

Cross Pollination

Newsletter of the Halton Master Gardeners



April / May Garden To Do List

Spring is a busy time, so our 'to do list' is longer than usual!



- **Perennials** – Cut back leaving 6" (15 cm) stems for solitary bees and divide if needed.
- **Prune** roses when the forsythia are blooming
- **Prune** buddleia bushes to about 6" (15 cm) from ground before new growth
- **Tomatoes**—Start seeds indoors; monitor seedlings for growth and re-pot if necessary
- **Lawn** – Wait until your footprints are no longer visible before working on your lawn. Rake up loose/dead grass and top-dress lawn with 1/2 inch (2 cm) fine textured compost; over-seed bare spots in the lawn when lilacs bloom. If it's too cold seed may rot. Areas with moss indicate soil has been compacted and nutrient level is likely low. Aerate and treat.
- **House plants** - Increase watering and feed, preferably with an organic fertilizer. Repot one size larger if needed. Note-Hoya & Nile lily (agapanthus) flower when slightly pot bound, so repot these less often. If the soil is drying out quite quickly between watering, it may be time to repot.
- **Hummingbirds** – arrive early May, so put out your feeders or better yet, plant hummingbird friendly plants. More info at [Christie Lake Association](#).
- **Take photos**- When your spring bulbs come up, a photo of the area will help identify where you need more bulbs or where bulbs need to be divided.
- **Watch**- Need a garden break? Watch [The Fungi in Your Future](#)

Hummingbirds are on their way!



Check out this very cool animated hummingbird tracking information at <http://www.therubythroat.com/>



Here are some tips to care for Hummingbirds

1. Make your own mixture for your feeder:
 - a. Mix one part white sugar to four parts water.
 - b. Allow the water to boil for one minute and then add sugar
 - c. Once the sugar has dissolved, remove from heat and allow the mixture to cool thoroughly
 - d. Fill your feeder and store any excess in the fridge for up to three or four weeks.
2. Clean your feeder regularly, with hot water and a brush
3. Plant a variety of native *hummingbird-friendly* flowers - preferably red & bell or trumpet-shaped flowers

Visit **Canadian Wildlife Federation** for more suggestions: http://cwf-fcf.org/en/resources/encyclopedias/fauna/birds/hummingbirds.html#List_of_Native_Plant_Species_That_Attract

MAY IS: LYME DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH
<https://www.lymedisease.org/get-involved/take-action/lyme-awareness-month/>



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Pest of the Month - Squash Bugs

Squash Bugs (*Insecta: Hemiptera - Coreidae*)

Identification:

- adults have tear-shaped bodies, greyish-brown with black legs
- 1.4-1.6 cm in length & .75 cm in width
- nymphs have pear-shaped, grey body with darker legs
- egg masses are on underside of leaves, between veins
- larvae are dark red, with green underside
- if disturbed, emit a stinky secretion
- often confused with [stink bugs](#)
- fly to feed and lay eggs



May
2018

Period of Activity:

- appear late May/early June; continue through growing season, particularly in hot & dry conditions

Plants Commonly Attacked

- cucurbits (squash, watermelon, cucumber, pumpkins, zucchini & some gourds)

Evidence of Infestation & Damage:

- squash bugs suck juices of leaves, causing them to wilt and appear mottled
- after frost may feed on fruit
- honeydew excreted by this bug can spread bacterial & fungal diseases

Control:

1. Handpick bugs & eggs, then drop into a bucket of soapy water
2. Use row covers to deter bugs
3. Plant resistant varieties - 'Butternut', 'Royal Acorn', 'Sweet Cheese', and 'Black Zucchini'
4. Do a thorough garden clean-up in fall to remove over-wintering areas (i.e., plant residue)
5. An insecticidal soap, can be used every 3 days for 2 weeks, when squash bugs emerge. Insecticidal soaps are contact insecticides, so take care to make sure that all plant surfaces are covered, especially the undersides
6. Natural enemies of squash bug include wasp egg parasitoids -attracting these to the garden may help reduce infestation

For further Info: OMAFRA, Ontario Crop IPM: Squash Bugs,

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/IPM/english/cucurbits/insects/squash-bugs.html#advanced>



Q. What did the judge say to the squash bug when it entered her courtroom?

A. Odour in the court!



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The following was written by a potential member who came to a meeting!

Warm & Welcoming - 'Halton Master Gardeners' is a rare find!

Rarely, in my experience, do you find a group who is as genuinely welcoming as Halton Master Gardens. While most groups look for new recruits, have special committees and membership drives, the HMG's difference or 'special sauce' if you will, seems to me that inclusiveness comes from the heart – a true desire to share, teach and embrace newbies with potentially similar interests.

My story:

I've known about Master Gardeners and have spoken with members at various venues for many years. As I'm just moving to Burlington from Toronto and have a new yard that's a completely blank slate for gardening, I approached an HMG member at a recent RBG event to ask about resources for hire. She took the time to learn about my project and ended up inspiring me to consider relying on and developing my own skills. 'Come out to our next meeting' she advised.

At that first meeting, I felt at home right away. A number of members helped me feel comfortable right from the start. Their greetings were easy and casual in a way that seemed not to be anyone's job but rather simply an expression of genuine interest in who was behind the new face. A great speaker, some snacks and more chit chat and I'd had a wonderful evening.

There was no question that I was going to try a second meeting. At that evening, everyone from the first meeting remembered me, others introduced themselves and suddenly I found myself part of the group – not officially yet, mind you, but I am inspired and feel as though I've found a knowledgeable, open group I'm definitely excited about joining.

If you have the least inkling to join a group and have an interest in gardening, don't miss your chance to be part of this exceptional group of Halton Master Gardeners.

I'm happy to answer any questions you might have about my experience. Email haltonmastergardeners@gmail.com and ask for Jo-Anne!

Interested in “” - coming a Master Gardener?

You don't need a “Masters”, just a passion for gardening!

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**May
2018**

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HaltonMasterGardeners.ca

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What's Growing On? (continued)

Halton MGs are excited to present **“How to be a Great Gardener!”** talks at Hamilton Public Libraries!

Here are the date and locations:

- Wed. April 18th at 2:00 p.m. Turner Park Library
- Fri. April 20th at 2 p.m. Dundas library
- Tues. May 8th at 2 p.m. Saltfleet library
- Tues. May 9th at 2pm. Redhill library
- Monday, May 14th 7 p.m. Sherwood library
- Tues. May 22nd at 2 p.m. Concession library

Sign up at www.hpl.ca.



May
2018

Come and ask us your garden questions in person!



We are happy to be taking part in Plant Faire again this year on April 21st from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the RBG Centre.

Bring your garden questions or just come and say hello!

HMG Claudette will be presenting “Garden Hacks-Nifty Garden Ideas” at 10:30 a.m. at Plant Faire.

Milton Public Library in May

Join HMG Janet for her great talk: 'Creating a Garden for Pollinators' at the Milton Public Library, on Wednesday, May 9th at 7 p.m.

“Learn which plant species are favoured by native bees and butterflies and create a space where these pollinators will thrive.”



Janet helping a ‘budding’ gardener at the Oakville Home Show

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What's Growing On?

Royal Botanical Gardens Speaker Series *Variety Flavour and Fun with Niki Jabbour*

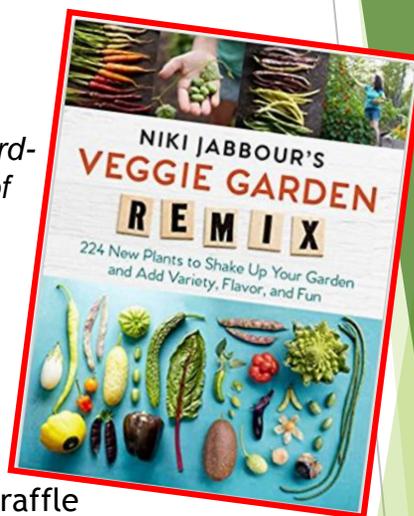
Halton Master Gardeners are thrilled to be sponsoring a 2nd speaker: Niki Jabbour on **Friday, May 4th 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.** Register now at [RBG Programs](#)

“Expanding beyond standard garden crops like tomatoes, spinach, and string beans can be intimidating for some vegetable gardeners. Join bestselling author, Niki Jabbour, to shake up your garden and discover unexpected flavours and textures in husk cherries, amaranth greens and yard-long beans (to name a few). Niki outlines dozens of plants for you to consider for your garden.”



HMGs will be in attendance to answer any garden questions before and after the talk.

And make sure you get a free raffle ticket for Niki's book Veggie Garden Remix!



May
2018



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Do you have a garden question for us? Send us an email!

Do you need a speaker for your social or garden club? Email us with details and we'll do our best to fill requests. Here are some topics to give you ideas:

- Pollinator Gardens
- Invasive Plants
- Starting Plants From Seed
- Hummingbird Gardens



You can also request a Master Gardener Q&A Panel for your Garden Club!

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