



Cross Pollination

September 2010

Coordinator's Corner

It's hard to believe that it's time to start our meetings over again. This summer seems to have had it all-a gentle beginning, then rain and more rain, followed by extreme humidity and heat, topped off with 2 dry weeks that have left brown lawns and wilted gardens. The more recent rain and cooler temperatures are an opportunity to get back out in the garden and give it a sprucing up before fall sets in.

Many thank you's to Lorne and his wonderful wife Elaine who graciously hosted our annual BBQ. Despite the wet weather, everyone enjoyed both the great food and the opportunity to visit Lorne and Elaine's gorgeous garden. We even had an informal tutorial on how to make a lavender wand ! Halton Master Gardeners just never stop wanting to learn!



Bob, Claudette, Lorne, Jim & Elaine



Making lavender wands



June Streadwick, Zone 5 Director joins us



The finished product!

Photos by Barry Catley

SUMMER WORKSHOP

NIAGARA PARKS SCHOOL OF HORTICULTURE

I spent July 17/18 weekend walking, sitting, standing, looking, listening and learning about pruning trees and perennials at the Niagara Parks School and of course, enjoying the food, provided by the excellent School's chefs.

Although I had reservations about spending a day on pruning, I was excited about exploring perennials which are a major part of my garden. However, contrary to my expectations I was more than surprised by the subject of pruning "young shade trees".

Darrell Bley, curator of Woody Plants, was our instructor and he started with the basics. This meant the important plant chemicals that give life to the trees and affect their growth. These are: IAA (indole acetic acid), Gibberellic acid and Cytokinins.

Of course this is now obvious (thanks to the course) and it also gives clues to changes that need to be made through pruning to facilitate healthy development or to identify problems which hinder growth.

He gave us 6 pruning objectives:

1. Develop a strong central leader by heading back the competitive leaders to keep the tree *excurrent*. Some trees are naturally *excurrent* and others *decurent* (eg crab tree)
2. Develop energy and vigor for fast growth achieved by:
 - leaving on as many leaves as possible for photosynthesis
 - by not removing too many branches which store energy

- by focusing the growth on the upper third of the tree
3. Push a healthy root system by:
 - leaving on as many buds as possible which will produce lots of IAA and Gibberellic acid which will signal the roots to grow strongly
 - Planting at proper height (not at ground level) and mulching up to set roots.
 4. Develop strong trunk taper by:
 - leaving on as many small branches and leaves on the trunk for the first few years
 - not staking the tree
 5. Remove broken and rubbing limbs achieved by selective pruning
 6. Develop a good scaffold for the permanent branches. Then he gave us scaffolding rules for how the branches should be organized around the trunk, regulations for street trees.

We trudged around dozens of trees, analyzing what was a good structure and where problems now exist particularly in older trees that could have been rectified in the past through timely pruning. We had a pruning demonstration including the students' hands-on.

Note: Darrell is a delightful and engaging teacher whom I would recommend for talks or workshops. As

previously mentioned I was not particularly interested in the topic but now I look around at trees and their growth and had a field day when the boulevard trees were being pruned along our street the following week. They did a good job!!!

For the second day of the workshop Lorne Fast, Curator of Collections and Taxonomist was our instructor. We started with a 14-page handout "Knowing your way around the perennial border". There were 6 specimens per page with columns for scientific name, common name, requirement for sun/shade, moisture, drainage, organic, pH and method of propagation. With this in hand we walked and walked and viewed nearly every one of the 84 plants, assessing their needs per the grid. It was fascinating and my only frustration is that I need an estate to plant all my favorites. The walk-about were interspersed with inside talks with overheads illustrating even more plants. I think I was more than relieved when

the upper 80F weather suddenly turned stormy and lightening threatened so we all had to come inside for safety reasons.

Lorne is also the school's taxonomist and a computer whiz. He has nearly completed mapping all the plants in the school and has identified all the planting beds. If you want to know where a particular collection or tree or perennial is located, you can find where it is planted on the website. I obviously need to do some clerical organizing of my little garden so I remember where I put my plants and even know what I have! Very impressive!

I am looking forward to next summer's workshop as I have been more than satisfied with both last and this year's programs and special thanks to June Streadwick who has organized these workshops so well, in addition to billeting me in her home.

Roberta Roberts
August 2010



Excurrent

strong central leader



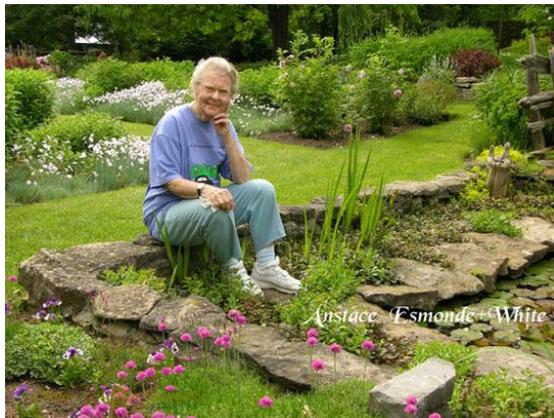
Decurrent

branching habit

A GARDEN TOUR TO OTTAWA

In June I went on a bus tour organized by Milne House Garden Club. I would like to share with you some of the experience.

First we headed off from Toronto Botanical Garden to Oxford Mills, with a short stop at the Big Apple just off the 401 for coffee and apple goodies. Driving through country roads we stopped at the Brigadoon Restaurant, in Oxford Mills which looks like an old coaching inn but may have been the village grocery shop at some time, and had an excellent lunch. Then on to Anstace Esmonde-White's garden in Kemptville. This garden achieved fame on television as the set for both CBC gardening programs and the weekly PBS program "From a Country Garden". Anstace a still spritely 90 year old, showed us around the lovely garden with its goldfish pond, thyme garden, herb garden, colourful perennial beds, and even a maze. Anstace is also well known for having written the defining book "Vegetable Gardening". So going through a hedge we found a potager- a wonderful garden developed from plain farm fields over 40 years ago - a labour of love.



Then we were off to another garden in Kemptville to the Hutton's century old stone farm house sitting on 90 acres of farm and woodland. Returning home four years ago from overseas they began to develop a big country garden featuring many old Ontario heritage perennials and self seeding annuals. The inner acre of the cultivated garden includes a spring-fed pond and large gazebo (offering us wine and treats) which overlooks a stream and old bridge. More recently they added a walled herb and vegetable garden with a flaming trumpet vine over the arched entrance, and have started to create a woodland transition to the wild. This area was like a meadow and full of colourful native plants and grasses.

Less than an hour later we were strolling through the Byward Market, close to the hotel, looking at all the street stalls with wonderful plants and baskets. Very tempting to bring some home if only we had a truck!!

Next morning it was over the bridge to Quebec and a short drive to the Royal Ottawa Golf Club in Gatineau for the Annual Meeting of the Garden Clubs of Ontario and



lunch at this stately and very grand establishment. Ed Lawrence of CBC Radio "Ontario Today" was the amusing and informative after- lunch speaker. (He does not look a bit like his voice).

After lunch we had a guided tour of the spectacular peony beds at the Central Experimental Farm with Mary Pratte. While the early peonies were past because of the early season this year, she showed us many unusual and rare specimens. It was a treat to see this garden as I have heard so much about Mary's work at reestablishing this part of the gardens.

Arise and shine, we visited the grounds and gardens of Rideau Hall. We could not see the Governor General's private garden as she was doing an investiture that morning. The grounds have lots of trees, all native to the area, and many were planted by various dignitaries who visit the Capital. Popular sites are those planted by JFK and Princess Diana. It is an impressive arboretum. I was very impressed by the spacious Rose Garden, created by Mrs Gerda Hnatyshyn in the early 1990s. I was expecting something compact but it was large with curving stone walkways and huge iron work obelisks and arches with the roses in full bloom.

At noon we arrived at the Smith's garden in Burritt's Rapids with its sign of "Burritt's Farm 1793". The heritage house dates from 1832 and the extensive gardens include trees and big perennial borders, a large kitchen garden and lawns rolling down to the Rideau River with unusual sculptures dotted around the gardens and shrubbery around the tennis court. So peaceful, tucked away in the countryside.

Our last stop got us leaping off the bus as we entered the Rideau Woodland Ramble. (Rideauwoodlandramble.com.) This was a delightful nursery just off a country road. It is situated on 7 acres of woodland near Merrickville. This is well worth a visit; the quality of hostas,

grasses, dwarf conifers, magnolias and a range of shrubs, trees, and perennials was superb. It took all my willpower not to buy lots of plants. I did succumb to Hosta "Praying hands". By coincidence the RWR is featured in the latest issue of Garden Making on page 18. The nursery is the happy result of the devastating ice storm of 1998 that swiped away a mature stand of red pine and resulted in a large swath of open land - a fitting spot for their dream nursery. Do go and visit.

I returned home inspired by these lovely gardens, many off the beaten track and a glimpse of lovely countryside close to Ottawa.

Roberta Roberts
August 2010



Rideau Woodland Ramble
www.rideauwoodlandramble.com/



Garden Tours and Plant Sales

- **Along the Garden Path** in Newmarket Sat. Sept. 11, 10- 4 10.00
lssmastergardeners@gmail.com
- **Marion Jarvie - Open Garden**
37 Thornheights Road, Thornhill
September 18 & 19. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., rain or shine

RBG Events

- **100 Mile Produce Gardens Grand Opening** on September 8th at 4pm in Hendrie Park
- **Auxiliary of RBG Fall Plant Sale**
Friday, September 10, 3 to 6 p.m.
and Sunday, September 12, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Arboretum
- **Members Mulch Day**
Saturday, September 25; 8 a.m. to noon, Mercer's Glen, off of Old Guelph Road



Halton Master Gardener Meetings

- October 6th
- November 3rd
- December 1st

Check our website for details of future meetings at

www.haltonmastergardeners.mgoi.ca/Meetings.php

Workshops & Technical Updates

- **Coordinators Conference**
October 2, 2010
- **GARDEN DESIGN 2010 FOR YOU Technical Update**,
September 30th at the Simcoe County Museum
- **Vineland Research and Innovation Centre** one day course, September 12th
- **Halton Region MG Technical Update**, September 17th , 2011