

The GardenShed

Winter 2021

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE APPLE COUNTRY GARDEN CLUB



Winter 2021

Telephone Road & Walker Road, Cramah Township

Photo by Shannon



the Garden Shed

the long Winter of 2021

~ From the Editor

Last issue, we were all desperately waiting for a vaccine for the COVID-19 virus. Happily, it wasn't long after that an effective vaccine was announced, and then another as well. Oh glory be! Such jubilation! We were ready to line up and bare our arms right then and there....but...alas, the schedule didn't quite look like that was how it was going to work...so we wait...doesn't look like it will be very soon....so we wait...

I don't know about you but last March, when the lockdown came, I dragged out my project list and set out to use my time productively. I cleaned, I polished, I painted (furniture and walls, not pictures), I sewed, I cooked, I *ate*, I baked, I *ate* and then energetically kept in regular touch with friends and family by phone, e-mail and Skype. Whew, talk about busy. I got all my projects done (except one that I've procrastinated on for decades).

Then here comes the second lockdown. Friends and family are in the same boat as I am, they have nothing to say and aren't doing anything either.

Projects are motivating the first time around but not so much in the repeat stage. I don't have anything left that I really want to do....oh yeah...the procrastinated project..... I have at least ten years, maybe more of photographs from *before digital cameras*; in boxes, in storage bins, in drawers, all waiting to be sorted and pasted into photo albums. I *have to be* brutal about what to keep and what to discard because though I spent a fortune on photo developing not all/many of them are really worth a plug nickel. You know how it is with relatives and pets, or when taking pictures during a party and after a few drinks. So right now, I am staying busy still procrastinating and avoiding doing that job.

I do want to specially thank those members who have taken the time and effort to submit their stories, pictures and recipes for this issue.

Be sure to take a peek at the *Little Sprout Corner* and send, via email, your guesses as to the blooming gardener those little sprouts became.

~ Shannon

~from the President



Family Outing - Socially Distanced

Happy 2021 everyone! Let's hope that the new year brings better things than the last, as we are finally beginning to see a light at the end of this very long tunnel. Hopefully we may soon be able to restart our normal (if there will ever be the old normal) meetings again.

It doesn't seem like two years have passed since I was privileged to take on the role of President.

Let me rephrase that because the last ten months have moved at a snail's pace.

Even though we were only able to meet formally a couple of times, the club has survived, thanks to your executive and also due to your loyalty as members.

I am happy to announce that we have secured our provincial grant of \$1,000.00 and more importantly our local government has shown great faith in us by renewing our \$2,000.00 annual township grant and just now we received word of a one-time grant from the Ontario Government of about \$1,000.00.

When I spoke with one of our councilors to thank them for the township grant I was told that as far as they were concerned we were the most deserving of all their applicants due to our continued work in beautifying the township's down-towns. So give yourselves a well deserved pat on the back.

We are also pursuing additional grant monies from the district to be able to purchase replacements for our canvas shelters and to upgrade our computer equipment.

Winter seems to have arrived with our first major snowfall. It's a time to reflect on last year and start planning for next spring's gardens.

It's a time to start winter seeding and pore over garden magazines and seed catalogs.

I think though, this year, we should take a minute or two and give thanks that our little corner of the world in Cramahe has been spared (so far, fingers crossed) from the blight of the covid virus. As far as I know we have all come through generally well. Hopefully this will continue. I personally attribute it to our rural area and the compliance to the guidelines laid out to keep us all safe.

So again well done, you should all be proud of your commitments.

Speaking of commitment, we have in the last couple of weeks increased our membership substantially, getting very close if not surpassing our fifty member mark. To those who have renewed, I thank you.

To Clair, Trish and Sharron, thanks for your work in "friendly arm twisting".

On that note, I want to thank all of my executive who have done a great job, under less than ideal conditions to make my term as President a lot of fun.

Some of you are leaving and to you, on behalf of the whole club, let me offer our thanks for jobs well done.

To those who will be new, have a good time, I'm sure you will find it very rewarding. To those "veterans" keep up the high standards.

To Sharron, your new and returning President.... Take it away.....

Keep your boots dry..

~ *Jim*



**My ancestors came
here on an iceberg**

It is not within the realm of Indoor Gardening and I know we have discussed this before during meetings but it might be a good time to review now while there is still time for the seeds this year.

How to Germinate Perennials during the Winter Months

Components:

1. Clear plastic container with clear plastic lid (shoe-box size). Available at the Dollar Store. Punch numerous holes in the bottom and lid of the container.
2. Perennial seeds of your choice.
3. Potting Soil.

Method:

1. Fill the plastic container to 1/2 full with potting soil.
2. Dampen the soil thoroughly but do not soak.
3. Sprinkle your perennial seeds onto the soil.
4. Cover the seeds with potting soil as per the seed package instructions.
5. Cover with the lid.
6. Place in a sunny (south exposure is best) location outside in the snow.
7. Let nature run it's course until the end of May. Moisture will freeze and melt through the container and the sun will bring the sprouts to life.
8. Transplant when the weather is warm and sunny.
9. Enjoy for years!



***I'm a little flaky but
still unique***

***Snowflakes are beautiful, pure and white
and just like us, no two are alike.***

How to keep your Houseplants Healthy all Winter

Plants have been proven to benefit our emotional well-being. Let's give something back during the winter months.

1. Increase the light

To make sure your indoor plants are getting enough light during the winter when the sun is lower in the sky and often cloud

covered, you may want to move them closer to their natural light source...the window or a grow light. Should your plants start leaning toward the light you can gradually rotate them every few days to make sure they receive natural light on all sides.



2. Stabilize Temperatures

Plants don't like extreme changes in temperature.

Room temperature of 20 degrees Celsius is optimum.

It is important to move your plants away from open windows and doors, heating units and radiators, and, even ovens. Keep temperatures as stable as possible, not too hot or too cold or drafty. Houseplants are happiest when humidity is between 40-50%. While the furnace is running and you don't have a humidifier, you can help your plants by misting their leaves regularly.

3. Give them a rest

When their light is less strong, your indoor plants will rest from October through February in a semi-dormancy state. Also, since plants only take up water based on the amount of light they receive, you won't have to water your plants as often in the winter months. Wait longer between waterings or reduce the amount of water each time. Allow the potting soil to dry out completely between waterings to avoid root rot. If you want to be a little more Eco-friendly in your house, reuse water on your houseplants that you've used for cooking things like vegetables and pasta. Watering globes will deliver moisture to your houseplants when they need it. Simply take a wine bottle, fill it with water and stick it upside down in your plant's pot. The plant will draw out the water when it's thirsty, thus avoiding over watering.

4. Don't forget to Dust

While your home is closed up for the winter, dust builds up on your plant leaves which reduces the amount of light getting to your plants. Gently dust off leaves every week or two. For extreme buildup use some mildly soapy water and a soft cloth to wipe down the leaves.

5. Skip the Fertilizer

While dormant, your plants are not really growing and will not benefit from any added nutrients at this time, so give them a break from the fertilizer.

6. Watch for Bugs

If you see sticky stuff on your houseplants it is a sure sign that you have bugs! The dry air in our homes is an invitation to mealy bugs, aphids and red spider mites. They drink up plant juices, secreting the excess. This clear sticky substance is called honeydew and is often the first clue these pests are feeding on your plants.

Try rinsing the bugs off indoor plants first. A strong blast of water dislodges many of the insects. If that doesn't work then move on to insecticidal soap or organic horticultural oil labeled for houseplants.

- Mealy bugs have the appearance of thick cotton batting. Remove them from the leaves by wiping them down with a soft cloth soaked with rubbing alcohol.

- Aphids are small, pear-shaped with long antennae, sized like the head of a pin.
- Red spider mites are hard to spot but are mostly found on the underside of the leaves and appear as red dots.
- Aphids and Red Spider mites can be removed by misting regularly with warm water.
- Fungus Gnats or small fruit flies have to be controlled from the immature stage which are worm-like larvae that feed on organic matter in the soil. Allow the soil to go a bit drier and trap the adults with a small container of apple cider vinegar on the counter top. Another option is *Bacillus thuringiensis israeliensis* (Bti) is a naturally occurring bacterium that kills the fungus gnat larvae, mosquito and black flies. Just sprinkle the bits on the soil surface and water. When the fungus gnat larvae feed upon the Bti, they die. This product is safe for pets, people, and wildlife. Sprinkle the product over the soil surface and repeat as often as the label directions recommend.

6. Don't mind the Winter Blues

Do not count a nearly nude plant out just because it's lost its leaves. Come winter, you might find your houseplants dropping more leaves than they usually do. Don't worry—plants drop their leaves to compensate for the lack of light, and in turn, the lack of food. It's normal for your plant to look a little less flamboyant now than it did in the summer months.

Feel free to help it with some very slight trimming if you'd like, as doing so can help prevent further leaf loss.



**Does this blizzard
make me look fat?**

Starting Seeds Indoors Successfully

First of all...It isn't difficult, it isn't complicated and it is not impossible. It does take time and forethoughtbut hey, this year we have plenty of both!

Some ideas to try: herbs, annual flowers, onions, eggplants, celery, leeks cantaloupes, watermelons, cucumbers, squashes, tomatoes, head lettuce, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and peppers.

Your seedlings are going to be indoors for about 6-8 weeks, so you'll need to be ready to plant 2-3 months before transplant time, so end of February or beginning of March.

What you'll Need:

- your seeds of course
- containers:
 - 2-3 inches wide and 2-3 inches deep
 - with good drainage
 - plastic cell trays, peat pots, cut off milk cartons, Dixie cups or mini clay pots.
 - container options of 20 - 40 individual fairly large cells is recommended.
 - Be sure to select containers that will house your seedlings right through to transplant
- south facing window or a grow light situation
- bag of potting mix that is a good blend of soil, vermiculite or perlite and peat moss.
- A complete soluble fertilizer; like a 15-15-15
- clear plastic kitchen bags or clear plastic wrap.

Planting:

1. Fill the containers with pre-moistened potting mix. Not soggy, just moistened.
2. Gently place one or two seeds in each cell (assuming the 40 count cell tray); more of course in a mini clay pot or cut off milk carton. Don't put so many in each cell that you have to thin them out or transplant to another container before moving outdoors.
3. Press the seeds into the soil surface to make sure there is good contact with the soil.
4. Sprinkle more soil on top, enough to fully cover the seeds.

5. Mark your seeding flats with name and date of sowing.
6. Place the planted container inside a plastic bag and tie it closed. Or you can cover the tray with plastic wrap but don't let the wrap touch the soil surface.
7. Don't water again until the seedlings sprout
8. Place the planted container in an evenly warm but not too hot location away from sunlight. Too much light can cause overheating under the plastic and rot the seeds.
9. Seedlings will appear within 10 days to 2-sometimes as long as 3 weeks. When they appear, remove the container from the plastic cover and then place the container in full sun facing window or under a grow light.

Watering:

- Water the seedlings **from the bottom** with room temperature water to keep the soil just moist at all times. Or you can use a spray bottle and mist with a fine spray.
- 3 - 4 weeks after sowing, when the plants are established, add some fertilizer to the water. Fertilize only once or twice before they go into the garden.

Hardening Off:

- Six or eight weeks have passed, the weather is better and now for the next two weeks,



you want get the plants ready to be transplanted into the garden. To get them used to the outside without shocking them with sunburn, windburn or freeze, start this hardening process by placing them outside for 2-3 hours per day in full sun and bring them back in. Next day, place the sprouts outside in full sun for 2-3 hours and then into

the shade for a few more hours and then bring them back in.

- By the end of the second week you can leave them out all day and night if it's warm enough.

Transplanting:

- Transplant your sprouts in the late afternoon when the sun is low to keep them from drying out.
- Make sure they are well watered before you plant.
- Make sure the soil you are planting them into is moist.
- Try not to disrupt the root ball while transplanting.
- Water gently but thoroughly, making sure the soil has settled around the root ball.
- Keep well watered for the first 4-5 days until they are well established.
- Enjoy your crop!



**Get away from me
with that shovel!**

Each year I purchase potted forced tulips and daffodils. You may have done this many times but just in case, I thought I would document it here (it is certainly quite easy) because this year I decided to give it a go!

How to Force Tulip Bulbs

I had a hard time finding bulbs when I went looking in early November (everyone was sold out). Luckily I happened on Hollandale Garden Centre (my new GoTo nursery). I was able to buy nice, large Tulip and Daffodil bulbs.

Bulbs are not commonly sold “ready to force” so you have to prepare them. Place the bulbs in a cool 35-45 degrees F. dark place for 12 - 16 weeks to be chilled. I know some people chill in their vegetable drawer in the fridge but I left mine in the unheated garage.

After chilling, choose a container with good drainage and fill with soil to about 3 - 4 inches below the rim of the container. Place the bulbs just on top of the soil (pointy end up) and fill the container with soil around the bulbs and to the top of the container. The tips of the bulbs should show through the top of the soil.

Place the pots in a cool, dark place. A basement or unheated garage is fine. Water lightly about once per week and when leaves appear, bring the bulbs out and place them in bright but indirect light.

After forcing, care for them just like a houseplant. Water when soil is dry and keep away from direct light and drafts.

I thought that by the time this issue was ready, I could show you a picture of my tulips and daffodils in bloom, but at this point they are still growing and no buds in sight. The tulip pot is in a west window and I put the daffodils under the grow light....may be too direct but, I expect to have blooms shortly.

Next year, I will do a couple of things differently. First of all, I will shop a lot earlier and leave the bulbs dormant longer.

Here's to Spring!

~~ *Shannon*

~~ *Wintering at Home*

Well, 2020 was one of the longest and loneliest years and one that I'm sure we would all like to forget.

I am thankful though, to be living in a small town.

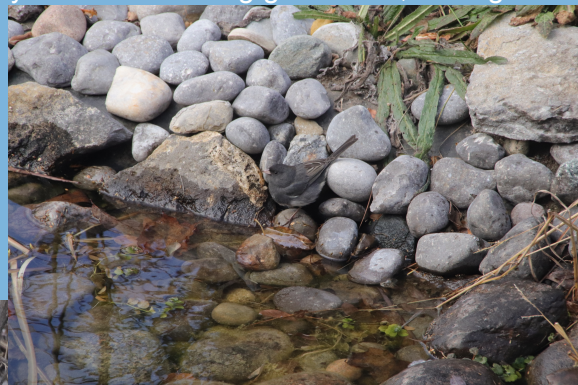
Our sun room has been a wonderful addition where we can sit to enjoy the non-stop entertainment of nature which is not only limited to the beautiful spaces we have created but those of our fine feathered friends and four-legged furry critters.

We have documented over 30+ species of birds and have seen fox, coyotes and deer as well as the regular squirrels and rabbits. We solved the pesky squirrels getting onto feeders by adding duct pipe around the posts.



I don't know where they came from but I have a jar inside the sun room where I am overwintering seven wasps that I did not have the heart to cast out into the cold. They seem to be happy, sleeping most of the time and waking up occasionally to enjoy some honey.

I have tried two ways of overwintering geraniums, storing some in leaf bags and the others potted up and sitting on the window sill in the basement.



Looking forward to the day when we can get together and enjoy a potluck and clink our glasses together in friendship.



Until we meet again face to face I wish you all good health.

~~ *Cori*

~~ Dining at Home

Some comfort food I made to remind us of visiting family in Montreal.



- Clair B

Carrot & Parsnip Soup

- Karen P

1 tsp vegetable oil
2 cups peeled chopped carrots
1 cup peeled chopped parsnips
1 small onion chopped
1 med potato peeled & chopped
3 cups chicken stock or vegetable stock
1 1/2 cups milk
Chopped chives or green onion

In a large saucepan mix vegetables with oil & cook with lid on for 20 minutes or until vegetables are soft
Stir in stock, bring to boil
Reduce heat simmer covered for 30 minutes
Blend in batches until smooth (I use an immersion blender)
Stir in milk, reheat without boiling
Season with salt & pepper
Serve with chives or green onions sprinkled on top

Onion Pie

- Karen P

1 cup salted soda cracker crumbs
1/4 cup melted butter
2 cups thinly sliced onions
2 tbsp butter
3/4 cups milk
2 beaten eggs
Salt & pepper to taste
1/2 cup shredded cheddar or Parmesan cheese
Paprika

Mix crackers with melted butter & press into 8 inch pie plate to form a pie shell
Cook onions in 2 tbsp butter, stir until soft but not brown
Put into cracker pie shell
Mix eggs, milk, salt & pepper & pour over onions
Sprinkle cheese on top, sprinkle with paprika
Bake in preheated 350 oven for 30 minutes or until knife comes out clean.

This is a weight watcher's soup and is absolutely delicious:
- Marg P

Immunity Soup:

--30 minutes to prepare and one hour to cook
- serves 8

This recipe yields a big pot of brothy soup that you can make ahead and enjoy for a couple of days, the flavour just gets better over time. You may be wary of the large amount of garlic, but keep in mind that it mellows considerably after being cooked.

2 tbsp olive oil
1 1/2 cups chopped onion
3 celery stalks thinly sliced
2 large carrots, thinly sliced
1 lb sliced mushrooms
10 garlic cloves minced
8 cups, unsalted chicken stock
4 fresh thyme sprigs
2 bay leaves
1 15 oz can unsalted chick peas, drained
2 lbs bone-in, skinless chicken breasts
1 1/2 tsp kosher salt
1/2 tsp crushed red pepper (optional)
12 oz curly kale, stems removed, leaves torn

1. Heat oil in a large dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion, celery and carrot; cook stirring occasionally, about five minutes. Add mushrooms and garlic, cook stirring often, for three minutes. Stir in stock, thyme, bay leaves, and chick peas, and bring to a simmer. Add chicken, salt and red pepper; cover and simmer until chicken is done, about 25 minutes.
2. Remove chicken from dutch oven and cool slightly. Shred meat with two forks, discard bones. Stir chicken and kale into soup, cover and simmer until kale is just tender, about five minutes. Discard thyme sprigs and bay leaves.

Per Serving: 1 1/2 cups:

253 cal, 7g total fat, 1g sat fat, 581 mg sodium, 22g total carb, 5g sugar, 6g fibre, 28g protein

~~~ **Swap Shop Corner** ~~~

**Item/Items**

**Contact by email or call:**

Looking for good or slightly damaged medium to large size pottery for fish shelter in pond

Cori H

I am looking to re home a *Stephanotis* plant. It is in a large pot and will probably take 2 people to move it.

Cori H



~~~ **Little Sprout Corner** ~~~

Which of our Garden Club members do you think this little baby sprout grew up to be??

Member's current picture will be revealed here next issue.



Sprout #1.

- email your guesses to acgc.gardenshed@gmail.com



Member's current picture will be revealed here next issue.

Sprout #2.

- email your guesses to
acgc.gardenshed@gmail.com



Member's current picture will be revealed here next issue.

Sprout #3.

- email your guesses to
acgc.gardenshed@gmail.com

~~~ *Over the Garden Fence* ~~~

(Neighbouring Horticultural Societies)

The Horticultural clubs have been closed to public meetings due to COVID since March 2020. Where possible, there has been some effort made by the individual clubs to keep the club somewhat active during the past months.

Brighton Horticulture meets at King Edward Community Centre, 81 Elizabeth St. 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm.

All meetings are on-hold due to COVID-19.

Cobourg Horticulture meets at Cobourg Columbus Community Centre, 232 Spencer Street East (D'Arcy), 1st Wednesday of the month at 7:00pm.

Due to the on-going pandemic, this year's speakers will be coming to us via Zoom. CHS members will receive an invitation via email approximately two weeks before each session.

Grafton Green Thumbs meet at St. Andrews United Church, 137 Old Danforth Rd., 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm.

All meetings are on-hold due to COVID-19.

Peterborough Horticulture meets at the Lions' Centre, 347 Burnham St., Peterborough, 4th Wednesday of the month, 7:00 p.m.

Location: Online! Utilizing the Zoom platform for the foreseeable future. The meeting link will be forwarded to all members a day or two prior to the meeting. *Membership* has its privileges.

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

All meetings are on-hold due to COVID-19.

The Moon hangs up at night;
Her beams are cold and bright;
Seeing her shadow low;
The water's frozen now.



~~ Please Join Us ...

on Facebook
or online at cramahehort.ca

... meetings are canceled at the moment....stay tuned.....

Life is a snowflake
a free-falling star
a fragile reminder
of all that we are

born of a raindrop
laced by the breeze
spinning through space
dancing through trees

a diamond of light
a gem in the sun
a journey of hope
a new life begun

by Charles Ghigna



The woods are lovely,
dark and deep,
But I have
promises to keep,
and miles to go
Before I sleep,
And miles to go
before I sleep

Robert Frost

The Apple Country Garden Club

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*Growing our community ...
One garden at a time.*