



# Streetsville Blooms

Streetsville Horticultural Society

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

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



Volume 28, Issue 5

January 2021

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## Next Meeting

**Tuesday January 12**

**Rock Gardens: Anna Leggat**

**Zoom Virtual Meeting**

**Meeting starts 7:30pm**

## A Message from the Board of Directors

We are very sad to share the news that Dave Rowan, husband of our co-president Marg Rowan died unexpectedly on December 1, 2020. He died as a result of a severe asthma attack the previous day.

Marg has requested that we respect her privacy at this exceptionally difficult time.

## President's Message

I hope all of you had the best Christmas and New Year's celebrations possible given the limitations and restrictions!

As we move into a month of COVID lockdown, we will all need some interesting diversions to fill the gaps in our usual January activities. Our online General Meetings and ZOOM speakers will hopefully be on your list of gardening pursuits. This edition of the newsletter includes links to gardening sites and videos that might be of interest. Perhaps you are caring for indoor plants or are overwintering outdoor annuals that require focused attention. In addition to my geraniums and five foot potted "colocasia" (elephant ear) plant, this year I am trying to overwinter three passionflower vines, two of which I grew with surprising ease from a packet of seeds.

The largest vine is six feet tall and since bringing it indoors in October it has unexpectedly developed five flower buds which continue to grow fatter; One opened on Christmas Day! Also, in my plans are reading and research into flowering native species which will prosper in my garden beds, most of which are in full sun and require so much water. As our climate grows warmer each year, I need to wean myself away from some of the needy flowering species I love, for long term ease of maintenance.

Whatever your January plans, stay well and safe. All the best for 2021!

 Janet Shaw, Co-President





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## Speaker of the month: Rock Garden by Anna Leggat



Anna Leggat is a former Botany and Chemistry High School teacher. She worked for 30 years at the Kortright Centre for Conservation. Now a Master Gardener, she is past Chair of the Ontario Rock Garden Society and former editor of its Journal, past Director of the North American Rock Garden Society, a member of GardenComm, and former Program Director of the East York Garden Club. She has held membership in many local Horticultural societies, and Rock Garden societies in other countries and has written gardening articles for Toronto Life, Landscape Ontario and The Globe and Mail.

In 2017 Anna won the North American Rock Garden Society Marvin Black Award, and in 2016 a Silver Award from GARDENCOMM. Anna has travelled widely, photographing wildlife and mountain plants, and has won photography prizes.

She says "I am basically a mad gardener, gardening in a comparatively large garden in Toronto with lots of shade and visiting mink, deer and groundhogs. I want to grow vegetables; however, deer and groundhogs would like me to as well." ✂ Janet Shaw

## Zoom Speaker List February to April 2021

February 9, 2021 - Robert Pavlis "Common Garden Myths"

March 9, 2021 - Denise Hodgins "Prune Away: What and When to Prune"

April 13, 2021 - Julia Dimakis "Successful Vegetable Gardening"

## 2020 Plant Premiums



Our poinsettia premiums were distributed to our members in December. Thanks to Carol Ashford, Jon Eldridge, Steve Fenech, Rob and Sue Harshman, Janet Shaw and Martha Witney for being our delivery people.

Originating in Mexico, the poinsettia flowers in December and January and is the ultimate Christmas decoration in the home – aside from the Christmas tree, of course. Poinsettias aren't difficult to care for. Once Christmas is over, you can try to get your poinsettia to bloom again for the following year.



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## BOUGAINVILLEA IN DECEMBER

Bougainvillea is an ornamental vine or bush /tree. Native to South America, it was discovered by European botanist Philibert Commercon in 1789 and named after French Navy admiral Louis Antoine de Bougainville. In the nineteenth century it was introduced to Europe and sold in nurseries, it has now spread to all the world and has more than 300 varieties with new hybrids coming up very often. It has many colours and the small waxy flowers are surrounded by sepals like bracts which have a paper like texture. In South America it is known as paper plant as well.

Bougainvillea is popular in warm climates and in equatorial regions it blooms all year, in other areas they are seasonal with 4 to 6 weeks of blooming season. This plant likes dry soil and needs very little water. In colder climates like Canada, it is seen as a house plant and sold in bigger nurseries in the spring in pots.

On one of my spring trips to Terra Garden Centre I saw a full bloom plant in a pot and of course bought it home. That was 4 years ago, in the fall I brought it indoors as an experiment to see if it would survive the winter and it did.

I took it out in late spring in its pot and it bloomed and regained its foliage so now that's what I have been doing every year. What really surprised me was that in April 2020 it bloomed inside in a spot by the window. And again, in summer it had the best blooms ever outside on the porch and now in December has blooms again.

What a wonderful surprise for me especially with this year being so difficult, we have all had personal loss and in communities around us, the world has changed. We are a zoom culture now but nature has given me hope and shown that we can persevere all challenges and come out as beautiful human beings.

 Asma



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## Native Corner: American Beech- *"Fagus grandifolia"*

As the dark days of winter continue and the foliage drops from many deciduous trees, the Canadian landscape we are so lucky to be a part of, takes on an indescribable beauty. One tree that becomes easy to identify (but don't confuse it with an Ironwood) because it keeps its dead leaves the longest (a phenomenon called marcescence) is the American Beech.



Beeches, oaks and chestnuts are all members of the same family, but there is only one species of beech native to North America – *Fagus grandifolia*. All beeches are distinguished by their flowers. The males appear in dangling yellow-green clusters. The female flowers bloom in pairs on short stalks. But it is the thin smooth bark that seems to attract the attention of almost everyone, especially any penknife-toting youngster. For centuries, people have written on the bark, and some ancient inscriptions remain visible on trees in North America and Europe – record keeping, arboreal style, if you will. Apparently, the Beech's rapid formation of wound cork allows it to quickly seal over tears, cuts, or incisions in the bark, leaving distinctive scars visible for decades or even centuries.

Some ancient beeches are historic artifacts simply because of their graffiti. The Presidents' Tree in Maryland is marked with all the presidents' names from George Washington to Andrew Johnson, along with the signature of the carver, Samuel Fenton, a soldier stationed nearby during the Civil War. The Old Benchmark Beech in Louisiana is a boundary marker with two centuries worth of surveyors' notations carved on its bark.

The beech is equally noted for beechnuts. Triangular and reddish-brown in October, the taste is similar to hazelnuts, and can be roasted like chestnuts. The Algonquin, Ojibwe, Menominee, Chippewa, Potawatomi, and Iroquois ate the nuts whole, or crushed them to make meal. Animals are equally fond of them as red squirrels and chipmunks hide the nuts for winter food.

The settlers also ate beechnuts, and even made a type of coffee by roasting and grinding the kernels. The nuts could also be pressed to release oil, which was comparable in many ways to olive oil, suitable for frying and salad dressings.

Beechnuts were once the staple food of the passenger pigeon. These birds landed on beech trees by the hundreds of thousands, a spectacle once described as a "biological storm". It's impossible to think that a bird with such a profound connection to the ecology of the country could be knocked off so easily, but the passenger pigeon was extinct by 1900. Part of the reason for their demise was the staggering number of beeches felled by settlers for their farms, depriving the birds of both food and lodging. Of course, without the birds, the soil changed as well - pigeon droppings and the beeches had evolved together.



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Beechwood was not generally used for construction. It tended to warp during seasoning and rotted if left buried in the soil. It was extremely useful as barrels, bowls, butter boxes, and kitchen utensils, because it had no smell or taste to leach into the food. It was also a sturdy wood that could withstand friction and scouring so was used for handles of carpenters' tools, thresholds, clothespins, and the soles of clogs. A type of creosote was made by distilling the tar from beechwood. Once used to treat coughs and as a disinfectant, it is rarely used for these purposes today. Modern beechwood is now used for flooring, furniture, veneer, plywood, railroad ties, baskets, pulp, charcoal, and rough lumber. It is popular as a fuel because it burns well.

The American Beech grows between 60 and 80ft tall, with a wide spreading crown. Mature bark is silvery-grey, thin and smooth. It has alternate simple leaves 3-5" long, that are a glossy dark green, unlobed and leathery (in sunny conditions) to waxy (in shady conditions) in texture. Persisting into the winter, the leaves are a lovely yellow to golden bronze in autumn. They are monoecious (male and female parts exist on the same plant) and have reddish-brown wood.

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

## Who was George Leslie?

The Leslie Log House was built in 1826 by John Leslie and his family who immigrated from Scotland in 1824. George Leslie nephew of John Leslie had worked as a gardener in Scotland and soon after arrival in Canada found work in York in 1830. He started selling grain, seed and groceries in Toronto. In 1834 he, with others, founded the Toronto Horticultural Society.

Excerpts from: The Cottage Florist, For the Province Of Ontario being a compendious and practical guide to the

Many very valuable works on the subject of Floriculture have issued from the press of Britain and America, but I am not aware of any that has addressed itself, as is proposed here, to the mere beginner. Some are limited to the cultivation of particular classes of plants; others are too elaborate and expensive; while some again are mere catalogues. And in addition to this, however useful in the hands of the more experienced gardener, they are necessarily unsuited to the novice in floriculture in this Province, where the climate is so very different from that for which they were intended. In this respect the Cottage Florist may be relied on with safety, prepared, as it has been, exclusively for the Province of Ontario.

cultivation of flowering plants, adapted to the climate of the late province of Upper Canada / by an amateur florist, published Toronto by J. Bain, 1868

**For Toronto Nurseries:**  
**Geo Leslie and Son**  
**Proprietors, Packing done**  
in the best manner to  
ensure safe carriage to the  
most distant parts.



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## WORK TO BE DONE

In each month, beginning with what may be considered the commencement of our floral year.

April: Let all digging and raking be done as early in the month as possible. In the beginning of the month shrubs, perennials and biennials may be planted if possible in moist weather if not give water. Tender Annuals may be sown during the first week on a hotbed, the half hardy Annuals under glass in a warm spot, about the end of the month.

Anemones and Ranunculus, in pots, may be planted in the beds.

Look over Tulips and Hyacinths now coming into flower; some may require support. Polyanthus and Auricula will soon show their beauties; clear from decayed leaves, and thin trusses where too thick; clean walks and put garden generally in order.

Look for more wisdom from George Leslie in the coming months. ✂ Monica Ross

## Winter distractions 2021

For most ardent gardeners winter is a time to plan for the coming spring, we order seeds, and make lists of what worked and didn't. We decide this is the year that we are finally going to rearrange 'that' garden bed which just hasn't fulfilled our vision.

I still have my garden journal from when I moved into this house 28 years ago when it was surrounded by mud and construction debris. Of course, back then there were no trees so no shade, and what I could grow then is quite different from today. I occasionally reread what I wrote.

Some of us read gardening books, and drool over catalogues. This winter I feel that I am going to need some visual inspiration.

The easiest way to find garden related videos, films and documentaries on a particular subject is to Google the topic and add movie/film or documentary after the subject.



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A few years ago, I created a list of garden related videos, films and documentaries, that are available to watch free on line.

The 2021 list includes some favourite websites that can be searched by keywords, if you aren't familiar with the term, all it means is a word that describes the content you want to find. It could be as simple and specific as; vegetables, or more general such as garden design, or organic gardening.



The links are below are clickable, this means hold down the Ctrl button usually found on the bottom left of keyboard and then click on the web address. If this does not work; copy the web address and paste it into Google search.

<https://www.cultureunplugged.com> a free online film archive to watch films (documentaries, short films, talks & more)

<https://www.thompson-morgan.com/video-library> We've put together all our easy to follow 'how to' gardening videos so that they are all in one place to make it easier for you to find expert gardening advice and tips. Flowers, vegetables, fruit, equipment and gardening tips

<https://goodgardeningvideos.org/> search by topics or by season

<https://www.growveg.com/gardening-videos.aspx> videos on many topics, from growing blueberries to how to make flavoured gin.

<https://horttrades.co.uk/how-to-build-a-rain-garden-video-series> A series of videos, narrated by Mark Cullen, is aimed at informing and educating the public and landscape professionals on how to properly build a rain garden. Part one explores two rain gardens in the Lake Simcoe watershed.

<http://www.infocobuild.com/books-and-films/nature.html> A listing of 186 documentaries and films about nature and the environment

<https://www.gardenersworld.com/how-to/maintain-the-garden/how-to-create-a-wildlife-garden-part-one/> Gain inspiration to create your own wildlife garden, as Monty Don outlines his plans to transform a neglected area into a wildlife-friendly haven.

If you don't mind spending a little money: The **University of Guelph Arboretum** has some good offerings this winter, most cost \$10 per session, some courses have multiple sessions so the total cost is more.

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/arboretum/educationandevents/workshops>

Or the **Mother Earth News Online Educational Fair**, usually held as a real physical event, you can sign up for \$2.99 a month or \$35 a year for access to all their courses PLUS all of prerecorded webinars. (100 workshop videos and counting!)



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They have courses on a huge variety of subjects including Bread Making, Immune system boosting, Garden planning, Survival skills, Raising chickens, Seed saving, Making fermented beverages, DIY, and many other topics

<https://online.motherearthnewsfair.com/>

## Garden Blogs



<http://www.torontogardens.com/>

<https://stevenbiggs.ca/>

<https://threedogsinagarden.blogspot.com/p/about-three-dogs-in-garden.html>

<https://www.gwmastergardeners.ca/news-events/blog/>

<http://markcullen.com/>

<https://www.gardenmyths.com/>

## YouTube videos

<https://youtu.be/YCEaYInJbos> The secret life of trees

<https://youtu.be/8QSWP56J8DA> The secret world of plants

<https://youtu.be/MHdE2YCRjck> Can running Save a Rainforest?

✂ Monica Ross

## Planning for your 2021 garden

Things to know: if you are planning to grow vegetables from seed you should be aware that seeds maybe in short supply this spring. A suggestion: if you only need a few seeds please find a friend to them share with, last spring many seed companies reserved their supplies for farm operations and community gardens.

Seeds will be available for online ordering starting in late December. These companies are located in Canada and supply many seeds both vegetable and flowers.

<https://mckenziaseeds.com/> ; <https://www.westcoastseeds.com/> ; <https://www.incredibleseeds.ca/> ;

<https://www.oscseeds.com/product-category/vegetables/>; <https://www.veseys.com/>;

<https://www.stokeseeds.com/ca/>; <https://u harvest.ca/shop/> ; <https://www.damseeds.com/>



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Seeds will be available in retail stores early in the new year, probably only for curbside pickup. If you need help ordering on line please contact me. If there are particular perennials you would like to have please let me know, we may be able to order them from Cannon nurseries- the nursery where we buy our spring premiums, or from other wholesale suppliers. ✂ **Monica Ross**



**1. Try something new:** bird seed ornaments. "If you are feeding your winter birds – make sure that it is fresh seeds. Niger seed dries out quickly and the finches won't touch it and my sunflower seeds from last year, the birds do not go after. I had to purchase fresh seeds from this year harvest and they like that. What a fussy lot they are but let's face it We humans don't like old food either." Ursula Evanoff.

**2. Learn something new:** Online courses, videos, native plants. Use Monica's list.

**3. Gardening more:** Mix and match plants like never before. Add edible plants to the ornamental ones.





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## **Remember the photo contest categories are being carried over for 2021**

### Streetsville Horticultural Society Photo Contest 2019-2020-2021

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Class 1 | "How beautiful the leaves grow old. How full of light and color are their last days." John Burroughs |
| Class 2 | "A shadow on the snow" -Charles Tomlinson  |
| Class 3 | "Fungi are the grand recyclers of the planet-" Paul Stamets  |
| Class 4 | "A host of golden daffodils, Fluttering and dancing in the breeze. - William Wordsworth              |
| Class 5 | "What a lovely thing a rose is!" Arthur Conan Doyle  |
| Class 6 | "Close to you"-The Carpenters, leaf or leaves close up   |
| Class 7 | "Ripe vegetables were magic to me"-Michael Pollan  |
| Class 8 | "They call me Mellow Yellow"-Donovan   |

These are the categories – NATURE RELATED

Suggestion: keep this list in your camera case, your wallet or your pocket for reference when you are taking photos

## **Photo Contest Rules**

- Closing Date September 2021 meeting.
- All pictures must have been taken by the competitor and should be nature related.
- Coloured photos, unless other specified, no larger than 4" x 6".
- One entry per class per single membership.
- Two entries per class, one per person in a family membership.
- If photo does not meet category it will be rejected.
- Previously submitted photos not allowed.
- Photos taken from September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2021



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## PHOTO GALLERY

By Grace Nelham

**Galapagos: Climate Change's Ground Zero.** By Dave Taylor.



This collage includes: Sea Lions, Lava Cactus, Black Striped Salema Fish and a Bottle-nosed Dolphin



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