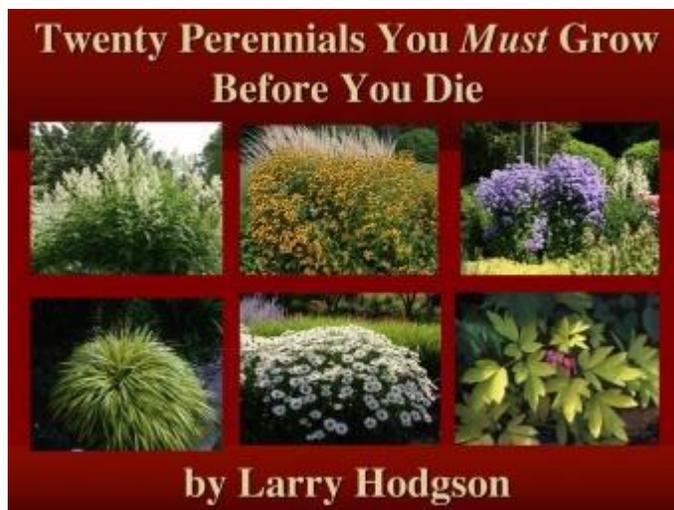


Notes on Larry Hodgson talk to Brome Lake Garden Club on Saturday January 20th 2018

Prepared by David Oldacre January 21st 2018

TWENTY PERENNIALS TO GROW BEFORE YOU DIE



Larry Hodgson is one of Canada's best-known garden communicators: editor, and contributor for many magazines, radio garden commentator and author of numerous well known garden books, both in French and English. He also leads many garden tours throughout Canada and the gardens of over 30 countries. With this lecture Larry wants us to discover 20 perennials that every gardener really should be growing, plants so exceptional that you can't afford to be without them. Always an entertaining and fun speaker, this is an event to take in!

About Larry Hodgson from his blog at <https://laidbackgardener.blog/>

Larry Hodgson is one of Canada's best-known garden communicators. After studies at the University of Toronto and Laval University where he obtained his B.A. in modern languages in 1978, he succeeded in combining his language skills with his passion for gardening in a novel career as a garden writer and lecturer.

He has notably been editor-in-chief of House Plant Magazine, Fleurs, Plantes et Jardins, À Fleur de Pot and Houseplant Forum magazines and is currently the garden correspondent for Le Soleil and radio garden commentator for CKIA-FM Radio. He is a regular contributor Gardens Central and Fleurs, Plantes, Jardins garden magazines as well as horticultural editor of the latter and has written for many other garden publications in both the United States and Canada, including Canadian Gardening, Harrowsmith, Horticulture, Fine Gardening, Rebecca's Garden and Organic Gardening.

He also speaks frequently to horticultural groups throughout Canada and the U.S. His book credits include The Garden Lover's Guide to Canada, Complete Guide to Houseplants, Making the Most of Shade, Perennials for Every Purpose, Annuals for Every Purpose, and Houseplants for Dummies, as well as about over 50 other titles in English and French. He can be seen in Quebec on French-language television and was notably a regular collaborator for 7 years on the shows Fleurs et Jardins and Salut Bonjour Weekend.

He is the President of the Garden Writers Association and the winner of the prestigious 2006 Garden Media Promoter Award offered by the Perennial Plant Association. An avid proponent of garden tourism, he has lead garden tours throughout Canada and to the gardens of over 30 countries over the last 30 years. He presently resides in Quebec City, Quebec.

Introduction

In his introduction, Larry talked about the criteria he used for selecting the plants he was going to talk about:

- Extraordinary and attractive
- Beautiful bloomers,
- Easy to plant,
- Will grow in the harsh Quebec climate
- Can be left alone to take care of themselves although some may be a bit invasive.

In this 75 minute talk, he provided beautiful photographs of 26 of his favourite perennials which he has grown in his property in a Zone 4b area of Quebec City, with a brief and fast paced review of what he thought were the most interesting characteristics of each. In passing, he mentioned that in his experience the basic information provided by gardening centres is often quite often wrong – both in Zone assignment and whether they like sun, partial shade and shade!

I have researched each of these plants and provided links to websites where more information can be found, and in so doing I have used a variety of primary sources.

1: Doll's eye baneberry *Achaea pachypoda*

Poisonous, a woodland plant, grows best in shade, likes growing under Maple trees, deer proof, widely available, In the Fall, the petals turn red with white berries which look like dolls eyes – hence the name. One plant is good enough!

More information about this plant can be found at the Wikipedia entry at

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Actaea_pachypoda

2: Agastache *Agastache* “Blue Fortune”

This variety does not self seed, its blue/mauve blooms smell a bit like liquorice. It is easy to reproduce as it will grow from cuttings and will last about 5 years. It is usually identified as a Zone 5 plant – but Larry said that he has grown it in his property in Quebec City.

For more information see the website

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=v220>

3: Golden Aralia *Aralia cordata* “Sun King”

It first became commonly available about 4 years ago. It grows to a height of 90cm by 180 cm wide. It has a beautiful foliage and will die down to the ground in the Fall.

For more information see the website

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?taxonid=274056>

4: Goats Beard *Aruncus dioicus*

It grows to a height of 150cm by 40-120cm wide and gives the impression that it is a shrub. It is slow growing, and will only get to a metre in its first year. It is a late spring bloomer and can be planted anywhere. It is hard to find nowadays. It is a native plant, and as the name suggests there is a female and a male version. It is best to get a male plant. It is deeply rooted and is like a shrub.

For more information see the website

<http://www.finegardening.com/goatsbeard-aruncus-dioicus>

5: Masterwort *Astrantia major*

It comes in various colours from white to pink – but not red. It grows to 60-75cm high by 45-60cm wide. It prefers partial shade. It blooms in late May to June, and if the conditions are right it will bloom again in the Fall, Its bracts are rather like petals and it self seeds.

For more information see the website

<http://www.finegardening.com/masterwort-astrantia-major>

6: Autumn Glory Bergenia *Bergenia crossifolia* "Herbstblüte"

This is a fall bloomer (in fact that is the meaning of the German word Herbstblüte) It grows to about 35cm high by 60-90cm wide. It can grow in Zone 2 and even grows in Northern Quebec! It does not like to be moved, but the stems are easy to cut. It likes full sun and will bloom in the Spring as well as the Fall

I couldn't find many English language websites for this plant which appears to be a great favourite in Europe, but here is one from the UK

<http://www.lubera.co.uk/plants/perennials/spring-bloomers-for-sunny-locations/bergenia-cordifolia-herbstbluete>

7: Milky Bellflower *Campanula Lactiflora* "Prichards Variety"

This is not your ordinary bell flower. It is an old fashioned perennial which is coming back into popularity. It grows to 70-80cm high by 40cm wide. It blooms in the middle of summer and produces lots of flowers. It likes a lot of sun – but doesn't do well in partial shade.

For more information see the website

<https://www.gardenia.net/plant/campanula-lactiflora-prichards-variety-milky-bellflower>

8: Sea Kale *Crambe maritima*

It has thick leaves which are purple in Spring which then turn blue. It produces small white flowers and needs full sun. In Europe it grows on the borders of the ocean and does not mind salt – which is probably why deer don't like it. It is normally a zone 5 plant but will grow in zones 4 and will grow to 75cm high by 75cm wide

For more information see the website

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crambe_maritima

9: Golden Bleeding Heart *Dicentra Spectabilis* "Gold heart"

This has pink flowers which when pushed from the bottom out pops the white stamen. For that reason it is often called "Naked Lady". The foliage is lime green in Spring and then it goes dormant. It is a Zone 2 plant and grows best in full sun, although it doesn't seem to mind partial sun.

For more information see the website

<https://www.gardenia.net/plant/dicentra-spectabilis-Gold-Heart-bleeding-heart>

10: Purple Joe Pyeweed *Eupatorium maculatum* "Atropurpurea"

It grows like the dickens – I know I have some on the edges on my property around the edges of the municipal ditch. It likes sun and partial sun, and particularly wet areas. It blooms in August to September and is one of the last bloomers to attract passing butterflies. If conditions are right it is a great garden plant as well

For more information see the website

<http://www.perennials.com/plants/eupatorium-purp-maculatum-atropurpureum.html>

11: Rozane Hardy Geranium *Geranium* "Rozanne"

This is a low growing ground cover perennial with blue flowers. This is a zone 3 plant which grows to 50cm high by 60cm wide and will spread of its own accord. It was named the perennial of the year in 2008, and the perennial of the century in 2013 at the 100th anniversary of the Chelsea Flower show. I have a similar hardy geranium with pinkish mauve flowers in my garden but that is an Armenian Geranium.

For more information about this plant see the website at

<http://www.perennials.com/plants/geranium-rozanne.html>

There is also an article in the UK Telegraph newspaper about the Plant of the century award at:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/chelseafloreshow/10080721/Chelsea-Flower-Show-2013-Geranium-found-at-bottom-of-garden-named-Plant-of-the-Centenary.html>

12: Golden Forest Grass *Hakonchloa macra* "Aureola"

This is a zone 4 grass which has a very attractive foliage of white and green striped leaves which was named perennial of the year in 2009. It grows in clumps and is best in partial shade in a moist environment. The flowers are not particularly important.

More information can be found on this plant at

<http://www.finegardening.com/golden-japanese-forest-grass-hakonechloa-macra-aureola>

- 13: Lemon Queen Sunflower *Helianthus x Laetiflorus* "Lemon Queen"
 This is a tall flower which was first noticed in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. It prefers full sun, and grows to 100cm high by 90-120cm wide and does not spread. It blooms in September – November.
 More information can be found on this plant at:
<https://www.gardenia.net/plant/Helianthus-Lemon-Queen-Sunflower>
- 14: Yellow Waxbells *Kirengeshoma Palmata*
 This is a late blooming plant with yellow flowers which likes full sun but will also grow in partial shade. In full sun it will bloom in September – in partial shade it will bloom in October. It needs a lot of moisture, and is slow growing. It is an easy plant to look after but you should not let it dry out. Larry recommended that it is best to plant several plants together.
 More information can be found on this plant at:
<http://www.finegardening.com/yellow-wax-bells-kirengeshoma-palmata>
- 15: Tree Mallow *Lavatera thuringiaca*
 This is not a Zone 6 plant as some garden centres suggest – but a Zone 4 plant! It likes full sun and is a mid summer bloomer with the usual pink flowers of other mallows.. It is a big plant which grows to 120-150cm high by 90-120cm wide and this is taller than most mallows. It But it is not a tree, although it may look like one!
 More information can be found on this plant at:
<http://www.perennials.com/plants/lavatera-thuringiaca.html>
- 16: Shasta Daisy *Leucanthemum x superbum* "Becky"
 This is a zone 4 plant which never stops blooming! It was perennial of the year in 2003 and grows to 70cm high by 75cm wide. It grows well in both full sun and partial shade. But it is sterile and does not produce seed.
 More information can be found on this plant at:
<http://www.finegardening.com/becky-shasta-daisy-leucanthemum-x-superbum-becky>
- 17: Fernleaf peony *Paeonia tenuifolia*
 This is not your usual peony! For one thing it is quite low growing and above all does not flop about! It has wonderful fern like foliage and will grow to a height of 30-40cm by 60cm wide. It has red blooms and is the earliest peony to bloom. But it has two problems – it does not have a colourful fall foliage and it is very expensive at \$40/plant.
 More information can be found on this plant at:
http://plants.connon.ca/11100004/Plant/2955/Fernleaf_Peony
- 18: Oriental poppy "Harlem" *Papaver orientale* "Harlem"
 This is a relatively new plant which first became available about 5 years ago and it is another expensive one at \$30/plant. The good news is that it does grow from cuttings! A hybridizer friend from Yorkview told him that what you do is to make a slashing across some of the roots, and these will develop into complete plants!
 It prefers full sun and has striking purple blooms. It blooms twice a year – in the Spring after which it goes dormant during the summer then blooms again in the Fall.
 More information can be found on this plant at:
<http://www.perennials.com/plants/papaver-orientale-harlem.html>
- 19: Giant Fleece Flower *Persicaria polymorpha* (syn *Polygonum polymorphium*)
 This is a large plant which grows to 200cm high by 200cm wide. Weeds to not grow under it! It is somewhat scented, although some sceptics say that it smells more like fresh cut hay to them! Larry grew his from a cutting! It will grow in full sun, partial shade and full shade and it blooms continuously from the end of June to September. It has sterile seed caps, and can be used as a show place for spring bulbs. It does flop though if it has been planted

in an area where it is protected from the wind. It is best planted in a completely open area where the plant will naturally develop strong enough stems which do not flop about in strong winds.

More information can be found on this plant at:

<http://www.learn2grow.com/plants/polygonum-polymorphum/>

- 20: Garden Phlox *Phlox paniculata* "Jeana"
 Larry first came upon this plant on a visit to Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania. It grows to a height of 120-150cm by 45-50cm in width, but it is hard to find. It is close to the wide variety and is resistant to mould. Apparently newer varieties are being developed which produce earlier and earlier blooms. The flowers are tiny, but there are lots of them and they really attract butterflies (also hummingbirds according to the website below)
 More information can be found on this plant at:
<http://www.abnativeplants.com/plant/Phlox-paniculata-Jeana>
- 21: Variegated red lungwort *Pulmonaria rubra* "David Ward"
 This variety of lungwort has pale green foliage with a white border. As the name suggest it has pinkish coloured flowers. It is different from the native lungwort which has green foliage with white spots – but the one thing they have in common is they grow everywhere. I have a patch of the native lungwort in my garden and I can attest to that it does indeed grow everywhere, and not necessarily close to the original plant!
 More information can be found on this plant at:
<http://www.perennials.com/plants/pulmonaria-rubra-david-ward.html>
- 22: Bronze leaf rodgersia *Rodgersia podopylla*
 This plant will grow in full sun, partial sun and full shade but does not like dry conditions. Its main attraction is that it has large attractive leaves. It can grow to about 150cm high with a spread of about 150-250 cm. But it is not normally found in garden centres. According to the website below it is a zone 5-9 plant, which is best grown in rich, acidic, humusy, consistently moist soils in part shade.
 More information can be found on this plant at:
<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=d674>
- 23: Three lobed coneflower *Rudbeckia triloba*
 You can buy this from seed and produces too many flowers! It likes full sun and will grow to a height of 60-90 cm with a spread of about 45cm. It is a late bloomer producing flowers from September until the first snow fall. Birds love it, so don't bother to clean up until the start of the next season!
 More information can be found on this plant at:
<http://www.finegardening.com/brown-eyed-susan-rudbeckia-triloba>
- 24: Stone Crop *Sedum reptre* "Angelina"
 This plant became available about 7 years ago and has bright yellow foliage which turns lime green in summer and even more beautiful foliage in the Fall. It needs to have room to spread and Larry showed us a dramatic photo of its fall colours and how it spreads. According to the website below 'Angelina' has terminal clusters of star-shaped, vibrant yellow flowers
 More information can be found on this plant at:
<http://www.finegardening.com/stone-orphine-sedum-rupestre-angelina>
- 25: Shredded Umbrella Plant *Syneilesis aconitifolia*
 This plant grows best in partial sun It does have flowers but they are somewhat ordinary. The early buds look a bit like a mushroom! It will spread but rather slowly. According to the website below the plant is attractive to bees, butterflies and/or birds.
 More information can be found on this plant at:
<https://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/go/70268/>

26: Culvers Root Veronicastrum Virginica

This is a native plant and a late bloomer. According to the website [“this species has soft spikes of white to pale pink or bluish purple flowers that look like elegant, living candelabras. The blooms reach 4 feet or more, adding a vertical accent to the back of a mixed border or wild garden from mid-summer to early autumn. Plants spread to about 3 feet.”](#) It likes full to partial sun, and I have some in my garden along the fence on the east side of my property. It certainly is a hardy plant and it has been growing there every year since I moved into my property in Sutton Quebec.

More information can be found on this plant at:

<http://www.finegardening.com/culvers-root-veronicastrum-virginicum>

At the end of his talk, Larry gave a brief overview of the contents of his blog (<https://laidbackgardener.blog/>) and mentioned that he will be leading a number of garden tours (all in French) in June and July

Specifically	June 28 th to 30 th	Thousand Islands and Ottawa
	July 5 th to 7 th	Saugenay
	July 15 th to 17 th	Laurentians
	July 26 th to 27 th	Eastern Townships

In the question period after the talk, one member of the audience asked why he had not included Penstemons in his presentation. Larry's response was that most members of this come from a somewhat dryer climate and while he liked penstemons, his preference was for those which he can easily grow in his garden in Quebec City. He also mentioned that they are usually grown as annuals in his area of Quebec.

For some interesting information on penstemon see the website at

<https://www.highcountrygardens.com/perennial-plants/penstemon/growing-penstemon>

There was also a question about Hellebores and the Lenten Rose. For some information on this plant see the website at

<https://www.gardendesign.com/flowers/hellebores.html>