



Cross Pollination

April 2010

Coordinator's Corner

Spring has Sprung



For the first time ever, I was in the garden early this year. The tree buds were swelling with the promise of a bounty of flowers and new life. My snowdrops and early crocuses were up and the tulips were just peaking through. I have already noted where I need to fill in the gaps with spring bulbs next year. My spinach and parsley seeds are at the ready, while I wait for a break in the rain to set them in the cool soil. I have already cut down my grasses and cleared out the stalks from some of my perennial gardens. My spring enthusiasm may have caused a bit of damage to my lawn as I ignored the usual wisdom of “not walking on the grass if you leave depressions in it as you step”, but it was too warm and sunny to stay inside. What a pleasure it is to have a true spring with this gradual warming rather than the too often furnace to air conditioner weather of recent memory.

We're at the Post!

Thanks to Patty's efforts, the Burlington Post has agreed to include garden articles from our group in their paper. What a great way to get our message out to the public! Keep a sharp eye out for new ideas and make notes about your gardening insights. I hope that everyone will take a turn at contributing to this wonderful new initiative. If you need inspiration, why not visit Patty's garden blog at www.gardeningpomona.blogspot.com/.



We're Worldwide!

Something other than plants is also sprouting up this spring. Joyce and I went to Grimsby last week to participate in the website training offered by Linda Hugli of MGOI. We had a wonderful afternoon learning how to upload files and populate the pages of our new Halton Region Master Gardener subdomain. Why on earth would we want a website? you might ask. More and more, people are looking to the Internet first to find information. *(continued on next page)*

Claudette Sims

Coordinator's Corner

Continued from page 1



Our website will let the public know who we are, what we do and when we do it. We can post the times of our information clinics, our gardening advice and information about our meetings. At the next advice clinic or inquiry that you receive from the public, you can indeed say that yes, we have a website. Go to www.haltonmastergardeners.mgoi.ca and check it out for yourself!



Mighty oaks from little acorns grow

The above saying came to mind when our Technical Update committee met on March 24th. Maureen, Patty, Larry, Lorne and I were thrilled with the ease with which our committee tackled all the important questions of where, when and how our own Halton Technical update will proceed. That Halton MG website may come in very handy to advertise our TU. The committee has indeed planted an acorn and now it is up to our group to help it grow into an oak!



Claudette Sims

Mark Your Calendar



- **RBG garden show** April 23, 24, 25
- **Members Mulch Day** Saturday, April 24; 8 a.m. to noon
- **Tulip Celebration** Saturdays and Sundays, May 1, 2, 8, 9, 15 and 16; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Rock Garden
- **RBG Auxiliary Plant Sale** Thursday, May 6 and Saturday, May 8, Arboretum
- **Lilac Celebration** Saturdays and Sundays, May 22, 23, 24, 29 and 30; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Arboretum/Lilac Dell
- **Aldershot Escarpment Garden Open House** Sunday, May 30; 3 to 5 p.m.; RBG Centre
- **Iris and Peony Celebration** Saturdays and Sundays, June 5, 6, 12 and 13; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Laking Garden.
- **Grand Durand Garden Tour** Saturday, June 12th 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
www.durandna.com or 905.527.6820
- **Summer Workshop**, July 17th and 18th, 2010 at the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens and School of Horticulture



Halton Region Master Gardeners Meetings



- May 5th
- June 2nd
- September 1st

Monastic Gardens: a very short history

By Patty King

Some of the earliest gardens were found in monasteries all throughout Europe. The monastic gardens served many purposes. Food for the table, flowers for the altar and herbs for the sick were all grown within the walled grounds of the monastery. Most importantly, from an historic view, was that these gardens along with the techniques of gardening were preserved for the future. The medieval period ranged from approximately 500 -1500 AD. It was a time when kings were fighting wars against other rival kings and a time of crusades. Without the monastic gardens the art of gardening would certainly have been lost to ruin and neglect.

Most monastic gardens were laid out following the lines of the Roman villa. It formed an atrium and *peristyle*, surrounded by a colonnade. This enclosed area was renamed the cloister. These were sanctuaries where the good and wicked could flee and be safe. There were beds of flowers and herbs and in the center the fountain. In time the simple courtyards grew into extensive buildings and enclosures. Then the area would be divided into four areas; the physic garden, a cloister *garth*, a vegetable garden and an orchard. The *herbularis* or physic garden grew sage, rue, southernwood, poppy, pennyroyal, mint and parsley, gladioli and marigolds. Apples, pears and cherries were grown in the orchard for eating, and grapes for wine. In warmer climes the fig tree reigned supreme. The most revered flowers were the rose, lily and violet.

The crusades brought a mania for travel and pilgrimages. Those returning from their travels brought home strange plants from other countries such as Damask and Provence roses, oleanders and pomegranates. Monks played a part in the distribution of plants. They carried with them much plant and horticultural information while traveling between shrines and while on pilgrimages.



Reconstruction of a Roman *peristylum* (peristyle) and *peristylum* (courtyard) at Pompeii.



In a medieval monastic complex, the *garth* was often situated to the south side of the church, providing a sunny protected area.

An Incrediball Bloomerang of New Plants!

By Sharon Paradis

A couple of new plants to look forward to this spring are:

Incrediball Hydrangea (*Hydrangea Arborescens* 'Abetwo')

This adaptable plant produces huge white flowers (as much as 12 inches across). It is very cold hardy and blooms on new growth, so even very cold winters won't keep it from blooming. The flowers are upright on very sturdy stems, so they don't flop like the "Annabelle". Prune back in late winter/early spring to encourage strong new growth and flowering. It makes a good cut flower, and is a low maintenance plant. The height is 48" to 60" tall, with a mounding habit. It is hardy in zones 3 to 9. It can be planted in sun or partial shade. The flower colour is not affected by soil pH. The plant grows best in moist, well-drained soil, but adapts to most sites.



Bloomerang Lilac (*Syringa* x 'Pendra')



Bloomerang is a new kind of lilac. It blooms in late spring. The plant goes through a rest period in the heat of summer, then flowers from mid-summer to frost. It is a compact mounded variety that is good as a foundation plant or as part of the mixed border. It can also be included in a perennial bed. The plant has very fragrant lavender flowers that are good for cutting and also attract butterflies. It is hardy to zone 4. It grows 4' to 5' tall and has a spread of 6 ½ feet. Remove spent blooms promptly to encourage reblooming.

Prune to shape after blooming. This variety had good powdery mildew resistance and is also resistant to the root rots that can be a problem for lilacs.

I am looking forward to seeing how these plants perform!

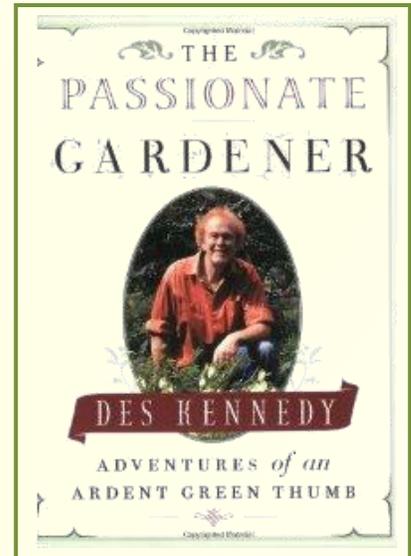
The Passionate Gardener: Adventures of an Ardent Green Thumb

Des Kennedy

Review by Maureen Millar

Rating *****

This book is one of the favourites on my bookshelf. It is a small book and fairly expensive but well worth the price. The book cover describes it as 'an irreverent exploration of the fierce attachment so many people develop to gardening'. This book is all that and more. It's a great read anytime but after reading it for the third time this winter, it left me somewhere between longing for the spring to get out and get going, to OMG, just thinking about all the work ahead makes me want to hibernate!



The author describes himself, depending on the audience, as a writer who gardens or a gardener who writes. His garden is in the Gulf Islands of northern B.C. and he describes in great detail his own experiences in this fairly remote area. He writes with great humour and obviously doesn't take himself too seriously. He makes even the devastation of his garden from a winter storm entertaining and at the same time, heartbreaking. His descriptions of the various seasons and plant life make you feel as if you are there looking at the same things and feeling the same joys. He has some terrific theories on why we do what we do and why we as gardeners are the way we are. There are great laughs in the chapters about the Chaos Theory, The Seven Deadly Sins and the Ten Commandments (actually, there are eleven commandments if you count his own 'Thou shalt not stop' gardening). He takes natural/organic gardening to new levels with the great urine-as-nitrogen experiment in his rhubarb patch and declares it to be the miracle that would rival any from Lourdes or Fatima.

I think you will find this book to be entertaining and inspiring.

Like the man says... 'The luckiest among us drift into old age within the garden'.



There is always a lot to be thankful for, if you take the time to look. For example, I'm sitting here thinking how nice it is that wrinkles don't hurt. ~Author Unknown