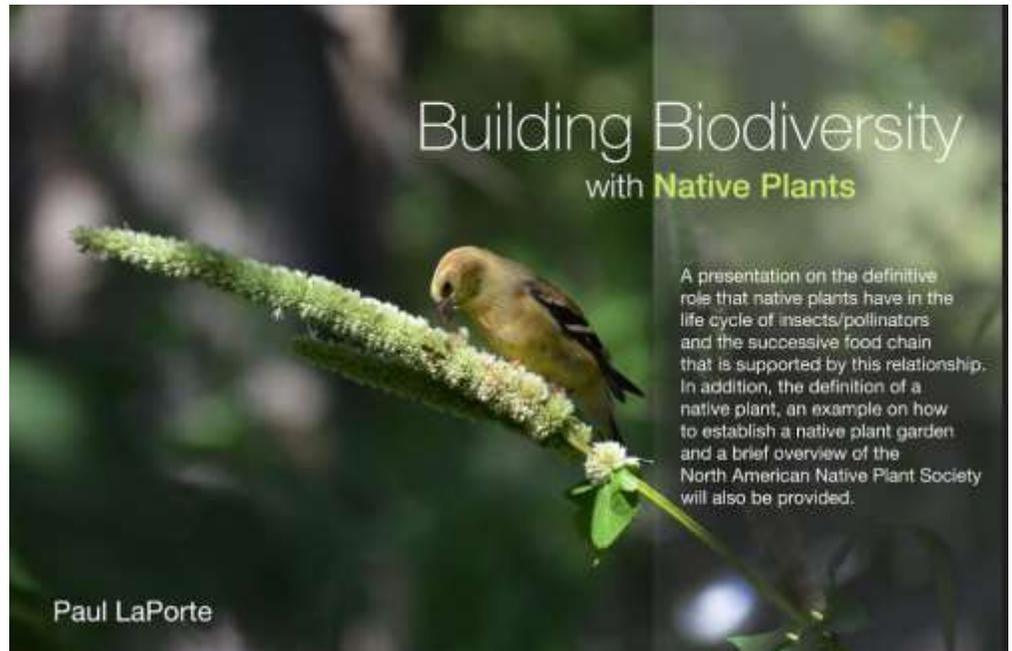
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Wednesday September 22, 7pm -- Zoom Virtual Meeting: Paul LaPorte: Building Biodiversity with Native Plants

Paul LaPorte is the owner of Ephemeral Ark Nursery (specializing in native woodland species) and consultant on ecological gardening and design. Living in the Greenbelt of the GTA, he has taken the opportunity to steward and study numerous native plant communities within multiple ecotypes and varied microclimates. Paul maintains a strong knowledge of Ontario native plant species and their communities and fosters them in his own gardens. He is the current chair of the Ontario Native Plant Growers Association, a past member of Kawartha Conservation's BlueScope Steering Committee, the past President of the North American Native Plant Society and the past Vice Chair of the Scugog Environmental Advisory Committee. He has had the pleasure of presenting for numerous organizations on the importance of native plants to our ecology.



NOTE: Paul has requested that we DO NOT RECORD this month's engagement as some of the material has propriety rights with agreed upon terms of use. We do hope that everyone can join us live that evening.

President's Message

It will likely not come as a surprise to anyone that although we'd hoped for in-person meetings this fall, it's not quite time yet. Sigh. Your board has decided that due to the delta variant and our health unit messaging around the spread of COVID-19, our general meetings for September, October and November will all be hosted online via ZOOM. Members will receive the Zoom link a few days prior to each event. Disappointing, but we hope that you're able to enjoy this newsletter as much as we've enjoyed putting it together for you "until we can meet again". Contributions to future newsletters are most welcome. Send us your pics. 😊



❖ MJ Pilgrim

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The Peterborough Garden Show, 2022

Version

More news of a similar nature to the above: We'd hoped for some sort of show in 2022, but it's extremely unlikely at this point. We're going to take the next year to determine what sort of show is possible in the future, given crowd capacities and venues. If you have ideas for us, we're all ears!



Composter Empty Yet?



Hopefully everyone has been composting their kitchen and garden waste over the summer in a composter that is positioned to get some sun during the day. If it still has some black gold in it, the fall is a good time to pull it out and spread what's left over your gardens. When doing your end of season clean up spread a little compost at the same time around your perennials to give them a boost in the spring to get off to a great start. Reboot your composter as well as you empty it.

Composting does not have to come to a full stop as the cold weather sets in. Save bags of the leaves that you will be raking up soon (not too soon I hope) and keep some pots dry of fading annuals in their dirt close to the composter. Once you have taken out what you can spread, start filling the composter back up with a thick layer of leaves and the green waste from your kitchen, another layer of leaves, the last grass cuttings and some dirt from your potted plants and another layer of leaves. You will want to use a lot of leaves and gently 'fluff' the pile as you add to it over the next few months before the freeze up.

The leaves add insulation as well as air space to provide oxidation to help with the decaying process of the kitchen scraps you will be adding. As it gets colder create a heap of leaves in the middle with a hole in the center to add the kitchen scraps all winter long. Try holding your green waste so you can add it in larger quantities all at once since high nitrogen amendments will help keep temperatures and microbe activity up. Keep adding leaves and dirt through the winter and into the spring as the temperature warms up. As the moisture increases your pile might get a bit soggy and a bit smelly, so be sure to keep one bag of leaves to add as you toss the pile as it thaws out. Your composter will be well on its way to providing you with another batch of finished compost to add to your gardens as you plant for another season. (Adapted from : www.planetnatural.com)

❖ **Laura Jack**

Fleming Park Cleanup Party!

Thursday Oct. 7, 9am – 11am.

Bring your tools and tarps as we begin to put the park to bed.

Rain date: Thursday Oct. 14, 9am-11am.

Join us! 😊

Ode to a Cover Crop

Last year was the first time I planted a cover crop in my raised vegetable beds. I try to garden organically and am always reading about the benefits of cover crops. Cover crops fight weeds and act as a 'green manure' by improving the nitrogen and potassium in the soil. Last Fall I decided I'd give it a shot.

This Spring, when that cover crop needed to be turned into the soil, I was somewhat regretful --- seemed like an extra bit of labour to add to an already long Spring To-Do list. I resolved no cover crop this Fall.

However, my vegetable gardens have never been so productive and my tomatoes have never been this huge (and never ending!). All my vegetables did incredibly well this year, notwithstanding the heat waves and droughts in these parts. Many variables could explain this year's success, but I think I have an overabundance of evidence (and tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, peas, zucchini etc.) to give planting a cover crop another go.

So, later this Fall, I'll prepare my beds by removing the last stalks of this year's crops and give the beds a final weeding. I'll then work about 2 inches of compost or manure into the top 6 inches of soil. I'll then spread winter rye seed, lightly rake it in and water it for a few days until it sprouts. Next Spring I'll turn the rye grass into the beds and let it decompose in the soil about a month before planting next year's vegetables. Voila!

❖ **Sandra Caswell**

Bringing in Your Tropicals for Their Annual Winter Spa Treatment

If your houseplants are on "vacation" on the back deck this summer, then at around this time you should think about getting them ready to move back inside for the winter.

You need to bring your plants indoors before night time temperatures dip below 7 or 8 degrees (C). Most tropical plants will suffer damage at temperatures below 5 degrees, a few even below 10 degrees.

Sudden changes in temperature, light, and humidity can be traumatic to plants, resulting in yellowed leaves, dieback, wilting, and even death. To prevent shock when you bring houseplants back indoors, expose plants gradually to reduced lighting.

Before moving day, inspect plants for insects and diseases, and treat as appropriate before bringing plants back inside. Spray them a couple of times over a 2 week period with a mild soap and water mix so that you don't bring bugs from outdoors in with your plants. Alternatively, soaking the pot in a tub of lukewarm soapy water for about 15 minutes will force insects out of the soil. Allow the plant and pot to dry completely afterwards. If snails, earthworms, or other insects burrowed in the soil, you might want to repot the plants, placing a piece of wire screening over the drainage hole to keep them out next year.



Personal anecdote: A couple of years ago, I brought a large cactus planter inside without inspections or the soaking method. The next day, we found a curious "deposit" left behind by some unknown critter on our kitchen floor and we kinda freaked out. We set live traps in the house and were on high alert for a chipmunk or squirrel or even something huge with big teeth that could drag us out of bed by the big toe. It was a little bit traumatic. A day or so later, my son found a large toad in the living room and we connected the dots. Turns out that toads leave very large deposits for their body size (Google it!) and closer inspection of the cactus planter showed an open hibernation hole. Whew!



Moral of the story? Check your plant pots for toads too!

❖ **MJ Pilgrim**

How to Store and Preserve Seeds

Whether you are trying to preserve vegetable or flower seeds the process is the same

1. Allow the plant seeds to mature and dry out
2. Label envelope with seed type and date
3. Place envelopes in glass jars with lids
4. Place a silicone gel pack or dry rice in the jars
5. Replace gel pack or rice every six months
6. Store seed in a cool and dry location in the refrigerator (never freeze seeds)
7. Take them out of fridge at least 3 hours before planting into prepared soil
8. Some seeds have a few years of viability if stored properly
9. HAPPY PLANTING NEXT SPRING !!!

❖ **Annie English**

Fleming Park

The great dedicated team at Fleming Park have been busy all summer keeping it in tip-top shape but **we need your help! On Thursday, October 7, we're hosting a garden cleanup party from 9am – 11am at the park. Bring your tools and tarps. Rain date same time, Thursday October 14.**

After the cleanup, we will all take a break when we put the Park "to sleep". Please join us in thanking the tremendous team of Fred Doris, Annie English, Susan Leask, Pat Lounsbury, and Lois Scott for another successful season.



Japanese Knotweed

This spring while wandering at the foot of London Street behind our property, I noticed an unusual plant growing that I had never seen before. I used a plant identification app on my phone to identify it and realized that it was Japanese Knotweed: a highly invasive and problematic plant that has caused such issues in the UK that mortgage lenders will ask for validation that the plant does not exist on a property before approving financing.



The plant has red/green stems with purplish flecks that are very reminiscent of bamboo. The leaves are heart shaped and sprout in an alternating zig-zag pattern along the stem. It flowers about this time of year (late summer/fall) with small white flowers in a feathery shape. The big problem with the plant is that it has a highly destructive root system that is very difficult to eradicate and has the ability to crack foundations and even grow through concrete.



When I identified this plant, I wasn't sure what to do. I contacted the Ontario Invasive Plant Council on Facebook and they recommended I report it on a tracking app, which I did, but nothing really happened after that. They were not very hopeful that reporting it to the city would have much effect, so I didn't do it at the time which I now regret.

As I was down that way again a few days ago, I decided to check in on this plant and it was quite a bit larger than it had been in the spring and was fully in flower. I decided to call the city to see what could be done. I am very pleased to report that I did reach an inspector in the Public Works department who verified my finding and to my delight said that the city would indeed take care of it before it spread too much further.

I guess the moral of the story is if you see this plant in your neighbourhood, it's worth making a call sooner rather than later!

❖ **Mary-Rose Daigle**

Curious Sunflower

This spring I bought a packet of mixed sunflower seeds. I planted 3 in a pot and waited, hoping to get a variety of plants. The seeds sprouted quickly and I soon planted them about the garden. Because of the rainy spring, my garden exploded with plants much taller than previous years. I forgot about the sunflowers. In August, I noticed what had to be one of my forgotten sunflowers. I watched daily in amazement as it quickly outgrew everything around it.

A friend had sent me a photo of her sunflower that towered over her with one giant flower at the top. I wondered if mine would be so tall.

As my plant continued to grow, I noticed that there were three buds at the top. I examined further to find that there were buds at the base of every leaf stem! This was not the plant I expected. By late August the sunflower had one bloom, so far, nodding at the top of my six-foot fence. However, I wasn't too happy to see that this flower, instead of facing my yard, was gazing over my neighbour's fence! Curious?

Never mind. I counted 24 buds on this plant so I am looking forward to seeing all of those sunflowers in bloom!

❖ **Shaun Pyper**

PHS Sunshine Committee

Just a quick reminder that the PHS does have a Sunshine Committee for any of our members that are sick, hospitalized or bereaved – but we often don't hear about them. If you know of any members that you'd like to see encouraged, please do let us know.

Membership 2021-2022

It may be the end of a growing season but we are just getting our year started of learning and growing together. We will be connecting you with great speakers for your enjoyment as well as gaining knowledge and awareness of the resources we have locally and surrounding us. Please consider renewing your membership now, which will give you access to all our speakers and informative newsletters until the end of 2022. Membership fees are still the same – a great deal at \$20 for single and \$25 for a family.

Instructions for online and print/mail renewal are at peterboroughhort.com/about-the-society

Join us for over a year of fun and promoting the sharing of information on horticultural best practices, protecting our environment, planting, growing and beautification of our communities!

❖ **Laura Jack**



Free Organic, No-Till Vegetable Gardening eCourse on YouTube.com via localharvest

Learn the essentials of vegetable gardening with a special focus on composting, succession planting and winter gardening.

<https://localharvestgardening.com/>

New members Ed and Carole Shephard passed this information along – thanks, Ed and Carole!

PETERBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Notice of Public Lecture

A Real-Time Virtual Meeting

This fall's PHS monthly meetings and speaker series will remain virtual but will be conducted on Zoom in real time with a question-and-answer period following the speaker's presentation. Attendees will be provided with the link to join meetings when they **register** by email as instructed below.

“Rediscovering Hutchison House Herbal Garden”

Kelly McDowell

Kelly McDowell is a healing arts practitioner who is preparing to qualify as a registered Clinical Herbalist. In the process she is rediscovering and deepening her passion for plant medicines as allies for spiritual and physical healing. As a volunteer working with the herb gardens at Hutchison House, Kelly will lead us on a virtual tour of the garden and share her knowledge of the healing properties of herbs and the context for the emergence of herbal medicine. Question and answer period follows.



Kelly McDowell in Hutchison House Herb Garden

Tuesday, 21 September 2021, 7:30 p.m. on Zoom. Register to attend by sending an email note to info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca with “herb garden” in the subject line.

