

AUTUMN 2019

# THE BLOOMING NEWS

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## UPCOMING PROGRAM EVENTS

☞ **Thursday, September 19, 2019 10:30 am**

**Visit to Rideau Woodland Ramble and picnic at WillowStone Farm**

☞ **Thursday, October 10, 2019 12:30 pm**

**(Note change of date)**

Rockcliffe Park CC

**Ikebana's Inspiring Beauty**

**Terry (Jusei) Hodgins**

☞ **Thursday, November 21, 2019 12:30 pm**

Rockcliffe Park CC

**The Gardens at Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm**

**Richard Hinchcliff**

☞ **December, 2019 – Christmas Party**

**Details to be announced**

☞ **Thursday, January 16, 2020 10:30 am**

Royal Ottawa Golf Club, Aylmer Road

**Botanical Art**

**Kerri Weller**

## WELCOME TO THE OTTAWA GARDEN CLUB

We are delighted to welcome these new members to our club:

Margo Ledoux, Keltie Mierins, Sonia Rajani, Linda Russell and Deborah Seaborn.

# PRESIDENT'S CORNER



## Calling All Writers!

Tired of digging, transplanting and pruning in the garden? Why not try it on paper instead and help write for the *Blooming News*?

Our newsletter's editorial team is urgently in need of people who can dig for information, transplant it to a page and prune it to the right length – in other words, write an occasional short summary of one of our meetings. Since the BN only appears twice a year, this is not an onerous chore for garden lovers. Most articles are in the 300- to 400-word range – about half a page.

If you are interested in this fertile field of endeavour, please contact Felicity Garrard ([felicity.garrard@gmail.com](mailto:felicity.garrard@gmail.com)) or Helen Clark ([hclark@magma.ca](mailto:hclark@magma.ca)).

### THE BLOOMING NEWS

Newsletter of  
The Ottawa Garden Club  
is published semi-annually  
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**Editor:** Felicity Garrard  
**Advisors:** Heather Brown  
Helen Clark  
**Distribution:** Kelly Noel  
**Photographers:** Cynthia Hoisak  
Barbara Brown

**Website:** [www.ogc.website](http://www.ogc.website)

This Autumn issue of the *Blooming News* is brimming with reports of a very active and successful season full of interesting presentations and fun events.

A highlight for me was our wonderful garden tour to Montreal and the Laurentians. As beautifully described by our editor Felicity Garrard (pages 10-14), the tour included visits to a botanical garden, three lovely private gardens, an expansive country estate, and even a peony farm. It was a great success, thanks in large part to Sally Hutchison's superb organizational skills. Sally, ably assisted by Peggy Morgan, made advance visits to all the sites, met the hosts, and planned every detail. Since I joined the OGC, I have been on four tours – Toronto, Prince Edward County, Eastern Townships, and recently Montreal/Laurentians – all organized by Sally! She says this will be her last – but who knows what gardens will yet catch her eye that she thinks we all must see!



Sally is just one of the many extraordinary women who make our garden club so vibrant and interesting. Another is Kelly Noel, who has stepped down from the Executive after having served as Treasurer, *Blooming News* Editor, Vice President, and President, not to mention database manager and computer whiz. Luckily for us, she will continue to provide much-needed technical support for our team.

We are very pleased that Pat Sylvester has joined the Executive, assuming the important role of Program Chair. Pat and her hard-working committee have organized an excellent fall program that will begin with a September outing to the Rideau Woodland Ramble, followed by a picnic at nearby WillowStone Farm, the home of Victoria and David Hutton. (A full program description begins on page 3). Chris Edwards, who skillfully managed our program for more than seven years, has agreed to be Vice President.

It's a pleasure to be able to welcome five new members this year, all with a keen interest in gardening and eager to participate in club activities. We will host a formal welcome for them in the fall. Our success as a club has created a problem with numbers over the past few years, obliging us to temporarily limit guests and new members, but I am happy to say that we are now open for both.

Finally, special thanks to our outgoing President Peggy Morgan for her calm and competent leadership and her kind and gentle ways. She has been a wonderful President and role model. It is an honour for me to step into her shoes.

There are so many more volunteers I could mention. Instead, I invite you to read through these pages to fully appreciate everyone's contributions.

*Heather Brown*

# PROGRAM AUTUMN 2019

**Thursday, September 19, 2019**  
**10:30 am**

## **Visit to Rideau Woodland Ramble and Picnic at WillowStone Farm**



Come and explore the award-winning gardens of the **Rideau Woodland Ramble**, ([www.rideauwoodlandramble.com](http://www.rideauwoodlandramble.com)). The result of years of hard work, experimentation and discovery by co-owners **David Dunn and Rob Caron**, the gardens consist of several interconnected zones, most of them featuring plantings in shade and woodland. There is a **Garden Centre and Display Garden** nestled in the heart of the Ramble as well as a small **Art Gallery** displaying David's garden and wildlife art. This is where we will greet you with coffee on your arrival, and give you an opportunity to explore, before sitting down in one of the "greenhouses" for a presentation by David and Rob. They will describe the founding of the Ramble, how they turned crises such as the ice storm into opportunities and tackled the challenges of a changing climate. They will also recommend some interesting plants to consider for your own garden.

David Dunn is a graduate of the School of Architecture, Carleton University and is a member (retired) of the Ontario Association of Architects. Rob Caron is a horticulturist and a graduate of the Algonquin Horticultural Program.

Once you have had a chance to wander and perhaps find a special plant for that 'challenging spot' in your garden, you are invited to enjoy a picnic at **WillowStone Farm**, home of Garden Club member Victoria Hutton and her husband David, at 1490 Scott Road West, Acton's Corners. It is a century-old 100-acre farm just a few kilometres from the Ramble. Bring your lunch and a lawn chair and admire Victoria and David's

beautiful garden. Cold drinks and dessert treats will be available.

This outing, which will take place **rain or shine**, promises to be a delightful launch to the fall season of the Ottawa Garden Club.

Please try to carpool if you can.



**Rideau Woodland Ramble is located at 7210 Burritt's Rapids Road (County Road 23), Merrickville K0G 1N0, just about a kilometre north of Hwy. 43, on the west side of the road. If you are coming from Ottawa, take the 416 south to exit 34, and head west on Hwy 43 through several traffic circles. Drive about 12 kilometres until you see Burritt's Rapids Road (County Rd 23), and turn right. The Ramble is about a kilometre along on your left. If you are coming from Merrickville or points west, take Hwy 43 east out of Merrickville and turn left at the 2nd Burritt's Rapids Road (County Road 23). Watch for the blue "Provincial Attraction" signs on Hwy 43. The Ramble is a kilometre north on the left.**

**To reach WillowStone Farm from Rideau Woodland Ramble: on leaving the Ramble, turn right on County Road 23 heading toward Highway 43. Turn left on 43 (sign says County Road 43 E). Drive about five kilometres to Acton's Corners and turn left on Acton's Corners Road. In 1.7 kilometres, turn left on Scott Road West. WillowStone Farm, no. 1490, will be on your left. Park in the mowed grass field next to the barn, just inside the driveway gates.**



**Thursday, October 10, 2019**

**12:30 pm**

Rockcliffe Park CC

**Ikebana's Inspiring Beauty**

**Terry (Jusei) Hodgins**



Ikebana arrangements are not unlike sculpture; considerations of colour, line, form and function guide the construction of a work. The resulting forms are varied and unexpected, and can range widely in terms of size and composition, from a piece

made from a single flower, to one that incorporates several different flowers, branches and other natural objects. An amazing up-close and personal experience, this presentation will showcase the history of this ancient floral art as well as the varied methods used in Ikebana. Terry Hodgins is an advanced Ikebana teacher, with wide-ranging experience in demonstrations and workshops for the Ohara School of Ikebana, Ottawa Chapter.

**Thursday, November 21, 2019**

**12:30 pm**

Rockcliffe Park CC

**The Gardens at Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm**

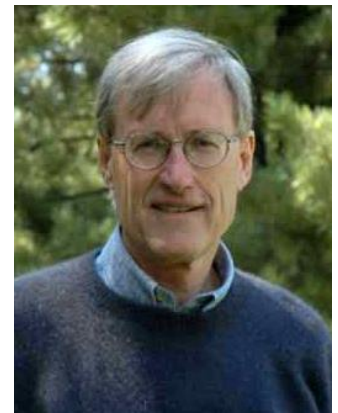
**Richard Hinchcliff**

The Central Experimental Farm (CEF) was established by the Government of Canada to research crops that could live through the cold Canadian winter. The story of the gardens begins in 1886 with William S. Saunders, the first director of Canada's network of experimental farms. Saunders was also a horticulture enthusiast who established the gardens at the CEF as part of the Farm's broader mandate.

Richard will describe how the gardens came to be the beautiful Ottawa attraction they are today, with a look at their past and at the people who were behind the made-in-Ottawa flowering plants on display.

The Blooming News, August, 2019 .... page 4

Richard Hinchcliff has worked as a journalist on a daily newspaper, as an economist with local government, and as a civil servant with the federal government in Ottawa. He has operated a small business offering photographic and website services. In recent years, he has devoted himself to photography and writing, with a focus on the Central Experimental Farm. He is co-author of the book *For the Love of Trees: A Guide to the Trees of Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm Arboretum*, and author of a new book entitled *Blooms: An Illustrated History of the Ornamental Gardens at Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm*.



Richard Hinchcliff

**Also at this meeting...sign up and pay for our annual January Luncheon to be held at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club.**

**December, 2019**

**Christmas Party – details to be announced.**

**Thursday, January 16, 2020**

**10:30 am**

Royal Ottawa Golf Club, Aylmer Road

**Botanical Art**

**Kerri Weller**



Kerri Weller

Join us as we journey into the fascinating world of botanical art. Avid gardener and botanical artist Kerri Weller provides an introduction to this traditional art genre and relays the stories behind her botanical paintings. Oil paint is Kerri's favourite medium to express the beauty of the plant world. An internationally recognized botanical artist, her work has been published in *Fine Art*

*Connoisseur* magazine, juried into international art exhibitions and is in the collection of the Hunt Institute for botanical documentation at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

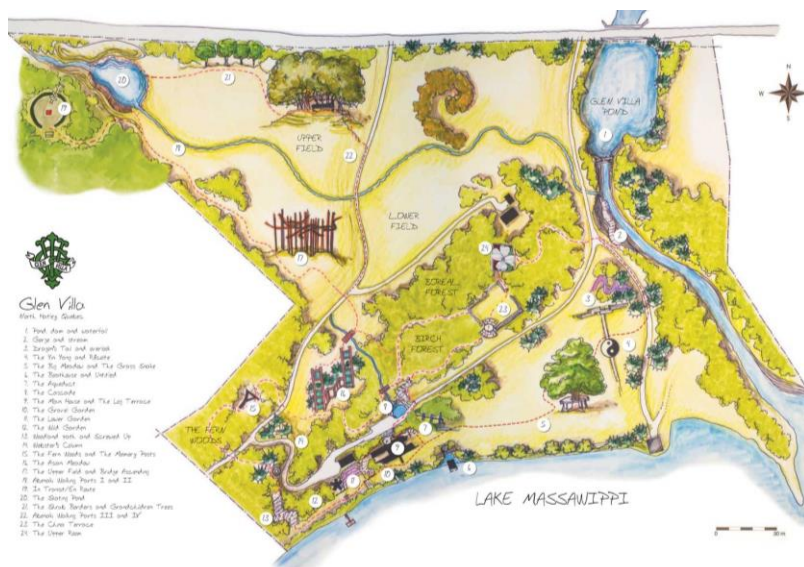
[www.ogc.website](http://www.ogc.website)

# HIGHLIGHTS OF WINTER MEETINGS

**Stop – Look – Listen! The Art of Garden Observation:** Our January luncheon at the Ottawa Golf Club is always a cheering event during the dark of winter, and this year was no exception. Our speaker, Pat Webster, well known to those of us who were fortunate enough to visit her spectacular property, Glen Villa, during our June 2017 garden tour, had us immediately spellbound by her vivacious enthusiasm as she described her philosophy on the art of garden observation. Learning to look is a perpetual process, she told us, and she should know, having toured no fewer than 327 gardens around the world!

Her mantra for visiting a garden derives from her childhood experience of being told to “stop, look, and listen” when crossing a road. First you take time, be still, and take in the whole effect of the garden, then you start to look. Look in every direction, up, down, over, through and close-up; look at colour contrasts, shapes, textures; turn around and look back at where you came from for a different view; take photographs. Always

carry a notebook. As Pat said, the more you look, the more you see. Or as Yogi Berra had it “You can observe a lot just by watching”! Then finally, listen; to the birds, to trickling water, the hum of bees. She added that when it comes to garden design, listening in a deeper sense is also important; what is this garden wanting to tell me? What does it need? What changes should be made? She illustrated this idea with examples from Glen Villa where a simple change turned out to be transformative, such as clearing trees from around a waterfall, placing a sculpture in exactly the right place, or building a curving boardwalk around a pond. We came away inspired, and armed with a new perspective on garden visiting that stood us in good stead for our June tour to Montreal and the Laurentians. For additional tips, see Pat’s useful handout titled “Questions to Ask Yourself When You Visit a Garden” on page 16. More of her creations and photographs can be found on her website at [www.siteandinsight.com](http://www.siteandinsight.com)



*Felicity Garrard*

**Bringing Nature Home: Using Indigenous Trees and Shrubs:** Owen Clarkin’s great love of trees, and especially trees that are indigenous to Ontario and Eastern North America, shone through in his enthusiastic presentation on February 21<sup>st</sup>. A naturalist, chemist, and Chair of Conservation for the Ottawa Field Naturalist Club, Mr. Clarkin’s particular interest is in “bringing nature home,” by preserving and planting indigenous trees and shrubs on our properties. Many can be planted from seed. Over the years, because of

logging, pests, disease and land development, many of the original species (like the American elm) have become endangered. Others not originally native to our area (like the southern hackberry), have naturalized in our region. Mr. Clarkin presented an A to Z (Y actually!) roundup of numerous trees and shrubs that he has photographed in the Ottawa area. From ashes to junipers, oaks and yews, we discovered a world of variety and subtle beauty in our own backyard. For example, the northern pecan is native to the southern U.S., but grows in Ottawa. A lovely shade tree, its nuts are smaller than the southern



Persimmon tree



Northern pecan



varieties but still edible. Surprisingly, the pawpaw, also found in Ottawa, bears North America's largest native fruit, and the persimmon has been bred to survive in our climate. The leatherwood shrub (whose bark can be twisted into a knot) grows deep in our woods and sports fragrant yellow flowers in the spring. Old favourites, such as the ninebark shrub, with its delicate flowers and showy fall foliage, and the iconic sugar maple, were featured. The red spruce, while rare in Ontario, is tall and stately, and its planting can help conserve our genetic heritage. We left inspired to continue Mr. Clarkin's quest to identify and preserve our amazing natural vegetation. You can find more information about Owen Clarkin at: <http://treefestottawa.org/tree-educator>.

*Helen Clark*

**Tick Talk: This Moment in Time:** As the clock ticked towards spring, Ann Stanton-Loucks, the lead for the Lyme Disease Program at Ottawa Public Health, captured the full attention of our members with a timely presentation about the rising number of deer ticks in the Ottawa area and their role in spreading Lyme disease. Ann emphasized that, as a result, we now face a much higher risk of contracting the harmful disease, which can begin with flu-like symptoms. She passed around vials containing some tiny (dead) ticks, both normal and engorged, and then described how they are spread, their life cycle, and prevention measures. There have always been many kinds of ticks in Ontario, but deer ticks migrated originally from Lyme, Connecticut, and are fairly new to our area. Properly known as the black-legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) the name "deer tick" is misleading, as ticks only become transmitters of the disease (to deer, dogs and humans) by feeding on infected migratory birds and small mammals. Climate change has affected bird migration, as well as vector-borne diseases like Lyme. Ticks are moving north, and are now found from Halifax to Winnipeg, Kenora and Rainy River. They lay their eggs in spring, often under dead leaves, hatch into tiny larva with six legs, and then into the adult nymph with eight legs. They live under dead leaves and in brush and tall grass, but not in trees, as is sometimes believed. Ticks attach themselves by burying their head in your skin. They thoughtfully inject

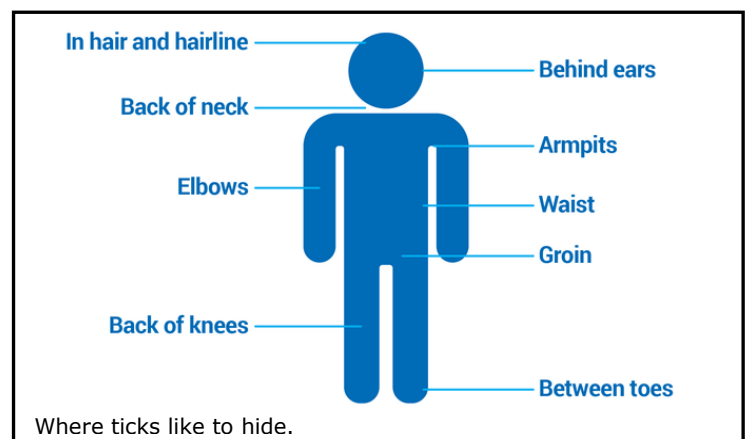


you with an analgesic (so you don't feel them biting) and an anticoagulant, and stay attached until they become engorged with blood. The bacteria lives in their gut, not their mouth, and they must feed for more than 24 hours to infect you. The characteristic bullseye rash is one sign of a tick bite, but red blotches can also indicate an infection.

To protect oneself from hungry ticks, Ann recommended wearing an insect repellent containing DEET, tucking pants into socks, duct-taping around the tops of gloves, staying on trails or paths, mowing grass and clearing leaves from garden or cottage property, and doing a tick check of your body every day. Keep play structures away from bird feeders and rake up fallen nuts and acorns. Check pets carefully for ticks because dogs (unlike cats) can get Lyme disease. The vaccine for dogs works well, and a vaccine for humans is being developed. To remove a tick, use tweezers or a tick key, grasp the head firmly and pull it out perpendicular to the skin to ensure that the whole body is removed. If possible, keep the tick and note the date you were bitten. It is

important to contact your doctor if you believe a tick has been attached to you for 24 or more hours, or if you are unsure how long the tick has been attached. The doctor can determine if you need immediate treatment with antibiotics, and you should not wait for the tick to be tested for Lyme, since this can take six months. Reassuringly, Ann mentioned that much research is being done on deer ticks by Ottawa Health and the University of Ottawa. There were numerous questions from members following Ann's excellent and informative presentation. We were all very glad to learn more about these bloodthirsty little creatures and the risk they represent as their peak season approached. More information can be found at:

<http://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/lyme-disease.aspx#What-if-I-find-a-tick>



*Helen Clark*

**Foraging the Forest Floor:** In April, we travelled in our imaginations to the Nordic Baltic when two of our diplomatic members, Jetta Manninen (Finland) and Inara Eihenbauma (Latvia) spoke to us about the long tradition of foraging for berries and mushrooms in their countries. While both Finland and Latvia are far north by Canadian standards (Finland is the same latitude as the Northwest Territories and Latvia compares to Churchill on Hudson's Bay) their climate is moderate, thanks to the influence of the Gulf Stream. In both cases, more than half of the land mass is covered in forest. In these countries, millions of kilograms of berries and mushrooms are collected each year by individuals and families foraging in the forests. The most plentiful berries are cloudbberries, blueberries and lingonberries. Jetta says that her parents pick hundreds of litres of blueberries each year, usually enjoying half a litre every day for breakfast. Foraging on a grand scale is possible because of something called "Everyman's Right", the Nordic tradition of sharing nature's benefits equally. As Jetta and Inara explained, this age-old concept gives everyone the basic right to roam freely in the countryside without needing to obtain permission, no matter who owns or occupies the land. This right has



Chris Edwards thanks Inara (left) and Jetta (right)



Black Trumpet



Chanterelle

evolved over the centuries from a largely unwritten code of practice to become a fundamental legal right. It allows you to walk, ski, cycle or camp freely on both public and private land (not agricultural); pick wild berries and mushrooms and flowers, as long as they are not protected species; fish with a rod and line; and use boats, swim or bathe in inland waters and the sea. However, Everyman's Right does not apply to activities that damage the environment or disturb others (e.g., building fires, removing moss, harming trees, littering or hunting.)

Tellingly, Baltic languages have no word for "trespassing". The main focus of the presentation was on mushrooms, and Jetta and Inara took us on a colourful and fascinating slide show of some of their favourites. Inara explained that people are encouraged to pick mushrooms for their health benefits as they are low in fat and high in fibre, protein and vitamins. In her country, more than 1,000 million kilograms of mushrooms are harvested each year, the equivalent of 200 kilograms per person!

Most mushrooms live in a symbiotic relationship with certain trees, and if you know which trees, you can usually find them. For example, Chanterelles exist near pine and birch trees, often hiding under moss, whereas Black Trumpet mushrooms grow near deciduous trees. Both Jetta and Inara are passionate about mushrooming and love being outside in nature, observing all the wonders on the forest floor. They encouraged everyone to give it a try, but cautioned that when mushrooming you should always take a book with photos and descriptions of the various species so you know what you are picking (and can avoid poisonous ones!). We were all enchanted with this very interesting talk and learned a lot about the art and practice of foraging.



Marti Todd wins a beautiful Easter basket arranged by Pauline Yelle

*Heather Brown*



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, at her last meeting as President, Peggy Morgan welcomed members to the 2019 Annual General Meeting. She began by thanking Joan Sirrs for her work in organizing friendly hospitality and refreshments for members at monthly meetings. A beautiful spring garden bouquet from Pauline Yelle was presented to Joan. Busy Dale-Harris was recognized for her help as the telephone convenor, Marianne Feaver for being the liaison with the club's diplomatic members, and Cynthia Hoisak and Barbara Brown as talented event and meeting photographers.

A new Garden Club email address was announced, [ottawagardenclubogc@gmail.com](mailto:ottawagardenclubogc@gmail.com). In the future, all correspondence will come from this address.

Peggy then introduced Noémie McGovern, the winner of the 2019 Anstace Esmonde-White award. She is a second-year student in the Horticultural Industries Program at Algonquin College, and is currently finishing an internship at the all-seasons Maplelawn Garden. A framed certificate and cheque were presented to Noémie. Sarah Shapiro, a past winner of the award was also introduced. She is now



Peggy Morgan presents Noémie McGovern's award



Sarah Shapiro

the Horticultural Therapy instructor at The Perley and Rideau Veteran's Health Centre.

Treasurer Ann Goldsmith gave her report, noting that the Club "took in more than we spent", allowing a balanced budget once again. Almost all members have paid their annual fees, and new members are all paid up. Copies of the report (Fiscal Year May 1, 2018 – April 30, 2019) were available to all. Ann made special mention of the \$1200.00 profit from the annual Bring & Buy sale, as well as occasional raffles at monthly meetings, with thanks to Pauline Yelle for her skillful organizing.

Program Committee chair, Chris Edwards, announced that she is stepping down, and gave an animated review of the interesting program the committee organized this year. She thanked her creative and supportive team including Lee Crowe, Freda Godby, Mary Murphy, Mary Pratte, Grace Strachan, Pat Sylvester and Pauline Yelle.

Peggy paid tribute to Kelly Noel, who is leaving the Executive after many years of dedicated service to the club. Kelly has agreed to stay

involved as the club's technical expert. A lovely flower arrangement created by Mary Udd was presented to her.

The current members of the Executive were graciously thanked and the incoming Executive slate introduced by Peggy, beginning with the new Program Committee Chair, Pat Sylvester; Vice President, Chris Edwards; and Ottawa Garden Club President, Heather Brown.

The full Executive slate is on page one of the Blooming News. The Annual General Meeting was then adjourned with a motion from Lucinda Boucher, seconded by Marianne Feaver.

Heather took over the meeting and thanked Peggy for her calm and steady leadership over the past two



Mary Udd presents Kelly Noel's well-deserved bouquet



years. She presented Peggy with a decorative glass garden ornament on behalf of the club. Heather then introduced five new club members: Margo Ledoux, Keltie Mieirins, Sonia Rajani, Linda Russell and Deborah Seaborn. She was especially pleased to welcome new members after three years of closed membership due to capacity.



Pauline Yelle and Cynthia Hoisak with some of Cynthia's clever cloth pumpkins designed for the Perley postal cart

Heather then introduced Sally Hutchison, who had prepared a presentation on the club's Outreach Program at The Perley and Rideau Veteran's Health Centre. A slideshow of photographs of the two Rideau Court Gardens, and the seasonal decorations on the Centre's postal cart was shown, while Mary Hardwick and Barbara Brown explained how the outreach program developed over time, and involved club volunteers to maintain the gardens over the summer months. The initiative was inspired by past club President June Norgaard as a special outreach project. Dianne Breton added details about the donated postal cart and the creative work of Cynthia Hoisak and Pat Padmos, coordinating and decorating the cart. Finally, Sarah Shapiro, Horticultural Therapist, gave an overview of the gardening programs provided for residents. The meeting ended with good wishes to all for a warm and happy summer.

*Dianne Breton*



Peggy Morgan passes the torch (and the microphone!) to incoming President, Heather Brown



Victoria Hutton, Mary Hardwick and Barbara Brown

*You can spend your whole life travelling around the world in search of the Garden of Eden, or you can create it in your own backyard.*

*Khang Kijarro Nguyen*



Cynthia Hoisak's summer display for the Perley postal cart



# TOUR OF GARDENS IN MONTREAL AND THE LAURENTIANS

June 18 – 20, 2019

When Sally Hutchison came across an article in the February 2017 edition of *Garden Making* magazine about a little-known country garden in the heart of the Laurentian countryside, Le Jardin de François, she and Peggy Morgan decided they had to investigate. The gorgeous and unexpected paradise they found became the centrepiece of this year's Garden Club tour, an extraordinary place those of us lucky enough to experience it will not soon forget. With the expert assistance of the indefatigable Margaret Dailey-Plouffe of Heatherington and Associates, a three-day trip to the area was soon crafted, one that would include a visit to the world-renowned Montreal Botanical Garden, three private gardens in Westmount, and an award-winning peony farm in Harrington. And not forgetting of course, the obligatory plant-shopping opportunity, this time at the Michel Corbeil nursery in St-Eustache, the largest producer of perennial plants in Quebec!



Peggy Morgan and Sally Hutchison with azalea bonsai

Despite an early morning start, the atmosphere on the bus was highly festive as tour guide Margaret plied us with snacks, handed out brochures and maps and gave us some background on our first stop of the day, the **Montreal Botanical Garden**.

Founded in



Leslie Lahey, Karen Junke and Chris Edwards



Yin and Yang in iris and fern

1931 by Brother Marie-Victorin, a member of the Brothers of Christian Schools and a self-taught botanist, the Botanical Garden has now become the second largest in the world after Kew Gardens in London, England. It has an extensive collection of over 21,000 plant species and cultivars, ten exhibition greenhouses, and some 30 themed gardens. The magnificent Chinese Garden features a large cerulean lake with bridges, rocks and a tumbling waterfall, with vistas of Siberian iris and budding peonies framed by curvilinear architecture. There was also an impressive bonsai collection, only rivalled by the spectacular

display awaiting us at the next-door Japanese garden. Here we discovered an array of tiny perfect oaks, pines, ginkgos, maples and even flowering azaleas, many of them impossibly ancient, the oldest being 275 years old! After exploring several other beautiful areas of this huge site, including a series of small lakes and ponds, a First Nations garden and a dramatic and fascinating rock garden, we wandered through extensive ornamental planting beds to the busy restaurant for lunch and a much-needed sit-down! ([www.espacepurlavie.ca](http://www.espacepurlavie.ca))



The monumental rock garden





Heather thanks Cynthia Gordon Cundhill

Back on the bus, we threaded our way through Montreal, navigating the steep streets of Westmount to where the first of our private hostesses awaited us. **Cynthia Gordon Cundhill's** pretty garden is approached down shady steps flanked by hostas, sweet woodruff, anemones and Solomon's seal, leading to a meandering hillside oasis with flagged paths and a small lawn bordered by perennial beds densely planted with penstemon, aquilegia, astrantia, indigo, dictamnus and much more. Though surrounded by other homes, the garden has a quiet, woodland feel, an old leaning



Tour leader Margaret Dailey-Plouffe and Mary Udd



Dagmar Guttman and Ann Goldsmith

hawthorn tree and a surprise treehouse adding to the country atmosphere. Cynthia takes care of the garden herself, telling us that it has survived the ravages of many children and dogs, so it was one we could all relate to! After



Dagmar's bench.

Heather thanked her and presented her with a gift of an extremely efficient-looking planting spade, we boarded the bus for our next destination, the home of **Dagmar Guttman**. On arrival we were immediately struck by her spectacular "white garden" – a beautiful display of white peonies, roses, lilacs, philadelphus and alyssum spilling down the slope from the front door.

Behind the house we found a large, open symmetrical space, our eyes immediately drawn to an elegant bench flanked by standard pear trees centred at the end of the lawn. On either side were lush perennial beds, a notable feature being the large number of climbing roses, some winding their way through decorative geometric arbours. We rested awhile in the shade of Dagmar's extensive pale grey-blue painted porch, until it was time to thank her, present her planting spade, and move on to the home of **Gail Jarislowski**, our last stop. As we got off the bus, we were enveloped in a cloud of fragrance from the white flowers of the towering black locust trees (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) outside her residence. Once inside the garden, we were impressed by another magnificent tree, a horse chestnut spreading its stately branches to create a cool space for a variety of shade-loving plants and a pond full of decorative fish. We were invited to gather on the terrace where Gail, along with other members of the Garden Club of Montreal, had prepared welcome refreshments, including delicious mushroom sandwiches that became the talk of the hour! After a last thank-you to The Blooming News, August, 2019 .... page 11

[www.ogc.website](http://www.ogc.website)



Gail Jarislowski and Marion Robertson.



Gail and a final planting spade presentation, we re-boarded the bus for the drive north to our hotel, Le Manoir in Saint-Sauveur. Dinner at the hotel allowed us to mix and make new friends, followed by an exploration of the hotel's extensive facilities – indoor and outdoor pools, hot tub and spa – before retiring to rest up in anticipation of the treat in store the next day.



A jolly dinner group!

As we were about to find out, **Le Jardin de François** is truly an expression of one man's passion. Created by philanthropist businessman and self-taught horticulturist François Marcil, previously owner of a chain of building supply stores across



François Marcil



One of the many references to love in the garden

Quebec, the garden radiates his personality at every turn, sometimes broad and visionary, sometimes quirky and whimsical, but always uniquely and unequivocally his own. He greeted us at the gates, a striking figure in his signature stetson, after which his assistant Gina gave us a brief introductory talk on the history of the garden, thanking us for our entry fee, which goes directly to the Laurentian Alzheimers Association, a cause close to François' heart. She told us that his initial inspiration for the garden was a visit he made to the Jardin des Quatre Vents in Charlevoix in 1990. Starting with 100 roses, he experimented with various levels of hardiness, but although he now has more than 1,000 in the garden, he decided to focus on plants with less demanding care requirements, such as

peonies, hydrangeas, astilbes, lilies, hostas, azalea, lady's mantle and monarda. As we set off on the soft bark-covered paths for the two-hour tour with our guides, we discovered that the way he creates maximum impact with these fairly familiar plants is to group them in great sweeping masses and swathes. The effect is magical and hugely effective, even though we were too early in the season to see some of them in bloom. The seven-acre property borders the Rivière à Simon, which rushes over rapids and creates a wonderful background ambiance, as well as providing a spectacular view from François' grey and white Nantucket-style home. He has also created a series of waterfalls and trickling streams that thread their way through wooded glades featuring many kinds of shade-loving plants. Everywhere in the garden there were whimsical touches – a collection of birdhouses, some church-shaped, a series of clever wood sculptures created by artist Michel Giroux, many other bronze pieces, and, in



Bird house



Wood sculpture of child on swing



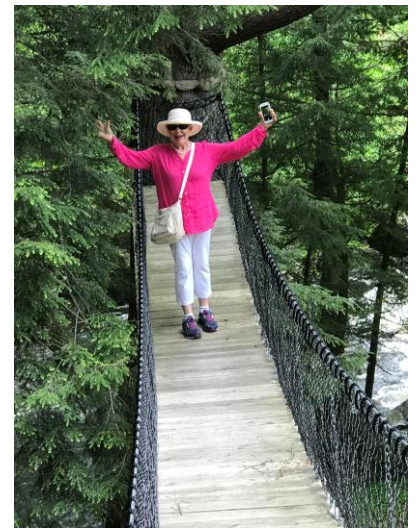
Le Pont de l'Amour





A splendidly realistic wooden peacock

the Secret Garden, a miniature covered bridge with heart-shaped doors and windows, called Le Pont de l'Amour. A funky treehouse François built for his grandchildren also enchanted us, with its crooked windows, primary colours and rope bridge, as well as the nearby pet rabbits and chickens, carefully protected from raiding raccoons! At the end of our tour we gathered for refreshments before reluctantly making our way back to the bus, admiring as we went a magnificent sculpture of a



Helen Clark walks the plank!

horse appearing to leap over a bed of blazing pink azaleas - one vivid last impression to take with us from the extraordinary multi-faceted artistic creation that is Le Jardin de François. ([www.jardindefrancois.com](http://www.jardindefrancois.com))



The bronze leaping horse

After lunch at l'Orange et Pamplemousse in Saint-Sauveur, the rest of our day was free to shop, swim, or just relax at Le Manoir. A couple of torrential downpours didn't spoil our fun, but suggested that our previously beautiful weather was about to change.

Our third day did indeed dawn grey and rainy, but spirits were high as we headed for our morning destination, the huge Michel Corbeil plant nursery in St-Eustache. After a guided tour of the impressive show garden, divided into many smaller gardens where perennials are tested and displayed, we were let loose to go shopping, looking for the plants that had particularly caught our eye in the garden, such as glorious purple and yellow *Baptisia* 'Grape Taffy', and the graceful *Gillenia trifoliata*.

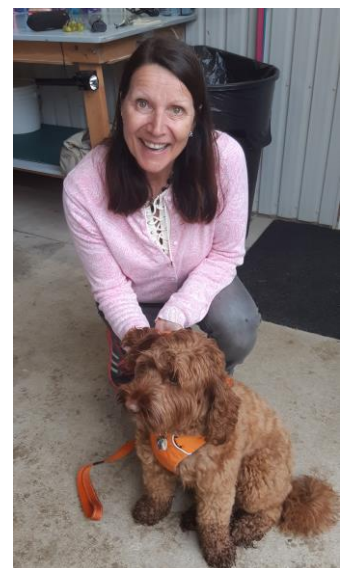
With precious purchases safely stowed under the bus, we set

off cross-country to Yolanta Niklewicz and Brian Bertram's peony farm in Harrington, **Le Jardin Bertram**. We hung on tightly as intrepid driver Terry navigated the twisty, hilly roads, but eventually made it safely to the farm, perched on a hill in a wild and gorgeous landscape. It was raining hard by this time, so after being greeted by our hosts, and while Margaret and



Brian Bertram

her helpers set out a delicious picnic lunch, we gathered in the barn and toured an excellent display that set out the history of the Bertram peony venture. And what a history it was! The couple started to plan their dream enterprise six years ago as a retirement project, even though both were still working full-time in Montreal - "we needed to be busy!". After an exhaustive search they found the perfect site, 300 acres of land (100 pasture, 200 forest) that had been farmed by four generations of Scottish settlers. It had also been a red deer farm for some time, but the fences for domestic deer proved inadequate for the wild variety, who soon destroyed many of the fruit trees the Bertrams



Yolanta with furry Filou!



initially hoped to cultivate. They readjusted, adapted and decided peonies were the way to go, importing most of their tubers (all "collection" peonies) from France so as not to compete with local varieties. They faced many challenges along the way - soil erosion, slow growth, a devastating fungal disease – but with endless hard work (weeding by hand!) and stubborn persistence, eventually learned how to produce healthy peonies on a grand scale. We picked up some useful peony tips: iodine is a natural fungicide; don't use too



Defying the rain in the Bertrams' peony field

much nitrogen or there will be fewer flowers; and a surprise to many of us, cut the stems right down to ground level in winter so melting snow doesn't cause rot. After the talk, and once



Dianne Breton can even wear a rain poncho with elegance!

Heather had thanked our very charming hosts, some of us donned rain ponchos and squelched down to the peony field to see the results of the Bertrams' work for ourselves. Although few of the peonies were in bloom, we could well imagine how this field would look if they were, and could fully understand the lure of cultivating this beautiful and iconic plant.

We drove back to Ottawa with wonderful memories and much to think about. During the trip, Heather thanked Sally Hutchison and Peggy Morgan for their efforts in creating such a splendid and successful tour, and presented them with lovely gifts from Saint-Sauveur. She also thanked Margaret Dailey-Plouffe for her superb organizing and catering, and Terry for his calm and efficient driving. On behalf of the Club, our thanks also go to Julian Armstrong of the Garden Club of Montreal for her invaluable help in finding such beautiful private gardens in Montreal for us to visit.

Roll on the next Ottawa Garden Club Tour!

*Felicity Garrard*



Sally Hutchison and Julian Armstrong



# MEET OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Having hiked, biked and skied her way around the world for the last 30 years, the active Heather Brown is an ideal person to take on the Presidency of the Ottawa Garden Club, with its many and varied responsibilities. Her former career working in communications at Carleton University has already greatly benefited the *Blooming News*, and makes her a natural fit for her new duties.

Heather joined the OGC in 2011, sponsored by Joan Drummond and Cindy Boucher, and showed her mettle at her first AGM by volunteering to be Secretary! She went on to serve in this position until 2017, when she became Vice President. Starting in 2012, she became heavily involved in the *Blooming News* team, managed the website, worked on The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre garden team and participated in the 150<sup>th</sup> Committee events. A talented artist, she has also contributed to the OGC's *Bloomin' Art* exhibitions at the Chartwell Rockcliffe Retirement Residence.

A keen gardener, Heather notes that her country garden, with its pond and wildflower meadow, has always been therapeutic for her, physically and mentally, becoming larger and larger during her working years! She says that she is happy to have become involved in the OGC, with its interesting and lively women, and has made good friends here over the years.

For Heather, it has been a natural progression from Secretary to President of the OGC, and we are happy to welcome such a vibrant, active and talented person in this role!



*Heather Brown*



## BEHIND THE SCENES



Sally Tindale, Donna Chan and Joan Sirrs

One of the many pleasures of coming to our OGC meetings is the informal social time beforehand when members have the opportunity to gather around the hospitality table, visiting with each other and enjoying delicious savouries and sweets (and the ever-present tray of sandwiches.) This social time is possible because of the generosity and creativity of our members who bring in these treats for all to enjoy.

Joan Sirrs, who has headed up the hospitality team for nine years, regularly circulates a 'sign-up' sheet for contributions and is always very pleased with the generous response. "I am grateful to members who find themselves willing and able to contribute to our table," she says. But much of the work goes on behind the scenes - lugging dishes and coffee

pots, setting up tables, organizing glasses, and especially cleaning up. Joan recruits 'episodic' volunteers to help with these logistics, but also has a committed and reliable team working with her - Donna Chan, Sally Tindale, and Grace Strachan. "I can't tell you how much I appreciate their support," says Joan. Thanks to everyone for making our hospitality table such a success!

*Heather Brown*



# *Questions to Ask Yourself When You Visit a Garden*

## **Context**

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- How does the garden relate to the world around it?
- Is the location special in some way? What is its history?
- Who built the garden? When?
- What was the designer's objective? What resources were available?
- Is the garden part of a larger landscape or separated from it by fences, walls or hedges?
- Does the site dominate the garden or is the garden imposed on the site?

## **Garden overview**

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- What challenges does the site offer? (Soil, climate, wind, predators and other animals)
- Is the land well-used and well-managed? Are opportunities missed?
- Is the garden ecologically sensitive?
- Is the site flat or hilly? Has the topography been altered?
- Is the garden large or small? Is it a single space or divided into 'rooms'?
- Does the garden have a particular style? (Theatrical, domestic, grand, full of fantasy or quietly contained? Symmetrical or asymmetrical? Bold gestures or garden of details?)
- Does the garden convey a particular atmosphere?
- Is there a theme that holds the garden together? Is the theme obvious or subtle? How is the theme conveyed? Are extraneous or irrelevant details eliminated?
- Is the garden predictable or full of surprises? Is the balance right?

## **Layout**

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- Are the house and garden close together or separated? Are there other outbuildings?
- Does the garden direct you in a particular way or are you free to wander? Are paths straight or curved? What are they made of?
- Is there variation within the garden? Is it enough or too much? Is there movement from light to dark? Is there a single colour palette or multiple colours? Are there both open and closed spaces? Are transitions from one space to another always handled in the same way? Are divisions within the garden always the same size?
- Does the garden hold together? Is there a theme? Is it a plant, a colour, a shape, an idea?

## **Elements within the garden**

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- **Plants:** Choices of plant, placement within the garden, arrangements within a border. Variation of colours, textures, height, structure (solid, leafy, spiky, globular). Single specimens or masses?
- **Hardscaping:** What types of materials are used, and how? What is the effect of choices? Does hardscaping blend or contrast with natural landscape?
- **Water:** Is it present? What is the effect of its use? Is it fast- or slow-moving? A large surface or a stream? Does it add sound? Does it reflect surroundings and sky?
- **Art:** Is art used? What kind? How does it relate to other elements within garden?

## **Overall**

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- Can you sum up your overall impression of the garden in a word or a sentence or two?
- What kinds of associations does the garden conjure up?
- What emotions does the garden evoke in you? What causes that response?

Pat Webster ~ [www.siteandinsight.com](http://www.siteandinsight.com)