



Streetsville Blooms



Streetsville Horticultural Society

Proud to be a member of the Ontario Horticultural Association

Volume 23, Issue 2

www.streetsvillehort.ca

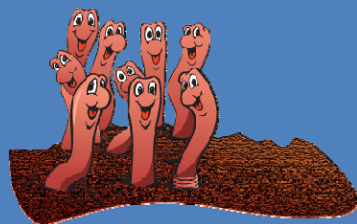
February 2016

Next meeting: Tuesday, February 9, 2016

COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN REFORM CHURCH

Doors open 7:00 p.m.,

Meeting starts 7:30 p.m.



Speaker's Corner

Topic: Vermicomposting

Vermicomposting, or worm composting, is an excellent way to convert household garbage into nutrient rich fertilizer. Composting with special composting worms is an efficient and environmentally efficient way to save tonnes of waste going into landfill.

Cathy Nesbitt is a Worm Advocate and Founder of Cathy's Crawly Composters (est. 2002) specializing in vermicomposting and organic diversion. Through inspirational storytelling and an incredible sense of humour, Cathy has raised the level of awareness about sustainable living. Cathy has been acknowledged with several environmental and business awards and is recognized as one of the country's foremost vermicomposting experts.

President's Message

By the time you read this it will be Groundhog Day, the official midpoint of winter, and six weeks later, it will be spring. Having 12 hours of daylight is marvellous after what often seems like months of darkness. Of course, we all know that real spring in southern Ontario is dependent on the weather not a calendar date.

I would like to share with you some of the topics your Board of Directors has been discussing.

As you probably know, we are going to have a very busy spring. We will have our regular meetings and we will be hosting the District 15 AGM on May 7. The AGM will include a flower show and a photography show. More information will be available as we get closer to the AGM date.

Over the past two years, we have had a *Bring a Friend* night in June. Many members have asked about having a field trip in June as has been done in some previous years. So that it is possible to have a trip in June, we have decided to change the *Friend Night* to our April 12 meeting. After much discussion, we decided to change the name of *Friend Night* to *Streetsville Horticultural Society Open House*. Of course, you may still bring friends. We will be publicizing this event through the newsletters of our various local politicians, and are hoping to have local realtors provide information about our society to new home purchasers in the area.

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There are several awards from the Ontario Horticultural Society that members of our society may be qualified to receive. Most of these awards require a minimum of 10 years active service to the society. If you would like to suggest someone for nomination, please contact me.

We have been asked by Erin Mills Town Centre to set up a Streetsville Hort booth in the new centre court on May 7, 2016, the Saturday before Mother's Day. We would be able to promote the society, sell cookbooks, and answer garden related questions. I think it is a great idea; however, that is the same day as our District AGM and many members will be attending the AGM.

If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please contact me or our assistant secretary Arlene Crothers at acrothers18@gmail.com

Monica Ross, President



Remember to Lug your mug!



Highlights include:

- 25 gardens
- 6 professional floral artists
- International competitors
- 100s of hours of seminars, workshops, and presentations
- New books
- Rain garden
- Garden market place
- National Home Show

<http://canadablooms.com/>

A poster for the Southern Ontario Orchid Society Orchid Show 2016. The background is black. At the top, it says "Southern Ontario Orchid Society" in yellow. Below that, "Orchid Show 2016" is written in large, bold, red letters. To the right is a photograph of two yellow orchids. On the far right, vertically, it says "Jay Norris photograph". The event dates are "Sat & Sun 11am - 5pm" and "FEBRUARY 13 & 14". Below that, it says "General admission: \$12.00 cash only" and "supervised children under 12 free hand-held cameras only". Further down, it lists "Limited Admission \$20.00" and "Sat 5:30 - 7:30 pm" and "Sun 9 - 11am" with "tripods permitted". There are social media icons for Twitter and Facebook with the handles "twitter.com/SOOSOrchid" and "facebook.com/SOOSOrchid". A QR code is in the bottom right. The location is "Toronto Botanical Garden, 777 Lawrence Ave. East, Toronto, ON, M3C 1P2". At the bottom, it says "Follow us on social media ... visit WWW.SOOS.ca for \$2 off coupon" and "info: 905.640.5643". There is also a small logo for "S.O.O.S. IS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION PROCEEDS SUPPORT CONSERVATION" and a "P" logo.

Composting with Worms

Vermicomposting is the processing of household organic waste through specialty earthworms into nutrient rich fertilizer. A natural, odourless, aerobic process differs from composting.

There are four major components to vermicomposting: container, bedding material, waste material and composting worms.

Ideally, the container should be opaque and keep out the light. It should also be lightweight, durable, and watertight. A

shallow container is best to allow for greater oxygenation.

The bedding material provides food and a habitat in which the earthworms live. Bedding material should consist of shredded cardboard, shredded newspaper, aged straw or hay, coconut coir, shredded fall

leaves, peat moss and aged compost. To create bedding material, soak a large quantity of shredded cardboard, newspaper or the above. Worms want an environment that is about 75 per cent water. The bedding material should be kept moist, not wet.

Once the bedding material is moist, place it in the container mixed with small amounts of grit, such as, fine sand, shredded leaves, cornstarch, and sawdust or ground egg shells. Worms do not have teeth and require something gritty to help them grind up the waste material.

The earthworms are fed waste material, such as vegetable and fruit scrapings, coffee grounds and filters, tea bags, ground egg shells, grains, plant trimmings and paper.

Items to avoid are: pet waste, meat, dairy, hot, or heavily spiced foods, metals, foils, plastics, chemicals, oils, solvents, insecticides, soaps or paint etc.

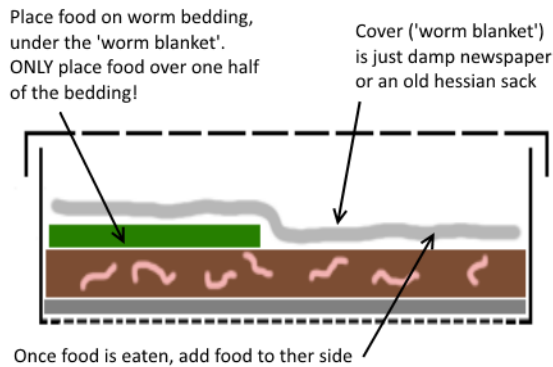
Worms are the final component of vermicomposting. Specialty earthworms are used, such as red wigglers, *Eisenia foetida*, or European night crawlers, *Lumbricus terrestris*. Backyard earthworms can not live on vegetable waste.

Building a home for your worms is easy. Using a Rubbermaid container to build a homemade composter, drill 18 – 20 holes in the lid and the same amount around the upper perimeter of the side of the Rubbermaid container. Add a layer of moist bedding material, approximately one-

third or one-half of the container. Include small amounts of grit. Add some green or waste material on top of one-quarter area of bedding material. Cover with additional bedding material. Spray the top layer with water, enough to make it moist. Place lid on container and allow to meld for a week or two to develop a microbial community before adding worms.



Worm Farm Feeding



It is best to feed the worms once a week in small amounts. If you feed them more than they can process, you will end up with a stinky mess.

Once your worm compost bin is set up and running smoothly, it requires little attention until it is time to harvest the worm castings.

It is ready once there is little or no bedding material left to see and it has reduced in bulk to consist of worm compost, which is brown and earthy looking. Castings can be harvested every two to six months; depending on how many worms you have.

Happy harvesting!

Videos on vermicomposting are available online at:

<http://www.redwormcomposting.com/getting-started/>

<http://www.planetnatural.com/worm-composting/>



Debra Lemire, Newsletter Chair

Herbs in the Spotlight

Chives are an edible perennial herb. It grows across much of Europe, Asia, and North America. The scapes or stems are hollow and tubular. Its distinctive smell and taste is derived from a volatile oil, rich in sulphur and common to the onion family. *Allium schoenoprasum*, onion chive – purple flowers early spring.

Allium tuberosum, garlic chive – white flowers late summer.

Propagation: by seed and division.



Harvest: cut to within one inch (3 cm) of the ground four times a year to maintain a supply. It does not dry well.

Refrigerate in a plastic bag for a week or freeze chopped leaves in ice cube trays for convenience. Cut

flowers in full bloom to add colour to salads and sauces.

Common uses: Often snipped and sprinkled on food just before serving. Pairs well with eggs, fish, potatoes, salads, shellfish, sole and soups.

Cultivation: Chives are fairly tolerant regarding soil and position. Plant them in a rich moist soil and in a sunny position.

Medicinal uses: leaves are mildly antiseptic and when sprinkled on food they stimulate the appetite and promote digestion.

Culinary uses: add chives at the end of cooking or the flavour will disappear. They are delicious freshly picked and snipped as a garnish or flavour in omelettes or scrambled eggs, salad and soups. They can be mashed into soft cheeses or sprinkled onto grilled meats. Add to sour cream as a filling for baked potatoes.



Companion planting: plant chives next to apple trees to prevent scab, and next to roses to prevent black spot.

Container planting: grows well in pots.

Chive Butter

- ½ cup/4 oz./100 g butter
- 4 tablespoons chopped chives
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

Cream the chives and softened butter together until well mixed. Beat in the lemon juice and season to taste. Cover and cool the butter in the refrigerator until ready to use; it will keep for several days. (Can be frozen). It is great on top of steaks, fish or baked potatoes.



With apologies to Beatrix Potter, there are bad rabbits!

At this time of year, nothing is growing in our gardens, but that doesn't mean nothing is happening. In my garden, I have intruders or what might be better described as bad rabbits.



Last winter many plants in my garden were badly damaged by hungry bunnies. The list included two rose bushes, lavender, a deutzia, a large blackberry bush, a hydrangea, and a burning bush. All of these had the bark eaten and resulted in girdled stems. This meant no new growth above the eaten sections and required cutting the plants back to about six inches tall to stimulate new growth. All the plants survived but I had no blackberries; they fruit on the previous year's growth. No flowers on the deutzia or hydrangea; they bloom on the previous year's growth. The rest were very late blooming.

This picture is the burning bush,



originally about five feet tall; the bark was eaten up to a height of about 24 inches. I have a mental picture of rabbits standing on each other's shoulders to reach that high!

This one is rabbit-pruned lavender.



Now the rabbits are back! They live in a neighbour's yard behind my house. The owners cut the grass about once a year whether it needs it or not, and by doing so they create a perfect home for many rabbits.

How can we protect our gardens from this sort of damage? There are several ways, physical barriers such as wire mesh work very well. The fence should be made of one inch galvanized steel mesh or hardware cloth 18 to 24 inches high. This is what I did with my blackberry bush this year. Last year the snow was deep enough that the rabbits could walk over the snow to eat the bark.

Other suggested options are potions made of Tabasco, garlic, hot peppers etc. I cannot bring myself to do that. The ingredients inevitably get in the animals' eyes, and it hurts. I want to dissuade them from eating my shrubs but I'm okay with them eating dropped bird seed, or the thyme, and they have already trimmed back a large patch of pinks.

Another option is Plantskydd, a commercially available animal repellent that smells awful. The ingredients are dried blood and vegetable oil only. The vegetable oil sticks to the plants even during severe snow/rainfall conditions for up to six months over winter. It works very well. We used it on the trees we planted at the Log House in 2014 and 2015; there has been no damage by deer or other critters.

Monica Ross, President

**Are you a
vendor?
Reserve a table
today!**



Vendor tables are available May 7, for the Ontario Horticultural Association District 15 Annual General Meeting for \$35.00.

For further information, please contact Mary Hachey at 905.858.8897 or e-mail her at mary.hachey@gmail.com.

Happenings at the Royal Botanical Gardens

For adults as well as children, events include a Discovery Show, Meet the Animals, crafts, and puppet shows happening daily until April 17 for more information <http://www.rbg.ca/reptiles-dailyevents>





We are looking for gift donations for the Ontario Horticultural Association District 15 Annual General Meeting. Re-gifting is good too.

Please contact Lynn Merritt before February 20 at 905.826.3281 or e-mail lynnc.merritt@sympatico.ca.

Early Colour – Forcing Bulbs

While the last weeks of winter may seem to drag on for eternity, keen gardeners keep their eyes peeled to the drab, dormant earth for signs of life from crocuses, daffodils, and tulips that herald the true start of the new planting season. Why not bring the vibrant colour you're longing for indoors by forcing spring bulbs?

1. While some nurseries will sell pre-chilled bulbs over the winter, the best time to buy bulbs is in the fall.
2. Look for big healthy-looking bulbs without any soft spots. If you are buying tulips, make sure the label states that you can force them.
3. If you are planting multiple bulbs in one large pot, make sure they all have the same bloom time.
4. Choose a pot with good drainage and wash it well before use.

5. Don't let the bulbs touch; if one rots, it won't affect the rest.

6. Cover bulbs with just enough soil so that the noses show and water thoroughly.

7. Fill the pot with good-quality, indoor potting soil, leaving a few centimetres at the top.

8. Plant bulbs close to the edge of the pot so the leaves will drape outward.



9. Place the pots in a dark, cold room. Check the pots every two weeks to make sure the soil is still moist, but not wet.

10. After about 12 to 16 weeks (or when you see shoots two to three centimetres above the soil), place the pot in a warm room with bright, indirect light. Once you see flower buds, move the pot to a full sun location.

Note: Too much warmth—especially at night—will lead to lanky, floppy stems, and blooms will tip over.

The best bulbs to force

- Tulips
- Crocuses
- Daffodils
- Hyacinths
- Grape hyacinths (*Muscari* cvs.)



Article taken from Canadian Gardening at <http://www.canadiangardening.com/plants/flower-bulbs/10-steps-to-forcing-spring-bulbs/a/29521>

Streetsville Blooms

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Vice president: Marg Rowan

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Crothers

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Editor: Debra Lemire

Webmaster: Nigel Roberts

Questions, concerns, ideas, or
would you like to volunteer for a
position on the Board?

Contact Monica Ross at
905.824.7283 or at
thegardenlady@psstnetwork.ca

Article suggestions; please contact
Debbie Lemire at
debra.lemire@gmail.com or
416.268.4348.

URL: www.streetsvillehort.ca

E-mail:
streetsvillehort@hotmail.com

OHA Website:
www.gardenontario.org

P.O. Box 42048, 128 Queen St. S.
Mississauga, ON L4M 4Z4



Jobs for the month of February

General

- Firm plants after frost heaving;
- Order seeds.

Trees and shrubs

- Continue to protect plants from frost and drying winds.

Lawns

- Get mower serviced, sharpened, and repaired.

Fruit

- Dormant spray tree and bush fruit;
- Prune fall-fruiting raspberries.

Vegetables

- Start some vegetables and flowers indoors.

Flowers

- Start slower growing flowers indoors.

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