



# STREETSVILLE BLOOMS



## Streetsville Horticultural Society

*Proud to be a member of the Ontario Horticultural Association*

Volume 21, Issue 7

[www.streetsvillehort.ca](http://www.streetsvillehort.ca)

March 2015

### NEXT MEETING

**MARCH 10, 2015**

**CHRISTIAN REFORM CHURCH**

2630 Inlake Court

**DOORS OPEN AT 7:00**

**Meeting at 7:30**

**SPEAKER: SID BALLER**

**TOPIC: "SPRING PRUNING"**

**SPEAKER BIO:** Sid was employed at the Humber Arboretum, as superintendent for 19 years and previous to that appointment was a horticultural technician for three years. In his capacity as superintendent he was responsible for the plant collections, policy and acquisition, ensuring the effective maintenance and care of the ornamental collections and natural areas of the 100 hectare site, hiring, staff development, etc.

Prior to his career at Humber, Sid was employed for eight years as a gardener for the City of Etobicoke. Sid has enjoyed presenting and demonstrating horticultural topics like "Spring Pruning" for over 30 years and always loves the opportunity to continue educating horticultural enthusiasts.

Dean Scully, Program Chair

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### MAKE YOUR OWN WEED B GONE

- 1 Gallon Vinegar
- 2 Cups Epsom Salts
- ¼ cup Dawn Dish Detergent (The Blue Original)

It will kill anything you spray it on. Mix and spray in morning after dew has evaporated. Walk away. Go back after dinner – weeds are all gone! Cheaper than anything you can buy anywhere. Never buy RoundUp again!!

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Even though the snow lies deep on the ground and the mercury in the thermometer seems to have dropped to the bottom, spring will be here soon. This is a great time to plan for the upcoming season of growth. What would you like to add to your garden? What would you like to change? A cold winter night is the perfect time for coming up with new ideas for your garden.

A number of years ago, we began to take photos every year of different parts of our garden in different seasons. The idea behind it was to give us an idea of how things looked so we could plan how we thought we could change them. You can do the same thing even if you don't have the photos to help you along. Do you have favorite colors you would like to emphasize in your garden? Are there some colors you are tired of and want to replace? You have plenty of resources to use. Online there are many garden centers that can provide you with hundreds of ideas to help in this regard.

There may also be textures you want to change. Maybe you want to add the texture of ferns in a dark corner of your garden or the shiny smooth leaves of a holly plant somewhere else.

Another option to think about could be the addition of bushes or small trees to provide privacy for part of your garden. Or perhaps there is a bush or two that has outlived their beauty. Now is a good time to think about replacing them. Although most bushes are perennials, some also have a useful lifespan and could be replaced after some years.

Once the growing season begins, you will find yourself very busy in the garden without a lot of time for planning. Don't forget to read through the Vesey's catalogue we are using as a fundraiser, to add some vivid splashes of color to your garden. Use this time wisely for plotting ahead what you would like to accomplish in your garden in the coming year. Come July and August you will be glad you did.

Rob & Sue Harshman, Co-Presidents

## SOWING SEEDS INDOORS WITH SUCCESS

The cold winds howl outside, the temperatures keep falling, and the snow banks keep growing bigger. February feels like such a long month. Fortunately, seed catalogues have arrived with the promise of sunshine and warmer temperatures. Beautiful pictures of new varieties of peonies, more colorful Asiatic lilies and vigorous canes of climbing roses in a rainbow of colors bring forth new hopes for our gardens. For the vegetable gardener, there are more images of delicious vegetables, such as purple bush beans, juicy orange melons and the firm flesh of the red tomatoes.

Starting seeds indoors is an easy process if you remember three simple requirements for success: adequate lighting, sterilized growing material and proper temperature. An indoor temperature of 21° – 24°C will germinate most seeds and seedlings grow better at 10° – 16°C.

1. Sow your seeds according to the directions on the back of the packet. Most seeds packages recommend starting seeds six to eight weeks before the last frost date. This year the last frost date in Mississauga is May 9, so plan on sowing your seeds toward the end of March. Don't sow your seeds too early or the seedlings will be leggy and overgrown before you get a chance to plant them.

2. Choose seeds that are easy to grow. Annuals and vegetables are easier to grown than perennials.

However, starting perennials can be very rewarding. Some perennial seeds need a period of dormancy before they will germinate. To overcome dormancy one of the following methods may be required: refrigeration – for four to 12 weeks; scarification – carefully nick the hard outer shell with a knife; or soak the seeds in water for a period of up to 24 hours. Special requirements are listed on the seed packages.

3. You can start seedlings in open flats or in sterile propagation kits that can be purchased at your local

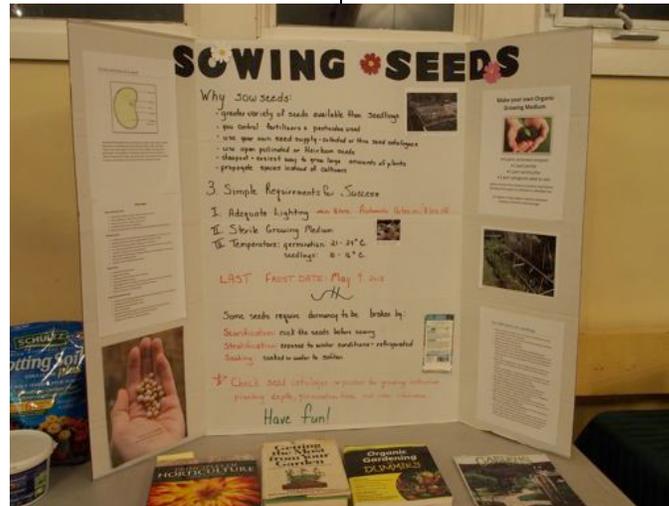
hardware store or nursery centre. They include four or six cell packs with drainage holes with a flat and a clear lid. Containers come in plastic or in a biodegradable material, such as peat or coir. If you are reusing containers from previous years, they must be sanitized first in soap and water with a solution of 10 per cent bleach to destroy micro-organisms that can kill seedlings. You can also make homemade containers from recycled milk cartons, egg cartons or other recyclable material. Just remember to poke drainage holes at the bottom of the container.

4. Prepare your own growing medium from the recipe below or purchase sterile organic growing medium from your local hardware store or nursery centre. This seed mixture lacks nutrients so seedlings will need to be fertilized once they begin to grow. Don't use potting soil as it is too rich and doesn't drain well enough for seedlings. Fill flats or cell containers with lightly moistened growing material and tamp it down. Plant two to three seeds per cell and lightly cover the seeds to a

depth of three times their thickness with the growing mixture. Fine seeds that require light to germinate do not need to be covered with soil. Mist gently or water from below. Remember to keep the soil moist but not waterlogged. Label and loosely cover the container with plastic or glass. Put containers in a warm place and check frequently. At the first sign of germination, remove the cover.

5. Adequate lighting is important to the growth of seedlings and can be the most difficult requirement to fill indoors. Place seed trays in a southern facing window that receives at least a full day of bright sunlight – at least eight hours. However, if natural light is not adequate two – four grow lights or cool florescent tubes about six inches above the plants are better. Use an automatic timer and set lights for sixteen hours on and eight hours off.

6. When the seedlings have two sets of true leaves, start feeding with a balanced, water-soluble (20-20-



20) fertilizer at half-strength every week and slowing working up to full strength after a few weeks.

7. Transplant seedlings into a container of potting soil when they become too crowded or when they grow three or four true leaves. Make planting holes in the soil of the new containers with a dibble or a pencil. Make sure the soil is moist, gently lift the seedlings by their leaves, and tease the roots loose. Insert the seedling into the new containers and press the soil down firmly on either of side of the seedling.

8. Whenever seedlings or indoor plants are moved outdoors, they need to be acclimatized or hardened off. Hardening off gradually exposes the plants to wind, rain, sun and outdoor temperatures. About a week or two before transplanting the seedlings into your garden, bring your plants outside to a protected location. A cold frame is a good location or beside the fence or house out of direct sunshine. Each day leave the plants outside a little longer and then bring them back inside. Gradually work up to a full day. After a week of hardening off the seedlings are ready to be planted in their permanent locations.

#### Organic growing medium recipe:

- 4 parts screened compost
- 1 part perlite
- 1 part vermiculite
- 2 part sphagnum peat or coir

Lightly moisten the mixture to prevent dust before blending thoroughly in a dishpan or wheelbarrow.

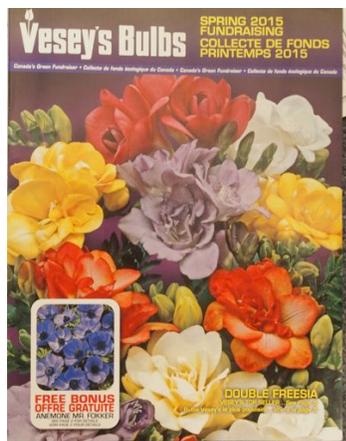
By Debra Lemire

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## VESEY'S BULB SPRING FUNDRAISER

### REMINDER:

Order forms must be handed in at the **APRIL** meeting. Completed Orders will be ready for pick up at the **MAY** meeting.



## DISTRICT 15 AGM – APRIL 25<sup>th</sup>

Roseland's Horticultural Society will be hosting the District 15 AGM this year on April 25<sup>th</sup>. It will be held at the Learning Enrichment Foundation, 116 Industry Street/1267 Weston Road in the Weston and Eglinton Road area. More information will be forthcoming at our April meeting.

As well as a flower show there is also a Photo Contest. The **deadline for photo entries is April 3<sup>rd</sup>** so here is a heads-up as to what they are looking for:

### District 15 Photo Contest:

Division 1V – Photography

**Entries must be received by April 3, 2015**

- Class 29 “Good things come in small packages” – a photo incorporating seeds
- Class 30 An ant’s perspective in the garden
- Class 31 “Small space – big impact” – focusing on small garden spaces

#### Photography Rules:

In addition to the general rules, Prints must be submitted to: Shirley Smiley, 80 Inverdon Road, Etobicoke, ON M9C 4M1. **Entries must be received by April 3, 2015.**

1. All photographs must have been taken by the exhibitor.
2. Any image size up to 4” x 6”. Images must be matted or mounted to a maximum of 5” x 7” and ready to hang.
3. This is a print competition. Electronic file submissions are not permitted.
4. Each exhibitor is allowed one entry per class in the photography division.
5. Photographs must have been taken in Ontario in the past 24 months and should feature horticulture in some way.
6. Each print must have an entry tag attached to the back of the mat/mount.
7. No name or title or any kind is permitted on the front of the print.
8. Prints must be picked up at the end of the AGM.

*“What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness.”*

*John Steinbeck*

## SHS MEMBERSHIP FEES TO INCREASE

Membership fees for SHS have not increased since 2006. Our costs are rising and so effective Sept. 1, 2015 membership fees for SHS will increase. A Single membership will become \$20 and a Family membership will be \$30.

It's still a bargain!! – Where else can you get 10 meetings, newsletters, guest speakers, premiums, garden tour, workshops etc. for that price?

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## NEW AT OUR PLANT SALE:

This year we are planning on having birdhouses, bee houses, bat & butterfly houses etc. for sale at the Plant Sale on **May 23rd.**

We need some help from some of our talented men to help build them and we also need some wood!

**Do you have any lumber (not plywood) at your house that you don't want???** It needs to be at least 1" thick and a minimum of 12 inches long. If so, call Rob Harshman at 905 607-2802.



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## HOW (& WHEN) TO PRUNE TREES

### How to Prune Large Trees

Short answer? Don't. Large trees need an arborist or tree trimming service for both safety and health of the tree. Fortunately, large trees rarely need to be pruned yearly!

### How to Prune Small Trees

You prune decorative garden trees for two reasons... First, is to improve the health of the tree. Pruning creates more compact and healthy growth, and opens up the crown for good air circulation. Second, to improve the appearance of the tree. Every time you make a cut in your tree, first think

about which one of those objectives you are trying to achieve... if your cut fits with one of those two, it's a good cut.

Note: Make sure your pruners and loppers are sharp and clean. You don't want to invite fungus or disease.

To prune a small tree for health, first you want to remove any dead or unhealthy branches. Make your cuts just outside the collar of the branch... don't cut too close to the trunk, and on the other side, don't leave a stub. If branches cross over or are too thick, prune them out to allow the branches you leave room to grow and flourish. Most people are not aggressive enough in thinning out branches.

Now prune for shape and size. Step back and look at your tree, and know what it's natural shape should be. For instance, is it a weeping tree, or a graceful vase shape? Make sure you remove branches that are interfering with the shape you want your tree to take. Step back after every cut and re-evaluate. Try to remove most of your branches at the trunk, but if you need to shorten a branch, don't cut it in the middle... make your cut a quarter inch above a bud.

Excerpt: The Garden Glove,  
[www.thegardenglove.com](http://www.thegardenglove.com)

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## CLEANING YOUR HOUSEPLANTS

You are probably thinking you have enough to clean in your home without worrying about cleaning your plants. Plants grow in soil, so why do you need to bother keeping it off their leaves? As anyone who has gone away for 2 weeks knows, it doesn't take long for dust to accumulate. A layer of dust on the leaves of your houseplants will block sunlight and reduce the plants ability to photosynthesize. Photosynthesis is how the plant feeds itself. Without it, you will have a stressed plant. A [clean plant](#) that is photosynthesizing at optimal levels will be a healthier plant and [healthy plants](#) don't get diseases and pest infestations as readily as [stressed plants](#).

So periodically cleaning the leaves of your houseplants actually makes less work for you in the long run. And it will make your home look better.

It really depends on how much dust is in

your air as to how often you need to clean your houseplants. Folks with dirt roads, construction and a lot of wind will need to clean their houseplants more often. The best way to tell if a plant needs cleaning is to rub your fingers on the leaves. If you can feel or see dust more dust than you can blow off the leaves, it is time to clean.

### How to Clean Houseplants

- **Spray The Whole Plant** The easiest method for cleaning houseplants is to move them to the kitchen sink or shower and hose them off. Test the water before spraying, to make sure it is lukewarm. Both hot and cold water can injure the plant's leaves. If your plants are really grimy, you can spray them with a diluted soapy water mixture and then hose them off. Use about 1/4 t. dish soap per 1 qt. of water. Small plants that can't handle the force of a spray can be cleaned by holding the base of the plant at soil level, inverting it into a bucket of water and swishing the leaves about. Watering the soil before hand will help prevent the soil from falling out when the pot is inverted. You could also wrap plastic wrap around the base of the plant, to contain the soil while cleaning. Again, be sure to use lukewarm water. Let the plants drip-dry before moving them back.

- **Wipe Individual Leaves** For plants that are too large to move, you can simply wipe the leaves off with a damp cloth. After the initial cleaning, you can help keep dust from building up on the leaves by using a soft duster on them whenever you dust your house.

- **Brush Off the Dust** Some plants have sticky or fuzzy leaves that just don't lend themselves to easy cleaning. And in the case of plants like [African Violets](#), that don't like getting their leaves wet, neither spraying nor wiping is the answer. For fuzzy leaved plants, use a soft brush, like a mushroom brush, to very gently coax the dust from the leaves.

- **Trim and Clean-up Leaves** While you're washing your plants, you can further tidy them by getting rid of dead, brown or [yellowing leaves](#). If the leaf falls loose easily, you can remove it by hand. Otherwise use scissors. Never pull resistant leaves of a plant. You can also prune away browned leaf tips, from plants that were left too dry. Carefully cut away just the dry, brown portions. You plant will look more natural if you follow the natural contour of

the leaves when cutting

- **Clean the Plant's Pot** You put all this effort into cleaning your plants, you might as well make sure the pots are in shape too. If salt or minerals have formed a white layer on the outside or rim of your flowerpot, you should remove the plant and thoroughly clean the pot. Wash the pot with a diluted bleach solution of 1 part [bleach](#) to 10 parts water. Scrub all the salt residue with a stiff brush and rinse the pot well before repotting your plant. [Prevent future build-up on pots](#) by periodically flushing the soil in the pots.

Initially it might sound like a lot of work to keep your houseplants clean, but you'll find that an occasional cleaning is not really that much effort and it will keep your houseplants looking and growing better.

Marie Iannotti, Gardening Expert

### DRAW TABLE

It was great to see that the frigid weather did not deter the members and friends from coming out to the meeting.

WOW! The donations to the draw table in February were overwhelming, with many, many wonderful items for future raffles. THANKS A BUNCH to the following wonderful members for their generous donations: **Monika Schouten, Lynn Merritt, Marg Rowan, June Samaras, Michelle Harshman-Bettig, Sue Harshman, Sandi Hill and Jean Watt.**

THANK YOU to our January speaker Marilyn Cornwell for her donation of cards and calendars to our draw table, which will be used in future baskets.

THANKS to all the members who purchased tickets for the raffle prizes for the month of February; hope to see some new faces in March. Come on over and check out the table and see if there is something that peaks your interest. Tickets are 3 for \$1.00, 12 for \$3.00 & 24 for \$5.00.

Congratulations! Goes out to **Enza Lafratta** the lucky winner of the Plant Stand. **Linda Bowman** and **Marg Rowan**, were the lucky winners of the baskets.



And lastly, I wish to thank **Sharon Pancott** and **Rob Harshman** for their help with setting up and taking the bounty to my car.

Keep warm and see you all in March.

Mary Bernier, Draw Table Chair

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## 2015 PLANT SALE

The date and venue for the 2015 plant sale has been confirmed! **Saturday, May 23rd** is the day and we'll be at the Leslie Log House again. The Streetsville Historical Society will be participating again this year, offering pancakes for breakfast and hot dogs for lunch.

At the March meeting, sign up sheets will be passed around and there will be some flyers available. To have an early start on preparations, I will be bringing some labeling for volunteers to take home to work on.

After the success of the bee house building at Christmas, we have asked Phil to build us some houses to sell and he has agreed.

### NEEDS LIST

- volunteers
- trays
- old venetian blinds for labeling
- volunteers
- volunteers
- clean 6" pots
- clean, unpainted scrap wood
- volunteers
- did I already say volunteers?

Debra Buckler, Plant Sale Chair

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## FROM THE MEMBERSHIP DESK

A busy night at the membership desk in February. We had 5 new members join our society! Many thanks to desk helpers **Marie Kothari** and **Shirley Boyes!** Remember, if you would like to help out, come in early - there is always something to do to get the meeting set up. We thank you for your help! You can reach me at [gracemcelhinney@hotmail.com](mailto:gracemcelhinney@hotmail.com) if you would like to volunteer. I will not be around for the April meeting so some extra help is going to be needed.

The sign-in desk is quite easy to work for the rest of the season; it's basically greeting and

helping members find their nametags. What a great way to get to know fellow members! As I mentioned we had 5 new members join and their names are **Joseph DaCosta, Arlene Crothers, Laurel Wade, Nel Padt** and **Vicky Pavao**. Let's make them feel welcome as they blend into our society!

Remember: hand in your nametags at the end of the evening and take a few seconds to tuck in the string. Look for the box at the exit to toss in the tags.

There is still some prize money (Flower Show & Photo Contest) that needs to be picked up so please check with me if it could be yours.



I hope everyone enjoyed the Tower of London display (see above) which included a ceramic poppy that was used there. I really enjoyed setting it up for our members to enjoy.

Grace McElhinney, Membership Chair

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## FLOWER SHOWS

We have one more monthly meeting before the flower shows start in April.

In December we had a wonderful evening with our members making Christmas centerpieces. It was inspiring to see so many creative designs made that night. There was so much talent displayed that evening I want to encourage members to enter our flower shows and showcase their creative abilities. If you have never entered a design there is a 'novice class' you can enter to start off your debut. The arrangements are judged by a more relaxed standard, giving you chance to learn as you go. The Judge is asked to write constructive comments on each entry. A new Exhibitor remains a novice until they have won three firsts in that category.

The April novice design class is "Spring Garden" - a design using spring flowers.

Pick your favorite spring flowers and colors, a container and put together your interpretation of a spring garden. The design needs to fit into a space that is 36" by 24".

The general rules are on our web page with this year's Schedule. More detail and helpful information can be found in the Streetsville Horticultural Society Flower Show Handbook on the website as well. It would also be helpful to own an OJES Ontario Judging and Exhibiting Standards rulebook. This tells exhibitors what a judge is looking for when they are judging flower shows floral designs and horticultural specimens. I will be happy to advise anyone who needs help getting started.

Enter the show, get creative and have fun!

Nicky Hall, Flower Show Convenor

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## WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Should you wish to volunteer for any of our many projects please contact Sue or Rob at 905 607-2802 and send all volunteer hours to Eleonora Roberts at [gattescohouse@rogers.com](mailto:gattescohouse@rogers.com)

## DO'S AND DON'TS FOR PRUNING

1. **Do** remove any dead or damaged wood, cutting back to a healthy, outward-facing shoot or bud facing outward.
  2. **Do** remove any obviously weak shoot, cutting right back to a main branch.
  3. **Do** prune any straggly branches back by half to a strong shoot or bud facing outward.
  4. **Do not** remove any well-formed, healthy wood, or you are likely to do away with buds that would produce flowers later.
  5. **Do** use only sharp, clean tools to prune. Dull blades crush stems and tear or fray the edges of the cut making it easier for diseases to gain access to the plant.
  6. **Do** keep pruning equipment sharp.
  7. **Do** prune in the late winter or early spring.
  8. **Do** prune roses when the forsythia begins to bloom.
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Questions, concerns, ideas, want to volunteer??

Call:

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SHS website: [www.streetsvillehort.ca](http://www.streetsvillehort.ca)