

SCOTIA GARDENER



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Hello fellow gardeners!

Welcome to December! It certainly has been a challenging year for gardeners with lengthy drought issues across the province. I am happy to hear the rain outside my window as I write this message - we seem to now be catching up on our rain and I for one will not complain! I hope the extreme drought has not impacted you and your garden too much. It certainly has given us pause to think just how important our water resources are and how we must adapt to a changing climate.

It has been a beautiful fall, and I hope you have had time to get out and enjoy it. I have enjoyed the nice afternoons to clean up my yard while getting it ready for the winter and putting some fall bulbs in the ground.

We have had a busy fall at the NSAGC. In **September** we held our **semi-annual Executive and board meetings**. We had some great discussions about ongoing initiatives, and the minutes are available on the NSAGC website. Most importantly, we voted on a **giveaway plant for 2026**, which is the **DIANTHUS – “ROCKIN RED”**. More details will follow from the committee co-chairs in late March 2026.

I attended the **District 3 Fall Rally** in **Elmsdale** in early **October** and was impressed by the large turnout from all over this very large district. I also have some pending invites coming up that I am very much looking forward to. If your club or district would like me to attend a meeting or event, please don't hesitate to reach out!

In **November** the Executive held a **strategic planning meeting** to set goals for my two-year term as Chairperson. We have lots of exciting initiatives that we will be busy working on. We also held a **one-day training session for new board members** in Truro on **November 8th**, which was well attended and gave new members a lot of helpful resources to enable them to be successful in their roles.

As we wrap up a very busy 2025, I want to take a moment to wish you and yours a wonderful holiday season filled with joy, laughter and happiness! I look forward to seeing you in 2026!

Geoff MacDonald
NSAGC Chairperson
secretary@nsagc.com



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“THE MOTHER OF EXPLORER ROSES”

Dr. Felicitas Svejda, 1920 - 2016, born in Vienna, Austria

Submitted by Janice Schmidt



I have had the pleasure of submitting two articles to this newsletter on the growing of Canadian roses in Nova Scotia.

In this next series I want to continue all things Canadian that we should be proud of and that is the **Hybridizers** of those roses that have become famous exports and found in gardens throughout the world. This is due to their hardiness, disease resistance, and ease of propagation.

The idea started in **1968** by **Dr. Svejda** who launched the first national trial of ornamental shrubs in Canada. The program focused on developing winter hardy, recurrent flowering varieties with good resistance to disease. Back in 1961 few rose varieties could survive without winter protection outside the warmer conditions of Southern Ontario and the coast of British Columbia.

Today there are **twenty-five varieties** in the **Explorer series**, and they can generally survive temperatures as low as -35 degrees Celsius with repeat blooms in beautiful colours of red, pink, white and yellow over the growing season with minimal pruning requirements. I have had many explorer roses in my garden and now that I live in Nova Scotia, I can also add to the Explorer roses success by saying that they can also withstand high winds off the Bay of Fundy and salty sea spray.

Dr. Svejda was rewarded for her contributions to the world of roses by being presented with the Certificate of Merit from the Royal National Rose Society of Great Britain (1985), the Gold Medal of Portland (2004) for John Cabot, Certificate of Merit from the Canadian Ornamental Plant Foundation (1999) and an Honorary Doctorate of Science from York University, Toronto (2000).

The Canadian Rose Society also enjoyed a wonderful relationship with Dr. Svejda and from 2001 to 2004 she was an **honorary patron of our society**.



William Baffin

Here are a few of her roses that are in my garden:

George Vancouver (*shown on the right*) has a growth habit of 0.9 M high and a spread of 1 M. Repeat blooms from June to September and very resistant to powdery mildew and black spot.



George Vancouver

William Baffin (*shown on the left*) has a growth habit of 2.5 – 3.0 M and repeat blooms from June to September and is resistant to powdery mildew and black spot. The top photo is of four William Baffin's before I moved to Nova Scotia, and the bottom photo is my current William Baffin which is four feet tall.

I hope you enjoyed a glimpse of my garden featuring a couple of Dr. Svejda's roses, in my next article I will feature roses from the **Canadian Artist Series** that share the rose bed with the Explorers.

Please visit the Canadian Rose Society website for more information on Canadian Hardy Roses at Canadianrosesociety.org. If you have any questions related to the growing of roses, please contact me at Jantim200698@gmail.com.

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with a quote from the great lady herself.

“I greatly enjoyed my work with roses, and I am happy that people around the globe enjoy cultivating and looking at the Explorers.”

Dr. Felicitas Svejda

Sources: Jenny Hart Editor of the Canadian Rose Society newsletter and Janice Schmidt President of the Canadian Rose Society.

WINTER SOWING

Submitted by Lori Reid, Vice Chairperson, NSAGC and Member of the Mount Denson Garden Club

I discovered the concept of **Winter Sowing** in 2020 and have become totally addicted to this fun process. I do not (yet) have a greenhouse, nor do I have room in the house to start all the plants I would like to put out in the beds. So, this process works great for me, with the **added bonus** of being able to sink my fingers into soil when I normally am looking out the windows at my snow-covered beds. There have been many success and sure failures but that is what gardening is all about – right! It has been wonderful to be able to share my love of winter sowing with local Garden Clubs and to share the plants I have been able to propagate with this method.

My preferred seeds to start are **perennials** but **hardy annuals and vegetables** can be done using this method as well. Achillea, Agastache, Asclepias, Baptista, Chrysanthemum, Columbine, Dianthus, Echinacea (7 varieties), Nepeta, Poppies (annual & perennial), Salvia, and Veronica have all germinated successfully. This past year I experimented with vegetable seeds and discovered that the tomatoes germinated and were by far the best tomato plants in my garden.

I start my winter sowing anytime after mid January when the Holidays are behind me and my fingers start itching to get into gardening again.



All set for the winter and covered with snow.

What is Winter Sowing?

Winter sowing is exactly what it sounds like. Sowing seeds in the winter using a container that acts like a greenhouse.

Why Winter Sow?

1. It will stop the constant daily spring parade of transplants to harden off. As they sprout, they will become acclimatized to the weather fluctuations we have here in the spring.
2. You do not need to invest in costly equipment.
3. It is a space saver as after the initial prep work, it is all placed outside.

When To Winter Sow?

You can start your winter sowing any time **after winter has settled in with snow and cold temperatures**. However, you need to have your containers out at least 4 to 6 weeks before the last frost date if specific length of cold stratification is required.

What To Winter Sow?

1. Some seeds are better than others to use for winter sowing. **Frost Hardy, Cold Hardy, Perennial or Cold Stratify** are keywords to look for in descriptions on seed packages.
2. Any seed that transplants well - as you will need to either pull them apart or pick them. So, transplants that do not like having their roots disturbed (cucumbers, or squash) will not work well.
3. Choose Canadian or locally sourced seeds as the seeds are produced for our climate.

What Type of Containers?

You do not have to purchase any special containers. **Recycle** your used 4L water jugs, juice jugs, or deep bakery containers into your winter greenhouses. Clear, sturdy containers work best allowing the sun to get to the plants. I have discovered the pots with clear domed lids available at the *Dollar Store* work very well.

Steps:

1. **Prepare your containers** by drilling or cutting drainage holes in the bottom. **Hint:** if you are using jugs do this before you cut it. Once the drainage holes are done you can go ahead and cut your jug just under the handle or about halfway up, making sure to not cut all the way around. Leave about one-inch uncut so that top and bottom are still attached.
2. **Pre-moisten your soil** in a bucket. Add enough water so that if you pick up a handful and squeeze it is moist but not drippy but if you open your hand, it will stay together. I use *PRO-MIX Premium All Purpose Mix* by the bales.
3. **Pack** in soil at least 4-5" deep.
4. **Sprinkle seeds** over soil - **pressing** so seed is in contact with moist soil.

WINTER SOWING

Continued from Page 3

5. **DO NOT FORGET** to add a tag inside the container. Trust me you will not remember what is in it!
6. **Put duct tape** around the jug closing the **top and bottom together**.
7. If using jugs leave the screw cap off, if using another type of container make sure there are holes in the top for air circulation and so water can get in. But keep the screw cap for later to be used to close the jug in case of a cold spell after germination. It will trap the day's heat in overnight. Hint: if you have a lot of jugs out it is much easier to throw a tarp over them.
8. Using a **Garden Marker**, write contents on the outside of the container. Using Sharpie markers will leave you guessing as it will fade, again trust me, I know! **Make a Master List** of what jug contains what seeds.
9. **Final step** - take them out and nestle them into their new home. Find a sheltered, sunny spot and plop them down in the snow. Check on them occasionally to make sure they have not dried out, if they have, drip some water in or mound some snow on them, without opening them. That is, it until you start seeing the green sprouts popping up.

Quick Reference – Winter Sowing Method



Cut your jug, leaving just a bit as a "hinge", punch lots of drainage holes.



Make sure your potting soil is moist, not soaked, but moist enough to clump together if you squeeze a handful.



Add your soil so its at least 4" deep and then sprinkle your seeds on top and press down.



Sprinkle a bit of soil on top of the seeds and make sure you put a tag inside the jug.



Tape closed and on the outside of the jug write the name of the seeds you put inside.



Put your jugs outside and forget until it warms up.

Now What

This is the **hardest part...waiting!** You should start to see growing activity around the same time as your tulips or daffodils pop up. Patience is the key to success!

Once the seedlings are **actively growing** watch for the occasional warmer days as it will get hot inside the container and fry them quickly. More **ventilation** may be needed, either more holes or pop the top off for a bit.

You can start planting them out into the ground once it is sufficiently warmed up and the seedlings have 2 to 3 true leaves.

To **transplant** into the ground, either pull apart individually or use the chunk method, which is just dividing the clump into halves or thirds, my preferred method.

If you decide to try this or have already used this method, I would love to hear from you at nsagc.lori2025@gmail.com.

Happy Gardening!

2026 NSAGC CONVENTION - JUNE 5-7 – PLAN TO ATTEND

Submitted by Glynis Thomas, Director, District 1 – Cape Breton

The planning for the **NSAGC 2026 Convention** is well underway. **Mark your Calendar** now to attend – **June 5 - 7, 2026** at the **Inverary Resort Baddeck** in Baddeck, NS.

Registration is now open and the Registration Form and Accommodation information is as follows but you can find all this information and more on the NSAGC website at <https://nsagc.com/>.

2026 NSAGC CONVENTION – REGISTRATION FORM



2026 NSAGC Convention Registration

Hosted by District 1 Cape Breton

June 5-7, 2026

Inverary Resort Baddeck

368 Shore Rd, Baddeck, NS (details to follow)

(Please note Registration Closes May 6th, 2026)

CULTURE – RHYTHM – ROOTS

Name: First _____ Last _____
 e-mail: _____
 Telephone: _____
 Mailing address: _____
 Garden Club or Society Affiliation: _____

ATTENDING:	Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	Banquet	<input type="checkbox"/>
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CONVENTION Fees include: *Friday Evening Reception - Hands on Floral Challenge, Appetizers & Round the Island Presentation. Saturday (830am-5pm) AGM, Guest Speakers, Served Lunch & Refreshment Breaks, Awards, Floral Displays and more.*
 Please, check all boxes that apply.

Garden Club Members, Affiliate Society Members	\$70.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
General Public	\$80.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Late Registration (Received after April 26, 2026)	add \$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/>

Taxes & Gratuity are included in all meals

SATURDAY EVENING BANQUET Fees include: *Full Three Course Served Meal (please check meal selection), Keynote Speaker, Cape Breton Ceilidh with Doug Lamey & Company.*

Garden Club or Affiliate Society Member, and Guests	\$70.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Roast Chicken	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vegetarian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Atlantic Salmon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vegan	<input type="checkbox"/>

Special Requirements: _____

We are also pleased to offer a “**PROPER GARDEN APRON**” with pockets, adjustable cross-back straps, plus something special (More details and photographs to follow).

GARDEN APRON (NO orders accepted after May 6, 2026)	\$25.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
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CONVENTION + BANQUET + APRON = TOTAL \$

The GREAT REGISTRATION DRAW: Two registrations will be drawn from the those received on or before **February 26, 2026** for a full reimbursement of Convention Fees Only (Banquet Fees, Apron not included).

For more information email: convention@nsagc.com

Online Registration may be completed via nsagc.com “Save the Date” then e-transfer or mail payment.

e-mail registration to: convention@nsagc.com

e-transfer to: convention@nsagc.com In **MEMO** area of e-transfer include **FULL NAME & phone number**.

Mail Registration and/or Cheque payable to **NSAGC 2026** (no post-dated cheques, please) to:

NSAGC 2026 c/o 21 Keefe Avenue, Sydney, NS B1R 2C9

Confirmation email/notice will be sent once your registration form and payment have been received.

ACCESSIBILITY: The venue is accessible but please advise of any considerations that may impede you.

REFUNDS will be considered only for exceptional circumstances, by the convention committee, based on information from requestor.

2026 NSAGC CONVENTION – ACCOMMODATION INFORMATION

We are pleased the 2026 NSACG Convention June 5-7, 2026 is at



WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE INVERARY RESORT FOR THEIR SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT AND DEDICATION TO OUR CONVENTION.

The Inverary has provided rooms at group rates of \$224 & up, which **includes breakfast. Just let them know you are with the NSAGC Convention in June of 2026.**

Inveraryresort.com or **1-800-565-5660** or reservations@capebretonresorts.com

Please note this site is a resort with many included amenities. They will also be bringing in live entertainment for us on Friday evening at the Lakeside Restaurant at no cost to us.

AMENITIES INCLUDE: • 11 acres of gardens, green space and shoreline

• Indoor Heated Pool, Indoor & Outdoor Hot Tubs, Sauna, Fitness Centre

• Private Beach (with Bonfires in the evening), a boardwalk, shuffleboard, washer toss

• The Inverary Spa (email: inveraryspa@outlook.com)

• The Narrows Café & Bar, Lakeside Restaurant (Oyster shucking)

• Marina (with watercraft rentals - Kayaks, paddle boats, Pontoon boat)

Plus enjoy up to 20% savings on golf at Bell Bay Golf Club!

Accommodations

Room Type	Total Room Count	Dates	Your Group Rates Double occupancy
Main Lodge Water View (King or 2 Queen)	June 5-7, 2026	June 5-7, 2026	\$269
Main Lodge 2 Queens			\$269
King Suites			\$330
Two Bedroom Queen Suite			N/A
Traditional King, Double or Queen			\$224
SKYE - 3 Bedroom Cottage - min. 3 nights			N/A
Cottages (King or Efficiency)			N/A
Total Rooms Blocked: 100 (mixed)			

A 3% marketing fee & HST will be applied to the above quoted guest room rate during your groups stay.
Suites and cottages may be available as well during this time.

Guest Room Reservations Policy:

- Inverary Resort requires that the first's night room rate & taxes be paid upon booking of each guest room.
- Cancellation Policy for Guestroom Reservations is 3 days prior to date of arrival. Not canceling before this time is a charge of first night's room & taxes charged to the form of payment the reservation is guaranteed to
- Check in is at 3:00 pm and check out time is 11:00 am. Any person who checks out later than 11:00 am will have a late charge fee automatically applied to their room account.

2026 NSAGC CONVENTION – ALTERNATE ACCOMMODATION, ATTRACTIONS, ADVENTURES AND MORE

ADVENTURES IN AND NEAR BADDECK CURATED BY THE INVERARY RESORT

- Hike to Uisge Ban Falls (group transport can be arranged through Bannockburn tours.com)
- Catamaran Sailing – www.sailingcbi.com
- Tour of Big Spruce Brewery – www.bigspruce.ca
- Bell Museum tours - www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/ns/grahambell/index.aspx

The Inverary Resort staff can also assist groups in arranging the above tours. Please contact the Inverary Resort at 902-295-3500 for details after making your reservation with the Inverary Resort.

CAPE BRETON ISLAND – BADDECK

Baddeck has been described as the beginning – and the end – of Cape Breton Island’s world-famous Cabot Trail. Nestled along the shores of the Bras d’Or Lake (a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve), its name likely derived from the Mi’kmaw word Abadak – “place with an island near” (Kidston). Places of interest in and near Baddeck, and see CBIslands.com for more ideas:

- Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site (Museum) and **Mabel Bell’s new Garden**
- Uisage Ban Falls Provincial Park ([Uisage Ban Falls Provincial Park - Wikipedia](http://Uisage%20Ban%20Falls%20Provincial%20Park%20-%20Wikipedia) _Falls)
- Walk the Baddeck Boardwalk and the public wharf
- Walk Chebucto Street dotted with shops, galleries, cafes, historic buildings
- Gaelic College/Colaiste na Gàidhlig 15 min drive from Baddeck ([Colaiste na Gàidhlig / The Gaelic College](http://Colaiste%20na%20Gàidhlig%20%2F%20The%20Gaelic%20College))
- Provincial Parks – Whycocomagh, St. Anne’s, North River, Mabou & West Mabou
- Amoeba Tours, Sailing CBI, North River Kayak (Kidston ferry opens at the end of June)

NSAGC 2026 CONVENTION OPTIONS

Alternate Accommodation near the Inverary Resort

Within 10 mins walking distance

- Auberge Gisele’s Inn
- Ceilidh Country Lodge
- Lynwood Inn
- Telegraph House
- Silver Dart Lodge
- Bryson’s Bed & Breakfast

There are other accommodations, including campgrounds, B&B, Airbnb within a reasonably close distance to the Inverary Resort and our event venue at the MacAulay Conference Centre.

Restaurants and Café’s in Baddeck

There are two options at Inverary Resort

- **The Narrows**
- **Lakeside Restaurant**

Within 15 mins walk of the Inverary Resort

- Baddeck Lobster Suppers
- Salt Rock Restaurant
- Highwheeler Cafe & Bakery
- Tom’s Pizza
- Three Doors Down Diner
- Main Street Restaurant Baddeck
- Bell Buoy Bistro
- The Freight Shed: Waterside or Terrace

2026 NSAGC PHOTO CONTEST

Submitted by Sharon Bryson, Photo Contest Chair

The **2026 NSAGC Photo Contest** is open for the season. The **deadline** for submitting your entries is **April 29, 2026**.

The **PHOTO CONTEST RULES AND CLASSES** are printed below and can also be found on the NSAGC website at <http://nsagc.ca>.

Please read the rules which explain all the procedures for entries. *Be especially aware of the need for full size images.*

Look through your pictures from last year and choose some great ones. You may enter up to ten (10) photos (one per Class) or if you prefer only one or two.

For inspiration the photos presented here are just a few of the entries from last year and you can view more of last years' entries on the NSAGC website at <http://nsagc.ca>.

Have fun selecting your entries for the NSAGC 2026 Photo Contest and we look forward to seeing all your beautiful photos.



Venie McShane -
Class 3

Photo Contest Rules for the 2026 NSAGC Photo Competition

PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE RULES APPLY TO THE 2026 CONTEST. PLEASE DO NOT USE RULES FROM PREVIOUS YEARS.

1. The contest is open to amateur photographers. (Photography cannot be your primary business.) The Chair of the contest and others associated with organizing the competition are not eligible. The Chair will decide questions of eligibility.
2. Contestants must be **members** of a club, society or an affiliate that pays dues to the NSAGC.
3. Contestants may enter **one photograph per class** in each of the following classes (maximum **ten** photos):

Class 1 - Life in the Garden

- Insects or Animals (e.g., birds, deer, squirrels, snakes, frogs, etc.) **no** humans or pets. Best if photo also shows some botanical feature.



Life in the Garden – 1st in
Class - Mark Kehoe

Class 2 - Close-ups

- Close-up or macro of any botanical feature (i.e., flower, leaf, etc.).

Class 3 - Foliage

- Celebrate the beautiful diversity of foliage form, colour and texture featured in your garden plants.



Water in Garden – 3rd in Class -
Tim Geddes

Class 4 - Water in the Garden

- Any image depicting water somewhere, somehow in the garden, from a garden pond, fountain, rain (raindrops), stream, rainbow, etc. This is a class where creativity can be expressed!

2026 NSAGC PHOTO CONTEST

Continued from Page 8

Class 5 - Vegetables or Fruit

- Any type, singly or in groups, or a mixture, picked or still on the vegetation.

Class 6 - Garden Art

- Any structure, sculpture, piece of art (any type) among the vegetation. Could involve such things as flower show arrangements, wreaths, topiary, creative flower beds, etc., that are part of a garden landscape (best shown among the vegetation or flowers).

Class 7 - Flowering Trees or Shrubs

- One type or any mixture, either in the garden or as an arrangement. Can be shown alone or as part of a garden setting at time of flowering.

Class 8 - Fall Scene

- A creative opportunity to capture the beauty or activities of the season, either in the garden or as a work of Mother Nature.

Class 9 - Landscape

- A photo should capture the fun, beauty, or creativity of a sizable portion of a garden or natural landscape, including aerial shots.



**Nature in Winter – 2nd in
Class - Bill Reader**

Class 10 - Nature in Winter

- Views of gardens or plants in the winter season that are highlighted by snow, frost or vegetation shape or colour in this season.

4. Any individual photo can only be submitted in one class.

5. The finished photograph must accurately reflect the subject matter and the scene as it originally appeared - i.e., no Photoshop-like editing except for cropping or brightness alterations.

6. **Photos will be submitted digitally.** Change the ***File Name to Your Name and Class No.*** For example: right click the mouse on the photo to change the file name and select *Rename* from the pop-up menu. Type *Adamsmith1* for your name (Adam Smith) and the class number one. Then save the photo using *Save as* in the original folder or create a new folder for just these photos. Continue for each of the photos you will be submitting, changing the class number of each.

- **Image size is to be no smaller than 1500 pixels on the longest side** (portrait or landscape orientation). Small images do not meet the judges' criteria.
- Email your photos to [**photos.nsage@gmail.com**](mailto:photos.nsage@gmail.com).
- Exceptionally large files may need to be submitted in successive emails.
- Include in your email: **your name, address, email address, phone number, and the club or organization** of which you are a member.
- **Photos are to be received by no later than April 29, 2026**, to allow time for judging, as well as putting the presentation together for the NSAGC convention.

2026 NSAGC PHOTO CONTEST

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7. Photos will be judged on originality, composition, focus and exposure. Judging will be done by two independent judges with years of gardening/plant and/or art/photography backgrounds and will be administered by the Chair.

The judges will accept any photo that is a reasonable interpretation of the title of the class concerned. Remember, one of the four criteria of judging is originality.

8. Photos that have received a 1st, 2nd or 3rd place standing in any class of a previous NSAGC annual photographic contest cannot be resubmitted in subsequent years.

9. **One 1st, 2nd and 3rd place prize will be awarded for the three “Best Overall” photos.**

10. Display during convention - since all photos will be in a digital format, they will be part of a video which will run on a screen in a loop during the entire convention so that all attending members will have the opportunity to view them all. Each photo will have the contestant's name included, along with any award it received. The three Best Overall winners will be displayed as well.

11. In submitting your photos, you grant the NSAGC permission to display or reproduce them for the following purposes: to promote, inform or advertise the photo contest to members of the NSAGC; and/or for the NSAGC to use as promotional material. All submitted photos will be displayed on the NSAGC website - www.nsagc.com - shortly after the Convention.

In all other matters the owners of the photo(s) will retain their rights under copyright law. If you choose to include people in your submission, you are responsible to obtain the necessary release from the individual(s) depicted.



Mia Muise - Class 5

GARDEN CLUB NEWS

BRIDGEWATER GARDEN CLUB (District 6 – South Shore) Submitted by Pauline Morehouse

After a busy Summer, our garden club regrouped in September with a presentation from **Kayla Winsor, Climate Action Coordinator**, the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg on the **Woolly Adelgid project**. Most parks in the district are included in this program, with trees being treated.

In October, we held a **pumpkin decorating workshop**. We hold this annual event and invite our youngest along to have fun with pumpkins.

We are looking forward to **2026**, with more meetings, workshops, and road trips in the planning stage. Sharing our love of gardening with fun, laughter, and learning.



GARDEN CLUB NEWS

GREAT VILLAGE GARDEN CLUB

(District 3 – Central North)

Submitted by Cheryl Cooke, President

Our club has been **busy**, we have added new community flower boxes to our care this spring. With the drought we were thankful for marigolds and geraniums being the hardy stock planted.

We had a **successful plant sale, as well!**

Our Club Members toured: Lowland gardens, Hillendale's, The Dalhousie Alumni gardens, rock gardens and greenhouse and ended our touring trips with a pruning demo at Charlie the tree guy's.



We hosted a seed exchange followed with a presentation by one of our members - **Gabrielle** on her gorgeous water feature in her backyard.

At our next meeting we are making centrepieces lead by our Events Coordinator **Patti**!

Our **Outstanding member** for 2025 was **Arthur Haskins**. The commitment and knowledge he provides to the GVGC is invaluable. If we are doing a fundraiser, turning a bed, or looking for a last-minute speaker or activity, we never have to look far because Art always helps. It is a privilege an honor to have him as one of our members.

To wrap up 2025 we will be putting up a holiday tree (**64th consecutive year**) in the centre of Great Village with a social gathering at our past president's home for treats and laughs – thank you **Cathy and Steve**!

As always, we welcome guests and would love to have you join us. Happy Gardening from the Great Village Garden Club.

UPPER VAUGHAN GARDEN CLUB

(District 5 – Valley District)

Submitted by Mark Kehoe, President & Co-Secretary

Frosty nights are our seasonal reminder to get our flower beds cleaned up and ready for their winter rest. The garden club took advantage of some warmer days and completed the necessary plant maintenance, amended the soil and planted spring bulbs in all our community gardens. We all agree that some of our most enjoyable club socials are when we have our hands in the dirt.



In November we modified our **annual Seed Exchange** evening to include a **bottled canned/preserved food exchange**. Members swapped some delicious treats from our gardens and kitchens.

Plans for winter include a **December Christmas Dessert Party** and a **January Build-A-Bouquet workshop**.



GARDEN CLUB NEWS

PARRSBORO GARDEN CLUB

(District 3 – Central North)

Submitted by **Georgie Hebb**

For October, we did Apples!

Our October 6th meeting was a beautiful autumn day where Club members **pressed apples!** What fun, and a lot of work! With the generous loan of an apple press for the day, and we set to work. Putting the press together was quite a task. While that was happening, the rest of us were cutting up the apples nice and small, and then some went through a meat grinder to mush them to start the process of juice extraction. Then off to the press. Next came the challenging work part – turning the press required a bit of muscle! We watched in anticipation for the first trickle of juice to come out of the spout and lo and behold, there it was – then more emptied into our bucket – while our intrepid pressers kept up turning the press. We all enjoyed the day and took home some lovely fresh apple juice at the end of the meeting.



Hard work pressing apples!

Peter Milner, a local apple forager and purveyor of fine apple cider. In 2018 he started **Faraway Cider** so he could share his passion with the public. Our event was well attended and enjoyed by the community. Peter passed on a lot of information that he has learned, or researched, over the years about the wonders of wild apples. Peter covered foraging for apples in Cumberland, grafting apples to create an orchard, growing healthy nutritional apples, and making cider.



Apple Talk - Margaret with our speaker, Peter Milner

November meeting – Garden Successes and Failures

We enjoyed a PowerPoint presentation of lovely images sent in by our members showing our gardens from this summer. Although we had a serious drought, there were many successes. Members eagerly talked about what they managed to pull through, what did not make it and lessons were learned for next year to ward off failure if we experience another extremely dry summer.

Other Events

A few of our members attended the **Fall Rally** and thoroughly enjoyed the day. It was a very well put together event and well attended.

Over the summer a few devoted members have diligently cared for the planters, as well as the **Dino Garden and Meadow at the Fundy Geological Museum**. Those gardens looked lovely all summer long thanks to their hard work.



SUCCESS

GARDEN CLUB NEWS

EASTERN SHORE GARDEN CLUB

(District 4 – Halifax District)

Submitted by Diane Lucas, President

At our **September** meeting, we welcomed guest speaker **Alexe Indigo**, a PhD student at **Dalhousie Agricultural Campus** in Truro, who has been studying **Japanese beetles**.

In June, Alexe asked club members who could collect fifty or more Japanese beetles in one day, to participate in her study. She gave us collection kits and questionnaires. Those club members who participated in the study, brought their kits for Alexe to the September meeting.

We learned from Alexe that Japanese Beetles arrived in North America around 1950. In the last five years, their numbers and range have increased due to climate change. The beetles feed on three hundred different plants.

In the USA, where large numbers of Japanese Beetles have been present for longer, some native animal species are beginning to prey upon the beetle, such as the parasitic Winsom fly, the Goldenrod Crab Spider (*Misumena vatia*), birds, and raccoons. We are hoping our native animals will also begin to see Japanese beetles as food. For now, the best gardeners can do to control them is to drop them into a container of soapy water. Nematodes sprayed on your lawn may be a helpful control. Japanese beetle traps may increase the number of beetles coming to your yard, filling the traps quickly and spreading to more plants. Soap sprays and pesticides on plants and the ground will harm pollinators and larvae of native insects, so this is not recommended. We hope that Alexe's research will help us to find ways to safely control this invasive insect in the coming years.

Tracy Jessen, the **Naturalization Coordinator** for **Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM)**, was our guest speaker at our **October** meeting. The HRM Naturalization program was launched in 2022. Tracy, an

experienced horticulturalist, was hired along with two seasonal gardeners. The program has three aspects: 1. planting and care – native planting initiatives, wetland restoration, invasive species removal, 2. Education - 'Sharing the importance of naturalization and species it supports, including upcoming or ongoing naturalization project sites,' and 3. Outreach - 'Involving communities in planting and maintenance to foster ownership and stewardship.' We are so fortunate to have Tracy working on this project. Tracy is also a **Butterflyway Ranger**. **Butterflyway** is a project that helps people naturalize their own yards and communities.

Find out more about these projects here:

<https://www.halifax.ca/parks-recreation/parks-trails-gardens/naturalization>

<https://davidsuzuki.org/take-action/act-locally/butterflyway/>

We also enjoyed our annual seed, tuber, and rhizome exchange at the October meeting.

Workshops - Twenty members took part in **Bloom Institutes** (<https://bloominstitute.ca/>) herbal workshop on the use of beneficial roots.

Volunteers – A few Club members volunteered their time to do some instruction and planting of bulbs at the local **Soul's Harbour site**. We also did a garden clean up and bulb planting at our **local cenotaph**, ahead of Remembrance Day.



*Tracy Jessen, HRM
Naturalization Coordinator*



October seed, tuber and rhizome exchange.

GARDEN CLUB NEWS

BIBLE HILL GARDEN CLUB

(District 3 – Central North)

Submitted by *Cathy Fanning*

“The garden year has no beginnings and no end.” Elizabeth Lawrence

There is beauty in the natural world, no matter what the season. Fall was busy for the **Bible Hill Garden Club**. It was nice to see old and new members come out for the first fall meeting. At this meeting, we had the pleasure of listening to **Alexe Indigo**, a PhD student at Dalhousie Agriculture College, give an informative talk on the **Japanese Beetle** and management strategies. In **September**, members of the Bible Hill Garden Club were busy tending to fall cleanup at the local cemetery and admiring the new benches that the club had donated and installed at the cemetery.

The month of October saw many of our members attend the **Fall Rally at Riverview United Church** in **Elmsdale**. Members reported back to the Club about how much they enjoyed the speakers, the lovely food and prizes, and the opportunity to connect with other fellow garden club members. Everyone had a enjoyable time. A huge thank you to the organizing committee for a job well done!

During the Club’s **October** meeting, members had the opportunity to make a scarecrow decoration or centerpiece for Thanksgiving. **Heather Creelman**, a talented member led this activity. All the necessary supplies including a variety of bottles were available for members to choose from for their project. A fun night for all members for sure!



November’s club meeting is traditionally the month for making a wreath or an outdoor container for Christmas. This activity was led by another one of our talented members, **Joan Salter**. There was a variety of fresh seasonal greenery, berries, and ribbon available for members to choose from. On **December 7th**, the Club will host its **traditional centerpiece workshop** for the community at the Bible Hill Fire Hall.



The **Holiday Season** is quickly approaching, and members are looking forward to our Club’s **Annual Christmas Dinner** planned for **December 8th**. In the spirit of giving, club members are requested to donate a non-perishable food item for the local Food Bank at this event.

After a remarkably busy fall season, may you all enjoy the rest that winter offers in the garden! It is a time to dream and plan for next spring. On behalf of the Bible Hill Garden Club, we wish all our fellow garden club members a happy and healthy Holiday and a bright New Year!

FORTIES GARDEN CLUB

District 5 – Valley

Submitted by *Sheila McKeand, Co-ordinator for the District Meeting*

The **FORTIES GARDEN CLUB** will be hosting the **DISTRICT 5 MEETING** on **April 18 2026**, at the **Forties Community Centre**, 1787 Forties Road, Forties Settlement.

The theme for the day will be **“The Enjoyment and Rewards of Gardening.”**

The committee is very busy with planning a wonderful day filled with presentations from four guest speakers, Vendors, Outstanding Member Award presentations, coffee/lunch break and so much more.

Plan to attend and be sure to **register by April 10, 2026**. Registration forms with an invitation will be sent out in the next week and if you do not receive one just send **your full name, garden club name, indicate if you have any dietary restrictions and mail your cheque for \$30.00** to **Sheila McKeand, c/o Forties Garden Club, 1644 Forties Road, New Ross, NS B0J 2M0**.

GARDEN CLUB NEWS

ANTIGONISH GARDEN CLUB

District 2 – Eastern

Submitted by Ruth MacEachern, Secretary

Antigonish Garden Club has enjoyed a lively autumn, encouraged by the rains and some mild weather.

Our September meeting was a members' forum discussing the drought and covering coping strategies and results. There was also a lot of interest in self-watering planters and rain barrels, so we hope to arrange a presentation in spring 2026 on the use of pots, barrels, and accessories.

Fifteen members from Antigonish attended the **District 2 - Fall Rally**, where we enjoyed meeting people from other Clubs, listening to varied and interesting speakers, and enjoying a generous and tasty lunch. Members noted that while we are all committed gardeners, every Club has a different style and a different focus, so we can learn so much from each other. Creation of the **Pumpkin Centerpieces** over lunch was very enjoyable, and we would like to congratulate the **Westville Club and Area Garden Club** for organizing such a pleasant day.

In October, Heather and Tony

Blackburn of Heather Hill Farm provided a lively and informative session on **“Planting Fall Bulbs.”** This included advice on how to naturalize bulbs and how to combine different types of bulbs in one bed. We were also told that deer will avoid tulips if they are planted among daffodils. In the weeks following the session, many members were motivated to buy and plant new bulbs.



Antigonish Garden Club members with Pumpkin Centre pieces made at District 2 - Fall Rally.



Ayami Briggs' prize winning Ikebana arrangement.

At the **June Convention**, many members admired **Ayami Briggs'** prize-winning **Ikebana floral arrangement**. Thus, our November meeting will see twenty members gather with Ayami Briggs to learn how to create their own ikebana arrangement.

The year will end on **December 14th** with our **annual Christmas party**, always a merry afternoon, with donations for the food bank as well as food, music, and lively conversation.

MOUNT DENSON GARDEN CLUB

District 5 – Valley

Submitted by Lori Reid, Vice Chairperson, NSAGC and Member of the Mount Denson Garden Club

We finally got rain here in West Hants!!! As we prepared our gardens for the winter, the moisture was welcomed.

We held our **Annual Fall Mum Sale** at **Clifton Park Museum**, in Windsor this year and were pleased to sell out in 1.5 hours. Many thanks to everyone who came out to support this fundraiser.

At our **October** meeting, **Lori Reid** talked to members about **Winter Sowing**. Benefits, preparation and seeds were discussed. This talk generated so much enthusiasm that several members are trying Winter Sowing for the first time this winter. We will be reporting in the spring newsletter if their efforts resulted in lots of new plants.

We are pleased to announce our **\$500 Norma Sweet Memorial Bursary** has been awarded to **Ava Copas**. *Congratulations* Ava.



Mark Kehoe presenting Bursary cheque to Ava Copas - Photo courtesy of Mark Kehoe.

Members gathered at the Riverbank Cemetery, Hantsport, for fall cleanup. Numerous spring flowering bulbs and Fall Mums were planted

For the program at our **November** meeting **Tracey Martin** led a lively discussion on fall cleanup, winter care of canna and calla bulbs, answered questions regarding plant pests and others pertaining to gardening. Tracey has extensive history in the floral industry and is a fountain of information.

Members are looking forward to a workshop, at the end of November, creating **Holiday Arrangements** and new this year, we will be creating **Evergreen Gnomes**. In **December**, we will gather at a local restaurant to enjoy a Christmas dinner. Some members are looking forward to attending the Hantsport Christmas House Tours.

May you all have a safe and fun-filled Holiday Season.



Fall Mums - Photo courtesy of Lori Reid.

GARDEN CLUB NEWS

COUNTRY GARDEN CLUB

District 3 – Central South

Submitted by Jennifer MacKeigan

On **October 4, 2025**, the **Country Garden Club** hosted a **Fall Rally** at **Riverview United Church** in **Elmsdale**. Invitees were the garden clubs in **District 3 - Central North and South**. Over one hundred people attended.

NSAGC Chairperson, Geoff MacDonald, began the rally with an update of NSAGC activities and future plans. **District Directors Brenda Grasser and Beate Acker** provided a summary of the activities of the clubs in their respective

districts. **Six clubs** each honoured one of their members with an **Outstanding Member of the Year Award**.

The theme for the rally was “**Trials and Triumphs of Gardening**.” **Dez Pearson, General Foreperson of Dalhousie University’s Facilities Management Grounds Crew** in Halifax, inspired us with his photos of the various gardens throughout the campus and the stories of difficulties and successes encountered in maintaining such an extensive property.

Our next speakers were **Gerrard and Susan Garden** of Enfield. When **St. Bernard’s Park** in **Enfield** lost its benefactor, Gerrard and Susan took on the task of sourcing funding and volunteers to keep the extensive garden maintained and thriving. They shared the obstacles and solutions and their plans to keep this park available for the whole community to enjoy.

The attendees were treated to a delicious lunch, and the Country Garden Club would be remiss if it did not acknowledge the generous contribution of the **Hants North Late Bloomers** for the vegetable trays and the **Village Garden Club** for their large selection of sweets prepared by their members. Thank you! Many attendees went home with a door prize donated by **District 3 clubs and local businesses**.

I will leave you with a photo of autumn crocus from our past president’s garden. We look forward to a quick return of their spring counterpart.



Full House - Photo courtesy of Ed Dawson.



Autumn Crocus - Photo courtesy of Carol Morrison.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

Happy New Year!

Once again, I apologize for the delay with the newsletter but just prior to the Holiday Season I lost another family member. Life has a way of stopping us in our tracks and saying you need to take time to care for yourself and then move forward when you are ready.

Well, I am ready to move forward and have started planning for the spring – not only my garden, enrolling in a couple of online art classes and more importantly for all of you - the **Spring Issue** of the **Scotia Gardener Newsletter**. **Deadline for submissions is March 15th** and they can be sent to me at newsletter@nsagc.com.

Have a safe winter everyone,

Debbie
Editor, Scotia Gardener

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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 the pictures in the newsletter are original. Pictures will be credited on the page where the photo appears.

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