

The Garden Master News

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GOODNESS GROWS

- BY MARY JO MONK

The Goodness Grows! Dartmouth Gardening Network is eager to connect with more Master Gardeners in the Dartmouth area. Hopefully we will see that come to pass in the coming weeks and months. Goodness Grows! is a new community group established this fall. All members are volunteers living in Dartmouth who share a passion for gardening and the health and vitality of all members of our Dartmouth Community.

Already, there are about 40 members of Goodness Grows! and that number is continuing to climb. We recently received funding from the Dartmouth Community Health Board to support meetings and events to help the organization develop and grow over the next several months.

The network members bring a broad range of perspectives, skills and experience with respect to gardening, the importance of healthy communities and principles of community development. In addition to the overall network membership, Goodness Grows! currently has three complementary sub-groups operating:

1. Network Development and Logistics (expanded membership, established links with potential partners, meeting logistics, etc.)

2. Community Gardening (developing a proposal for a new community garden attached to a local community centre, linking with existing community gardens, etc.)

3. Educational and Social Events (gardening workshops, opportunities for Dartmouth residents to learn, share gardening experiences and knowledge, etc.).

We hope to create a Dartmouth community network whose members are involved in leading a variety of accessible and inclusive community activities promoting the health, social and environmental of gardening to support Dartmouth residents who:

1. Are engaged in gardening and gardening-related physical, social and educational activities that support them in living healthy lives;
2. Share an increased sense of ownership and commitment to their community as a result of community gardening activities in Dartmouth;
3. Have increased health literacy through access to education about harvesting and using garden produce that supports healthy food choices; and
4. Are committed to sharing their own perspectives, knowledge and skills for a healthier community.

My Gardening experience in Brazil

- By Elisabeth Jackson



Area to be gardened



Putting in the perennial garden

Late in 2007, my church told the congregation of an opportunity to volunteer at a missionary's compound in Brazil used to teach children and adults in the area. I had never experienced going on such a trip but felt it was an opportunity I didn't want to miss.

Before leaving in September of 2008, they asked what our job experiences and interests were. We received a schedule of what we would be doing before we left and another lady & myself were asked, among other things, to work with some of the staff to establish a garden area by putting in sods and a perennial garden.

Soon after we arrived in Brazil, we were shown the area near the school where they wanted to see grass growing and a flower garden. It was a bare spot measuring approximately 1,000 square feet and they already had a few young Brazilian men building a small sitting wall' that would go partially around the garden area.

We were shown the small 'outdoor greenhouse' that protected and stored the potted plants and we were told we

Gardening experience in Brazil (cont'd)

could design the garden & use whichever plants we needed.

Of course, I was in my element & Joan and I soon decided to have a curved flower bed next to the wall which surrounded the property.

The area that was going to have the sod laid, needed to be prepared by adding more topsoil, quail manure and then leveled. All this arrived just over 24 hours before we were scheduled to leave and the only available tools to level the area was hand tampers! Two young men did a lot of this work but we also helped out. That last day was very busy as Bruno and Jose started laying the sods, Joan & I worked on positioning the perennials until we were satisfied that they looked well where we had positioned them and would survive with the amount of direct sunlight they would get. We then planted them, watered them in and helped to lay the rest of the sods. When it started to rain that afternoon for the first time since we arrived in Brazil, I really believed that we were meant to finish this project for Joyce. What a big sense of accomplishment it was to finish this job for all the people who use the programs offered there!



With our new gardening friends in Brazil who helped lay sods & put in a garden.

Scattered Seeds

- By Carol Goodwin
Associate Professor
Environmental Horticulture
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SNOW CREATES A WAVE
THAT CRESTS
JUST BEFORE THE ROOF
OF MY CAR.

As I sit by the fire trying to recover from a solid day of shoveling, I can look out at snow drifts sculptured like waves, curled at the crest like in a surfer's dream. I've finished wading through the snow in the back yard to make sure there's lots of bird food available and my puppy can follow my path to get to his preferred pee spot (not on the lawn – what a good boy!)

I can't help but wonder which of my plants will vote 'no' to the type of winter we've had so far and refuse to come up in spring. Before the last freeze up, my pond had been gently overflowing into the woodland garden for the first time since I forgot and left a hose running into it some years ago. As I took my 'dozen times daily' walks on the path that loops through the woodland garden, ice crystals 10 cm thick shattered underfoot.



THERE WAS A FRONT
WALK THERE LAST NIGHT
WHEN I SHOVELED!

I can see a few plants have heaved – despite their long time residency there! It got so cold – and with no snow to insulate the soil. Knowing as I do that wet soil freezes more deeply than dry soil, I'm afraid that this may be a winter of dead shrubs and frozen water mains. I keep a scrapbook of all my plant labels from plants 'gone in'. It reads like a who's who of 'I wonder what happened to that?' and 'Oh, I forgot I used to have that'. I suspect a few more obituaries after May!

Scattered Seeds cont'd



SOMEHOW THE TEA HOUSE DOESN'T SEEM AS INVITING AS USUAL...

This is the kind of weather that drives home the importance of good pruning. Badly pruned shrubs, dense on the tops and thin below, collapse under the weight of the snow. The trees standing in stark contrast to their white surroundings are a study in the lack of formative pruning and the result of branch tip pruning, creating brooms on the ends of the branches.

It's a good time, too, for observing the patterns of snow drifting around the trees and shrubs. Dense plants have scoured and bare soil on their leeward side, thinner ones have lovely fingers of snow reaching through them and extending for about five times the plant's height. These examples of the action of wind and snow are important lessons in planning shrub borders by paths and driveways. My neighbour raised his driveway and lowered his lawn this summer in an effort to prevent the snow drifts that fill his driveway every winter. Sadly, it's the bank leading up my lawn that's the cause of all his misery – the wind drops its load of snow as it slows to rise up the bank, right on his driveway! . The screen of spruce he has planted along his property line on the opposite side will help – eventually. In the meantime, I hope he'll be happy to arrive home from his Newfoundland Christmas to a freshly shoveled driveway and path! My seed catalogues have started to pour in, and some of my orders have been placed.

My own garden is full, but I've started my Kentville garden in readiness for my retirement in a few years. I also started a woodland plant nursery, which should be 'good to go' in three years' time. Well, that's the plan... I'll have to see what remains in the spring from my fall plantings! My primary concern was to cover my raised beds with a framework and chicken wire to keep the deer from eating the plants! I'll definitely have to build a compound next year! In the meantime, I watch them (all 11 of them) from my mother's living room window. A buck left me an antler as compensation for the apple tree browsing, but I feel a bit underpaid! I hope you've enjoyed my winter musings. Hopefully spring will bring lots of optimism – let's get winter behind us first! In the meantime, there's a new seed catalogue waiting!

THE MG's GARDEN CALENDAR

Garden "Things -To - Do" In January & February

YOUR GARDEN

1. With Christmas over and plenty of Christmas trees tossed out for pickup, collect trees and use branches for mulching tender plants.
2. Enjoy a "physical" break from the garden duties! Do a bit of dreaming about your 2009 garden. Pour over seed/plant catalogues!
3. Take advantage of 'storm' days - check position & pattern of snow accumulation. This will help let you know where exposed and sheltered areas are - where to place a hedge or wind sensitive plants.
4. Buy a Garden Journal and Planner and make good use of them.
5. Take the opportunity to catch up on Gardening books, Magazines, articles, courses that you don't have time to do in the gardening season.
6. When 'snow conditions' permit take a walk around your property and check for damage e.g. broken branches, signs of insect or disease damage.
7. Collect broken or woody prunings for mulching for use later in the season.

YOUR MG PROJECTS

1. Plan MG projects for your Community.
2. Contact Community stakeholders to involve interested individuals or groups.
3. Record Volunteer hours on AMGA website:
<http://www.atlanticmastergardeners.com/>
4. Write up your experiences/adventures tips as a Master Gardener and forward them to our Newsletter to share with your fellow MG's. Send anything you would like to include to Sue Stuart at: suestuart@accesswave.ca
5. Search sources of online or on-site courses, workshops or materials beneficial to your volunteer work as an MG.
6. Promote yourself as an Atlantic Master Gardener - let your Community know you are there to help!
Our AMGA Logo will soon be available to members to wear when volunteering . More information will be available on this SOON!

Input from our Members

Emily Miller Reports:

Annapolis Royal Magnolias

The Town of Annapolis will again be holding a **Celebration of Magnolias** in May 2009.

To learn more and put your name on the mailing list for their Newsletter check out the website:

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

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/annapolisroyal/sets/72157611361300612/>

GARDEN TRIVIA

- Peppers can contain up to six times as much vitamin C as oranges! The highest levels are found when the peppers are in their "green" stage. Hot peppers contain less vitamin C than the milder bell peppers.
- Nearly 90% of the world's plants depend on bees and other pollinating insects to reproduce seed and thus perpetuate the species.
- 10 most popular home grown vegetables in the USA and Canada: Tomatoes, Peppers, Cucumbers, Onions, Beans, Lettuce, Carrots, Sweet Corn, Radishes and Cabbage. Tomatoes were grown in a little over 85% of all gardens with Cabbage being grown in only 30%.

- from Heirloom Seeds

Your Newsletter

If you have questions, comments, contributions or suggestions for the Newsletter please contact: Sue Stuart:
suestuart@accesswave.ca

