

PETERBOROUGH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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Wednesday March 23, 2022: Virtual Meeting, 7pm

Joyce Hostyn, Zoom: “Wildscaping”



Joyce Hostyn from Kingston, ON, is a rewilder who dreams of city streets lined with fruit and nut trees, wild parks and wild yards. Raised on a farm where her family grew, foraged and preserved enough produce to last the year, Joyce is now exploring what it means to be in conversation with the edible forest garden on her lawn-free quarter acre lot (featured in the Kingston Whig Standard). A Master Gardener and Permaculture Designer, Joyce coaches people on foodscaping and wildscaping as a new approach to gardening in a changing climate. She helped design and plant Kingston’s first two public food forests and is co-founder of Little Forests Kingston.

Master Gardener Joyce Hostyn walks through her wild forest yard on Kingston’s west end. Meghan Balogh/The Whig-Standard/Postmedia Network

This talk: Wildscaping--a new approach to gardening in a changing climate: With climate change, our perspective on what a garden should be and what we like to grow in it has to change. Our weather is becoming more variable with wetter springs, drier summers, colder winters and more extreme storms. Learn how to adapt your gardening style for a changing climate, drawing inspiration from our local landscapes and indigenous flora to create naturalistic and sustainable gardens.

President’s Message:

In the coming weeks, bouquets of tulips and daffodils will be available at our local flower shops and grocery stores. Forced pots of bulb flowers just about ready to view the sunlight will be everywhere as the days inch forward to that most blessed of seasons, Spring.

To me, the message in those pick-me-ups is that "there is light at the end of the tunnel, spring is coming, hang in there". After 2 difficult years, we all need to hear that message.



It's another odd spring, though, without the Peterborough Garden Show and the friendships that were forged and grew there. We accomplished great things together for so many years and our

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community was the beneficiary in terms of grants and scholarships. We're hopeful that in a future year (2023?) another show will be possible. Hang onto that thought!

Until then, we have lots to look forward to -- the continued lengthening of days, a reduction in the white things falling from the sky, increasing temperatures and more/stronger sunlight. Once April hits, we'll start to see natural bulbs pop out of the ground, and from there all of the amazing ephemerals will appear and what an amazing time of year that is.

For the PHS, our March general meeting will be held virtually on Zoom, but we're hoping for an in-person event as early as April or May if it's allowed and if it's as safe as possible for our members.

Hang in there -- we're all in this together.

❖ MJ Pilgrim

Tips For African Violets:



1. Start with a healthy plant, and of course a bloom colour that you will really like.
2. Give your violets the right amount of light: the number 1 reason why your violets might not be blooming is because they may not have sufficient light. You want bright light, but only indirect as direct light will burn their sensitive leaves. A north or east facing window would be best. You also want to make sure you are rotating your violets once a week to ensure even growth, and make sure you keep them away from the cold of a window.
3. Keep them warm; violets like temperatures like humans do: during the day anywhere from 75-85 degrees, and 65-70 degrees at night.
4. Water from underneath, never from above as the water could burn the leaves, rot them and make them unsightly. Put some water in their saucer and let them drink it up for about an hour, then pour it out. Make sure that they really dry out in between watering.
5. Fertilize regularly with an African violet specific fertilizer. You only need to fertilize between spring to fall, so if you have African violets, now is a great time to get them fed.
6. Only repot when necessary. African violets like to be a bit root bound, however, there is a fine line between being overly root bound to bloom or the point they are becoming unhealthy. The general rule of thumb is you want your pot about 1/3 the diameter of the leaf spread. For example, if your leaf spread is 12" you want it in a pot that is approximately 4" in diameter. You should repot about once a year but remember regular potting soil can be a bit too dense, so use an African violet mix that is light and airy.

Enjoy and wait for the rewards!

❖ Elane Kalavrias

It's Not Too Late to Start Seeds Indoors



There's still plenty of time to get seeds started indoors before planting outdoors in later May or early June. The internet abounds with 'how to' basics: coming up with creative planting vessels (everything from cups shaped from newspaper to shelled-out orange rinds); which planting medium to use (there's many seed starting mixes to choose from or make your own), and location (sunniest warm spot in the house like a south facing window or under grow lights).

In case you missed our February speaker, Anna Leggatt and her "Starting Seeds" seminar, here's a few of my tips & tricks for indoor seeding success:

- **Feeding** - once the first true leaves emerge, seedlings need to be fed. There's lots of high phosphorous seedling fertilizers to choose from or make your own. I have some fish and kelp emulsions leftover from last season that I'm planning to use in a batch of homemade fertilizer (1 tbsp fish & 1 tbsp kelp emulsion to 3.5L water). I fertilize in small amounts weekly. This avoids over-doing it and burning the delicate seedlings or producing jumbo plants but lousy fruits/blooms.
- **Encouraging growth in all directions** - once they emerge, seedlings will reach for the sun. This can cause them to become 'leggy' and weak - think of the floppy balloon guy in front of used car lots! To avoid this, turn the tray or pot around every few days, giving each side a chance to soak up those rays. It's also wise to pinch back: wait for several sets of true leaves to appear and then pinch back a full set of leaves down to a few millimeters above the next set of leaves. This will send new stems shooting outward. Repeating this once the new stems have produced a few sets of leaves will create bushier plants.
- **Pot size** - Plants in pellets or small containers, like egg cartons, will likely need to be repotted into something the size of a small Timmy's coffee cup before they're ready to plant outdoors. You'll know it's time to pot up if plants are crowding each other out, or if a plant's roots have started circling the pellet (pop it out with a butter knife to get a look at the roots).
- **Timing** - the early worm doesn't get the worm in the case of early seeding. The tiny plants will become leggy or need to be re-potted too many times, which most plants don't really like. Plant your seeds according to the seed package instructions, particularly when it comes to timing.

Did you know: the first 'leaves' you'll see aren't leaves at all. They are "cotyledons", or seed leaves. They contain all the nutrients the seedling needs to get it going. The second set of leaves you see are the first 'true' leaves.

◆ **Sandra Caswell**

March is Maple Syrup Time!

As the weather warms up and the whiff of spring is in the air, my first thoughts turn not to flowers but to the sap rising through the majestic sugar maple. Our family has been fortunate to have access to a large stand of sugar maple at my brother's cottage, so for many years we dragged the kids up north with pails and buckets to collect the precious sap and boil, boil, boil for many hours to make our own tiny taste of heaven.

As many will know, it takes approximately 40 Litres of sap to produce 1 Litre of syrup, so the process is not a fast one. You also need to get just the right recipe of sunny above zero days (+5C) with cold just below zero nights (-5C) to get the sap flowing. On a good day with the right tree, a

single tap can produce anywhere from 3-15 litres of sap/day according to the internet, but our experience is probably on the lower side of that number. We typically tap about a dozen trees and produce only a few litres of syrup, but the process is a fun one if for no other reason than to finally have an excuse to be outside enjoying nature.

We tend to boil over a wood fire, so our syrup always ends up with a bit of a smoky flavour compared to the commercially produced stuff, but we enjoy it nonetheless. It's special to us because we made it ourselves! Of course, my husband always says that with the gas getting to the cottage, the firewood and the beverages consumed waiting for the sap to boil, the syrup ends up costing about \$50/L but we still do it anyway.... It's way more fun than buying it at Costco!

❖ **Mary-Rose Daigle**



Don't Wish Away the Snow!!



Snow is one of the best insulating materials in nature. It has an R value similar to wood chips (R 1) or straw bales.

The secret of snow is its molecular structure. When water freezes into ice crystals, a lot of air is trapped in its lattice structure. Tiny pockets of trapped air are always good for insulation. Snow that's been on the ground a long time has much of the air squeezed out of it, while it's still a decent insulator, it's not as good as fresh snow.

Snow is also good at regulating its own temperature. When the air temperature goes above freezing, the ice crystals start pulling in heat from the surrounding area. The crystals store a lot of heat before they break down and start to melt. This means that anything under snow is warmer than the outside temperature. For example, in Goose Bay, Labrador, the mean January temperature is -16.4 C but under the snow at soil level, the temperature is only -2.1C.

So maybe we should wish for more snow this time of year to guarantee that our perennials don't die off in a random hard frost!

❖ **Shaun Pyper**

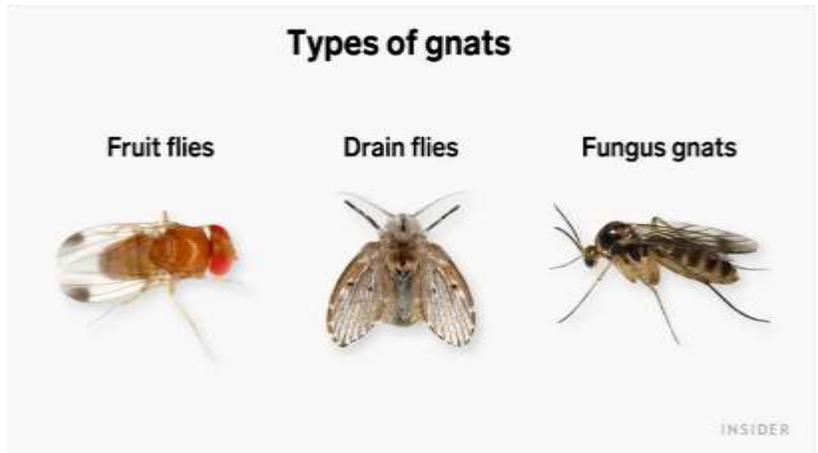
Benefits of Hydrogen Peroxide: Battle of the Soil Gnats, Part 2!

Hydrogen Peroxide (H₂O₂) is actually chemically similar to water (H₂O) so it is one of the safest chemicals you can use to deal with a wide range of garden and plant problems and pests.

Hydrogen Peroxide is unlike water in that it has an extra oxygen molecule which helps to kill things like mold, root rot, bacteria, fungus in your soil and soil gnats -- Hooray!

If you mix 1 part of 3% Hydrogen Peroxide (HP) with 3 parts of water you can use it for weekly watering for plants that may be struggling with fungal growth in the soil or root rot or gnat's eggs. The extra oxygen molecule also boosts a plant's ability to absorb nutrients from the soil.

Using distilled water will make your HP solution more effective since trace minerals in tap water may interfere with HP concentration and weaken it. If you use regular water, it is best to use it right away after mixing up your solution.



An HP and water solution of 1 teaspoon 3% HP mixed with 1 cup water can also be sprayed on foliage to get rid of pests like aphids and other parasites without harming beneficial insects.

It is also often used as a seed sprouting soak as well to kill any pathogens on the seed, then rinsed with water, planted, and then watered using the rinsed water solution to give them a boost and help them germinate quickly.

A 3% HP is the lowest concentration available and safest to use for plants and gardens and remember it still needs to be diluted with water. Handle carefully and be sure to not splash it into your eyes. Keep in dark container with a tight lid, away from light and heat. Sources: <https://www.plantssparkjoy.com> and www.plantcaretoday.com

◆ Laura Jack



Membership has its Privileges

Are you getting the zoom link for our monthly meetings?

If not, remember to "Renew for 22"!

We welcome New Members too!

Here we are again, joining together for another year of learning and growing together in the **Year of the Garden!** Our membership fees are still a great deal \$20 for single and \$25 for a family. Your membership will give you access for 2022 to our fun and informative newsletter and guest speakers on zoom (many of which are recorded for future reviewing). We will also be contacting local retailers for special discounts again this year.

Instructions for online and print/mail renewals are at:

peterboroughort.com/about-the-society

Four Easy and Effective Homemade Garden Repellents:



Hi everyone. If you are like me, we can't wait to be back in our gardens. A few "other pests and critters like your garden as well". In the past several years I have used the following four recipes and they work!! So, I thought this is the perfect time to share them with you.

DEER REPELLENT

3 tbsp. Hot Sauce

3 raw eggs

3 tbsp. minced garlic

½ cup water

1 tsp. Liquid Dish soap...mix and drop by a spoon around Hostas and you can drop directly on the leaves ...this works...and ask your hairdresser for human hair and spread around your plants also. I do this all the time as I have deer enter my yard.

BUG SPRAY FOR PLANTS

1 garlic bulb

1 tsp. Hot Sauce

1 tsp. Liquid Dish soap

1 cup water...mince the garlic and place in blender with hot sauce and water. Refrigerate overnight. In morning add dish soap. It again can be dropped on those little bugs if spray bottle not effective.

SKUNK SPRAY

4 cups Hydrogen Peroxide

¼ cup Baking Soda

1 tbsp. Liquid dish soap

TICK SPRAY

1 cup water

10 drops of Rose Geranium Oil

2-3 drops of Lavender oil

5 drops of Cedarwood oil

2-3 drops of Lemongrass oil...we double the recipe and spray on your pantlegs and safe to spray on your dogs...I have used this for several years...purchase good essential oils at your favourite Health Food Store.

❖ **Annie English**

Peter Keeping's Clematis List

Member [Peter Keeping](#) has supplied his [latest Clematis List](#). If you have questions about the list, please contact Peter directly via the contact information at the top of the sheet.

Hot off the press!

A new common name was announced this week for the LDD moth (*Lymantria dispar dispar*).

This is the moth that wreaked havoc nearby in the Buckhorn, Young's Point and Stoney Lake areas among others last summer. It is extremely invasive and is most familiar in its voracious, leaf-eating caterpillar stage. The moth will now be known as **"spongy moth."**

Formerly referred to as "gypsy moth," the hairy caterpillar with pairs of red and blue spots down its back was big news in 2021 when a population explosion in Eastern Ontario caused massive leaf loss in both deciduous and coniferous trees in infested areas. The old name was removed because it contained a derogatory term for Romani people.

The name spongy moth - derived from the common name used in France and French-speaking Canada, "spongieuse" - refers to the moth's egg mass, which has the color and texture of a sea sponge.



Please check your trees before spring arrives for the spongy egg masses and throw them into a bucket of soapy water for 48 hours. This is an ideal time to eradicate these eggs before they start hatching in April.

❖ MJ Pilgrim

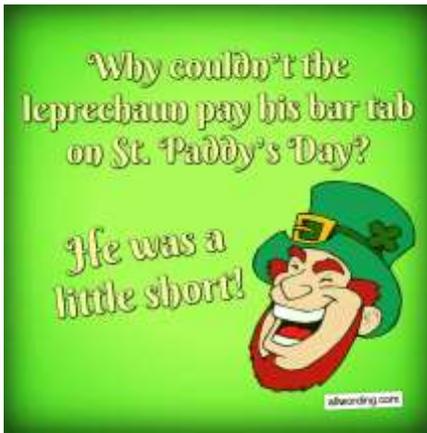
Bus Trip to Whistling Gardens

This is just a reminder of our planned bus trip to Whistling Gardens south of Brantford on **Monday June 6th**. With the Covid situation looking promising and everyone starving to resume missed excursions, our list of interested people is filling up. If you are interested but have not yet sent in your name, please do so soon to avoid disappointment. Contact patdevilliers@hotmail.com.

No deposit will be required until closer to the date of the trip.



Some St. Paddy's Day Gardening (?) humour!



....and finally.....



◆ Donna-Marie Fennell

