

SCOTIA GARDENER

Newsletter of the Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs

Winter 2021

Message from the President

Happy winter, my gardening friends,

I hope you are all well. Spring is just around the corner and that should make us gardeners very happy. Before you know it, the sun will be warming up the soil and our hands will love it.

It is exciting to see how some clubs were able to pivot and find new ways to meet and have exceptional speakers virtually—speakers we would usually not be able to have. Outdoor plant sales and activities are being planned for this spring and things are starting to look up for our clubs.

NSAGC is still not able to hold our convention this year as the gathering of large numbers is still not safe. Last year, the NSAGC agreed that we would not collect dues from the clubs this year, as many were not meeting and it was very difficult to raise funds last spring. Assessment forms will not be sent out this year. Our insurance is still being paid and is up to date.

Friends, we are not alone in our love of gardening. I want to share with you some news that will be coming your way soon. The Canadian Garden Council and the Canadian Nurseries Landscape Association have come together to encourage the Federal government to declare the year 2022 as the Year of the Garden for Canada. This is exciting news as it will help us promote our clubs and gardening in our communities. Look for information coming soon, in the meantime, check out this link: <https://gardenscanada.ca/year-of-the-garden/>



Photo by Kathy Harvie

As we continue to browse our seed catalogues and make plans for changes to our outdoor spaces this year, please also remember to support your local food bank.

Stay safe and stay well,
Pamela MacLean

Lighting up the Night in Inverness

by Betty Anne Cameron, Inverness Garden Club

The Inverness Garden Club was able to do what we have done for the last ten years, put up our 50 Christmas decorations along Central Avenue. This year people were especially overjoyed to have the decorations up.

There was no Christmas parade this year but the club did manage to bring Santa to Inverness, with the help of the fire department and the Development Association. He followed all Covid protocols and did not interact with the children. Nevertheless, they were so glad to see him!

The club sent out letters to businesses encouraging them to decorate their windows for the season and the response was great.

For the second year in a row, the Inverness Garden Club set up a Christmas display in the window of the WestSide restaurant.

We also decorated the windows at the Visitors Information Centre. Both were a huge hit with residents.

We do not meet currently and anything we do is done by email. We are planning for the summer of 2021, when we put out our 104 containers of flowers along Central Avenue.

Fundraising is an issue as we cannot canvas the local businesses as we usually do, as they are struggling also. But we will find a way!

We are "staying the blazes home" and are grateful for the leadership of Mr. MacNeil and Dr. Strang. Stay safe, everyone!



In Inverness the Christmas season comes to life at night with beautiful lights, all helped along by the members of the Inverness Garden Club. For 50 years the Club has been putting up decorations along Central Avenue!
Photos contributed by Betty Anne Cameron





The Inverness Garden Club worked its Christmas magic on the Visitor Centre. Photo contributed by Betty Anne Cameron

Rosy Applesauce

The secret to this applesauce is leaving the skins on the apples to give the sauce a rosy hue.

5 pounds Cortland apples

1/2 cup water

1/4 cup sugar (more or less to taste)

sprinkle of cinnamon (optional)

- Wash apples to clean them thoroughly.
- Cut each apple into quarters through the centre core.
- Trim off the core portion of each wedge.
- Place apples in large pot and add water.
- Cook over low heat, stirring regularly to prevent burning and to break up the apples.
- If you need to add a bit more water, do so. Adding less water will make a thicker sauce. Continue cooking gently about 30 minutes.
- When apples are soft, remove from heat and stir in sugar and cinnamon. Cool a bit. Push the apples through a sieve or food mill.

This pretty applesauce is delicious served plain or with cream poured over the top. It is good for breakfast, a snack or dessert and a great companion to pork. You can also freeze it.



Zooming Along in Elmsdale

by Carol Morrison, Elmsdale Country Garden Club

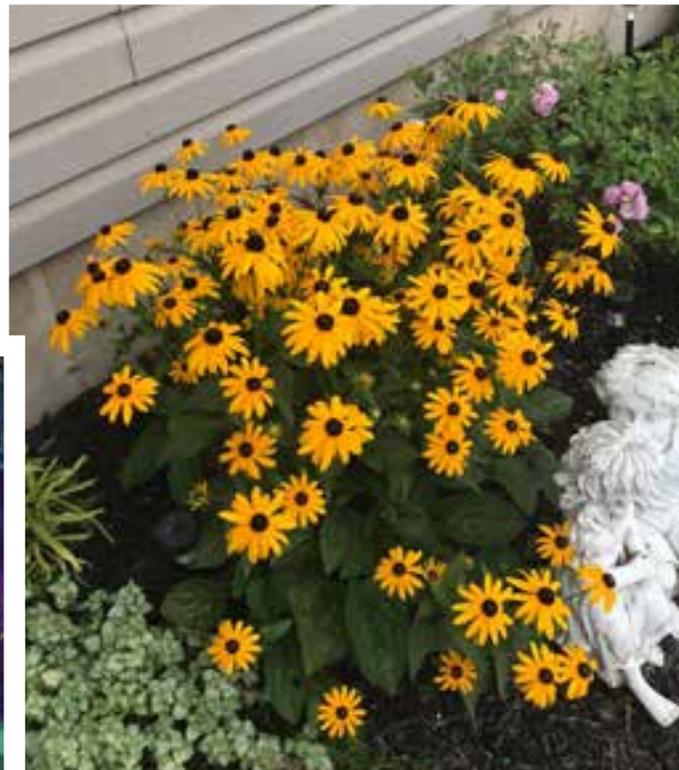
Through the winter our club continued monthly meetings using Zoom but also exchanged emails and phone calls for those not comfortable with this. We did discuss having a Christmas get-together round a fire pit, but realised that we couldn't manage social distancing and keep warm! Instead, we had a Christmas get-together using Zoom and also exchanged Christmas greetings using email. Some of us are on Facebook, and we have been using our Elmsdale Country Garden Club page to post comments and photographs.

After our January meeting, we showed photographs of members' gardens using the "share screen" option on Zoom and some of these are shown on this page and the following page. We hope to find speakers who are comfortable with doing this for future meetings.

We raise funds for an annual scholarship for a stu-

dent studying horticulture and decided to continue this year, although we were not able to have our main fund-raising event, a garden sale, last year. We are going to consider options for having one this year, including the possibility of an outdoor sale in the community garden we look after in Elmsdale.

Photos from the gardens of members of the Elmsdale Country Garden Club





Photos from the gardens of members of the Elmsdale Country Garden Club

Into Inside Gardening

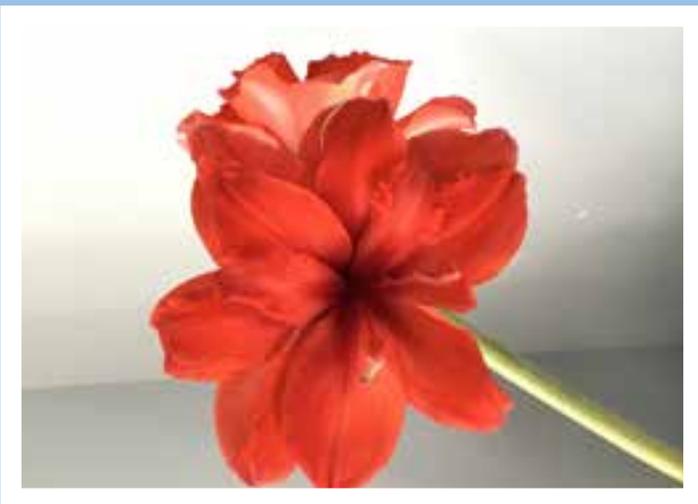
by Donna Burris, Secretary, Bedford Horticultural Society

It has been a challenging time but we are persevering ahead! Since we are not able to meet in person because of the pandemic, we are focused on keeping our members informed via emails of notices and events to maintain their interest in the club. The executive has continued to meet via Zoom and decided not to charge members the annual fee this year as we have funds to carry out any activities for the year.

We held a virtual monthly meeting through Zoom in January. Our guest speaker was Rosalyn Duffus who gave us an excellent talk on "Building A Crevice Rock Garden on the Cheap." She showed amazing pictures of the progress of its construction. She said the expensive part was buying the stunning plants for the garden!

In the meantime we are all dreaming of and anticipating the arrival of spring so that we can return to our gardens. In the meantime we will enjoy our inside plants.

Photos by Donna Burris



Blazing a Trail in Gaetz Brook

by Diane Lucas, VP, Eastern Shore Garden Club

The Eastern Shore Garden Club (ESGC) has not had meetings since the beginning of the pandemic but small groups of members have gotten together to do garden related activities.

Before Christmas, a small group assembled to gather greenery for wreaths. Throughout the past year, several ESGC members have been volunteering with the Gaetz Brook Greenway group. The Greenway is part of the Great Canadian Trail, a non-motorized trail to be used by the general public. The members have been going weekly to help clean up the brush left from construction.

One ESGC member has applied to be a leader in the David Suzuki Butterflyway Project. In the spring, she and many ESGC volunteers hope to plant native butterfly gardens in private and public spaces in our community. The Gaetz Brook Greenway group will be designating a couple of areas on the trail for the Butterflyway Project team to plant.

Our members continue to stay in touch through email to report our gardening news. We are looking forward to when we can resume meetings and our regular club activities.



Eastern Shore Garden Club members are helping to clean up the Gaetz Brook Greenway, part of the Great Canadian Trail. They will also be involved with establishing native butterfly plant gardens in their area, including a couple on the Gaetz Brook Greenway. Photo contributed by Diane Lucas

Staying Strong in Bridgetown

by Nicola McCarthy, Treasurer, Bridgetown Area Garden Club



Bridgetown Area Garden Club members show off the canoe decked out for Christmas.
Photo contributed by Nicola McCarthy

The festive period was of course much quieter than usual for the Bridgetown Area Garden Club due to Covid, but we still managed to share a little Christmas cheer with our members and our local community.

Although we had to cancel a planned workshop to make a 'Festive Garden Star', we provided kits instead for members to make at home, and dressed up our ever popular canoe in the park with greenery and berries for Christmas. Our members also received best wishes with a Christmas card from the club, made by a crafty member of our executive!

Now that Christmas is over, we've 'canoodled' our canoe for Valentine's Day, and are busy planning a series of workshops, kits and presentations for 2021.

Due to the current and past Covid constraints on activities, we have offered a discount on membership this year, which has been appreciated by our members—we even have some new members who joined in recent weeks, so we are looking forward to a busy year ahead.

A Christmas star stands in front of the star kits lined up for distribution. (top)

The canoe is transformed for Valentine's Day. (bottom)

Photos contributed by Nicola McCarthy



Great Village Christmas Tree

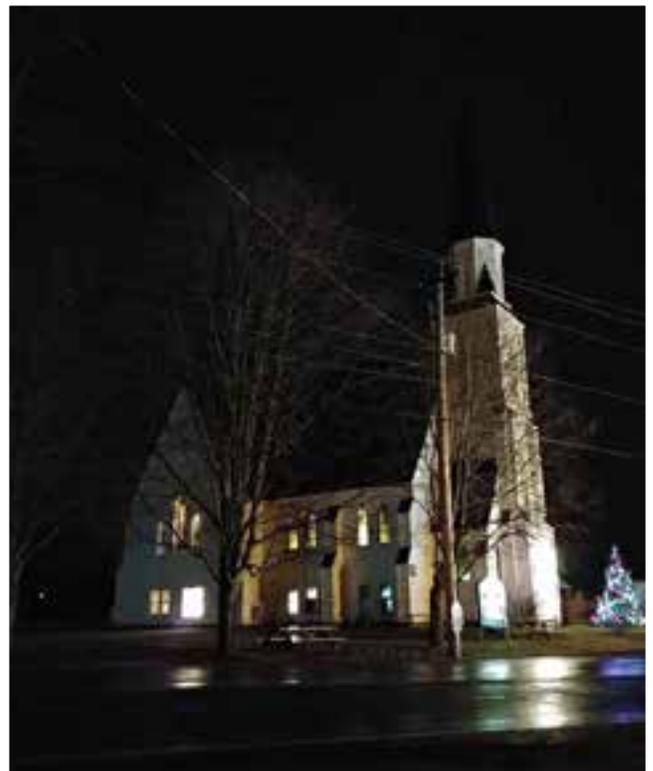
by Sybil Flemming, Secretary, Great Village Garden Club

It seems as if not much has happened this winter but we send greetings and an update anyway. Our club participated in erecting the community Christmas tree. It provided a lovely splash of colour during dark December nights.

We have been enjoying lots of snow on the ground and brilliant sunshine the last few days in the Great Village area. The winds off the bay remind us it is still winter.



Great Village Garden Club members help erect this year's Christmas tree. Photo by Trudy Johnson



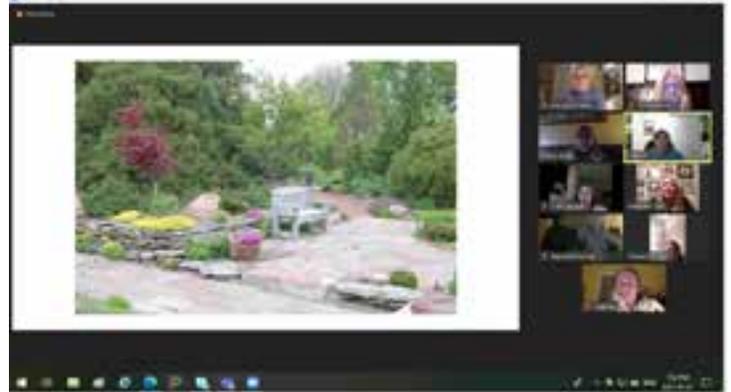
This photo shows the beautiful Christmas tree lighting up the night in front of the church. Photo by Clair Peers, friend of the Garden Club

Enjoying a Virtual Garden Tour

by Tara Moore, President, Prospect Area Garden Club

The Prospect Area Garden Club began meeting virtually through Zoom at the end of 2020. During our November and December meetings, members caught up with one another and shared photos of their gardens.

For our January meeting, we had a fantastic presentation by Darwin Carr, Coordinator of the Dalhousie University Bicentennial Botanical Gardens. He shared lots of beautiful photos and information on the history of the gardens. We are hoping that we will be able to visit the gardens in person later this year when the risk of COVID has decreased.



The Prospect Area Garden Club enjoyed an online presentation by Darwin Carr, Coordinator of the Dalhousie University Bicentennial Botanical Gardens.

Screen shot provided by Tara Moore

Sackville Garden Club Carries On

by Brenda Lapierre, Sackville Garden Club (Mayflower Garden Club)

There is not a whole lot going on in the club due to Covid restrictions. A lot of members are not willing to attend meetings. In November, Clarence Stevens did a presentation on flowering shrubs and about ten members attended. We didn't have meetings in December or January. In February we did a Zoom meeting with Yonder Hill Farms—again ten members participated. We are still planning on having a plant sale since it will be outdoors.



Forging Ahead in St. Margaret's Bay

by Paula Fredericks, St. Margaret's Bay Gardening Club

After having to cancel or postpone so many 2020 events, the St. Margaret's Bay Gardening Club executive was thrilled to connect with members in person again. (Our venue, the Tantallon Public Library, while open for regular patrons, does not have a meeting space large enough for social distancing for our group.)

In October and November, we booked two large spaces at St. Luke's United Church in Upper Tantallon and held three highly successful events. In October, we used the sanctuary to feature Roslyn Duffus, speaking on rock gardens. Forty-two attendees signed in, wore masks and social distanced for an inspiring talk and slide show. People were able to renew their memberships, purchase our raffle tickets for the June 5 3-basket draw and make generous donations to the St. Margaret's Bay Food Bank. For financial exchanges, envelopes were deposited in bins, eliminating handing of cash. This event was a wonderful way to re-connect, after being apart for so many months.

We normally hold an AGM in November, sharing delicious finger food and sometimes a presentation. We postponed the AGM (to March 24, 2021, minus food, sadly!) and instead invited our members back to the St. Luke's sanctuary to hear David Currie speak on backyard birds.

Our final 2020 get-together had several facets. The holiday decor workshop has become a "go to" event for many members and also a great fundraiser for the club. This year was no different. Members looked forward to filling containers or making sprays with greenery and embellishing them with the bows and stars provided. Yule logs were also available this year. There was an amazing array of evergreen sparsely displayed in the parking lot: boxwood, juniper, various types of cypress, cedar, yew, holly, fir and spruce. Our president, Claudette Levy, and her team were able to sustainably harvest all the material from Claudy's landscaping clients—a real "win-win." By booking the spacious Lower Hall at St. Luke's, we kept 25 folks socially

distanced, warm and creative! Our instructor, member Karen Llewellyn, never disappoints as she guides people through the selecting and arranging of the fragrant boughs, twigs and other materials.

The second aspect of this event—a new offering—was the sale of lovely greenery bundles and also beautiful sprays, created by Karen. We will do this again next year.



Photo provided by Paula Fredericks

Thirdly, in response to a request from Christmas in the Bay (a local initiative by the Chamber of Commerce and other groups), Karen kindly made a video presentation on creating winter arrangements so that families could watch from home during 2020's mostly on-line event, normally enjoyed by hundred of St. Margaret's Bay residents.

We had hoped to hold a Seedy Saturday in early spring 2021 but the venue is not adequate for social distancing for the large group of people we want to promote to. There will be events via Zoom in conjunction with Transition Bay St. Margaret's that speak to growing food and we are prepared to pick up the Seedy Saturday torch in 2022!



This past Christmas, St. Margaret's Bay Garden Club members enjoyed a holiday decor workshop. The many varieties of greenery in these photos were sustainably harvested and provided a lovely array of choices to make into seasonal arrangements.

Photos provided by Paula Fredericks

Gardening Tips

from our Members

Keeping Tulip Bouquets Fresh

From Bonie Conrad

When my husband and I got married we had fourteen dozen tulips decorating the room and table. I learned this useful technique: a tulip will last much longer in a vase if you prick the stem to the centre twice with a pin, about one inch below the flower and again about one-half inch below that. This breaks the vacuum and allows the flower to take up water. It really works—those tulips lasted for just over two weeks.



Boring for Bulbs!

From Diane Lucas

Digging holes for planting bulbs is a real chore. Use a cordless drill with an auger to quickly and easily bore out those holes.

Trouble Free Tools

From Diane Lucas

Keep a can of WD-40 in the garden shed to clean your tools and help keep them from rusting.



A Helping Hand with Pruning

From Emily Walker

Use a grabber/picker to grasp and pull down those hard to reach branches when you are pruning.

From Pod to Planter

From Emily Walker

Repurpose your coffee maker pods! Cut the foil cover from around the top. Empty the coffee grounds and the paper liner into the compost. Rinse out the plastic pod and stack them neatly for spring planting. They are just the right size for a couple seeds or a seedling. And, very conveniently, there is a small hole in the bottom of each pod for drainage or water uptake when placed in a shallow tray (also recycled from produce containers).



Outstanding Natural Beauty

Top: *P. coccinea*; bottom: *P. c.*
Hellebore
Photo by Kathy Harvie

Gardening Under Glass: Passiflora

by Esther Bryan

Why grow Passiflora?

They are relatively easy to grow in household conditions with a sunny window and moderate watering. It's patient when denied water/neglected and tolerates vigorous pruning easily. It rewards the gardener with lovely foliage and beautiful blooms even in winter! The only constraint is that it needs something to climb on—it's a vine.

How to grow?

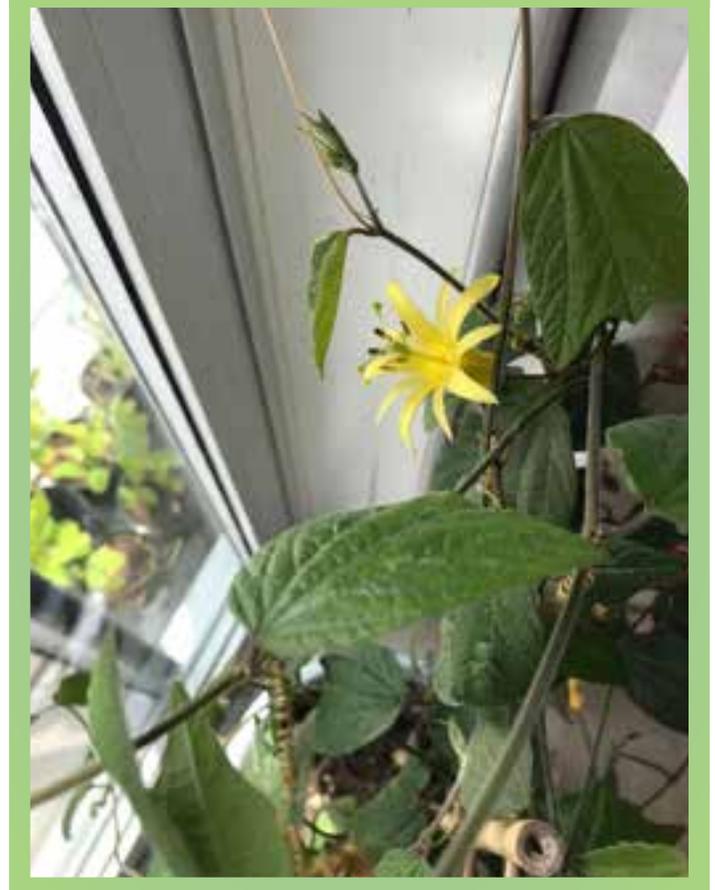
Sunny and warm window, keep it moist. Fertilize during warmer months and prune as needed. Moderate-large sized plants will result.

Seed?

Buy online for varieties other than *P. caerulea*. I definitely recommend trying other species for interesting blooms. I grow *P. coccinea* and *P. citrina*. (Actually, Butterfly World in Fort Lauderdale sold me Passiflora seeds years ago—their nursery specialized in them. Customs had no problems with me declaring them.) That said, seed can be difficult to germinate; the fresher the seed is, the better. Germination is erratic and may occur over time. Don't give up if you fail sometimes. Cuttings or plants are an easier way to start but will be difficult to find other than the standard blue passionflower. I used a heating mat to help my seeds germinate since they like warm and moist conditions. Insecticidal soap damaged a seedling—be warned!

Summering?

I definitely recommend putting Passiflora outside in full sun for the summer. They greatly enjoy the heat and humidity. I bring them inside in fall after a serious pruning back. Watch the watering though. I did have die back outside from lack of water/too hot a pot. Also, I lost blooms from mildew outside.



Passiflora coccinea (top)
Passiflora citrina (bottom)
Photos by Esther Bryan

Botanical Latin: What and Why

by Roslyn Duffus

Botanical Latin is a technical language evolved, primarily through the work of Carl Linnaeus (1701-1778), to serve as an international language for the scientific naming of organisms that include plants, animals, bacteria and fungi. Every plant has a Latin name so that an English speaker can speak of a plant to a person in Turkey or China or Russia and all will know exactly the plant that is being discussed, whereas locally, a single plant can have many common names and a single common name can refer to several different plants in different communities resulting in much confusion among gardeners.

The use of Latin can be quite intimidating to anyone the first time a seemingly unpronounceable word comes flowing out of another gardener's mouth but, since the English language has Latin as its root, many words can be successfully understood.

I will use a maple tree as an example:

- All maple trees are of the Genus *Acer* (name) and there are many different species (description) of maple.
- *Acer rubrum* L.—Once you know *Acer* is the name for a maple, it is pretty easy to guess it's a red maple.
- *Acer saccharum*—A sugar maple. A pretty easy guess if you ever used a certain sugar substitute.
- *Acer pensylvanicum* L.—Commonly called striped maple but in this case named for the State of Pennsylvania, where it is found in more abundance. When you see the L, it means this particular species was named by Carl Linnaeus himself.

So it can be seen that Botanical Latin can give many hints about the plant and its habitat (alpinus, alpine); place of origin (canadensis, Canada); colour (purpureus, purple); leaf shape (palmatum, palm shaped); and in the case of *Linnaea borealis*, who it might have been named for—the man himself!.



Linnaea borealis
also known as twinflower
Photo provided by
Roslyn Duffus

Dressing up Christmas Greenery with Queen Anne's Lace

by Donna Evers



Photos by Donna Evers

Pick the Queen Anne's lace when it is fully open. Include a little bit of stem. Also pick various sized blossoms. Then place in a book and tuck away until you start your Christmas decorating. I find an old phone book is perfect. When you decorate, just place the dried blossoms on the tree. They adhere nicely. If you place them in front of a tree light you get a nice effect. Best of all, the price is right!

A few hints to remember:

- Don't pick blossoms beyond their prime (when they are closing and going to seed).
- Don't pick beside a dusty road side.
- Don't save for the next year. New fresh ones each year are better.

Editor's note: It is said that Queen Anne's lace is named after Queen Anne of Denmark (1574-1619) who supposedly knew a thing or two about making lace. It is so common in Nova Scotia that it is easy to overlook its beauty. Each stem is topped by dozens of individual thread-thin stocks carrying many tiny blooms, forming a constellation around a tiny dark purple centre. There is a cluster of delicate fronds on the underside of the flowerhead and thin narrow leaves sprouting from a stem downed with white hair. Blooms spring open from tight bird nest formations and when the plant goes to seed, the bloom furls itself up again to shelter the seeds. Queen Anne's lace spreads quickly because its seeds stick to anything that brushes by them. This prolific biennial (*Daucus carota*) has a much humbler name—wild carrot. It flourishes on roadsides and in fields and tolerates dry conditions well.

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



No one was able to identify last issue's plant photo (above). The flower is from a ninebark Summer Wine *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Seward', shown to the right in full bloom.



From a close up, zoomed-in photo, it can be tricky to identify a plant. Can you name the plant in the photo above?

Send your answer to: 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!

A Note from the Editor

Emily Walker

From the clubs' reports, we gardeners celebrated Christmas creatively this year! Members modified activities and traditions to both stay safe and to benefit their communities.

Perhaps some of you are still nurturing the poinsettia you bought at Christmas. My creamy white poinsettia is long gone but I remember as I paid for it that the clerk told me the plant was called the star flower in the country where she was born. She then said, "Poinsettia must be the Latin name." A logical assumption but, it turns out, not a correct one.

Joel Roberts Poinsett, (1779–1851), was responsible for introducing the poinsettia to the United States. He was an American diplomat stationed in Mexico where he noticed these beautiful plants growing wild. He was an amateur botanist and brought some of the plants home with him to South Carolina where he grew them successfully. The plant was named in his honour with an "ia" added somewhere along the way. In Mexico, it is called Flower of the Holy Night (Christmas Eve).

The Latin name for poinsettia is *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, a member of the spurge family. It is impressive to hear gardeners refer to plants by their Latin names. They do it with such ease! This month's issue includes the first in a series about this unique plant language. A big thank you to Roslyn Duffus for shining a light on this fascinating subject.

Thank you as well to those who answered the call with photos, articles and club reports. Special thanks goes to Esther Bryan for her article on Passiflora, Donna Evers for her Queen Anne's Lace article and Kathy Harvie for her beautiful photos.

The more people who contribute to the newsletter, the more interesting and informative it is. Please send your suggestions, gardening tips, club information/announcements and photos to: newsletter@nsagc.com

While you enjoy the Winter 20–21 Scotia Gardener, I'll be having fun putting together the spring issue.

Till then!
Emily



2019-2020 NSAGC Executive Directors



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Vice Chair, Kathy d’Entremont
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Treasurer, Allison Magee
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Photo Contest Committee, Betty Anne Cameron
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District # 7, Western, Deb Bowes-Lyon, Director
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NSAGC Board Openings 2021

The following positions will be open for nominations at the virtual AGM in June:

Vice President

- candidate Deb Bowes-Lyon

Secretary

District 3 Director North

District 3 Director South

District 5 Director

- candidate Sandi Carroll

More than one candidate may be nominated from any district.

More details on the positions may be obtained by contacting any board member.

Anyone wishing to be nominated or who knows of a fellow garden club member you think would be a valuable addition to the board, please email Vicki Willis at vwillis53@hotmail.com

Scotia Gardener: 2021 Winter Issue (Volume 21, Number 1)

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 below.

Additional photo credits:

- Emily Walker—pages 3 & 11 (bottom), 14, 19, 20
- Kathy Harvie—page 23

American Rhododendron Society 2021 Virtual and Live Convention

*Rhodos Down East: Exploring the North Atlantic Region
June 3-6, 2021*

Virtual Convention and On-Site Events Old Orchard Inn, Wolfville, Nova Scotia

Take advantage of an exciting opportunity to learn about growing, breeding and gardening with rhododendrons. Due to the travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 American Rhododendron Society Convention will be offering all the presentations, garden tours and networking opportunities available on line to anyone who can access the internet! For those who can travel to Nova Scotia there will also be in-person sessions and garden tours as well as a plant sale featuring rare and unusual Rhodos propagated especially for this event.

Speakers include:

- Ken Cox, famed Scottish Rhodo breeder from Glendoick Nursery in Scotland
- Joe Brusco, Rhodo breeder from Massachusetts
- Todd Boland from Newfoundland's Memorial University Botanical Garden

The Convention will start with a lecture on "Introduction to Mi'kma'ki" by Gerald Gloade, a Mi'kmaw naturalist and educator who will tell the stories of the first people that explain the natural history since the area was covered by ice.

Garden tours, both virtual and in-person, will include the Kentville Research Centre, Annapolis Valley Historic Gardens and Peggy's Cove barrens as well as private gardens.

Networking opportunities will include the Breeder's Roundtable where you can hear about the latest trends in Rhodo breeding, the ARS Next Generation Project which will show how to involve the next generation in your local ARS club, as well as social events that feature the seafood, cider and wine from our local producers.

Registration for the virtual and in person convention is now open! See the convention website www.ars2021.org for registration information and link to EventBrite registration page.



Winter Wonderland