



Streetsville Blooms

Streetsville Horticultural Society

Proud to be a member of the Ontario Horticultural Association



Volume 27, Issue 9

www.streetsvillehort.ca

June 2020

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NEXT MEETING:

September 8, 2020

Streetsville United Church

274 Queen Street South

Doors open 6:45 p.m.

Meeting starts 7:30 p.m.

The president's Message

This will be the first year since I joined SHS more than ten years ago that we haven't been excited in June to report the results of the annual plant sale. It has been a strange year for sure, and it's not over yet. Hopefully you are all staying healthy, the most important thing in all of this chaos. Don't know when yet, but we will resume our monthly meetings at some time, this fall we hope, and it will be all the sweeter when we do. Maybe it's a coincidence, but there certainly seems to be a lot more birds around this spring, or maybe it's just that we have time to watch and photograph them? I've seen orioles for the first time in my garden and enjoyed wonderful bird pictures online, taken by other SHS members. We are lucky to live in such a beautiful part of Ontario! Since we can't really go anywhere, we have what all gardeners have always wanted – more time to work in the garden

(or at least that's what I've always said). This year will be the test. Take care of yourselves. Let's use this extra time thrust upon us to smell the roses. See you all in September we hope.

At the beginning of March, in anticipation of the annual plant sale, I potted a couple of dozen **canna lily** roots and set them in front of my sunniest window. Some took their sweet time sprouting but now I have about 18 plants ready for a summer home. They should flower (no guarantee) by the end of July. The roots will have to be dug up and over-wintered in a

cool, dry place. If you would like to include canna lilies in your garden this season, contact me at margrowan@hotmail.com and for a \$4 donation to SHS, you can take a pot home. (They sell for about \$10+ at the garden centers.) First come first served. I also have some hostas dug from my garden available. It would have been a very warm day for the plant sale!! ☺ Marg Rowan, **Co-President**





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Rotary Park

We haven't been able to work at Rotary Park this year, and the current earliest date we might be allowed to work there is July 3rd. When we were told this in April it seemed a long long way off but now it's just one more month.

In many cases the plants have still flowered (or are just about to) without our help but in other cases, our absence has been sorely missed.

If we do get back to work in July there will be lots to do, so if you haven't helped here before and would like to, please contact me at Jon.eldridge@ymail.com, so that I can contact you. Thank you.

ꝝ Jon Eldridge



Leslie Log House

The gardens at the log house are a huge mess, last fall a concrete path was installed causing damage to the garden. We were hoping to get an early start, but that hasn't happened. We will need many hands when we are allowed to get to work. If you are in the area, and would like to visit you can park on the street across the road. The peonies are about to burst in blooming glory.

ꝝ Carol Ashford



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Waldeinsamkeit: solitude in the forest

The quarantine is starting to open. By May 11th the government of Ontario opened “provincial parks and conservation reserves for limited day-use access. At this time, recreational activities will be limited to walking, hiking, biking and birdwatching. Day visitors will also be able to access all parks and conservation reserves for free until the end of the month”. That’s it. Free to go and visit!

As soon as the announcement was made my family and I were on our way to Forks of the Credit Provincial Park, located in Caledon, Ontario is part of the Ontario Parks system and of the Niagara Escarpment biosphere. The park is on the Bruce Trail and the Credit River runs through it. Another notable feature of includes a kettle lake and talus slope.



There has been a mill in the area since 1820. In 1885, John Deagle bought the mill at the top of the falls and converted it into an electrical generating station, damming the river and creating Cataract Lake; later the station was purchased by Ontario Hydro and was eventually shut down in 1947. The ruins of the mill and powerhouse are located within the park.



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It is a "natural environment", open all year, covering 282 hectares. There is no camping or intensive recreation – just picnicking, fishing, cycling, hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. The network of trails takes you through rolling hills, past Kettle Lake (created by glaciation), and into wooded areas near the river.

We went early morning. There weren't that many visitors, but they showed up later, by the time we were leaving. The weather was just perfect we brought our dog for the trail that takes less than an hour with some steep grades. The landscape is just beautiful. And The sound of water, the fresh air, the sensation of solitude and connection between nature and you peaceful and contemplative. Food for the soul.

White trillium; is the Ontario flower that gives the forests their long awaited pops of vibrant colours and contrast. This is the flower featured on many of our provincial documents, from health cards to driver's licenses. **Nury Garzon**





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Landscape fabric does not belong in gardens!

The problems that result from use of landscape fabric have been a frequent nightmare when I have worked on client's gardens. Let's start at the beginning.



Landscape fabric is marketed as a method of weed control in garden beds and other places such as under paths. Landscape fabric was developed for use in commercial growing facilities, if it is used outside it is usually installed in the spring and removed in the fall and then put in the garbage. With no soil or mulch covering the fabric there is nothing for weeds to grow in. It was never intended to be a permanent installation. Why do people use landscape fabric? Because they hope that it will make weeding the garden less time consuming. This is a bit like hoping the fairy godmother will do the laundry!

What goes wrong? First the instructions tell you to remove all plant material from the garden bed. But, but you say, I have an established garden, I just want to get rid of the weeds.

Wow this is not a simple process! Landscape fabric rarely lasts more than 2-3 years. So, remove almost your entire garden every 2-3 years and replant it? Then level the bed and remove all roots and rocks. But I have trees I can't get rid of the roots, it's on a slope and it has some really nice rocks.

Then roll out the fabric. Cost about \$1 per square foot, But it doesn't fit well around trees and shrubs, so cut and then overlap sections of fabric as needed to cover the area, but this means some areas are all bunched up and have two layers. Use landscape fabric pins (about 1 per square foot, 30 cents each) to secure the fabric to the soil underneath.

Next step; replant everything you removed, to do this you have to cut holes in the fabric for every plant. Oh, but isn't the purpose of landscape fabric to reduce the number of weeds, every time you cut a hole in the fabric you provide a space for weeds to grow.





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The final step is to cover the entire fabric surface with mulch which creates a perfect growing bed for weeds. Almost all weed seeds blow into your garden, drop from plants or trees already in your garden or birds deposit the seeds in their droppings. They need light to germinate and find suitable places to germinate in the mulch that is used to cover landscape fabric. It doesn't matter if it is organic mulch or pea gravel or river rock, the weeds still germinate.

A neighbour asked me why he had weeds in his re-sodded front lawn; he said the man at the store told me to put landscape fabric under new sod and no weeds would grow, I could see the

landscape fabric sticking out from under the sod. So, then we had a conversation about 'where weeds come from'. It's a myth that weeds sprout from the soil, they grow from the top down whether the fabric is there or not.

What happens next? The weed seeds germinate and grow down through the fabric, roots from perennial weeds grow up through the landscape fabric, don't believe anyone who tells you the fabric is impenetrable to roots.



This picture was taken in 2015 in a client's garden, weeds and roots have grown through the fabric. The fabric had been there for 2 years. And yes, it took a pickaxe and 6 hours to remove the fabric from a 6 by 10 foot bed. In every place where the fabric was removed the ground under it was slimy where wet, brick-like where dry, and packed down and not at all favourable to good plant growth



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This is a use recommended by manufacturers of landscape fabric, the purpose is to stop weed growth in a circle around a tree. This is industrial landscape fabric; it was installed 5 years earlier when the tree was planted. Seems to me the equivalent of putting your one year child in a turtle neck and never taking it off

Problems with planting and plant growth

If you are like most gardeners, you often move plants around and add new ones. Transplanting and dividing is difficult, especially if the plant is too big to move out of the pre-cut hole. You like to pop in annuals and bulbs but every time you have to cut a hole in the fabric. Many groundcovers need to be able to put down roots along their stems to spread, this cannot happen with landscape fabric in place.

Seeds from self seeding annuals and perennials may germinate but their roots have no soil to grow in. Plant roots growing on top of the fabric can't endure a drought.

Perennials need space for their roots and crowns to grow, it can't happen when they are girdled with fabric. Shrubs, trees and perennial send their roots up through landscape fabric, when you try to remove it because it starts to be unattractive, you are likely to damage the plants' roots of those of plants nearby. When you try to pull weeds the fabric tears and fragments.

Problems with soil

The biggest problem is you can't amend the soil by adding compost, manure or fertilisers. The next major problem is that organic matter such as fallen leaves or mulch you have used does not decompose into the soil. Weed barrier also interrupts the natural flow of nutrients. As plants drop leaves, and the mulch decomposes, those nutrients go straight back into the soil. Weed barrier stops this happening.

Most landscape fabrics get clogged with fine dust particles, fertilizer salts and calcium from watering over a period of time. This clogging makes the weed barrier an effective water and air barrier as well. If there is excess moisture under the fabric it can't evaporate and can cause root rot.

Ideal soil for plants is cool, moist, and loose, filled with nutrients and water that provide a habitat for earthworms and other insects that burrow and help aerate the soil and promote the health of the plants. Landscape fabric gradually dehydrates the underlying soil making it hard, dusty, difficult to dig new holes, and loss of organic matter causing earthworms and other beneficial insects to leave the area. A common event under landscape fabric is large networks of weed roots, searching for air, water or holes to grow through. Plastic mulches cause the soil to heat up which can be



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helpful in the spring if you want to grow tender vegetables and remove it when the soil has warmed but the heat can also kill beneficial microorganisms in the soil.

Technical problems

Landscape fabric only lasts three to five years before it needs to be replaced. It degrades when exposed to sunlight, it should not be exposed to sunlight for more than 30 days.

It is not the most attractive material. No matter how much mulch you put on top of it, rain, foot traffic, cats and dogs, wind and the slippery surface of the fabric will cause bare spots to be exposed. The dark surface of the fabric will heat up faster than the soil and encourage the ground to dry up a little faster. Sloping beds are especially susceptible to this problem, leaving the exposed fabric as an eye sore. As water is not absorbed into the soil landscape fabric increases runoff.

Environmental issues

Landscape fabrics are petroleum products, plastics whether woven or sheets. It fragments over time especially with exposure to sunlight. The fabric contains petroleum and other chemicals. Most gardening expert's advice is to avoid using petroleum products or products with chemicals around plants. This is especially true for those plants that are edible.

Another reason to avoid landscape cloth: it can kill songbirds. The January/February 2010 issue of "Bird Watcher's Digest" states that as the cloth ages, it becomes exposed and frayed. The frayed strips attract birds who use it in their nests. They – and their young – can become entangled in the strips and die.



The shreds of plastic left behind stay in the garden for eternity. It restricts ground nesting bee habitat. Voles and moles love landscape fabric, they even shred it to line their nests, the adults and young may ingest it.

<Is this what do you want your garden to look like?
What's the alternative?

In a very few words; use a load of mulch! Good weed-free wood chip mulch, and a nice thick 3-4" layer of it, keeps any weed seeds on the soil surface from sprouting. It breaks down slowly, adds a little

something to the soil as it goes, and you can always rake it to the side to add additional compost, plant, or allow re-seeders to spread.

Sources: Journal of environmental horticulture; Colorado State University Extension; Organic Gardening magazine; University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture



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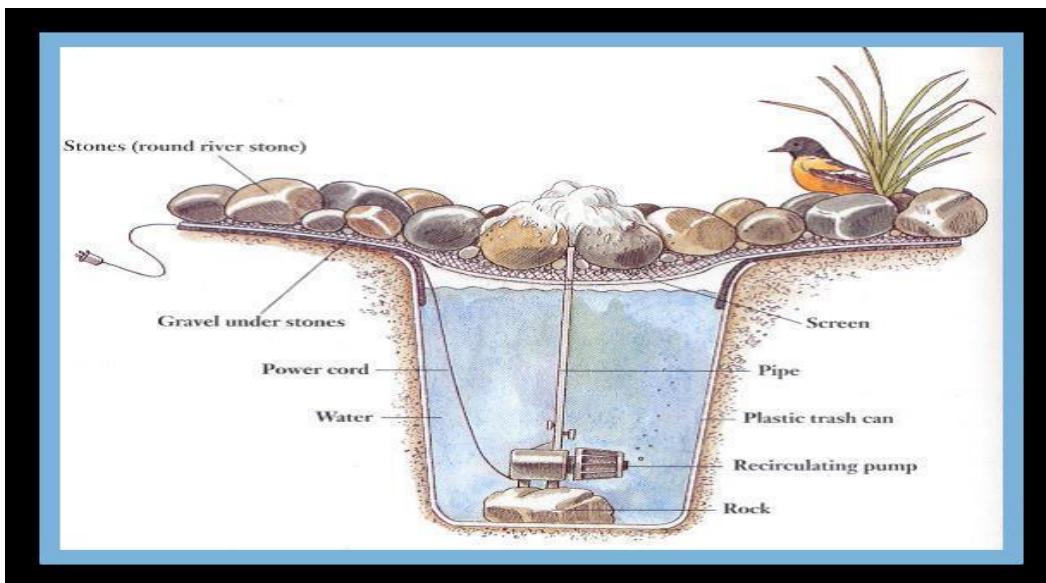
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Dr Linda Chalker-Scott; Washington State University, The Myth of Landscape Fabric' and many others, just Google search, pros and cons of Landscape fabric

∅ Monica Ross



Garden Projects

Two easy water features using a plastic tub or garbage container.

Piecing Together a Fountain of Sound

MATERIALS

- * Ceramic urn, vase, or other container for use as the fountain.
- * Plastic container for use as an underground reservoir. One the size of a half-whiskey barrel is best.
- * Electrical outlet fitted with a ground-fault interrupter circuit.
- * Pond liner: a 6-foot by 6-foot piece should be plenty.
- * Support: metal grill or mesh and lengths of wood or iron to use for reinforcement.
- * Recirculating pump with a capacity of at least 300 gallons per hour.
- * Plastic tubing sized to connect to the pump. To see how much to buy, measure from the bottom of the reservoir to the top of the container and add about 3 feet.
- * PVC pipe large enough for the pump's cord and plug.
- * Plumber's putty or silicon caulk
- * Hose clamp to fit the plastic tubing. This can be used to reduce the flow of water, if desired.
- * Ornamental stones
- * Shredded bark mulch

TOOLS

- * Razor knife, saw, screwdriver, and shovel



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Native corner: Carolina Spring Beauty – Claytonia Caroliniana

As I sit in the lovely afternoon sun, I thought it would be best to start this article with an introduction to myself before we get into the nitty and the gritty of my choice for this month's native plant spotlight. My name is Heather Marchment, and by day, I am a Certified Athletic Therapist and am studying to become an Osteopathic Manual Practitioner. By night, I am an avid hiker, lover of native plants and vegetable gardener. Most of you don't know me, as I'm always rushing into, or out of meetings and am quite quiet, but hopefully now you'll have some idea of who I am, and maybe we'll share a conversation or a smile or two.

I thought a Native Plant of the Month section would be a great compliment to our Plant of the Month article in our already illustrious newsletter, and I was lucky enough that the editors thought it was a great idea as well. So, hopefully, each month will feature a native plant that holds a special place in my heart, and if I can, an accompanying picture that I have taken on one of my many ventures into the vast unknown.

This month's choice is this sweet little spring ephemeral – Carolina Spring Beauty. A fascinating plant that often gets overshadowed by some of the other big-name spring ephemerals out there. Not to be confused with Claytonia Virginica, or Narrow-Leaved Spring Beauty, this little guy has more rounded, succulent leaves as opposed to the quite thin, grass-like leaf of its relative. These succulent leaves help the plant through any periods of moisture shortage. Once the temperature is warm enough, it is one of the first to bloom in spring, along with bloodroot, dicentra, and hepatica. Its timing is quite perfect, as this is the exact time when insects are warming up and looking for a place to land and nourish themselves.

It grows 4-6 inches high from a corm with many eyes. Two leaves rise, with a slender stem supporting a cluster of flowers. Each pale pink flower is a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide, with five petals, and delicately striped with a deeper shade of pink. In the center of this flower are 5 stamens with deep pink tips. The dainty flowers on the Spring Beauty close at night, or on cloudy days, and it prefers living in the rich humusy detritus of the woodland floor, often in partly open deciduous woods. Given the right conditions, where the soil is rich, warm and humusy, this plant will get a chance to mass and creates a most breathtaking swath of pink.



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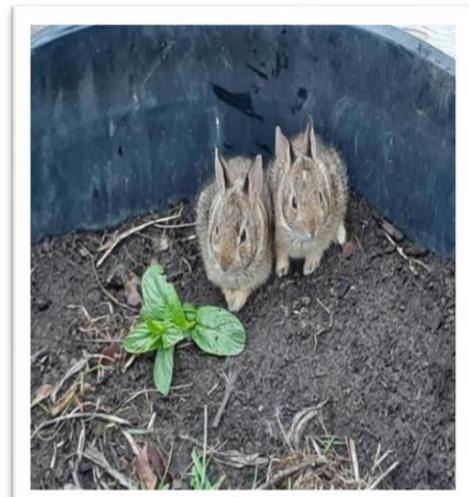
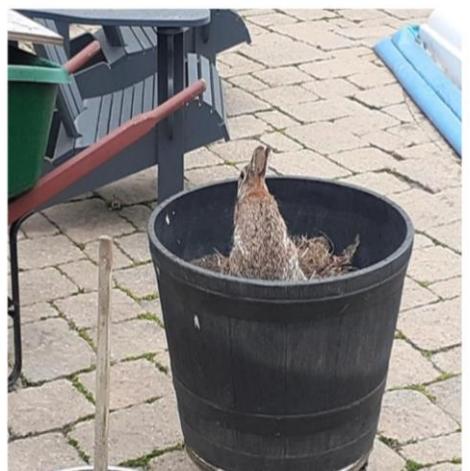
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The name honours John Clayton (1694-1773), an amateur botanist who held the post of clerk of Gloucester County, Virginia, which evidently afforded him enough time to travel around collecting plants.

The corms were eaten by the indigenous peoples. Apparently raw, they taste like radishes, and boiled, they taste like chestnuts. Being that small, however, garnered them the name “fairy spuds” by early settlers – imagine how long it took to collect enough for a meal! On the medical side, the Iroquois made cold infusions with the powdered root to give to children having convulsions.

Found throughout eastern North America and the Midwest, Spring Beauty self-sows in a natural habitat, but it is a very difficult plant to propagate. As always, never take it from the wild, and don’t buy it from nurseries that do. Heather Marchment

SOCIAL DISTANCING



This spring a rabbit decided to make her nest in one of my patio planters.

The little ones are seen just as they are starting to move around.
And the same day they it's time to leave the comforts of the nest.

Five days after leaving the nest only 3 of them can be seen hanging around in my yard.

It put a little excitement in my family's spring. Steve Fenech



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GALLERY

Flowers in Marcia Spear's garden from bulbs she purchased at our fall bulb sale



Iris Reticulata Alida



Tulipa Specie Lizzy



Tulipa Specie Lucca

