



Cross Pollination

May 2011

Coordinator's Corner

Update on our Update

On Wednesday, April 20th our Technical Update Committee met at the RBG to discuss details regarding our Halton Region Master Gardener Technical Update on September 17th. We started at 6:30 p.m. and the group insisted on staying until we had gotten through the entire agenda! So after 2 hours and some very creative ideas and constructive discussion, we now have crucial details of the update worked out such as timelines, a schedule, organizational framework and topics for our afternoon tours. A new webpage has been created and preliminary information has been posted there. I have pasted a copy for you below but please check our website at haltonmastergardeners.mgoi.ca/Technical_Update.php for ongoing updates.

Thanks to Christine, Jane, Larry, Lorne and Maureen for giving so generously of their time to make this event a success.

Don't forget that we are counting on all members to solicit donations for our raffle table and gift bags!

Halton Master Gardeners

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Technical Update



Master Gardeners are invited to the

Halton Region Master Gardeners Technical Update

All Things are Connected

Saturday, September 17th, 2011

**Royal Botanical Gardens Auditorium
680 Plains Road West, Burlington**

"This we know. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the Earth befalls the sons of the Earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself."

This quote, penned by a screenwriter, but attributed to Chief Seattle over a hundred years ago, still rings true today. Join us to celebrate the International Year of Forests and to explore our connections with the Earth in a day of thoughtful presentations and discussions.

More information coming soon...

Claudette Sims

Canada Blooms - and a little spark of Hope

By Donna Parker

Ah--Canada Blooms!

Our annual rite of spring seems to be getting a little tired, a little too predictable and commercial. The once spectacular gardens, sponsored by major corporations, have been reduced to mediocre shrines for stone walkways and retaining walls. Garden retail has taken over horticulture!

I had promised myself that I wouldn't venture there again. Too much transportation hassle for so little return BUT an e-mail from the new convenor for MG speakers and clinics sparked my interest. A "Sunday Sitdown" opportunity was presented. Members of the public could have 15 minutes (or more if it wasn't busy) to sit down with a Master Gardener and have a gardening problem or questions discussed. This intrigued me.

About six of us answered the call and were each set up at large round table with chairs. We were encouraged to bring whatever resources we felt might be useful. I had no idea about how well the event had been publicized but to my amazement people came! Some came with printed photos of their properties and others brought photos on their Smart Phones. Still others brought diagrams and magazines. By and large, for 3 hours, we were all busy.

What an unexpected pleasure the experience was! Many people were heard to exclaim as they left, "That was worth the price of admission!". For me it was one of the most satisfying experiences I've had as a Master Gardener. There was a focus to the conversations; there was time to really listen, time to draw sketches of ideas and time to have in-depth interaction. One very well presented woman, in business attire, had me almost stumped with her request until I realized she wanted me to recommend a range of artificial plants for her townhouse back yard. Now that's easy-care gardening!

Economic necessity dictates that Canada Blooms

Will change and may become a partner with the Home Show. Will horticulture become totally engulfed by decor and furniture? Master Gardeners have an opportunity to lead the way in strengthening the connection with the gardening public. Perhaps the "Sunday Sitdown" format offers a ray of hope in helping Canada Blooms to revitalize this connection with the public in a very meaningful, fully horticultural way.

Roberta's Tip of the Month

New tips concerning lifting of *Galanthus* (snowdrops)

Gardeners have traditionally assumed that lifting and planting snowdrops "in the green" is the best method. This is now refuted as being at odds with the plant's natural life cycle. In late summer the snowdrops restart their root growth when the soil moistens up. Lifting the bulbs "in the green" causes damage to the root system, weakening the plant and preventing after- flowering recovery. It is best to wait until dormancy.

From Royal Horticultural Society "The Garden" January 2011

I found this helpful as I was tempted to buy some snowdrops (in the green) outside a local shop on the weekend. However this information helped me avoid the disappointment of no flowers next year or weakened plants

Roberta

Lettuce Rejoice!

On March 14th, I attended the Stoney Creek Garden Club meeting and really enjoyed James Graham's no fuss garden presentation. I was thrilled to have "won" the large plastic bottle water cooler bottle and lettuce seeds. "Plant the seeds now and have lettuce in 4 weeks!" That's what James said, but I was leaving for Hawaii in 4 days so I had to plant up my bottle with much haste and little fuss. My husband obliged me by cutting the bottle in half. I soon discovered that the top half actually sat quite nicely inside the bottom of the bottle, so 2 short bits of strong tape were all that were needed to keep the top from being blown off by the wind.

I started the planting with some crumbled up newspaper to put in the bottom. This is really meant to keep any soil from going out the drainage holes in a pot, but I still thought it would make a nice base for my bottle. Then I checked the kitchen compost.



It was full of banana skins, tea bags, coffee grounds and filters and peanut shells from my husband's evening snacks. I threw the lot in! All that was needed was a bit of "fancy" soil on the top to make things look neat. Well, I discovered that I didn't have any "fancy" soil, so I made do with some clayish garden soil from the back garden. I scattered the tiny lettuce seeds over my soil and watered. The clay seemed to be holding an awful lot of water, but I was determined to make this a no fuss garden



so I just taped the bottle shut and placed it out on the back patio. We left for Hawaii the next morning! I wondered how my bottle was doing when I heard about the snowstorm that closed schools in mid-March.

We returned home on April 9th and I checked my lettuce garden the next day. Lo and behold, there

were my tiny lettuce plants growing. The only thing that it needed was a good watering which was easily accomplished by pouring water in the top. I probably won't have lettuce in 4 weeks, but then again I don't think we were counting on a major snowstorm in that time. The bottle sheltered the lettuce from the snow and wind and created a mini-greenhouse effect. What a great idea!



RBG & Garden Events

RBG

- May 5th 9:00 –12:30 p.m. **Auxiliary Plant Sale**
- May 7th, 8th, 14th, 15th **Tulip Festival**
- May 21, 22, 23, 28, 29 **Lilac Festival**
- June 18, 19, July 2, 3 **Rose Festival**

- **Plant for Life Sale** (in support of the Carpenter Hospice in Burlington) Saturday June 11 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Sunday June 12 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Rain or Shine 911 Cloverleaf Drive, Burlington

- **Open Gardens Toronto** Individual gardens open from April to August; entrance fee of \$4 for one garden or \$25 for a passport to all gardens; proceeds go to groups working to change the lives of girls and women. To see schedule and more details viewithere.com/opengardens/gardenbydate.html

Garden Websites & Blogs

- Yvonne Cunnington
www.countrygardenerblog.com/

www.flower-gardening-made-easy.com/index.html
- Marjorie Harris marjorieharris.com/
- Lene Rasmussen
salix-willows.blogspot.com/

Workshops & Technical Updates

- **M.G.O.I. Summer Workshops** at Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens and School of Horticulture Saturday, July 16th and Sunday, July 17th www.mgoi.ca for details
- **Halton Region MG Technical Update, *All Things are Connected***, September 17th , 2011
- **International MG Conference: *Color it Green in a Wild and Wonderful Way*** October 11th -14th, 2011 Charleston, WV <http://imgc.ext.wvu.edu/>



Halton Master Gardener Meetings

- May 4th Frank Kershaw
- June 1st TBA

Check our website for details of future meetings at

www.haltonmastergardeners.mgoi.ca/Meetings.php