

# SCOTIA GARDENER

Newsletter of the Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs

Fall 2020

## Message from the President

Hello, my gardening friends,

I hope you all are well and looking forward to an interesting fall and holiday season. With most of our fall clean up done and hopefully some seeds, leaves and plants left behind for the birds and bugs, we can focus on plans and ideas for Christmas and winter as changes in our social lives are becoming the norm.

Our newsletter looks a bit different this month as we welcome Emily Walker as our newsletter editor. With her new approach and excellent ideas, a few changes will take effect with this issue. Many thanks to Emily for accepting this challenging position. We look forward to a new format and a new newsletter.

Over many years Ann Jones has put forth a lot of effort for our board. She edited the newsletter for the past 11 years and was instrumental in developing our NSAGC Facebook page. Ann has decided it is time for her to step back from the newsletter. Ann, we will surely miss you and your great ideas and thank you immensely for your many contributions. We appreciate that you have taken us into the digital world.

I wish to thank our board for their efforts during this difficult year as well as our new members for stepping up. We still have a few openings and trust they will be filled soon. I also want to thank the executive and hard working members of each club. Without volunteers, we would have no clubs. It has been a different year and many new ideas have been put forth by the clubs. I urge you to continue to do so, as it is important to keep the communication lines open and find new ways of holding meetings.

We will soon be celebrating the Christmas and Hanukkah holidays, quickly followed by the ringing in of the New Year. Remember to support your local food bank even if your club is not collecting this year. I wish you all a blessed and safe holiday season and peace, joy and lots of gardening in the New Year. Cheers, Pamela

## Thank You, Ann!

It is time to express our sincere thanks to the long-time editor of the *Scotia Gardener*, Ann Jones. She has been a tireless advocate for our newsletter and oversaw the transition from the paper to the online version. We recognize her dedication and the many long hours she gave to producing the *Scotia Gardener*. We wish her well as she has more time now to garden and enjoy her beautiful home in Yarmouth. Thank you, Ann, for a job well done!



## Great Village Garden Club: 2020 Garden Tour

by Sybil Flemming, Secretary

The Great Village Garden Club had not met since the pandemic started and, although the executive had been doing necessary work for the club during the shutdown, it was felt we needed to find a way to involve all the members. A plan was hatched where the members could meet in a safe way in a large open space to view a garden and also have a social time, so a garden tour was planned.

Twenty-two members enjoyed the floral display at the dahlia garden of Art Haskins on the warm and sunny afternoon of September 12. Two of those attending were over 90 and vehicle transportation to the lower level garden was provided by VP Cathy Mazurso so that they could avoid the long and twisty set of stone steps.

We were reminded at the start that all COVID-19 protocols for an outdoor event were to be upheld. Photographer Trudi Johnson caught a few members setting the example for social distancing.

Everyone was awed by the display of colors and dahlia flower forms in the over 150 varieties of dahlias and hostas. Members were overheard saying they had picked favorites but it was indeed hard to single out one over another. Everyone admired the extensive work that went into the gardens, dahlias being front and back end work intensive. A late visitor—a lonely little garter snake—probably contributed to the lack of bugs at the event.

A small wine and cheese party was held at the end of the tour with food supplied by members Donna Shearer, Heather Williams, Linda Giddens and our host. The club provided Nova Scotia wines from Avondale Sky and Sainte Famille wineries of the Windsor area.

After thanking our host for the invitation and magnificent display, the group agreed to forego regular meetings indefinitely, which we will sadly miss. The executive was given authority to plan events, hoping our creative members will share some workable ideas.



Great Village Garden Club VP Cathy Mazur in the midst of the colorful display of Art Haskins' dahlia garden, safely distanced from member Margie Ross.

Photo by Trudi Johnson



## Fall River Garden Club: Staying the Course with Community Projects

by Lawrence Spencer, Treasurer and Acting President

We are keeping all our members informed on what is happening within our club and the NSAGC to maintain interest in the club and its activities. With some advertising on various local Facebook pages, we managed to gain at least five new members and there are some others hoping to join when they can.

As with the NSAGC, we decided not to charge our nominal dues this year. We have sufficient funds to cover our usual events and projects for next year.

We held our September meeting outdoors at one member's garden. For October and November we will be meeting in a large hall (an old Fire Hall with large areas, to allow for good social distancing). There are only about 30 members and, since normally only two thirds show up, there will be plenty of space. We are also having a guest speaker at each meeting: the first on daylilies, the second on bees and bee keeping.

We are able to obtain the hall at no cost as they appreciate our work in establishing and maintaining the gardens at the two properties they own and the large community garden (Jamieson Park) that we built and continue to expand for use by the

residents. It comprises a small wooded area with paths and lots of benches and six different gardens. In fact, one group of artisans will be using the Park for an outdoor craft sale in mid October. Our club will have a table there as well with hand-outs telling the story of the Park—one about our garden club and one explaining how you can have your own garden designated a "wildlife habitat" by the Canadian Wildlife Federation.

We had the wooded area trimmed and opened up this summer by two excellent hired workers. Our purpose was to expose several apple trees that had been planted over 100 years ago not only in the hope of getting some apples for use by the wildlife but also to preserve these old trees! We also opened up the area to better sunlight to allow for more undergrowth and wildflowers. (We plan on planting more there next spring).

We will be posting our upcoming meetings on various Facebook pages in the hope of enticing more member to join. I'm sure that, like all clubs, we could use the input of some younger members. We are all getting older and perhaps not up the tasks sometimes....here's hoping!

### Baked Haddock with Baby Tomatoes

Quick, easy and delicious, this is a good way to use up any kind of baby tomatoes.

- Place haddock loins or fillets in a casserole dish.
- Scatter a handful of tomatoes on top of the fish.
- Sprinkle with freshly ground pepper and salt.
- If you like, add a chopped herb such as thyme.
- Pour a generous dollop of good olive oil over the fish.
- Bake at 400° F until the fish flakes with a fork.
- Place portions of fish on plates and spoon over pan juices and tomatoes. Serve!

You can also use frozen fish. Just bake a little longer.



## Chester Garden Club: Looking on the Bright Side

by Jayne E. Campbell, President



Photos provided by Jayne Campbell

Garden clubs throughout the province have had to reinvent themselves during COVID-19. Meetings were cancelled and many fundraisers put on hold for at least the year. The Chester Garden Club was no different.

Many club members were eager to try and provide support and fellowship to other members while continuing to work on their mutual garden spaces in the village each week as well as in their own gardens. Our gardens gave us refuge as well as providing a very rewarding experience. A social time was incorporated in the Cove Garden each week so that, even while distancing and working, we were able to enjoy the company of others.

We encouraged members to support one another and to share with others their yard projects, flower arrangements, vegetable gardening and harvests, bird watching and garden concerns on our Facebook page. Many of our members are also learning a great deal from the posts by other garden clubs shared on social media. We might hate it at times but technology certainly has gotten us through a great deal in 2020.

The challenge will be to find out how we move forward with enthusiasm, developing new approaches to staying viable if larger group meetings are discouraged. On the brighter side, more people are appreciating the beauty around them—they are growing and eating more of what they grow. Local has become more important and our gardens have been one of the safest places to be. We have had much more time to actually smell the roses!

(more photos on the following page)



## Photos from the Cove Garden in Chester



The members of the Chester Garden Club have remained active during the past few months. They volunteer their time weekly to care for the Cove Garden in Chester. Here are photos taken of some of the beautiful flowers growing in the Cove Garden, thanks to the efforts of the Chester Garden Club.  
Photos by Cynthia Myers



## Bedford Horticultural Society: A Meadow Garden Inspires Us All

by Donna Burris, Secretary

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the Bedford Horticultural Society Executive met outside on a lovely late September afternoon to discuss a plan forward to keep in touch with our members.

### Meadow Making

On September 26 we thoroughly enjoyed a tour of Donna Evers' beautiful property by the lake, including her newly designed Meadow Garden. In June 2020 the Halifax Regional Municipality gave permission to make a pollinator meadow on the corner of Sime Court and Brenda Drive in the Kingswood subdivision, Hammonds Plains. The area is a one-quarter acre right-of-way owned by the city.

The city prepped the site by removing the existing sod and putting down new topsoil.



A path was marked out and seeded with a white clover mix. As of September, 3000 pollinator friendly plants were planted, all donated. This speaks highly of our gardening community in Nova Scotia. In September and October, they were busy planting bulbs. So far, they have planted over 300, again, all donated. Initially there were lots of questions about the project but soon people were asking how they might be involved. It has been a wonderful way to meet people in these difficult times.



Neighbours helped with the stone work and neighbour children enjoyed the progress. By mid July the Meadow Garden was stopping traffic.



In August a Monarch butterfly emerges from its chrysalis in the Meadow Garden.



A bench has been added. It is a great place to have a coffee or to wait for the bus or take photos of visitors like members of the Bedford Horticultural Society.

A young neighbour painted a sign and another friend made the support for it.

Photos provided by Donna Evers and Donna Burris





Bedford Horticultural Society members enjoy the outdoors and the company of club members at a succulent container garden workshop. Photos by Donna Burris



## Gardeners' Must Haves

If you were to pick your top five gardening must haves, what would you choose? Let's start with something that has to be high on the list—the humble garden tote. Tough and versatile, the tote is light weight, sturdy, flexible and holds wet, dry or anything in between. Use it to carry small tools to the garden or to bring debris to the compost pile. Partially fill it with water and soak a shrub root ball in it before planting. Load it up with potatoes or tomatoes. Use it to mix perlite, compost and soil. The tote in the photo is about 15 years old. It seems the only thing you cannot do to it is to wear it out!





## Brookfield Garden Club: Moving Forward—Meetings and Fun Activities

by Susan Stevenson, Publicity and Communication Manager 2020

Hope you had a blooming lovely year. Our March 2020 meeting took place as usual as it was before the stay-at-home order was issued. For each month's meeting, a different team of members provides refreshments and entertainment. The March meeting's entertainment was provided by member Terry whose husband Gary provided the members with succulents. Terry brought all the necessities to make our own decorative tin of succulents. We had a messy, fun time creating our fancy pots of plants.

April and May meetings were cancelled, along with our public speaker event.

We once again provided a bursary for a student attending the Dalhousie AC. The lucky student is local Ethan Densmore whose father owned Densmore's sod farm and whose grandfather ran Densmore's dairy farm many years ago in Brookfield. We received a note of thanks from this deserving young man.

We were actually able to meet in June and safely plant our wave petunias, provided at low cost from Searles Gardens and Florals. We do this each year for the public's enjoyment at two locations in our community. So, adorned with masks and carrying our trowels, we met at our gardens to enjoy our fellow gardeners and get those petunias into the soil. Barry and Jocelyn had already removed the failed daffodils from the plot a few days prior. The maple tree we planted at the Ed Creelman Park survived being snapped off in last year's hurricane. Though short, it is full and leafy this year!

In July, we met outside at Elsie's cottage and toured her garden by the lake, observing social distancing. It was the club's tenth birthday. We each brought a plant with us to be given as gifts to each other. Gail, our president, passed out a plant to each member. Our founding member, Heather, was not able to attend as she was at work. Sheryll baked a lovely cake that was enjoyed by all. A rousing Happy Birthday song topped off the fun!

In August we met outside at the Monk's garden for a tour of a beautiful property. We sat outside with social distancing on a lovely August evening. President Gail asked each member to tell us a tale about this season's gardening.

Our September meeting was held at the Seniors Room with masks and social distance seating with one new potential member, Erica, joining us that evening. We discussed our upcoming Eighth Annual Community Christmas wreath project, confirming a new wreath maker for our project and pleased to be invited to view the process come November. Tammy and Veronica were in charge of the entertainment. They quizzed us on Latin names and common names of plants. It was fun and a learning experience at the same time.

For the October meeting, we met again at the Seniors Room with masks and social distance seating. Gail started the meeting by checking on our wreath project. This is the time we contact our past supporters and find new supporters. I must praise the members for doing such a great job finding businesses to support our project. Entertainment for the evening was up to Ardith and me (Susan). Ardith had a great idea using old railway spikes. She painted them shiny black to start us off. Then we set up paints and brushes along with ideas of what to paint on the head of the spike. Many talented artists in our group enjoyed the task and adorned the spike head with flowers, insects and fancy dots!

The burning bush the club planted many years ago in Ed Creelman Park (coming into Brookfield from the 102) has showed its fire spectacularly this autumn.

We hope all our fellow garden club members have fared well with this interesting growing season—the unexpected early drought along with the warm temperatures early in June. I am loving the rain barrels more this year than ever!



## Gardening Under Glass: Plants that Please

by Emily Walker



Photo by Bob Kerr

Thank you, Bob Kerr, a member of the Bedford Horticultural Society, for suggesting the newsletter introduce a section called *Gardening Under Glass*. What a great idea! Bob has been able to coax his indoor plants to produce magnificent blooms in abundance. He told me that he rescued the beautiful hibiscus (pictured to the left) from the throw-away table at Sobey's nine years ago. He puts the hibiscus out on his patio in late April and brings it back inside before the frost hits. The plant likes to be pot bound and requires a lot of water. Bob prefers to use rain and melted snow water. He feeds the plant occasionally with a bit of 777 fertilizer and removes any leaves that are turning yellow. He has only experienced a bug problem once some time ago and was able to eliminate it. Bob is proud to report that this past winter he counted 113 scarlet flowers blooming from October to May!

Bob is certainly not alone—many people are avid indoor gardeners. There are many positive aspects about gardening under glass—better control over temperature, water, humidity and light. Indoor plants earn their keep big time. While providing living decorative accents, they also bring a great deal of pleasure when they flourish, flower or grow to impressive sizes.

Audrey Flanders of Audrey's Little Shop of Plants says that the passion for houseplants is soaring. In both her Dartmouth and Halifax stores, the most popular plant is the philodendron. The interest in this particular species stretches across all age groups and levels of experience. There are exotic varieties that appeal to the collector and easy care varieties that are perfect for the beginner. Audrey says that she has seen a significant upswing in indoor gardening in the last few years. Indoor gardeners range from folks who are downsizing to apartment living or people moving into their first home. The most remarkable group are grandparents who are connecting with their grandchildren by sharing an interest in houseplants. It is reassuring to know that there are whole new generations of indoor gardeners, all with different levels of experience but a shared passion, nonetheless!

What have you been growing inside? Share your gardening under glass success. Please include a photo that you have taken. Send to: [newsletter@nsagc.com](mailto:newsletter@nsagc.com)

### Fun Facts

*Philo* means a liking for and *dendron* is the Greek word for tree. So the word philodendron literally means a liking for trees.

The tropical variety of hibiscus (*hibiscus rosa-sinesis*) is also known as Chinese hibiscus. It is the national flower of Malaysia where it is called *Raya Bunga*.

A close-up, top-down view of a dense field of purple daisy-like flowers. The flowers have numerous thin, light purple petals radiating from a central yellow core. The background is a dark green, slightly out-of-focus foliage. The text 'Outstanding Natural Beauty' is written vertically in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font on the left side of the image.

**Outstanding Natural Beauty**



## Rooted in Clare Garden Club: Gardening for their Community

by Lisa Doucette, Vice President

Like most clubs during Covid, most of our events were cancelled. We finally did have one meeting in September in our backyard. This way we could follow all protocols.

We even had guest speakers! They were a lovely young couple that have started a permaculture farm in the area. They told us their story: how they were supposed to be in British Columbia, but Covid prevented them from going. So they decided to stay here, since Renee is from the area, and begin their dream of permaculture farming here. Please check out their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/gaianmindfarmcentre>

We also had someone drop off many lovely perennials to give away. We still have a few if anyone

would like them. They include daylilies, hostas, etc.

We continued to take care of the flower beds at the Clare Veterans' Centre. We also had good success with growing vegetables for the elderly in our raised beds at the Cultural Hub.

The Rooted in Clare Garden Club, along with La Société Acadienne de Clare and Clare Health and Wellness, produced a video with Alice d'Entremont regarding putting your flowers to bed for the winter. It's in French, so for those that can understand it, please go to either La Société's Facebook page or ours.

I do know one thing: because of Covid, everyone has beautiful flower and veggie beds this year!



Lisa Doucette thins out carrots in the raised beds where the Clare club grew vegetables for the elderly.



The last haul of vegetables the club distributed to the elderly in their community.

Photos contributed by Lisa Doucette



## Country Garden Club: Colour in the November Garden

by Carol Morrison

In October we met via Zoom and members of our club got together for their last clean-up of the Garden of Hope in Elmsdale, which we look after. We have been exchanging emails with gardening ideas and posting images of our gardens to our Facebook site. We are hoping to find a venue where we can safely meet inside in the future.

Meanwhile we are looking for the last signs of colour and interest in our gardens before they get covered in snow! Here are a few.



Photos by Carol Morrison







This photo that captures the purple fall crocus tells the story of autumn.  
Photo by Carol Morrison



## Close-Up Call: Your Chance to Win a Pop-up Garden Tote!



**From a close up, zoomed-in photo, it can be tricky to identify a plant. What do you think this is?**

**Send your answer to: [newsletter@nsagc.com](mailto:newsletter@nsagc.com) Please include the name of the plant, your name and the name of the garden club you belong to. One lucky person's entry will be drawn from all the correct entries submitted to win an awesome prize: a hard bottom (with drainage holes), collapsible, pop-up tote 27 inches tall and 21 inches in diameter with a capacity of 150 litres. Don't miss your chance to win this handy garden buddy!!**



## The Village Garden Club: A Fireside Meeting

by Carol Clark, Village Garden Club Member

The Village Garden Club, which includes the regions of the Gore, Rawdon and Noel Shore, gathered together on Brenda Bailey's cider business field in Woodville for the regular autumn meeting.

It was a cold grey Nova Scotia day, but ten members managed to attend Around a fire pit with thermoses of hot tea and cookies. Brenda had the fire invitingly burning on our afternoon arrival. We placed our portable chairs in a circle around the central heat and entered into fellowship readily shared.

The vegetable garden harvest of the now past summer was discussed. Work done on the robust harvest of tomatoes and other vegetables for winter storage was shared.

Brenda, herself, who the previous summer had over 100 cocoons of monarch butterflies along the rafters of her brewery, this year had only a handful from her milkweed plants. The plants were standing tall and stiff in full view of our fireside circle in the late fall temperature fluctuating around freezing.

Another member, Sue McRuer, said she had read a recent newspaper article about how the habitat of the monarch was disrupted this past year; for she had no monarchs at all from her milkweed plant.

Pat MacPhee put forth the question of whether it was preferable to put one's flower garden in shape in the fall or the spring for its thorough clean-up. Pat said she found the ground more workable in the spring. Someone else mentioned that the wood ticks were less troublesome during a fall clean-up.

Susanne McLachlan, who was unable to attend, generously sent along bulbs of old fashioned iris plants with brown yellow blossoms for any who wanted to plant them. Theresa Smart passed around small plastic bags of nasturtium seeds she had reaped from her abundant summer harvest.

It was a delightful outdoor get together around the warm fire pit, enjoyed by everyone present, including Brenda's large Irish wolfhound, who was very gentle and quietly accommodating toward everyone in his place by the fire pit.



The Covid restrictions are very irritating but people are enormously resilient and the joys of normal life always survive ultimately.



Club members enjoy chatting despite the chilly temperatures! Note the tea is in a thermos!



Enjoying the warmth from the firepit



Theresa Smart handed out nasturtian seeds for planting next spring.



Nancy Doane's Christmas cactus in full bloom

## Bridgetown Area Garden Club: Keeping Bridgetown Beautiful

by Deborah Bowes-Lyon, Director

The Bridgetown Area Garden Club has been busy this summer in spite of Covid restrictions impacting some of our usual activities. It's surprising what can be achieved with a little creativity and a lot of social distancing! Club members kept the town looking beautiful with flower filled planters, pretty rocks, a Butterfly Garden and award winning Canoe in Jubilee Park. We also said a big thank you on Face-

book to the local businesses that keep their plants looking beautiful! We had a happy winner of our Canada Day Photo Competition and several members enjoyed local garden tours in the Vandenberg's beautiful garden and at Rick Ketcheson's wonderful permaculture garden. Let's hope next summer will see things back to normal; but, if not, we are confident we can rise to the challenge again.



Photos contributed by Deborah Bowes-Lyon



## A Note From Your Editor

My name is Emily Walker, a member of the Bedford Horticultural Society. I will be working to fill Ann Jones' shoes as the new editor of the *Scotia Gardener*. We Nova Scotian garden club members are brought together because we share a common interest—gardening. This common interest is the basis of many friendships, learning experiences and good times. We value the personal satisfaction of being part of a community that is generous, nurturing and optimistic. That's just how gardeners are!

I hope to meet many of you through our newsletter and trust that you will enjoy reading and contributing to the new features such as the Gardeners' Must Haves corner, Favourite Plant Profile and Gardening Under Glass. Interest in gardening has grown immensely during Covid and I believe our newsletter can provide opportunities for the new as well as the more experienced gardeners to increase and share their gardening knowledge. Some of the items planned for future issues include regular articles on garden myths, garden challenges and how to decode those impressive Latin plant names. If you have a suggestion, special garden photo or something to share, please email me at: [newsletter@nsagc.com](mailto:newsletter@nsagc.com)

## Favourite Plant Profile: Creating Drama on the Deck

by Emily Walker

The first time I laid eyes on this plant in the nursery, I knew I had to have it! I liked its unusual name—'King Tut'—and thought it would be an interesting plant to use in a pot on my deck, right where I could see it from the kitchen window. When I brought this ornamental grass home, it was about 15 inches tall. I used a large, high-sided pot that could support a tall plant. I filled the pot with soil amended with plenty of compost and underplanted 'KingTut' with bocopia and a couple of purple petunias. 'King Tut' proved to be easy to care for. All it required was regular watering and the removal of the occasional brown frond. And did it ever grow—to nearly six feet high! Majestic, graceful and elegant, the stems with their feather duster heads were strong and supple enough to support the small songbirds that perched in them. Before taking it inside for the winter, I cut the stems back to just three inches. I also collected some of its seeds and hope to have success growing them. 'King Tut' has now taken up residence in a small room in the garage. It appears to like the light from the window and the scant amount of water I have given it. The stems have already grown over a foot tall! Oh, my!

*Cyperus papyrus* 'King Tut' is an ornamental grass that grows an impressive four to six feet high. Native to Africa, this remarkable plant has a lovely silhouette that sways gracefully in the breeze. A smaller version, 'Prince Tut', grows to be two to three feet high. The grass comes by its name honestly as it looks like it belongs in a Pharaoh's palace or bordering the banks of the Nile River. *Cyperus papyrus* was an important plant in ancient times when it was used to make useful things like paper, mats, rope, sandals, boats and baskets.

'King Tut' makes a dramatic statement as a potted plant and would be equally lovely at the back of a border garden. What is your favourite plant? Why? How do you care for it? Email your favourite plant details and photo to: [newsletter@nsagc.com](mailto:newsletter@nsagc.com)





Favourite Plant:  
King Tut grass  
against an  
autumn sunset



## 2019-2020 NSAGC Executive Directors



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## Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society Announcement

The Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticulture Society is hosting the American Rhododendron Society Convention on June 3-6, 2021, at the Old Orchard Inn in the Annapolis Valley. As it is still expected that travel restrictions will be in place, convention organizers will also be offering the presentations and virtual garden tours on-line for those who cannot travel to the Convention. For more information or to volunteer for this event, please contact:

**Jim Sharpe**

**ARS Convention Co-Chair  
sharpe@ns.sympatico.ca**

## Scotia Gardener: 2020 Fall Issue (Volume 20, Number 2)

Please note that the editor of the Scotia Gardener has exclusive control over the content and format of the newsletter. All information submitted for publication will be thoroughly reviewed by the editor and will be included or excluded in the newsletter at the sole discretion of the editor.

The preference is that all photographs in the newsletter be original. Photos will be credited on the page where the photo appears or on the penultimate page of the newsletter.

### Photo credits:

Emily Walker—Pages 1, 3, 7 (bottom), 10, 14, 17, 18  
Ed Kerr—Page 20



**Celebrating the Harvest**