



Streetsville Blooms



Streetsville Horticultural Society

Proud to be a member of the Ontario Horticultural Association

Volume 31, Issue 6

www.streetsvillehort.ca

February 2024



Next Meeting

Tuesday, February 13, 2024
Streetsville United Church
In Heritage Hall
274 Queen Street South
Set Up at 6:30 p.m.
Doors open at 7:00 p.m.
Meeting starts at 7:30 p.m.

Speaker: Melissa Creasey
Topic: Birds in Relation to your
Garden

1

Table of Contents

Co-Presidents' Message	2	Celebrations	5
Getting to Know Lichens	3	Raffle Table	5
February Speaker	3	Are Your Garden Seeds Still Good?	6
Membership Desk	4	Gardening News & Happenings	7
Member Judged Photo Contest	4		

¹ *Frozen in Time, courtesy of Grace Nelham*

Co-Presidents' Message

Spring arrives March 19th and by the time this newsletter arrives in your inbox, it will only be 47 days away. Despite mother nature wreaking havoc on our last meeting, winter has been very gentle to us thus far. Hopefully your amaryllis bulb has provided you with some blooms to brighten your day to combat January's below average hours of sunlight.

Now that our gardens are blanketed in snow, we can dedicate more time to other horticultural pursuits. Maybe you have decided to search through seed catalogues or landscaping magazines to add a new plant or feature to your garden. Are your houseplants flourishing with the extra attention you can provide them? If you left some seed heads, you might be enjoying visits from chickadees, juncos, or goldfinches.

Perhaps you have begun winter sowing, something that Vicki introduced me to, and I tried for the first-time last year. In a nutshell winter sowing involves using a transparent container, adding drain, and venting holes, filling it with potting material, adding the seeds, moistening the soil, and sitting them outside to let them cold stratify. Native plants work very well as do hardy vegetables such as kale and spinach. If you want to learn more, follow this link <https://www.rbg.ca/winter-sowing-part-one/> by the Royal Botanical Gardens.



Garden Ontario (OHA) publishes the Trillium Newsletter quarterly which contains interesting information. The winter edition showcased the winners of the various contests held the previous year and introduced the categories for the Arts, Publications, Youth, and Photography competitions for 2024. You can find out more details about the competition by looking at page 33 in their newsletter after clicking on the link. <https://gardenontario.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-24-Winter-Trillium.pdf>.

Lastly, we are not sure what the groundhog will say on February 2nd, but one thing is for sure, spring is just around the corner.

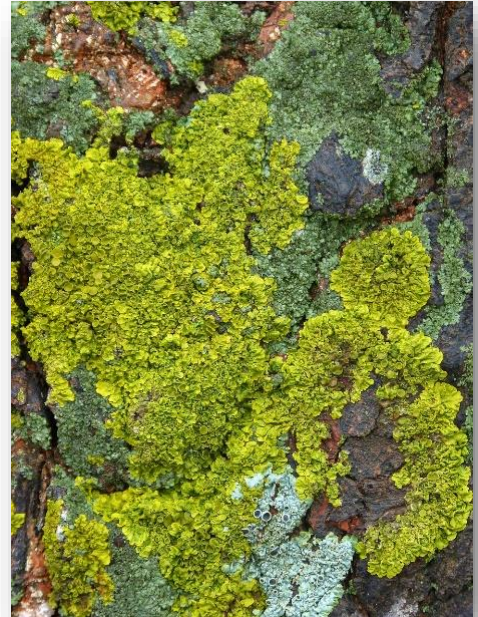
Maureen Dodd & Shelley Dodd



Getting to know Lichens

I don't remember ever hearing a talk about lichens at a Horticultural meeting, probably because no one chooses to have them in their garden. In the natural world however, they are everywhere! They survive in extreme environments, from the far North, where they feed the Caribou in winter, to the Sahara desert where they grow on sand....and everywhere in between.

Lichens are composed of 2 quite different species: a fungus and an algae. They need each other as the algae can photosynthesize to make sugars for energy and the fungus provides a tough layer of protective tissue and anchors the organism (not a plant) to the rock. They break up the surface of rocks by the force of their growth and by powerful acids, and when they die and decompose they produce soil.



Lichen fossils have been found that are over 400 million years old. There are at least 18,000 species of lichen and you can find 11,593 photos of them at www.waysofenlichenment.net.

2

Last year I read "Entangled Life" by Merlin Sheldrake and found it an excellent and very readable book on fungi (amazingly it's a NY Times bestseller). Some parts may just blow your mind! We were on the South coast of England last March on a cool damp windy day, and we found a very old church and churchyard which was covered with all sorts of lichen. I could have stayed there for an hour at least but my wife said "No way". She hadn't read the book.

Jon Eldridge

February Speaker – Birds in Relation to your Garden

Melissa Creasey, M.Sc.

Coordinator, Sustainable Home Landscapes
Credit Valley Conservation

With a Master of Science, Melissa Creasey has researched songbird ecology and conservation in both Newfoundland and Ontario. As the Coordinator for Sustainable Home Landscapes at Credit Valley Conservation, Melissa works with homeowners, businesses and institutions to promote sustainable landscaping on their properties. Melissa connects people with the plants and animals found in their backyards, while helping them to create healthy, climate-resilient landscapes.

² Picture from Pixabay



From the Membership Desk

Hello everyone, many of you know me already, but I just wanted to introduce myself. My name is Faulene Hopkins, and I am the new membership chair. You can always find me at the membership table, always ready to help in any way I can. I also have 3 helpers this year, Marg Allen, Sandra Jensen and Karen

Nish. Hopefully between all of us, we will be able to handle all membership needs. It will be a hard job, taking over for Shelley, but I think we are all up to it!

Looking forward to welcoming you all to the next meeting!

Faulene Hopkins

Member Judged Photo Contest

SHS will be holding a photo contest at our March 12, 2024 meeting. The classes for the contest are my favourite Nature Photo in colour, and my favourite Nature Photo in black and white. It's a fun contest that will be judged by our members present at the meeting.

Contest Rules:

- Photo size 4" x 6".
- Photo to be taken by competitor.
- One entry in each class per membership.
- Two entries per class in a family membership but the photo entries must be taken by different people.
- Print your name on the back of your photos.

3



There will be a table set up for the contest and you can give your photos to me.

Christina Anonychuk

³ *Amaryllis* courtesy of Amarin Tsujimura's efforts from the bulb planted at our December workshop

Celebrations



February's birth flowers are the violet and the primrose. These two woodland plants are tough because of their cold tolerance making them aptly suited to be February's chosen flowers!

Wishing Angie Griffiths, John Dodd, Anna-Marie Raftery, and Sandra Jensen who are celebrating a birthday this month, a happy and healthy year ahead!



Congratulations to Asoke & Rosemarie who are celebrating their 56th wedding anniversary this month!

Raffle Table

For the month of February, our raffle table will showcase a beautiful white bowl that would make a lovely serving dish or a table centrepiece, a set of 4 beautiful and exquisitely crafted Royal Worcester fine porcelain birds, silk cushion covers, a beautiful photo frame, jewelry and scarf that would make a nice Valentine's Day gift for a special person. Tickets are two dollars each or five dollars for three tickets.

Thanks to the generosity of our members, our raffle table always has some lovely whimsical and practical prizes. We are looking for more prizes. If anyone would like to donate an unused gift or item please bring it to the raffle table at the next meeting.

Thank you for generously donating and supporting our monthly raffle table.



Are Your Garden Seeds Still Good? Here's How to Tell

Don't waste time and effort! Before you get growing, check to see if your seeds will germinate with these helpful tips.

Before you plant older seeds find out if they'll still germinate with these helpful tips.

If you've started planning your spring garden, you might be taking stock and seeing what materials you have to work with. Are you wondering if the seeds you intended to use last year are still good?

Or, what about those heirloom seeds you got as a wedding favor a few years back?

Just like most things in nature, seeds have a shelf life and you need to determine your seeds' ability to germinate before you start planting. You don't want to waste your time and effort!



Seed Viability – In A “Nutshell”

Most brand new seeds have a 90% germination rate, meaning that 9 out of every 10 seeds you plant should grow. But if you've got seeds that have been hanging around for three years, the germination rate drops to around 60%. That means you'll need to plant a higher number of these older seeds to increase your chances of growing something.

Seed Viability Test for Older Seeds

If you have older seeds, it's wise to do a quick viability test prior to planting when using older seeds. Here's what to do:

- Fold a dampened paper towel in half.
- Take 2-3 seeds and place them on the damp towel.
- Fold the towel over the seeds and place them in a zippered plastic bag or airtight container in a warm location.

After a few days, open the bag and take a peek to see if any sprouted. This will give you a good gauge of how your seeds are germinating.

If the germination rate is low, but there is still some viability (for example, maybe only 2 of the seeds in your test sprouted), simply plant more of those seeds in the garden, knowing that not all may sprout. You're just increasing the sprouting odds.

If none of them sprout, obviously, you'll have to purchase fresh seeds.

Taken from the Farmer's Almanac Winter 2024

Gardening News & Happenings

- **[Southern Ontario Orchid Society Orchid Show & Sale](#)**: takes place on at the Toronto Botanical Garden, 777 Lawrence Ave. E, Toronto. **Saturday February 10th noon – 5:00 pm and Sunday February 11th 11:00 am – 4:00 pm**. Admission is \$10.
- **[Low-Maintenance Boulevard Gardens](#)**: Blooming Boulevards is offering a free webinar to help you learn how to replace your high-maintenance turf with a drought-proof, salt resistant, no-mow boulevard garden using easy care native plants that support pollinators! **Saturday February 10th 10:00 am – 11:00 am**. Sign up online at least two days before the event.
- **[Mississauga Seed Library 10th Anniversary & Launch](#)**: Celebrate the 10th year of the Seed Library with workshops, gardening experts, and family friendly activities. Small Arms Inspection Building, 1352 Lakeshore Rd. East #1352, Mississauga. (near the Mississauga / Etobicoke border). **Saturday February 24th 10:00 am – 2:00 pm**. Drop-in.
- **[Sustainable Balcony Gardening](#)**: City of Mississauga Drop-In program. Learn about the inspiring beauty and practical benefits of gardening on your balcony, with a focus on native plants and edibles. Leave with the know-how to bring your small outdoor space to life. Presented by Toronto & Region Conservation Authority. Malton Library, 3540 Morning Star Drive, Mississauga. **Saturday March 2nd 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm**. Drop-in.
- **[The Riverwood Conservancy](#)**: is offering numerous workshops during February including: Winter Waterfowl 101, Birding with the Expert at J.C. Saddington Park, Winter Birding, Great Backyard Bird Count, and Forest Bathing at Riverwood. Both daytime and evening programs are offered. The cost of each workshop varies but most are between \$5 and \$15. See their website for full details.
- **[University of Guelph Arboretum](#)**: is offering numerous in-person and virtual workshops during February. In-person events include Winter Birdwatching at the Arboretum, Owl Prowl, Conifer Workshop, Introduction to Animal Tracking, and Winter Tree Identification. Virtual workshops include Virtual Winter Tree ID, Virtual Gardening Fundamentals, and Virtual Wildlife Garden Design Course. Virtual workshops cost between \$10 and \$14. In-person workshops cost between \$14 for evening programs and \$97 for full day weekend courses. See their website for full details.
- **[GardenOntario \(formerly Ontario Horticultural Association\)](#)**: maintains a calendar of virtual and in-person events offered by Horticultural Societies across the province. Most virtual presentations are free. See the calendar listing on the GardenOntario website.
- **[GardenOntario 50/50 fundraising draw](#)**: GardenOntario is holding a fundraising 50/50 raffle with 50% of the proceeds supporting the Keep Ontario Beautiful program. Tickets prices start at 10 for \$10. Draw #8 takes place on Saturday March 16th. Tickets are available at <https://www.rafflebox.ca/raffle/ontario-ha>
- **[Royal Botanical Gardens WinterTide](#)**: Experience the brilliance of Canadian white winters like never before as the Rock Garden turns into the season's most elegant indoor and outdoor jazz lounge experience! RBG, 680 Plains Road West, Burlington. **Thursdays to Saturdays, February 8th to March 16th between 5:30 pm and 9:00 pm**. Tickets start at \$18 and must be pre-purchased. See website for ticketing details.