

WINTER-SPRING 2023

# THE BLOOMING NEWS

## 2023 EXECUTIVE

### President

Chris Edwards 613-749-7013

### Past President

Heather Brown 613-697-1315

### Vice President

Ann Goldsmith 613-234-4045

### Secretary

Dianne Breton 613-567-6558

### Treasurer

Mary Murphy 819-671-9721

### Membership Secretary

Donna Chan 613-590-1767

### Diplomatic Representative

Sarah Harvey

### Diplomatic Liaison

Marianne Feaver 613-748-7528

### Program Committee

**Chair:** Karen Junke 613-232-7514

Lee Crowe 613-830-2961

Freda Godby 613-825-3713

Nina LePage 613-290-4285

Keltie Mierins 613-746-6277

Sonja Rajani 613-229-9721

Linda Russell 613-744-6643

Mary Pratte (Consultant) 613-746-6070

Pauline Yelle 613-747-2896

### Community Outreach

Sonja Rajani 613-229-9721

### CWM Garden of Remembrance

Victoria Hutton 613-258-2822

### Telephone Convenor

Elizabeth Dale-Harris 613-745-5950

### Boutique Manager

Victoria Hutton 613-258-2822

### Hospitality

Margo Ledoux 613-794-0940

### Blooming News

Felicity Garrard 613-728-7710

Heather Brown 613-697-1315

Helen Clark 613-729-5571

### Photographers

Cynthia Hoisak 613-837-7798

Barbara Brown 613-728-7520

Mary Murphy 819-671-9721

### Zoom Host

Peggy Morgan 613-722-1619

### Website

Heather Brown 613-697-1315

## UPCOMING PROGRAM EVENTS

🌀 **Thursday, February 16, 2023 12:30 pm**

Rockcliffe Park CC

### The Marvel of the Monarch

Joan Harvey, Johanna Cutts,  
and Mary Ash

🌀 **Thursday, March 16, 2023 12:30 pm**

Rockcliffe Park CC

### Growing Plants from Seed, and Boosting Soil Health

Renée-Claude Goulet

🌀 **Thursday, April 20, 2023 12:30 pm**

Rockcliffe Park CC

### Gardening with Native Plants in Ontario

Candace Dressler

🌀 **Thursday, May 18, 2023**

Rockcliffe Park CC

### Annual General Meeting

🌀 **Thursday, June 15, 2023**

**Picnic at the Beaumont Hamel site,  
Canadian War Museum**

## WELCOME TO THE OTTAWA GARDEN CLUB

We are delighted to welcome the following new diplomatic  
members to our club:

Tiina Väljaste – Estonia  
Luisa Leão Rocha – Portugal  
Lamia Hashim – Sudan  
Carine Kjelsen – Switzerland

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I'm sitting at my desk on January 1<sup>st</sup>, wondering where the time has gone! I certainly hope that 2023 will be a year of peace, good health and much happiness for one and all. What turbulent times we live in. However, as I read the news or watch TV, I realize that we are extremely lucky to be in one of the best countries possible.

October found many of us finally back at the Rockcliffe Community Centre enjoying a very informative speech by Cindy Cluett on grasses. We also had the pleasure of listening to Patterson (Pat) Webster, who gave us a brief presentation on her new book, *Autobiography of a Garden*. This is the story of the creation of Pat's spectacular garden, Glen Villa, in the Eastern Townships.

Our Christmas celebration was very special this year, thanks to the generosity of our Diplomatic Representative Sarah Harvey. She welcomed us to her beautiful residence, which she transformed into a sunny paradise, complete with beach balls and sun umbrellas, to show us how Christmas is celebrated in New Zealand!

We are now gearing up for what looks to be another spectacular series of events, beginning in January with our annual OGC luncheon at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club. We are most fortunate to be able to listen via Zoom to Fergus Garrett, a renowned horticulturist and plantsman, from the famous Great Dixter Gardens in the UK.

We are always very spoiled with Mary Pratte's blogs. I do hope you will take a minute or two to read them ([www.ogc.website/blog](http://www.ogc.website/blog)). In this issue of the *Blooming News* you will also find an article Mary has contributed on feeding wild birds, which I'm most anxious to read, as Santa brought me a wonderful new bird feeder that is apparently squirrel-proof. Time will tell!

Dianne Breton has written an interesting article describing the hard work and creativity of a group of members who have been responsible for decorating the Postal Cart at Perley Health for over ten years. Many imaginative designs have been produced during this time that have brought great joy to the residents.

Did you know the history of the Ottawa Garden Club logo? On page 8 June Norgaard describes how this intriguing image came into being. The *Blooming News* is always the perfect vehicle to catch up with or look forward to the many events that our dedicated members are busy arranging. It might also make you want to join one of our great committees. What better way to meet knowledgeable, interesting, fun members of our club!

I have found that gardens offer so much. Wonderful therapy, great views of nature at its best and a tremendous enjoyment. I will finish with these two lovely quotes:

*"He who plants a garden, plants happiness."*

*"Your mind is a garden; your thoughts are the seeds; you can grow flowers, or you can grow weeds."*

I hope you and yours have a peaceful, healthy and fabulous 2023, connecting with family and friends.



*Christine Edwards*

# PROGRAM SPRING 2023

**Thursday, February 16, 2023**

**12:30 pm**

Rockcliffe Park CC

## **The Marvel of the Monarch**

**Joan Harvey, Johanna Cutts,  
and Mary Ash**

Do you want to be part of the Monarch Butterfly movement to help a fascinating species at risk to survive? This presentation will give you everything you need to know - from discovering the Monarch's delicate life cycle, understanding its fascinating 4500 km migration to Mexico, examining current population status, to constructing an attractive pollinator garden. Planting suitable host and nectar plants and becoming informed will ensure the Monarch butterfly thrives.



Joan Harvey, Johanna Cutts, and Mary Ash are retired OCDSB teachers, and members of the Monarch Teacher Network-Ottawa. In the past, they have presented "Teaching and Learning with Monarch Butterflies in the Classroom", and "Voices from the Land" workshops.

Currently, through presentations and community events, they have been educating various groups interested in Monarchs, and acting as consultants on new butterfly gardens. Come with your questions and learn about this captivating insect.

Its hope for survival lies with all of us.

**Thursday, March 16, 2023**

**12:30 pm**

Rockcliffe Park CC

## **Growing Plants from Seed, and Boosting Soil Health**

**Renée-Claude Goulet**

Ms. Goulet will talk to us about growing plants from seed, discuss the importance of soil health for food production, and will provide science-based tips to get the spring garden off to a good start from the ground up.



Renée-Claude Goulet

Renée-Claude is the Science Advisor at the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum, and an Ontario Certified Teacher.

<https://ingeniumcanada.org/agriculture>

Through her background in biology, education and many years of experience creating and delivering programs and exhibits at the museum, she has developed an expertise in communicating key issues related to the science and innovation behind production of food, fibre and fuel to a wide range of audiences. She is also a passionate gardener.

*Old gardeners never die; they just  
make other arrangements.*

*Anon*

**Thursday, April 20, 2023**

**12:30 pm**

Rockcliffe Park CC

## **Gardening with Native Plants in Ontario**

**Candace Dressler**

Candace Dressler will discuss plants that are native to different parts of the world and will give examples of the varying biomes on the planet, as well as the eco-regions and districts in North America. She will tell us how to use plant nomenclature and plant tags to help determine if a plant is native to the Ottawa area.

Finally, there will be an overview of some of her favourite native plants that she says have brought more birds to her backyard gardens and reduced maintenance requirements.



Candace is a Master Gardener, President of the Gloucester Horticultural Society and Past Director of the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) District 1. She started to garden with her grandparents on the prairies over 40 years ago and became a Master Gardener in 2017. She has a kitchen garden, an English-inspired front bed, and a woodland border behind her property.

**Thursday, May 18, 2023**

**12:30 pm**

Rockcliffe Park CC

## **Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday, June 15**

**(Rain date: Friday, June 16)**

## **Picnic at the Beaumont Hamel site, Canadian War Museum.**

We will be celebrating five years since the Inauguration of the Garden of Remembrance and the installation of the plaque and bench on the site at that time. We are looking forward to coming together at the Beaumont Hamel site with an informal picnic gathering of our members and officials from the Canadian War Museum.

More details will be announced in due course.

### **PROGRAM COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS WANTED!**

Karen Junke, Program Committee Chair, is looking for volunteers to join her talented team of event planners. The Garden Club Program is right at the heart of what we do as a club, so if you have enjoyed the presentations reported in this issue, and would like to help out, why not come and be involved in finding yet more fascinating topics and speakers to enlighten and entertain us. It's a fun group, and many hands make light work!

Contact [kjunke@rogers.com](mailto:kjunke@rogers.com) or call 613-232-7514.



# HIGHLIGHTS OF FALL MEETINGS

## A Visit to Roam Flora Flower Farm – September 8

Shimmering late summer heat enhanced the sights and scents of Roam Flora Flower Farm near Carp, as thirty of our members gathered for the tour. Colourful masses of zinnias, dahlias, roses, sunflowers, cosmos, salvia and delphiniums stretched out into the fields around us, while numerous butterflies, bees, and other pollinators hovered over the blossoms, using the last sun-drenched days of summer to stock up for the winter ahead. Laura Langford and her husband Dawson first gave us a short history of their off-grid and sustainable business, which they said began as a hobby and gradually got out of control! They bought the farm in 2018, and began with flat hayfields, a barn, no septic, no irrigation, no electricity, and no experience. Gradually becoming self-taught “by Google,” as Laura said, they have performed miracles, as their flourishing beds attest.

During the pandemic, Roam’s main business supplying wholesale florists collapsed, so the enterprising young couple have switched to mostly online and consumer sales of cut flowers, floral arrangements and exotic tulip bulbs, as well as offering flower workshops. They have built a greenhouse, polytunnels and a small workshop, and are renovating the original log farmhouse on the property. They have enriched the sandy loam soil with compost, installed solar panels for electricity, and built irrigation systems, including a pond that uses conduction to move the water around. The pond attracts turtles, swallows and herons, while the newly planted hedgerows and vine walls encourage insect-eating birds like wrens.



Laura and Dawson with their acres of flowers.



A ceiling-full of gorgeous dried blooms.

“Mother Nature is a feisty lady,” said Laura, and indeed there have been new pests and new problems each year. In their second year, they lost 10,000 dahlias to an early killing frost. After cows damaged their fields the same year, they now ask each other what the “cow” (crisis) is going to be this year! In fact, this year’s “cow” was the weather, with a hot spell in May that finished off the tulips, followed by cold and wet weather that stunted the peonies and a hot July that damaged the dahlias. We moved around the beds in the hot sun, admiring the pastoral scenery of green fields and woods beyond the prolific blooms around us. All of the zinnias and most of the dahlias are grown from seeds that the couple harvest themselves. “Dahlias are divas,” said





Laura, and she finds they grow better from seeds than from tubers. Her new dahlia breeding project involves 1,500 plants. All seedlings are meticulously flagged, tagged, photographed and numbered to keep track of their lineage. Isolation tunnels are used to separate the colours, and fly larvae are released into each tunnel to ensure that only "clean" flies pollinate the isolated flowers, thus retaining the exact colours. As she gently showed off the huge dahlia heads, Laura talked a lot about "ombre" (colours or tones that shade into each other) and her desire to create unique colour combinations.

After the tour, several members stayed to pick their own flowers, while others had pre-ordered magnificent bouquets to take home. In the future, Laura and Dawson are hoping to expand the existing business, sell seeds, create a water plant section, and build and offer more of their successful floral workshops. One of their puns on the name, Roam, is that "Rome wasn't built in a day," but we left feeling that this energetic couple, through love and hard work, will indeed end up building an even bigger and more successful enterprise in a very short time! [www.roamflora.ca](http://www.roamflora.ca)

*Helen Clark*

## WELCOME TEA FOR NEW MEMBERS AND DIPLOMATS



Sarah Harvey, Carine Kjelson (Switzerland) and Tiina Väljaste (Estonia).

On October 18<sup>th</sup>, our Diplomatic Representative Sarah Harvey hosted an elegant tea to welcome new members and diplomatic friends to the Ottawa Garden Club. The event was held at the beautiful New Zealand residence in Rockcliffe. We gathered in Sarah's lovely light-filled dining room for tea and sweets, before adjourning to the living room for the formal welcome from Club President, Chris Edwards. Chris was doing double-duty that day as she and a small garden club team had decorated the residence with fabulous fall arrangements in pumpkin vases. And as a special welcome, new members and diplomats were each given an arrangement to take home after the event. A lovely welcome indeed!

*Heather Brown*



Two of the beautiful fall arrangements made by the creative team of Chris Edwards, Ann Goldsmith, Sarah Harvey and Margo Ledoux to decorate the New Zealand residence.



Chris Edwards chats with diplomats Vikki Eriksson (Finland), Tiina Väljaste (Estonia), Mary McGillis McKee (Ireland) and Luisa Leão Rocha (Portugal)

## Grass with Class – October 20

It felt almost surreal walking into the Rockcliffe Park Community Centre in October after more than two years. Our last regular in-person meeting at the RPCC was February 2020 and some of us hadn't seen each other since then. But it didn't take long for warm greetings and happy chatter to fill the air. It was good to be back! President Chris Edwards began the meeting with a warm welcome to all, especially our eight new members. She then thanked all those who had worked so hard during the pandemic to keep our club thriving, in particular her executive, the program committee, and the Zoom specialists.

Freda Godby, who had organized the program for the day, introduced our guest speaker Cindy Cluett, owner of Beyond the House garden centre. Cindy began her career in high-tech, but soon decided to pursue her passion for gardening. She returned to Algonquin College to study horticulture, and now runs a full-service garden centre located in Russell, Ontario. The centre specializes in rare and unique plants. Her topic for the meeting was Ornamental Grasses, and Cindy certainly knows her subject! With the aid of beautiful photos, she gave a lively and animated presentation on a wide variety of grasses, their features, flaws, requirements and care. She believes that grasses are as important as shrubs to give structure and interest in the garden and her slides beautifully illustrated this point.



Chris Edwards with Cindy Cluett

Grasses can be divided into cool and warm season grasses. Cool season grasses, such as the popular Karl Foerster reed grass,

bloom early in the season, whereas warm season grasses are slow to show and come into their own with blooms late in the summer. She described a long list of warm season grasses, including her favourite *Sporobolus heterolepsis* (prairie dropseed), and the 2022 perennial plant of the year, *Schizachyrium scoparium* (little bluestem). She also pointed out some popular grasses that should be avoided, such as

blue oat grass and blue fescue. "People buy these because of their colour but they don't always do well in the garden," she says. She also discussed the beautiful *Pennisetum* fountain grasses that look wonderful in pots but are not reliable. "All purple grasses should be treated as annuals."

For more information on the variety of grasses available in our area, visit her website [www.beyondthehouse.ca](http://www.beyondthehouse.ca). Detailed information will be available in the spring when the nursery is stocked for the growing season.

And, as an added bonus at this meeting, Pat Webster joined us to talk about her beautifully illustrated new book, *Autobiography of a Garden*. Pat is well known to OGC members, having presented at two of our January meetings and hosted our bus tour to her beautiful Eastern Townships garden "Glen Villa". Her book describes the process of designing her garden over many years. She says that creating a garden changes you as the creator, as your story and the garden's story intertwine. "You need to be quiet to listen to the land" she says "to know what the site demands." Pat brought a number of her books to sell and there was a long lineup of eager purchasers. By the end of the meeting, our two presenters, Pat and Cindy, were engaged in enthusiastic gardening discussions and making plans to see each other again! It was a very successful launch to our 2022/23 season.



Pat Webster signing her book.

*Heather Brown*



*Sporobolus heterolepsis* (prairie dropseed)



## How to Make an Outdoor Seasonal Arrangement – November 8

The mood was festive as we gathered for our November meeting. Snow had fallen the day before and we were happy to be meeting again in person. We were looking forward to a presentation by Lynette L. Deir Mullen, owner of Stoneblossom Floral Gallery in Orleans, showcasing an outdoor winter/ Christmas planter. Lynette's young daughter, Emerson, accompanied her and was very cute and a good little helper.

Lynette started with a plastic bucket insert filled with wet oasis and emphasized the importance of placing oasis in water and letting it sink to the bottom of the container by itself in order that it is wet through. Leaves or soil can be used instead of oasis. She also spoke about cutting the greens and hydrating them first, so that they will last longer, saying that although materials from florists are more expensive than those from a big box store, they are much fresher, as they are shipped regularly. Before placing materials in the container, one must position it and decide if it will be seen from all sides or just from the front.

Lynette first inserted a birch log and then added BC cedar, which draped nicely over the side of the container. She started at the bottom and then zig-zagged it around, up and down, to create depth.

Next, she added bushier greens (balsam and pine) to fill in the empty spaces and to give different heights and textures.

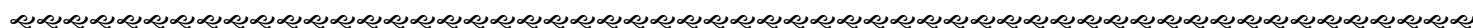
Curly willow added height without being too heavy. Lynette suggested it's best to wait until the end to add magnolia leaves so they will be seen. Loose magnolia leaves can be stapled on to other stems. Having decided which part of the container was the focal point, it was time to add the finishing touches. Lynette added branches of cotton, pinecones, ilex berries and a bow, and finally wrapped the plastic insert in burlap to create a beautiful seasonal display.



Lynette L. Deir Mullen and Lamia Hashim (Sudan)

Names had been placed in a hat for a draw to win this festive arrangement and to our delight, young Emerson drew Lamia Hashim's name. Lamia arrived recently from Sudan and this was the first time she had attended a Garden Club meeting!

*Sally Hutchison*



## HISTORY OF THE OGC LOGO

THE OTTAWA  
GARDEN CLUB



*In 2003, then OGC Vice President June Norgaard commissioned her brother, the graphic designer Don Pinder, to design a logo for the club. This elegant image - a stylized lotus flower - is featured on the Newsletter, our smart tote bags and denim shirts, as well as on our note cards and stationery. Here is June's brief history of the lotus, and what it has meant over the centuries.*

The lotus is a member of the water lily family (*Nymphaeaceae*). For thousands of years, Buddhists have considered the lotus flower a symbol of enlightenment and victory over darkness, because it grows up through dark murky waters and becomes beautiful when it reaches the light. To ancient Egyptians, the lotus became a symbol of hope, promise, rebirth and spiritual consciousness. This perhaps explains why lotus seeds – known to survive for centuries – were found sprinkled over Tutankhamun's body when his tomb was opened in 1922.

Almost since the beginning of time, the artful lotus flower image has been decorating just about anything you can imagine, such as lacquered boxes, china, jade figurines, Persian carpets, frieze paintings, Tiffany lamps, to mention only a few examples. The lotus is one of the most long-lived of botanical symbols. Perhaps even a few of the virtues of the beautiful lotus, so revered by ancient cultures, will continue to serve as an inspiration for our Ottawa Garden Club.

*June Norgaard*



# UPSIDE DOWN CHRISTMAS

On December 8, Sarah Harvey, Diplomatic Representative for the Ottawa Garden Club, treated the club to a "Christmas Down Under" in the New Zealand High Commission residence. And what fun that was! We all donned summer hats and dresses and sang Christmas carols with words like "Shepherds and musterers move over hillsides, Finding not angels but sheep to be shorn."

Sarah welcomed the group with a traditional Maori greeting and explained how Christmas in New Zealand differs from Christmas in the northern hemisphere. First, it is the start of their longest holiday season, so is a very busy time as families prepare for end of school activities and Christmas celebrations at the same time.



New Zealand Christmas tree, also known as the pohutukawa tree, or *Metrosideros excelsa*.



Mary Murphy isn't sheepish about winning the "Best Hat" prize for her perfectly themed creation.

Because of their British/Scottish heritage, New Zealanders' depiction of Christmas is imbued with images of winter - snow and ice and holly and ivy - despite the hot summer weather. Christmas cake, pudding, and pavlova are served, along with barbecues. Santa comes down the chimney bearing gifts. Not a problem because it's too hot for a fire! However this is a real puzzler for New Zealand children who cannot figure out how Santa can safely deliver gifts to children living in a cold, northern climate where fires are a must. The pohutukawa tree pictured above is known as New Zealand's Christmas tree because it flowers in December and January. Sarah told us that the first Christmas celebrated in New Zealand occurred in 1814 on the beach on the Bay of Islands. The congregation sat on overturned canoes arranged in rows like church pews.

Well, we didn't leave the party with a tan, but we did depart knowing a little more about Christmas in New Zealand, and in high spirits and gratitude for Sarah's generous hospitality.

*Jane Panet*



A jolly gathering under the beach umbrella!

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH



## Perley Courtyards: dormant for now

In October, after a successful growing and blooming season, we started the annual ritual of preparing the courtyard beds for winter. We planted 100 bulbs in each courtyard with a colourful variety of tulips and narcissus. We had three full sessions of cutting back and cleaning up, with over 11 waste yard bags to show for our work. Some bushes were not cut back, like the hydrangeas and some grasses, to provide winter interest for the residents.

Near the end of the season we welcomed Susan McNee to the group, and we are happy to share that three more members of the Garden Club (Margo Ledoux, Ann Goldsmith and Donna Chan) are in the final stages of their application to become volunteers at the Perley, and thus will be able to join the outreach group in spring 2023!

*Sonia Rajani*

## Decorating the Perley Postal Cart: The Beginning and the End

In the early 2000s, an antique postal cart, formerly used to transfer large canvas mail bags at Canadian railway stations, was donated to the Perley-Rideau Veterans Centre (now known as Perley Health). It was parked in the entry hallway and decorated by staff for special holidays, such as Remembrance Day and Volunteer Recognition Day.

In 2006, Club member June Norgaard suggested that some of the Garden Club volunteers who had started to create and maintain one of the Perley's courtyard gardens, could decorate the cart for the Christmas season, and the staff welcomed the idea.



Mary Hardwick gathered a group of members together and, with her contagious creative energy and enthusiasm, began coordinating the Club's seasonal decorating of the cart that has continued until this year. Dianne Breton took over from Mary for several years, followed by Pat Padmos. Garden Club members involved included Cynthia Hoisak (the creative ideas and mastermind behind most of the cart decorations), Sally Hutchison, Heather Brown, Peggy Morgan, Joan Hoffman, and Diane Henning.

Over the years, there were many themes. The postal cart was decorated with wintery Christmas scenes, spring-flowering branches, summer beach scenes, a trip across Canada and fall harvest scenes with hay bales and scarecrows. There was even a special cart to celebrate the Olympics. Each display came together like magic with the input of those involved. The objective was to stimulate memories and conversation between staff, volunteers, residents and their families as they walked or rolled in wheelchairs past the cart.





Perley Health allowed the Garden Club to store boxes of decorations in a large storage area, including artificial Christmas trees, lights, extension cords, and interesting pieces that were re-used in different ways. As space became tighter, the boxes were moved to shelves in a small room, and finally downsized to a space under a staircase. It became difficult for Club volunteers to carry in the decorations needed, and

then to bring them home for basement or garage storage. The decision was made to hand back the postal cart decorating to staff members.

The finale to decorating the postal cart, was the display of leftover Christmas decorations at the club's November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. Members were invited to take home any of the decorations in return for a donation to the Club – and one by one they all disappeared.

*Dianne Breton*

~~~~~

## IN MEMORIAM

**Mary Hardwick**

**May 21, 1945 - November 12, 2022**

We lost a friend this year .... the "Marvellous" Mary Hardwick. If you had the joy to know, or even just to meet her, you would remember finding yourself feeling as if you were at the centre of her universe for those moments. She listened with her whole heart. Mary's ebullient, warm and engaging ways won her many friends in many circles and she cultivated those friendships all of her life.

It was Mary who envisioned our Ottawa Garden Club's Community Outreach program back in 2007. She systematically created the program and the support that has ever since seen our volunteers lovingly tend the South Courtyard gardens at Perley Health. More recently the Rideau North Courtyard was added to those activities. Part of that program extended to the seasonal decoration of the famous postal cart, bringing pleasure to the residents throughout the year.



Mary's organizational gifts were many - she was an educator, community activist, artist, talented gardener, adventurer, extraordinary cook and a fabulous friend. Mary gave of her talents widely, including sharing joyful art lessons over the years at the May Court Hospice, a place dear to her heart. This is where Mary herself spent her final days, with a book of Mary Oliver's poetry on her bedside table.

*"All my life I was a bride married to amazement" (Mary Oliver from "When Death Comes")*

Mary leaves behind her sister Jane, loving daughters Anna and Liz, and her beloved Doug, husband of over 50 years - and many, many friends.

*Victoria Hutton*

## Canadian War Museum - Beaumont Hamel Garden of Remembrance



This year we are celebrating five years since the inauguration of the Garden of Remembrance at the Beaumont Hamel site at the Canadian War Museum. Many of our members will remember that back in 2015 the Club began looking for a community project with which to celebrate Canada's Sesquicentennial in 2017. It took some time to identify and develop, but with the vision and encouragement of the officials at the Canadian War Museum, our consultant Richard Rogers and an enthusiastic group of OGC volunteers, our project to incorporate the wildflowers of Newfoundland/Labrador into the commemorative turf on the Beaumont Hamel site was born.

We learned a lot as we tried to incorporate those wildflowers, consulting the Language of Flowers for significant associations of remembrance, bravery, love, loss and honour. We even went so far as to create a bog area, importing hardy pitcher plant stock and keeping a vigilant volunteer watering brigade at work for two seasons. Alas, one by one our significant plantings were decimated, either by the baking heat of our summers, or plundered, either by the resident groundhogs or most sadly, human predators.

We persevered. Mowed paths have been created to allow visitors to wander more deeply through the turf providing a place of reflection and remembrance. Views have been created from the Military History Research Archives windows allowing visitors to connect with this site.

We have gradually come to an understanding with Mother Nature and are beginning at last to achieve a balance among the various competing natural elements - with invaluable assistance from the CWM maintenance staff and officials, as well as ongoing flexibility on everyone's part!

*Victoria Hutton*



# FOR THE BIRDS

When we hear 'attracting birds to the garden', we think of filling a bird feeder and watching the squirrels eat 90% of the seed! But there is much more we need to offer our feathered friends if we want them to visit often. Beyond food, they also need shelter, water, a place and materials for nesting, and a safe environment. The benefits of having birds year-round in our yards are myriad – not only do they devour a surprising number of insects, but they add auditory and visual pleasure to our lives. Consider a few of these ideas to help you turn your backyard into a bird paradise.

## Food

Don't forget that bird food comes from plants, so supplement your feeders with a natural pantry of seeds, berries, nectar and nuts – you never know who will stop by for a meal! Planting a variety of shrubs and trees – crabapple, burning bush, cotoneaster, viburnum, conifers etc. – provides all of these for the birds, while hundreds of perennials and annuals produce seed or nectar for everything from finches to hummingbirds.

Birds also need grit in their diet to allow their stomachs to process food properly. This is not easy to find in winter, so some sand or chicken grit sprinkled on the ground will help them digest their food. Hang suet out once the cold weather arrives – it attracts chickadees and nuthatches, as well as woodpeckers of all sizes.



Encourage insects, no matter how much you hate them! They are essential if the natural food chain is to function properly. Starlings eat grubs in your lawns, chickadees pick pine sawfly larvae from the mugo pines, and many birds devour mosquitoes. Remember that butterflies emerge from caterpillars, and those large, shiny black beetles, while scary looking, might be the reclusive ground beetles which eliminate so many of our 'bad' bugs. Make your garden a home for both 'good' and 'bad' insects – they all have their place, and both kinds feed our birds or each other.

## Water

Birds need water all year long, both for bathing and for drinking. Provide bird baths (with a stone or two in them if they are too deep) filled with clean water in the warmer months. Birds can

generally find a puddle or other source of water before the ground freezes, and once the snow comes, they 'drink' it off branches or the ground.

## Shelter

Birds need shelter for nesting, keeping warm, and to escape from predators. Hedges and dense shrubs are ideal places for birds to hide, sleep and raise their young, as closely spaced branches keep predators and birds of prey at a safe distance. Bird houses are also a good idea, but choose those which can be opened and cleaned, and which have holes suitable for the size of birds you want to



attract – a specialty bird store will help you with this choice.

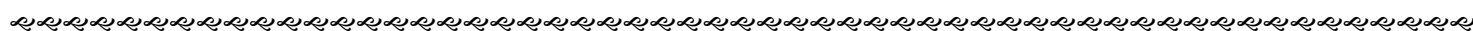
### **Nesting material**

Don't be too tidy in the garden – birds use all sorts of little scraps of lint, branches, grasses, string etc. to make their nests. Think about hanging a net bag or other type of container in a tree, and filling it with cat, dog or even human hair, pieces of yarn or thin strips of material – anything which might make a nest cozier for fragile chicks. Leaving a bit of leaf litter around also allows for insects to hide and multiply, hence providing food for ground feeding birds.

Finally - try not to use chemicals in the garden. This can tip the balance of nature, either killing the birds directly or driving them away as their food sources dry up.

So, fill that feeder by all means, but plant a coneflower and a crabapple as well!

*Mary Pratte*



## **BOOKWORM**

### ***The Naturally Beautiful Garden*, by Kathryn Bradley-Hole**

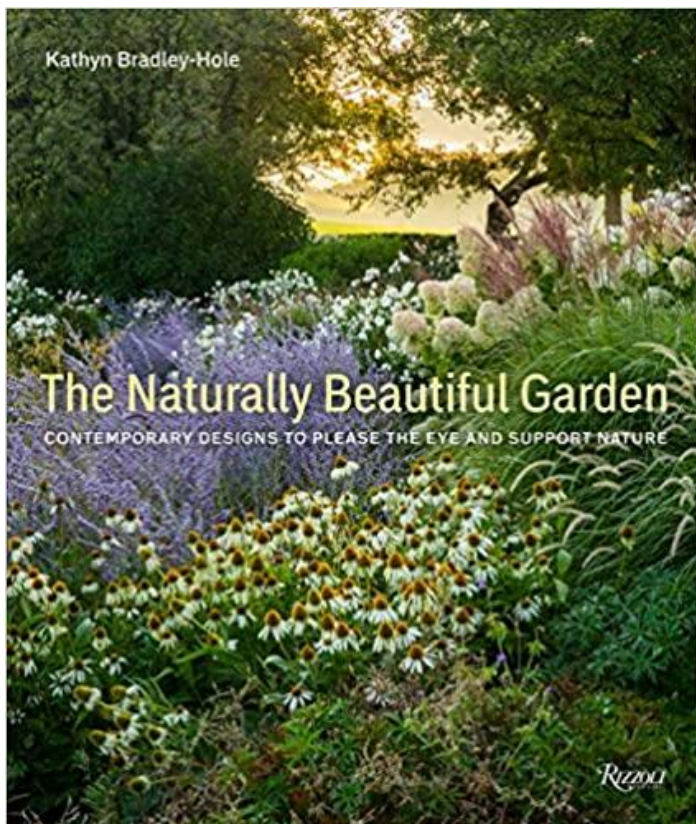
This is a gorgeous book to inspire you as you dream of next year's garden plan, or to just browse through during the winter months. It shows us how beautifully gardens can be designed while planting in ecologically sensitive ways that support pollinators, butterflies, birds, and other wildlife; a theme that is becoming more urgent as we face the loss of biodiversity around the world.

As the illustrations demonstrate, there need be no loss of visual impact or creativity when taking environmental concerns into account. With examples from all over the world, the gardens showcased here

serve diverse needs - from twenty-first-century public green spaces to modern cottage gardens, and from large country gardens to intimate city courtyards - across a wide range of climates and soils. They have been created with elegance and style, alongside their makers' efforts to work with, rather than against, nature, and support the complex web of life that so frequently struggles to coexist with human habitation or agriculture.

This lovely book features more than thirty gardens from across the globe, with photographs by leading garden photographers, including Richard Bloom, Andrea Jones, Marianne Majerus, Alessio Mei, Clive Nichols, and Ngoc Minh Ngo.

**Kathryn Bradley-Hole** is the author of Rizzoli's acclaimed *English Gardens* as well as the best-selling "*Gardeners' World*" *Garden Lovers' Guide to Britain* and *Lost Gardens of England: From the Archives of Country Life*. A fellow of the Linnean Society, she was for eighteen years the garden editor of the esteemed weekly magazine *Country Life* as well as the author of a regular column, *Nature Notes*.



*Felicity Garrard*



# HOW TO SPONSOR A NEW MEMBER

If you have a friend who you think might be interested in joining our garden club, this is what to do:

1. Any member may sponsor one new candidate each year after being a member for two full years.
2. Invite your friend to attend a meeting. Make sure you tell the President Christine Edwards ([chrisee68@gmail.com](mailto:chrisee68@gmail.com) or 613-749-7013) in advance so she can introduce your guest to the Garden Club members - this is important so that there is a record of her attendance. Prospective members must attend a minimum of two meetings as a guest before they can be nominated for membership. Remember there is a \$10.00 guest fee.
3. Be sure your nominee is aware that as a member of the club, she is agreeing to be actively involved - to participate in club meetings, activities and committees and to respond to requests from the Executive for assistance.
4. Obtain a **Nomination Form** from Membership Chair Donna Chan ([chanrddj@gmail.com](mailto:chanrddj@gmail.com) or 613-590-1767). This should be completed and submitted to Donna (1746 Windflower Way, Orléans, ON. K1C5Y5) **AFTER** a candidate has attended two meetings and **BEFORE** the end of March. Note, each Nomination Form requires the signature of the sponsor, co-sponsor and the candidate.
5. The Membership Chair brings forward nominations to the Executive. New members are admitted by the Executive at its April meeting each year, based both on available space and operational needs. The Membership Chair will advise the nominee of acceptance. The new members will be introduced at the AGM in May. They will be honoured at a special luncheon later in the year, usually October.
6. Nominations received after the end of March are held until the following year.
7. The number of new members admitted each year depends on the total number of members in the club.

*Donna Chan*

## THE BLOOMING NEWS

Newsletter of  
The Ottawa Garden Club  
is published semi-annually  
in January and in August.  
Volume 24, #1, January 2023

**Editor:** Felicity Garrard  
**Advisors:** Heather Brown  
Helen Clark  
**Distribution:** Kelly Noel

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