



Streetsville Blooms



Streetsville Horticultural Society

Proud to be a member of the Ontario Horticultural Association

Volume 29, Issue 6

www.streetsvillehort.ca

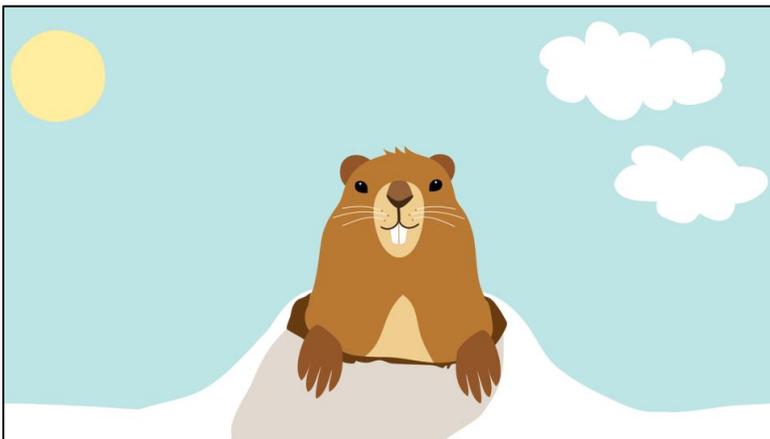
February 2022



**Our next Meeting is
February 8th, 2022,
Zoom Virtual Meeting
Social Chat at 7pm, Meeting
starts 7:30pm
Speaker Taya Kehler of
Riverwood Gardens**

Co-President's Message

Hi everyone, Happy Ground Hog Day we are halfway to spring!



We had hoped that our February meeting would be in person, however concerns over the Omicron variant and the capacity restrictions put in place by the church did not allow us to do that.

Please send any photos you wish to share to Maureen Dodd.

If you have gardening stories to share with our members, we love to hear them.

What got you interested in gardening? A person, perhaps a relative, a plant that you had to learn how to grow.

Do you have any ideas for the celebration of our 50th anniversary? Perhaps building an arbour at the Leslie Log House? An anniversary party with a cake? A field trip?

We are planning a member judged photo contest for our planned in person March meeting. We will need some volunteers to help set up the photos and tally the votes.

Take care everyone, see you on Zoom February 8th, another week closer to spring.

Carol and Monica



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Speaker of the month

Knitting with Natives: Incorporating Native Plants into Riverwood's Gardens by Taya Kehler



As a visual artist with a passion for nature and horticulture, Taya learned to combine these talents while completing her degree in Landscape Architecture at Dalhousie University. Since then, Taya has applied her talents to pursue positions in nursery maintenance, landscaping, garden design, and as The Riverwood Conservancy's Horticulture Assistant, lending her creative eye to the gardens at Riverwood. As TRC's new Gardens Coordinator, Taya is enthusiastic about viewing gardens as more than just the flowers that comprise them - incorporating eco-friendly components in her artistic designs, including native plants and pollinator habitat. She is particularly excited about connecting with the community and sharing the beauty and intricacy of year-round garden designs, and the importance of focusing on creating the right garden for the right space. ✂ Jon Eldridge

Events

Royal Botanical Gardens: Under the Canopy: Animals of the Rainforest from February 4 to May 1 at the RBG Centre, 680 Plains Road W. Burlington. This is the link for information. <https://www.rbg.ca/things-to-do/by-season/special-events/winter-exhibit/>

Canadian Wildlife Federation: Free Online Gardening for Wildlife Course; Want to learn how to support your local and migratory wildlife — all from the comfort of your home? CWF has a simple and free online course to help you learn the basics of wildlife-friendly gardening. This course is free, but registration closes February 14 so sign up soon if you are interested! This Gardening for Wildlife course will run from February 14 to April 30, 2022, with videos and supporting resources to use at your own pace. The course will:

- Cover the basics of wildlife-friendly gardening
- Discuss topics like invasive plants
- Feature some of Canada's backyard wildlife and native plants
- Gardening tips from CWF's Wildlife-friendly Demonstration Garden

This is the link for the course sign up and for lots of other information on their website. <https://cwf-fcf.org/en/explore/gardening-for-wildlife/action/workshops-events/course.html?src=jan24-22>



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Blast from the Past: February 1995 Newsletter

Winter Gardening Tips:

Cover rhubarb with compost and a bottomless container for early shoots. Late January, indoors, sow pepper, geranium, impatiens and begonia seeds. Grow Herbs: chervil, dill, small leaf basil, fennel, oregano and thyme on a sunny sill.

Our Annual Pot Luck supper meeting was very enjoyable. All of you who were unable to attend missed a good evening. We had a lot of tasty treats and a good variety of dishes. Thank you to all who participated and a BIG thank you to those who set up the tables and cleaned up etc. Lovely roses in vases decorated the tables and were given as prizes during the evening. The evening was capped off with a superb slide show by David Elliott on the Chelsea Flower Show and some diverse slides of Toronto.



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1995 Executive elected: **President:** Pauline Brown (Tippet); **1st Vice:** Grace Nelham; **2nd Vice:** Mary Gilbert.

Directors: Beverly Parsons, Anita King, Alex King, Fern Ottawa, Eileen Lamberton, Olga Atkinson, Pat Dinnie, Brenda Ottawa, Inge Neame, John Embury.

Auditors: Linda Paris and Grace Nelham. 'Novice of the Year Award' was presented to Pauline Brown.

Tulips

The Dutch fascination with tulips dates to 1593, when botanist **Carolus Clusius** planted the first tulip bulbs in Dutch soil after importing it from Turkey. They are believed to have reached Turkey 600 years earlier from Central Asia.

By 1634, exotic tulips had become a status symbol in Holland with widely speculative futures market betting on rare bulb breeds. During World War II, they helped keep people alive, when famine forced the Dutch to dig up the bulbs, boil and eat them."  **Carol Ashford**



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February 2022

Native Corner: Balsam Fir – *Abies balsamea*

Attempting to get a good picture of a mature Balsam Fir proved to be somewhat of a problem for this month's article! When they grow in the forest, they don't look like the Christmas trees that we know and love. Every time I tried to grab a picture of a mature Balsam, it became lost in the scenery, so a young Balsam is what I decided on.



One of the sounds of the boreal forest in winter is the swoosh of snow falling off trees. The pyramidal shapes of evergreens are as practical as they are graceful, since snow slides off them easily and keeps the boughs from breaking under its weight. It doesn't protect them from animals, however. Moose with their wide feet are able to plod through the snow to reach balsam fir, which is their favorite food and about the only forage around when the snow is deep.

Balsam twigs are mostly opposite, with round or conical buds hidden by the leaves. The male cones are tiny and reddish, right through to orange at pollination. The females which are two to four inches long, are resinous, with stems, and are blue-gray to green or purple. The cones produce tiny brown winged seeds.



Robust as it may look, balsam fir falls victim to spruce budworm, which can kill a mature tree in three to five years. Because of its thin bark, balsam fir is also the least fire resistant of all the conifers in the northeast. If a stand is wiped out, it is unlikely to regenerate easily because the fire kills not only the tree but the seeds as well.

Native peoples used the pleasant-smelling resin to make the seams of their canoes watertight. The resin from balsam fir is also considered therapeutic and antiseptic and has been used in folk remedies for everything from bronchitis to earaches to warts.



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Different native groups had different uses: the Chippewa used the gum as an analgesic; The Kwakiutl as a laxative; the Menominee found it useful for colds and sores; The Ojibwe for colds and venereal diseases; The Penobscot for cuts; And the Caughnawaga for skin cancers. The Cree used the resin to soothe insect bites, boils, scabies and other infections, and skin sores; it was applied directly or mixed with oil to make an ointment. Other groups considered it food: the Mi'kmaq used the bark to make a type of tea, and the Upriver Halkomelem of British Columbia found it effective to simply eat the bark or the gum on its own. The

Ojibwe made a warm liquid of the sap and drank it to cure gonorrhea. The bark can even be used to make a kind of bread.

By 1609 the commercial value of the tree was noticed in Acadia. These days balsam firs are grown on Christmas tree farms. It's popular because the needles cling to the branches even in overheated houses, and the shape is attractively conical - very Christmas card-like. Wreaths are made from the boughs and the highly scented needles are stuffed into souvenir pillows and sold in New England stores. Balsam fir wood is a creamy white to light brown and is also used for both lumber and pulpwood. It is lightweight, not very strong, and not very good at holding nails, so it tends to be used to make plywood or things like packing crates.

The blisters on the bark contain only oleoresin ("Canada balsam") which is used as a medium for mounting microscope specimens in laboratories, a cement for glassware, and in the manufacture of spirit varnishes. It is the provincial tree of New Brunswick, although spruce budworm has denuded large areas of Canada's maritime provinces.

Don't be misled by this month's diminutive picture – the Balsam Fir grows 40 to 80 feet tall. It has smooth gray bark with resinous blisters and, as it ages, the bark tends to be brown and scaly. The root system is shallow, penetrating to only 30 inches below the surface of the ground. The needles are flat, blunt tipped, and resinous and have two pale green lines on the undersurface. The cylindrical cones sit upright on the branches. It can be found on mountain slopes and alluvial flats, in forests and wetlands.

I hope to see you out and about exploring! Happy spotting!

As always, never dig up plants from the wild, and don't buy from nurseries that do.

Heather Marchment



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Volume 29, Issue 6

February 2022

The Cardinal

The cardinal is sexually dichromatic, (this means the male and female look different) the male has flashy colourful feathers, but the female is a quieter tan colour. Both the male and female do sport a crest on top of their heads and long tails. However, the male (pictured above) is a very vivid red with a black face around its thick red bill and the female cardinal (pictured below) is a pale brown with attractive warm reddish tinges in the wings, tail, and crest.

The plumage colour is due to its diet during molt when its diet is rich with foods containing carotenoid pigments found in plants, insects, seeds and some fruits such as blackberry, hackberry, wild grape, sumac and dogwood. Current research indicates brighter males have increased reproductive success. It also indicates success with care of young. In addition, cardinals do not migrate nor molt, so they keep that red plumage all year. which makes their vivid hues especially striking against the greys and whites of winter.



A highly adaptable species, cardinals are found in eastern/central North America as well as southern Canada, parts of Mexico, and Central America. Interestingly, the cardinal was once known as a Carolinian species, but it has dramatically expanded its range over the past fifty years. The breeding range has expanded north since the mid 1800s for three reasons:

- Clearing of forests, increasing edge habitat
- Warmer climates
- Winter feeding stations

It is not a bird of the forest and has advanced north following the clearing of forests, which provided tangles in shrubbery and in city parks. It is believed that cardinals moved from the south of Ohio, then to southern Canada, then east to New England. They're now a common bird in brushy areas near adjoining woodlands, often located in suburban areas.



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Cardinals are not especially picky eaters. Their main foods include both insects (29%)—such as beetles, cicadas, grasshoppers, leafhoppers, moths, flies, butterflies and crickets—and plant matter (71%) including berries, plants, and fruit. The bird will often forage on the ground around feeders and it particularly loves black oil sunflower seeds.

Cardinals do not migrate; they spend the year where they breed. Females construct the nest after both adults select the site. Often it will be found in honeysuckle shrubs, blackberry briars, or multiflora rose. The nest is a bowl-shaped structure of 4 layers including a rough outer layer of twigs crushed together, a leafy mat, grapevine bark, and then a lining of fine grasses. The average clutch is 3 eggs, buffy greenish-white with medium brown spots. The last egg laid is always more lightly spotted. The eggs hatch in 11 to 13 days and the young birds fledge in 9 to 10 days. The babies eat soft bodied insects such as caterpillars. Make sure that your garden includes butterfly host plants such as dill, fennel, hollyhock, mustard greens, and snapdragon!

The life span of most cardinals is usually 4 to 5 years with the longest wild female nearly 16 years old. The birds are predominately monogamous and will often mate for life, though they've also been known to 'break up' and look for new mates, especially if their mate dies.

Both males and females sing! For most songbirds, it's just the male. The cardinal's duets seem to strengthen their bonds. The female sings from the nest while incubating eggs and apparently communicates to the male when to bring food to her nest.

Aside from its song, a cardinal's most common sound is a loud, metallic chipping sound that you'll hear during breeding when the birds are defending their territory from predators. Despite their bright color, you won't see cardinals as often as you might expect because they hide in dense tangles. The best way to find them is often by listening for their pierce chipping sound. Excerpt: *The Farmer's Almanac*, Jan. 2022. ✂

Carol Ashford



Winter in the Garden



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Volume 29, Issue 6

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How to make sure your Amaryllis will rebloom



This article was originally published in the February 2019 newsletter. I have edited it to add some more information and hopefully simplify the details.

Most of us have probably bought or been given an Amaryllis, when it blooms, we are thrilled by the size and color of the flowers. The blooms fade after 2-3 weeks, many people just throw them out when the blooms die, but it isn't difficult to make sure it will rebloom.

In this picture the red flowered plant is now flowering for the 4th time, the bulb has grown big enough to have 2 flowering stems. The white one is 3 years old, the tall stem with a bud on the right is also 3 years old and will have pink flowers. The plant with bi-colored blooms is in its first year.

The basics; the plant we refer to as Amaryllis, is **not** actually a member of the Amaryllis family. It belongs to the *hippeastrum* species and is native to the tropical and subtropical regions of South America and the Caribbean.

The actual Amaryllis genus is native to South Africa where winter temperatures are between 0 and 10C. We have two plants called the same, one is a botanical name, and the other is a common name, and it gets confusing.

You can google how to get your Amaryllis to rebloom and will get many results. I have success with my plants re-flowering, often other people seem to have no success. I think some of the techniques that don't work well are because there is confusion about the climate in the areas where these plants are native. Or an assumption that a bulb is a bulb, and they can all be treated the same no matter where home is.

Tropical and subtropical areas such as the places where Hippeastrum/Amaryllis grow, usually have a dry or drier season, not a cold season when plants die back to the ground. In the dry periods many plants die back and then regrow when rain starts again. If we look at the directions given for planting a newly purchased Amaryllis/ hippeastrum, it says all you need to do to start growth is water them. That makes sense as they start new growth after a dry period.



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Volume 29, Issue 6

February 2022

The instructions

If you have a new bulb: follow the planting directions. Plus, I usually fertilize them **once a month** from when the leaves or flower shoots start growing. I usually use a 20-20-20 water soluble fertilizer.

Read the fertilizer instructions. The Plant Prod or equivalent water-soluble fertilizer instructions say: for houseplants use 6ml in 5 liters of water, if you only have one amaryllis 5 liters is a lot of prepared fertilizer. You could use the extra on other houseplants or you can use $\frac{1}{4}$ of a teaspoon of fertilizer in 1 liter of water.

Do not overwater, the soil should be just damp not wet, they rot easily. If you have a tendency to be overly kind to your plants, this is another option feed them half the recommended amount, twice as often, that way you don't run the risk of over fertilizing, half the amount every two weeks seems to work.

After the flower dies: cut down the flower stems to the bottom. Just as with other bulbs the leaves need to keep growing to regrow the bulb for next year's flowers. Keep the pots in a sunny location inside and fertilize them as described above.

After night temps are above 10 C, I put them outside on my front path in a planter box. The area gets lots of light but little direct sunlight. Remember don't over water them. Make sure your container has drainage holes. I usually use a granular fertilizer when the plants are outside, just because it's easier. I have thought about putting soil around the pots, but haven't because it would keep the soil in the amaryllis pots too damp. Continue fertilizing until late August. They stay outside until late September-early October.

I have a large potted tree that is outside on my back patio in the summer that has to come inside at the same time. The large pot spends the winter in my kitchen by the patio doors, a sunny location. When I bring the amaryllis in, I put the pots on top of the soil in the large pot. I water very little for about 6 weeks; don't fertilize during this time, the leaves will dry out and probably die back. The dry period is when the bulb is dormant.

This is where some directions tell you to put the pots in a cold, dry place such as a cold basement or garage for up to 2 months, I have never done this. It seems like this idea is suggested because spring blooming bulbs like daffodils, or tulips require a significant cold, dark period in order to bloom. Always think about where plants originated and try to duplicate those conditions.

After the dry period, water well once, keep the pots in a warm, sunny spot, don't water unless the soil is dry or fertilize at all until you see new growth. Remember that sometimes the leaves will start to grow before the flower spike, and sometimes the flower spike will come first. You can tell the difference right away because the leaves will be flat and thin, and the flower spike will be thick and fat. If leaves start growing first it doesn't mean it won't bloom. After the flowers die back start the same method again.



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February 2022

If your Amaryllis is new and was bought in the fall for blooms at Christmas, it has been conditioned to flower during the Christmas season. After the bloom has finished the bulb will have from January to May to regrow inside and then from May to October to grow outside about 9 months.

If you are trying to get your Amaryllis will rebloom don't be surprised if it doesn't start to regrow a new stem or leaves until January or sometimes later when the days start to get longer. Last year I had one that didn't rebloom until March.

Failure to flower can be due to drying off bulbs too early, growing in excessively shady conditions, under-watering or under fertilizing the previous summer. Theoretically you can count back 10 + weeks from when you want the plant to rebloom and that will tell you when to start the dormancy stage. I think this suggestion is one of the reasons for no repeat flowers, because it shortens the amount of time the bulb has to regrow, the same way that cutting back daffodil or tulips leaves too soon reduces flowering in subsequent years. ✂ **Monica Ross**



Absolutely stunning!

A picture of the amaryllis blooming that Mary Ann purchased from the SHS bulb sale.

Amaryllis photo by Mary-Ann Brown



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Tip Of the Month

Winter tasks include keeping the birds well fed.

February

The sun rides higher
Every trip.
The sidewalk shows.
Icicles drip.

A snowstorm comes,
And cars are stuck,
Though road salt flies
From the old town truck.

The chickadees
Grow plump on seed
That Mother pours
Where they can feed,

And snipping, snipping
Scissors run
To cut out hearts
For everyone.

An illustration by Trina Schart Hyman showing a young child in a purple winter coat and red-and-white striped scarf standing in a snowy landscape. Above the child, several small birds are gathered around a cylindrical bird feeder hanging from a bare tree branch. The scene is set against a light blue sky with snow on the ground.

Taken from: readmeastory, Poem by: John Updike, Illustration by: Trina Schart Hyman