

The Garden Master News

Newsletter of the Atlantic Master Gardeners Association

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SUMMER 2015



NSAGC District Meeting

May 7, 2016

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NSAGC District Meeting	1
President's Message	2-3
Upcoming AMGA Events	3
Book Review	4-5
Gardening Events	5
Attracting Hummingbirds	6-8
Name That Plant	8
Tithonia rotundifolia	9
2016 Executive	10

Hosted by:

St. Margaret's Bay Garden Club

Location:

St. Luke's United Church, 5374 St. Margaret's Bay Rd., Upper Tantallon

Directions:

15 mins, from Bedford or Bayers Lake.

From Halifax:

Take Highway #103 to Exit 5, or take the old #3 (The St. Margaret's Bay Rd.) from the Armdale Roundabout, past Bayers Lake, through Timberlea and Hubley to Upper Tantallon.

From Bedford (15 mins) or beyond:

Take the Hammond's Plains Rd. (Highway 213), turn right at the end where you can see the Superstore.

Or Take the 102 to the 103.

IMPORTANT! DON'T turn towards Peggy's Cove!

Irving Gas Station on left, at 'The Crossroads' then a Vet Clinic, keep straight past a small business mall, a few houses and then you'll see the church - it has a white fence along the front, and a large parking lot.

SCHEDULE: Starting at 8:45 with Registration, until 3:00pm. Program available at door or check :

FacebookStMargaretsBayGardening club

SPEAKERS:

1) **Nina Newington** (Tangled Gardens) - "Playing with colour"

2) **Jayme Melrose** (Common Roots Urban Farm) - "Growing a healthy, beautiful garden, and lessons learned"

3) **Crystal Godfrey** (Secret Gardens by Crystal) "The Streamlined Garden"

DOOR PRIZES

VENDORS

FREE PLANT- Each person in attendance will receive a free plant from 'Halifax District'. This year the plant is...

Rosy Milkweed - The monarch butterflies will love it!

Pick up your free plant out back as you leave!

RAFFLE - 3 Prizes and 3 Winners!

Tickets \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00 available at the Meeting, Redmond's Home Hardware, Mariposa Natural Foods and RBC in Upper Tantallon and The Finer Diner, Hackett's Cove

COST: NSAGC Members, the cost for the day is **\$13.00**, which includes lunch.

Non-members \$15.00, including lunch.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Notes from the Treehouse

- by Lynn Brooks



I only wish my early spring garden did look something like this. So I ask myself why not?

OK I may not have quite the designing eye to compose such a display, and it will spend far too much time blanketed by snow. But come the fall I think some of those large *Galanthus* and *Eranthis hyemalis*, (winter aconite) are coming into my world. I have the beginnings, a nice collection of *Helleborus* under the shade of large tree, and of course daffodils. Here it is only April and I am already thinking about next year. I am truly obsessed.

As an "old" gardener, and I am speaking of age, not experience, imagining the "what ifs" in my garden is such a good and healthy pastime on so many levels. Often at my age thinking about the future is rather unpleasant. Words like dementia, Alzheimer's, cancer, etc; lurk on the horizon. Gardening, I truly believe, keeps me young...But what about the actual young, how are we Master Gardeners going to get them out into the garden? It is gratifying that many young families are interested in growing veggies.

But they need help! Luckily in Halifax we have Master Gardener Jim Sharpe coming to the rescue. Jim through his long association with the Regional Library service has set up a series of workshops at different libraries all over the city and suburbs. Some of the local MGs came to help, and were thrilled by the public interest. So if you are wondering how to start in your area, talk to your library, they are happy to find time for you, and they will do the promotion. If public speaking makes your knees shake, borrow one of our banners (we have 3); and don't be surprised by how many people will come up and ask questions.

Another thing this "old" gardener will never stop doing is trying to learn. Heather and Carol have put together an exciting agenda for this year's July 7- 8 Conference at the Agricultural Campus in Truro. I can listen to Lloyd Mapplebeck forever. His nursery, Hillendale Perennials, just outside Truro has always been a must visit when I am in Truro. I have been lucky enough to wander around with Lloyd and pick his brain,. He likely has forgotten more than I will ever hope to know.

If you were at last years dinner for Raj's brief talk, it will be exciting to hear more on how science is finally realizing what we gardeners have known forever. Being around growing things is good for you.

I am also thrilled that 3 of our own Aileen Reid, Linda Hachez, and Bonnie Snow are going to be presenting. Lets hope this is a start of many more to come. We

(Continued Page 3)

Notes from the Treehouse

(Continued from page 2)

have so much to share!

Friday, Tracey MacKenzie will focus on rain gardens. Climate change will effect how we garden in the future and dealing with storm run-off is already a major issue in many cities. So this topic is both interesting and timely.

Most importantly this is our time. For two days we get together to talk, share a laugh, and exchange ideas I have my dog sitter already booked, can't wait to see you in Truro.

As always we on your executive are only a mouse click away.....

- Lynn



Upcoming Events

● **Membership Dues and Volunteer Hour** submissions are due on **May 31, 2016**. Check website for forms and details for submission:

http://atlanticmastergardeners.ca/html/members_page.html

● **MG Summer School**

- **July 4-8, 2016**

Dalhousie University Agricultural Campus - Truro, NS

- a week of learning activities for the classroom and outdoors, including Plant propagation, Planting techniques, Pruning, Garden maintenance, Pests and diseases, Troubleshooting plants and gardens, Fertilizing, Liming, Mulching and Composting, Garden tool selection, use and maintenance.

<http://www.dal.ca/faculty/agriculture/extended-learning/programs-courses/master-gardener-training/summer-school-level-i.html>

● **2016 AMGA Conference and AGM**

- **July 7-8, 2016**

Topics include: Edible Landscaping, Rain Gardens, "Members In the Spotlight", Plant Exchange and much more! More details will soon be available on the website!

● Deadline for submission of articles for the **Summer Newsletter** will be **July 22, 2016**.

suestuart@bellaliant.net

● The next AMGA **Executive Meeting** will be held on **June 5, 2016 at 1pm**. If you have a topic you would like to have added to the meeting agenda, contact one of the Executive members on the back page of the Newsletter.

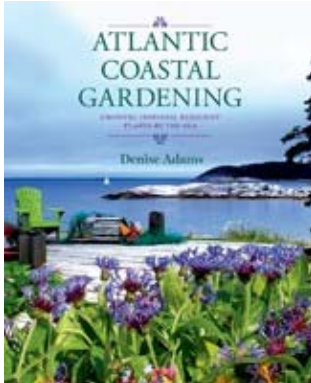
ATLANTIC COASTAL GARDENING

- By Denise Adams

Book Review - by Jim Sharpe

“The coast is a place where we can all grow, plant and play -- a place we can call our own.”

- Denise Adams



This is a beautiful book with many superb photos of gardens and plants growing by the ocean. It has a central message: we learn from the plants and their interaction with the wind, rain and weather what thrives and rewards us by the ocean. Especially useful is the author's list of characteristics to look for in maritime plants: short, stiff needles; toleration of pruning; small, thick leaves; prickly or thorny branches; short stature and creeping habit; succulent leaves and stems; silver leaves; and fuzzy and hairy leaves. From this list she assembles an impressive plant list, with great advice on microclimates, shelters and building the soil to garden by the sea.

The author, an art teacher before becoming a horticulturalist, focuses on using plants to beautify, to inspire and to create community together, both among the plants and the humans enjoying them. The book has a strong sense of design, which is reflected in the author's photographs, which show plants in fog, sun and wind, to their advantage. She includes profiles of eight seaside gardens, all from

St. Margaret's Bay or Mahone Bay, that show what can be done with plants and gardens beside the ocean.

She covers the range of gardening techniques as well, with discussions of seed saving (I love her use of tissue boxes to save seeds), starting seeds, perennials, soil, vegetables and acclimatizing shrubs and trees. Her chapter on seaweed doesn't just focus on using it for the garden or horticulture, but gathering dulse as a sea vegetable, in fact, cultivating sea plants as well as land plants. She shows how lucky we are to live on the margin, where we have access to both land and sea.

She uses driftwood, old boats and discarded lobster traps to create shelter from the wind and to provide a visual focus. She includes inspiring profiles of five coastal gardens, including before and after photos of Walter Ostrom's Indian Harbour masterpiece; Kip and Marina Harris and Shirley Parts from Paddy's Head; Olga; Vern Ferdericks from Middle Pointy Cove; and Roger and Susan Morin, Indian Harbour. Her final chapter on seaside nick-naks includes a wonderful description of Bill Gimby's garden, property and props in Hubbards.

Her focus on design is shown through the chapter on how to let the sea steal the show. Plants should complement, not compete with ocean views. She uses spirals in her design to complement the patterns from the sea. Seaside gardens cannot be regimented and neat; they work best when there is a casual, carefree atmosphere. She ends with a motto that I truly believe, "work less, live more."

ATLANTIC COASTAL GARDENING

(Continued from Page 4)

She mentions that there are very few books, except a few American books on Seaside gardens. It is interesting to me that with the English fascination with both gardens and the seaside, there are so few English show gardens that involve the sea. I think of Derek Jarman's cottage at Dungeness Beach, where he has taken the most hostile environment (shingle beach) in the shade of a towering nuclear plant, and turned it into a floral oasis. Inspired by Denise's book, maybe we can create seaside show gardens in Nova Scotia.



Gardening Events of Interest

- **NSAGC CONVENTION 2016**

- Hosted by Eastern District #2
Pictou County Wellness Centre
June 3rd & 4th 2016

- *"Touched By A Garden"*

With many exciting Topics and Speakers
- See Website for complete schedule

<http://www.nsagc.com/NSAGC%20CONVENTION%202016.pdf>

- **DAYLILY DAZE**

Saturday , July 2nd, 2016

1839 Hammonds Plains Road
First Baptist Church Hall

TIME: **9:00-3:30** Come and bring a friend to the Annual DAY LILLY DAZE

Shop AND Talk to vendors!

Win one of the raffles!

Learn about NSDS(Nova Scotia Daylily Society
Talk Hemorcallis!

ADMISSION: \$5.00— includes free Daylily and light lunch.

WORKSHOPS:

- Daylily Division!
- How to Grow a Daylily Successfully!
- Introduction to Hobby Bee Keeping!
- Bring your Camera and learn how to take wonderful pictures in your garden





Attracting Hummingbirds to Your Garden

- by **Luc Ouellet**

Introduction

Hummingbirds are fascinating birds to watch. Not only are they diminutive and colourful, they are also fast and agile. Their average flight speed approaches 50 km/hour and they can fly forward and backward, up and down, and occasionally even upside down. It is a delight to watch them move gracefully through the air at very high speeds, only to switch over to an almost effortless hovering position during feeding. Even hearing the humming sound from their fast beating wings brings a lot of pleasure to those who enjoy their company. With summer fast approaching, now is the time to prepare your garden to attract these delightful creatures.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird hovering next to a Beebalm flower.

Source: http://nativeplantwildlifegarden.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/164_6417c.jpg



The Ruby-throated Hummingbird

There are over 340 species of hummingbirds in the Americas, but only one of these, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*), is native to the Maritime Provinces. The Ruby-throated Hummingbird breeds and nests in all three Maritime Provinces. However, it doesn't overwinter in the Maritimes, but instead migrates to Mexico and Central America during late summer (late August to early September) to ensure a continuous nectar supply throughout the winter months. It returns in the spring (mid to late May) to breed and enjoy our climate. Any gardener that would like to attract Ruby-throated Hummingbirds to their garden must be aware of this migration pattern.

Feeding Habits of the Hummingbirds

Hummingbirds feed almost constantly during their awake state to satisfy their high energy need¹. They feed primarily on nectar, but also on some insects. It is said that hummingbirds can drink several times their body weight in nectar each day. The result is that a typical hummingbird can visit up to 1,000 flowers in a single day. In search of nectar, hummingbirds are attracted to tubular, bell, or trumpet-shaped flowers. This is a function of their anatomy, as they are equipped with long bills and even longer, extensible tongues.

¹Hummingbirds have the highest metabolic rate of any birds.



Attracting Hummingbirds to Your Garden

(Continued from page 6)

Hummingbirds easily detect the colours in the red spectrum from great distances. They associate these colours in flowers with food availability. Therefore, choose red flowers first, followed by pink, orange, purple, blue and yellow. Choose the brighter shades of the various colours. White should be the last choice. However, once in the garden, they will visit other suitable nectar flowers of any colour. Hummingbirds also have little or no sense of smell, as opposed to insects. Therefore, they tend to frequent plants with little to no fragrance.

Plan for a Succession of Flowers

In order to attract hummingbirds to your garden, and to encourage them to stay throughout their annual visits, it is important to plan for a succession of nectar-producing flowers to ensure a constant supply of nectar from spring to autumn. Table 1 (see attached file) contains a variety of annuals, perennials, deciduous trees, flowering shrubs, broadleaf evergreen shrubs, vines and even groundcovers that will attract hummingbirds with their nectar. These varieties are either native to the Maritimes, or suitable for its climate. The blooming periods and the bloom colours are indicated to help in the selection of the plant material most appropriate for your garden. Both annual and perennial flowering plants should be used, as well as flowering shrubs, trees and vines. When chosen carefully based on their blooming periods, a combination of these flowering plants should provide for a continuous bloom throughout the Ruby-throated Hummingbird's stay in the

Maritimes. It is important to note, however, that so many cultivated varieties produce very little nectar, be careful in your selection.

Other Considerations

Your garden should include trees and shrubs to provide shelter and some perching opportunities for the hummingbirds. The natural nectar sources should be supplemented with nectar solutions from hummingbird feeders, which can be bought from your local garden supply store. The birdfeeders provide a needed food source prior to the first bloom and can supplement throughout the summer when more hummingbirds are looking for a feeding during the migration down south. Finally, hummingbirds need a water source to help keep their feathers in good condition. A shallow pan with water, a sprinkler, or a plant mister will do the trick.

Conclusion

The hummingbird is one of the most delightful visitor that one could invite to his or her garden. They will keep you and your friends entertained for hours on end. Get busy and put a bit of effort into it; you will not regret it! And remember, if the hummingbirds like your garden, they will return year after year.

Reference Material

Newfield, Nancy L. and Barbara Nielsen. (1996). *Hummingbird Gardens: Attracting Nature's Jewels to Your Backyard*. Shelburne, VT: Chapters Publishing Ltd.

Roth, Sally. (2001). *Attracting Butterflies & Hummingbirds to Your Backyard*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale.

(Continued on Page 8)

Attracting Hummingbirds to Your Garden

(Continued from Page 7)

Tilford, Tony. (2008). *The Complete Book of Hummingbirds*. San Diego, CA: Thunder Bay Press.

Additional Recommended Resources

Canadian Wildlife Federation <http://cwf-fcf.org/en/discover-wildlife/flora-fauna/fauna/birds/hummingbirds.html>

Hummingbirds.net is a website about attracting, watching, feeding, and studying the hummingbirds that breed in North America. <http://www.hummingbirds.net>

The Hummingbird Society was founded by 1996 with the goals of teaching about hummingbirds and working to prevent their extinction.

<http://www.hummingbirdsociety.org>

Term Assignment

Submitted by: Luc Ouellet

Dalhousie University –

Master Gardner Training Program

Course: Plant Identification and Use

Date: March 29, 2016

NAME THAT PLANT

Carol Loncarevic 's Mystery Tree



Carol's tree was correctly identified by Jim Sharpe: **Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*)**

The Dawn Redwood tree has red brown bark that is deeply fissured. It has needle-like deciduous leaves, that are flattened and bright green. The tree has a single trunk and is exceedingly tall. the only living species in its genus, originating from China.

Here is Jim's Mystery Plant:



Send your guess to: suestuart@bellaliant.net

Tithonia rotundifolia

- By **Johanne Robertson**

Tithonia rotundifolia has become one of my favorite annuals to start from seeds. It is a plant of the *Asteraceae* family and is native to Mexico, Central America and the West Indies. It is commonly called **Mexican Sunflower** and I have been growing it for the last 3 years; they do very well along my vegetable garden. Robust, branching annual with long triangular-ovate entire or sometimes 3-lobed toothed leaves. They produce a large long-stem with mostly solitary flowerheads which bloom from summer to autumn in a stunning bright orange or orange-red similar to those of single-flowered dahlias.

The **Goldfinger** variety is compact, with vivid rich orange flowerhead. **Sundance** has bright orange blooms and **Torch** produces vivid red or orange-red flowers.

Seeds should be started inside 6 to 8 weeks before planting outside after danger of frost. Seeds are easy to germinate and seedlings grows quickly. This plant would be a good one to grow with kids and deer won't eat them. My garden is situated on top of a hill overlooking the St Nicholas River and it is always windy but this plant does not seems to mind the wind. They should be planted 3 to 4 feet apart and can grow 4 to 6 feet tall, they prefer full sun and are very low maintenance. They make a beautiful edge and attract hummingbirds, butterflies and bees. I always plant lots of annuals in my vegetable garden as they attract pollinators and produce a rainbow of colors.

Reference: The American Horticultural Society - A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants



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