

The GardenShed

WINTER 2020

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPLE COUNTRY GARDEN CLUB



POND IN WINTER

Photo by Robin Young



The GardenShed

~ From the Editor

Yesterday we arrived home from our winter travels and it has been a bit of a hard landing. As I write, I am watching a late February blizzard – forecast to last a couple of days – swirl around the bare, grey bones of my garden. And even before this storm began, I was already battling a certain amount of winter garden envy.

We spent last week on the Pacific coast of beautiful Baja California Sur, Mexico. It's a Unesco biosphere reserve, where arid mountains meet the sea and cactus-littered scrubland can be cultivated into exquisite desert gardens, displaying hundreds of varieties of cacti and succulents. For a southern Ontario gardener like me, this was an awe-inspiring and spectacular sight, but so far from 'real life' that it generated admiration rather than envy.



A secret garden behind a gallery in Todos Santos, Mexico.
February, 2020

No, believe it or not, the envy reared its ugly head right at home in Canada – more specifically, in Victoria – where our trip began. In early-mid February, countless shades of green coloured every vista and our hosts' garden was bursting with spring: crocuses and rhodos already past and fading, seas of snowdrops carpeting the ground, bergenia, heather, hellebores, redbud and flowering plum in full bloom and daffodils beginning to open. A taste of heaven!



Can you see all those snowdrops?
Victoria in February, 2020

Now I'm trying to yank myself back to the reality – a reality I usually enjoy – of tea by the fire as I peruse gardening catalogues, books and magazines while the wind howls around me. I'm sure most of you are enjoying something similar, and I hope this winter edition of our newsletter will help to bolster your gardening dreams.

~ Lorelyn



~from the President



Well it's just before Valentine's Day and winter is still holding us in its - albeit tenuous - grip. One day it's warm and spring-like, the next frosty and blustery - the joys of Canada in the winter.

It is the time, however, when all gardeners' thoughts turn to the coming of spring: seed catalogues, garden magazines, the new must-have plants and the hopes and dreams of gardens to come. At least that's what's happening at our house.

Me, I'm getting in shape for the annual spring clean-up and planting frenzy that takes place once the snow melts in the gardens. Which leads me to this piece of advice; with greatest respect, as we all get a tiny bit older, it behoves us to attack the spring clean-up a little at a time. It isn't a race. So make sure to do a little warm-up stretching and bending before you plunge into your tasks. It's always better to be able to enjoy the garden from a vertical position later on rather than a semi-horizontal one as a result of a bad back. Okay, so much for preaching from Doctor J.

The club this year is planning on a very full schedule, starting off with our continued participation at the Home & Garden Show in April. This year it is being held at the Keeler Centre and we plan to do some fundraising by selling potted plants and maybe a gift basket or two. As always, we are looking for volunteers to populate our booth. A signup sheet will be passed around at the meetings beforehand or you can contact either myself or Sharron.

In May (yes, it *will* come), we have our annual plant sale in the park on Apple Blossom Weekend. It's our biggest single fund raiser and it is successful because everybody participates. So when you are doing your spring clean-up and plant dividing, please set aside those plants and bushes and, yes, trees and pot them up for our sale. If you need a little help with doing that, the club has a crew of volunteers who will assist. Last year we raised over \$2500.00. This year, let's beat the record.

Spring also brings the first of our three flower shows. Every year we are treated to some gorgeous blooms and decorative designs by our members. However, I have noticed that the number of participants and entries has been declining in the last couple of years. (Maybe due to climate change?) I can say from my own experience that the shows are fun, and you don't need to be a "Master" gardener to enter. Show off to everybody the fruits of your labours, we're all gardeners, let's be proud and share. (We also award some pretty nice trophies.)

Lastly, we are still in search of a few people who would like to volunteer for our executive. It's a lot of fun and a little work commitment, and it is necessary to keep the club running smoothly. If you are interested, let any of the current executive know.

Well that's it for now. May the sun be on your back and the rain out of your boots. Until next time, good gardening.

~ Jim



~ January, 2020 Presentation ~~

DAHLIAS

With Marian Jean of Oakridge Dahlias

www.oakridgedahlias.ca

www.facebook.com/OakridgeDahlias



Members of the Apple Country Garden Club were pleased to welcome Marian Jean of Oakridge Dahlias to our January meeting. Marian's first memories of dahlias are in her grandfather's garden in Scotland, where the plants held their beautiful blooms well over her head. Marian's love of gardening comes from both sides of the family. She discovered the incredible variety of dahlias seven years ago when looking for 'Jessie G' as a gift for her mother, Jessie Giles. This began the obsession which created Oakridge Dahlias. Marian now grows over 900 dahlias annually, about 500 varieties, on her property south of Peterborough. Trained as a teacher, Marian incorporates her love of learning and teaching in personal education and in helping others get the best from their dahlias.

Starting Indoors

(For late-blooming varieties, earlier blooms on others and delayed spring weather)

- In greenhouse, sun room, sunny window or under lights
- Flower pots or seedling trays
- Slightly damp potting soil
- Water lightly (tubers rot easily)
- Heat (70F pref) to promote growth

Outdoor preparations

- Prefer rich, sandy, well-drained soil. Will tolerate other soils that are not too wet.
- Use raised beds in wet or poorly-drained areas



- Remove all weeds and roots
- Add manure, compost, decomposed leaves, etc.
- If using fertilizer, use low nitrogen for vegetables or flowers
- Soil ph preferably between 6.5 and 7



Outdoor planting

- Plant when the lilacs bloom and the corn is planted
- Generally 2 feet apart, 2.5 feet for very tall varieties, 1.5 feet for dwarfs
- In holes one spade depth deep
- Put a stake, of suitable height for the grown plant, in the hole
- Add 1 tsp. 6-8-6 in bottom of hole, cover with soil
- Place tuber on its side with the eye/shoot close to the stake, about 6" below the surface
- If it has a shoot, leave the top exposed and fill in the hole as it grows
- Very little water after planting, until growing well, as tubers rot easily
- Protect against cut worms and slugs by placing a toilet paper roll, partially buried in the ground, around the shoot

Growing your dahlias

- 1" of water a week from rain or by deep root soaking with irrigation or soaker hose
- Tie to stake every 12" or so
- Prefer cool roots so mulch late in June, after earwigs have nested
- If using fertilizer, choose one suitable for flowers and/or vegetables. Feed every 3 to 4 weeks until late August.
- A soil test will tell you exactly what your soil has for your plants and what you need to add





Topping

- Stops the upward growth of the main stem of the plant
- Creates a shorter, bushier plant
- Allows for more flower development
- Done when the plant has 4 sets/pairs of leaves
- Part the leaves and snap off the centre growing stalk just above the 4th pair of leaves (you can use a knife or scissor if you wish)

Disbudding

- Creates longer stems on flowers, better for cut flowers
- More energy per bloom, so bigger blooms, especially in the large and giant varieties
- Dahlias grow buds in groups of two or three
- When the buds are small but can be individually seen, pinch out the smaller side bud(s)
- For long stems, you may need to take off one or two sets of leaf side shoots, depending on the variety

Pests and Diseases

- Strong, healthy plants can thrive in spite of some insect damage
- Soap and water sprays control most problem insects
- Clean cut broken stems to reduce the chance of bacterial infections
- Cut off rotten stems well below the infection so it doesn't spread to the tubers

Dahlia Virus

- Stunted, twisted plants, pale curled leaves



- Dig and destroy, preferably burn. DO NOT compost
- Sterilize tools used
- Spread by nematodes, sucking insects and humans
- Some plants may be carriers

Dig up

- After a killing frost, or Early October
- Tubers rot in cold, damp soil even if not frosted o top
- Cut off top, 6" above ground
- Leave for a few days and up to one week to allow eyes to set
- Tie label to stem
- Dig up with a long-bladed spade 9 – 12" out from the stem (must be a complete circle with overlapping cuts to sever long roots)
- Using the spade, lift the tuber clump
- Clean off the worst of the earth
- Wash the clump and leave in a protected area covered with shavings, straw, leaves etc. to cure. Protect from freezing.
- Split clump, removing broken, rotten, diseased, old and eyeless tubers
- Leave to dry and scab over cuts for 24 hours
- Place in a container of storage medium (vermiculite, shavings, peat, etc. I use vermiculite in plastic shoeboxes.)
- Store cool (about 5C or 35 – 45F) and dark.

Marian can be contacted by email at info@oakridgedahlias.ca or by phone at 905-269-5395.

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### ***Your Apple Country Garden Club 2020 Executive and Board***

L to R: Sharron MacDonald, Marg Pafford, Cori Hall, Len Salvati, Karen Prins, Shannon Shea, Trish O'Brien, Clair Breton, Jim Detenbeck, Dennis Miluck of Brighton Hort



# ~~ February 2020 Presentation ~~

## WHAT'S THE BUZZ? BEE AMAZED!

With Joe, Hazel & Amy Cook of Blossom Hill Nursery

Please meet Hazel and Joe Cook (with backup from daughter Amy) who own and manage Blossom Hill Nursery near Peterborough. Blossom Hill began as 22 acres of scrub and they recently celebrated 25 years in business.

Your humble scribe will attempt to capture the essence of their presentation though with two talkers and one writer, plus some pretty heady bee science, I might miss the mark occasionally.

The Cooks started with delphiniums, then added peonies – they have 180 varieties at last count. In 2009 the Cooks moved on to honeybees and now they sell their own raw, unpasteurized honey and award winning mead.

I refer to Susan Chan's September 2019 presentation for the three "types" of bees within the 400 species in Ontario – honeybees, bumblebees, and solitary bees. The Blossom Hill Nursery and this article focus on honeybees.

The Cooks also mate, mark and make available for pick up, honeybee queens and 4-frame nucleus colonies (nucs) in a cardboard box. Overwintered marked queens that were produced at Blossom Hill in 2018 are for sale. The nucleus colony includes 2 brood frames, a frame of honey and pollen resources, and an extra drawn comb in a cardboard box. (Note: Every beekeeper wants "drawn comb" in their hives at nectar flow time. Drawn comb is that which is ready for either honey/pollen storage or ready for brood. If you want your bees to build combs, you must feed them sugar syrup or there must be a nectar flow going on).

Hazel and Joe put in a pond which is 30 feet deep with a shallow end like a swimming pool, thereby creating a watering hole for the pollinators. A ready source of water is as

important as pollen and nectar forage for bees. Try to create a landing pad so they can have a good drink e.g. floating wine corks.

Be aware that trees are very important to pollinators, even junk trees like the Manitoba maple are a haven for bees, providing, among other things, a place to swarm. They love sumac.

Most people don't realize that there were no honeybees in the Americas until the white settlers brought hives from Europe. And most people think all bees will sting, but honeybees won't do so unless threatened. In order not to "corner" the bees, always approach the hive from the rear, not the front.

Bees swarm for various reasons and in various places (trees, ivy, anywhere they can cluster). The swarm has left its home turf and they swarm for reasons of procreation and to resolve a lack of space as the colony grows. A skilled beekeeper can guide the swarm into the four frame nucleus colony box by shaking the tree branches and keeping an eye out for the queen. The worker bees and drones will follow the queen into the new hive (and invite their friends to a party!) Typically there is only one queen per hive, and the beekeeper will "paint" the queen to identify her since all hive life revolves around her. She can lay 1,500 to 2,000 eggs a day and she can do so for 3 to 4 years! That life can be extended to 5 to 6 years in some cases. In sharp contrast, the worker bees, all of whom are female, last 5 to 6 weeks.

Bees love spring bulbs such as bluebells, crocus, cyclamen, daffodils, and grape hyacinths, as well as iris and peonies! For later blooming, plant succulents such as sedum. If you don't want to plant these, go for 'singles' (e.g. one set





of petals) like Echinacea, which are more bee friendly.<sup>[17]  
SEP]</sup>



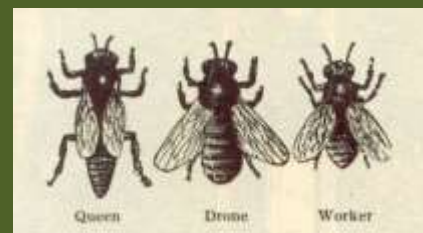
The bright colours of anthers and pollen have generally been thought to attract pollinators, but sometimes they can also be camouflage.

A beehive creates extreme efficiency by maintaining a strict caste society. The queen, the worker and the drone: hives need all three castes to function. These roles are determined during larva-hood, and cannot be altered once under way.

To create the queen bee, a larva is fed royal jelly. The queen emerges from her cell at the top tier and controls the ratio of the lower castes by deciding when to fertilize an egg. A younger queen produces more female worker

bees from fertilized eggs, while an older queen produces more drones from unfertilized eggs. The queen is cherished and loved by all her subjects, but if she goes missing, workers will notice her absence in less than 2 hours, and there will be no search party. The workers will pump out a new “emergency queen” from one of the larvae by feeding her royal jelly -- practicality always wins over sentimentality in the beehive.

Worker bees could be considered the next tier down from the queen. Despite being the smallest bee in the caste, workers are the most numerous. 50,000 of them can be found working in a single hive: Think of worker bees as the queen’s many, many right handwomen. All sisters, the workers tend to her every need while simultaneously removing debris and dead bees from the hive, foraging for nectar, and feeding the larvae. They do nothing but work from the day they are born to the day they die. And as already stated, that can be as short as 5 to 6 weeks.



It’s the drones who are undoubtedly the lowest caste citizens and on the surface seem to have the easiest life. They’re all males, and because their only purpose is to mate with the queen, the majority of their days are filled with eating, resting, and patrolling mating congregation sites (sort of a bee “match.com”). Life is good for these lads if you discount the fact that they die after mating. It is important to note that the queen goes as far as 5 km away from her hive to avoid incest. So the drones are nature’s couch potatoes, that is, until winter. Once winter arrives, the workers drive the drones out of the hive -- if drones refuse to leave, it’s not uncommon for the workers to carry them out of



the hive, then chew off their wings to prevent them from coming back in. It's no use feeding the useless, and once again, practicality wins over sentimentality in the hive. (*Some text thanks to Planet Bee Foundation.*)

Climate is a huge factor for honeybees. August is "fall" for bees. If the weather is mild they move around in the hive and eat precious resources, which means that by April they will starve to death. In order to cut his/her losses, the beekeeper will provide a source of sugar. And, if it is too warm, the bees will swarm on the outside of the hive, so water is brought into the hive to help with ventilation.

A word about predators. Along with the myth that all bees sting, comes the revelation that they have many foes: chipmunks, bears, squirrels, deer, mice, white spiders, ants, mites, moth larvae, wasps and hornets to name but a few. In fact the wily skunk scratches on the hive and ambushes the guard bees as they emerge. By far the worst problem for bees however, are the neonicotinoid pesticides which appear to be having a devastating effect on bees....and therefore our future. Progressive governments have reduced their use, but it will take decades to cleanse the earth of their toxicity.

So let's put the gloom and doom behind us. Here is a list of bee friendly plants:

Passionflower  
Russian sage  
Foxglove  
Clematis  
Dahlias  
Purple loosestrife  
Joe Pye weed  
Mums  
Goldenrod

Bees produce medicinal products such as Propolis and its extracts, which have numerous applications in treating various diseases due to

its anti-septic, anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant, anti-bacterial, anti-mycotic, anti-fungal, anti-ulcer, anti-cancer, and immuno-modulatory properties.

Hazel is the acknowledged expert at Blossom Nurseries in grafting queens. You need special tools, nerves of steel and a very steady hand. Grafting is the process of transferring larva from the worker cell of the breeder's hive to an artificial queen cell. The shape of the cell, along with the queen-less condition of the hive receiving the newly grafted cells, stimulates the workers to feed the transferred larva a diet which will make them develop into queens.

The Cooks have undertaken a mammoth job to reclaim the hill near their house for their beloved bees. More is due to emerge as this labour of love evolves.

And finally, let's play Jeopardy!

A: It is the strongest shape for the least amount of resources.

Q: Why is the inner structure of a bee hive octagon shaped?

You can reach Hazel, Joe and Amy Cook at: [info@Blossom Hill Nursery](mailto:info@BlossomHillNursery)

681 Fifes Bay Road  
Peterborough ON  
K9J 6X3  
705 741-9923

Please note that nursery visitors and customers are welcome by appointment.

~ Robin Young





## *Garden to Table*

### **Leek au Gratin**

2-3 leeks sliced & cleaned  
1½ tbsp butter  
1½ tbsp flour  
1 tsp dry mustard powder  
¼ tsp salt  
½ cup milk  
½ cup grated cheddar cheese  
½ cup fresh bread crumbs

Cook leeks in salted water until just tender, drain & place in a one litre casserole dish. In a small saucepan over low heat melt butter stir in flour, mustard & salt until smooth. Gradually add milk stir until thick... stir in cheese until melted.

Pour sauce over leeks. Sprinkle with bread crumbs.

Bake 400 F until browned.

Serves 4



### **Bruschetta**

6 plum tomatoes chopped  
3 spring onions chopped  
1 tbsp olive oil  
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar  
1 tsp salt  
1 tsp sugar  
1-2 tsp dry basil  
3 cloves crushed garlic

Mix all together put in a crock.

Cool for 1-2 hrs.

Serve with toasted baguette.

### **Leek Squash Soup**

2 acorn squash  
3 leeks  
3 tbsp butter  
5 cups chicken broth  
3 tbsp brown sugar  
¼ tsp each nutmeg, cinnamon and curry powder  
Feta cheese... for sprinkling on top  
Chile peppers (crushed) optional

Bake squash cut side down 400 degrees for 1 hr. Scoop out squash into a soup pot with butter & chopped cleaned leeks.

Simmer about 10 minutes.

Add broth & spices and simmer 30 minutes.

Blend with immersion wand until smooth.

Season with salt & pepper.

Serve topped with feta. (Add crushed peppers ...if you like a spicy soup. )

~ Karen Prins





## ~~~ *Over the Garden Fence* ~~~ (Neighbouring Horticultural Societies)

**Brighton Horticulture** meets at King Edward Community Centre, 81 Elizabeth St. 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm. Upcoming meetings: Mar 24, **Kevin Elchuk of Gibosihill Hostas**, *Designing with Ornamental Trees and Hostas*; Apr 28, **Susan Chan**, *Pollinator Garden Design*.

**Cobourg Horticulture** meets at Cobourg Columbus Community Centre, 232 Spencer Street East (D'Arcy), 1st Wednesday of the month at 7:00pm. Upcoming meetings: Mar 4, **Peter Keeping**, *Clematis*; Apr 1, **SDawn Golloher**, *New Perennials*.

**Grafton Green Thumbs** meet at St. Andrews United Church, 137 Old Danforth Rd., 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm. Upcoming meetings: Mar 10, **Dan Clost**, *Soil Amendments*; Apr 21, Joint meeting with us.

**Peterborough Horticulture** meets at the Lions' Centre, 347 Burnham St., Peterborough, 4th Wednesday of the month, 7:00 p.m. Upcoming meetings: Mar 25, **Dawn Golloher**, *Common Plant Nasties and How to Deal with Them*; Apr 24, **Carlotta James**, *Recap of the Monarch Ultra*.

**Port Hope Garden Club** meets at the Ruth Clarke Centre, 81 Mill St. S., 2nd Monday of the Month at 7:00 pm.

**CANADA BLOOMS**

March 13 – 22 [canadablooms.com](http://canadablooms.com)

**PETERBOROUGH GARDEN SHOW**

April 24, 25 & 26 [peterboroughgardenshow.com](http://peterboroughgardenshow.com)

## ~~~ *Giggles from the Garden* ~~~

As someone who used to be very athletic – playing hard singles tennis, cycling long distances on very hot days, decimating the competition at track meets – I am always taken aback (by which I mean right royally ticked off) when someone says with a sneer, “Is that all you do now? Play with a light, ergonomically designed shovel, pull out a few tiny plants, and stick some others in the ground? What? How do you get any exercise??”

Well I won't tell you my first thoughts, in case this gets into the hands of minors, but on further reflection, I wondered if it was just ignorance speaking. Maybe people Just Don't Know. If that's the case, here, in this Olympic Year, is a rundown of events that should be in the Olympics, or the Paralympics, the Special Olympics or the Barely There Olympics. Competition would be fierce and the health benefits – off the chart!

1. **The Watering Can Slop:** A very large metal container with a spout and small opening on top is filled to brim at the farthest point in the garden from your target plant. A complicated formula gives you marks for both speed of delivery and load delivered. Arriving quickly with only a third of a can is not a winner. Neither is arriving with all of the water, but after all the judges have gone home .

2. **The Sitting Weed:**(This is not what you think, even though our home field is right next to Sharpshooter.) This event is deceptively easy looking. From a very low wheeled seat, on a nasty slope, repeatedly lean over to the point of tipping, and reach out for a handful of small plants that do not want to give up the fight. If any wheels



leave the ground, you are penalized. If you tip over completely you are “in the weeds” and immediately disqualified.

**3. The Hoe Down:** Not your grandfather’s hoe down. This involves energetic mashing up of soil without disturbing the “good” plants while uprooting the “bad” plants. This has several sub events: the *Mess Up the Whole Plot* event: competitor is timed, and clods left in the plot cannot exceed 3 cm. *The Potato Hoe*: a specialized skill event that involves putting a substantial layer of dirt on a slightly greenish pile of potatoes without nicking the potato skin. Note: this event has a slightly absurd objective and requires a tool singularly unsuited to the task. Rather like golf.

**4. The Perennial Shuffle:** This event is very popular among gardeners who would rather look at their efforts than eat them. Competitors are given a garden plot well filled with perennials. You must dig every one of them out and move them to a different location in the same plot, while being timed. You must divide the roots of at least three of them, and ensure that the colours of the blooms will not clash with their new neighbours. (Judges’ discretion, as in figure skating, will involve “artistic merit” - which doesn’t burn many calories, but has its place, I suppose.)

**5. Hose Wrangling:** Competitors are given 20 meters of the cheapest hose available from Canadian Tire which has been methodically tangled and kinked by technical staff. The aim is to get the hose to bring water to a decorative thistle 15 metres away from the water source without knocking over any other plants on the course. The time used will be divided by the number of kinks corrected, so that the measure is “kinks per minute” or more likely, “minutes per kink”.

**6. The LV Sprint:** Competitors race through a selected Lee Valley store and throw as many garden gizmos and gadgets into their cart as possible. These are timed trials, with items gathered counted, but there are penalty points deducted if you take something that you already own. Drones will be sent to your garden sheds to verify the latter. There is also the **Negative LV Sprint**, as above, but you only gather items that you DO own, thus requiring a good memory for unfortunate impulse purchases.

**7. The Page Whiffle:** This involves whipping through a series of seed catalogues when your garden is already FAR too crowded, and choosing which 40 new plants you are going to buy anyway. All this while pretending to listen to an official explain the rules of Mah Jong. This requires tremendous concentration, and the brain burns many, many calories attending to these competing tasks. Judgements will range from “Barely Plausible” to “Ridiculous” all the way to “What Planet Do You Come From ?!” A coherent explanation of HOW you plan to defy the laws of physics in the natural world will add to your score.

So it is clear, my Horty Friends, that we as gardeners get more than our share of “high end exercise” without purchasing gym memberships or pouring ourselves into lycra and spandex, and enduring endless exhortations from personal trainers, as well as fish-eye looks from the gym bunnies who lurk around the water cooler beside the bicep machine.

There is now Olympic surfing, Olympic softball and Olympic skateboarding, with pickleball being narrowly rejected for Tokyo. So it is possible!

Let’s Make Olympic gardening the Next Big Thing!

I’ll be watching – from my couch – with a cold beverage in hand – between naps. Go Canada!

~ *Barrie Wood*



## *~~ Please Join Us ...*

on *facebook*

or online at [cramahehort.ca](http://cramahehort.ca)

... or at a meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month in the Keeler Centre in Colborne

### **Next meeting:**

Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 pm

**'Youth and the Natural World'**

with Cathy Dueck

### **Upcoming:**

Tuesday, April 21<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm

**'Gardening from a Hammock'**

with Dan Cooper

(Shared meeting with Grafton Green Thumbs)



## **The Apple Country Garden Club**

|             |                                                                                       |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| President:  | Jim Detenbeck<br><a href="mailto:detenbeckgary@gmail.com">detenbeckgary@gmail.com</a> |
| Secretary:  | Trish O'Brien<br><a href="mailto:twillow_51@hotmail.com">twillow_51@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Treasurer:  | Clair Breton<br><a href="mailto:clairbreton@bell.net">clairbreton@bell.net</a>        |
| Newsletter: | Lorelyn Morgan<br><a href="mailto:lgm@sympatico.ca">lgm@sympatico.ca</a>              |

*Growing our community ...*

*One garden at a time.*

