MAY
2023

GEORGETOWN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

President's Message

Hello May,

It seems we need to create gardens that can withstand almost anything. We have had warm temperatures, high winds, rain, sleet (and even a few snowflakes) and that has just been in the past three weeks! Not to mention the rabbits and deer found grazing my yard...ah!

Spring in Ontario!

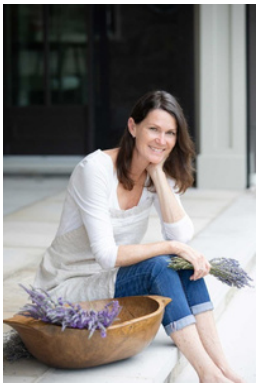
When I find something that works for me, I tend to stay with the plan.This year I am not planning anything too major in my garden. I will be looking for a few plants to fill in a few spaces, but not take over. The speaker last month, Claudette Sims, shared an understanding of the importance of removing plants that negatively impact our environment. I will choose carefully with the knowledge, the lists and the options she most generously shared with us.

A great sign of the May season is the return of our ever-popular Annual Plant Sale on May 12th at the Gellert and the May Flower Show at our meeting on May 17th. One slight change for the Flower Show is that entries will be accepted from 7-7:30 PM. The time change is due to scheduling by the church. I will have a few entry tags available at the plant sale if you would like to make them up ahead of time. Hope you will join us.

Let's keep in touch.

-Carol Mathison

Meeting- May 17, 7:30 PM
Norval United Church - 14015 Danby Rd.



Lee Anne Downey
"Lavender"

As a Master Gardener and the President of the Ontario Lavender Association from 2019-2022, Lee Anne gleaned an incredible amount of information from industry experts. Owner of Stonewall Farm, she will talk about what cultivars will grow in our zone, how to plant, prune and harvest your lavender.

Invasive Plants That Might Show Up On The Show Table or in Design (or your garden)

Garlic Mustard (Alliaria petiolata) Invasive and Aggressive!

Garlic mustard is an edible herb native to Europe. Since its introduction, garlic mustard has spread throughout Ontario, parts of Quebec, and established populations in western and Atlantic Canada. Garlic mustard is one of Ontario's most aggressive forest invaders, and threatens biodiversity. It can invade relatively undisturbed forests. Once established it can displace native wildflowers like trilliums (Trillium sp.) and trout lily (Erythronium americanum).

Garlic mustard grows in a wide range of habitats and spreads quickly along roadsides, trails, and fence lines. Seeds fall close to the parent plants and are rarely dispersed by wind or water. The main pathway for seed spread over long distances is through humans and pets. Within 5-7 years, garlic mustard can enter, establish itself, and become the dominant plant in the forest understory. This is achieved by the roots of the Garlic Mustard plant dispersing toxins in the soil that kill the fungi other plants depend on to survive. Garlic mustard gets its name from the garlic scent the leaves produce when crushed.

Control

Pull plants before or while they are in flower, but before seeds set. This will limit dispersal. Pulled plants which have flowered may still be able to produce seeds, so pulled garlic mustard should be "solarized" to ensure the plant is no longer viable. Solarize viable plant material by placing it in sealed black plastic bags (e.g. black garbage bags) and leaving them in direct sunlight for 1-3 weeks. Very small plants can be sprayed with a dilute herbicide and leaves the soil undisturbed.

First year garlic mustard appears as a small round-shaped emerald green leaf with a deep dip at the base. In its second year it grows up to 3 ' tall, the leaves become serrated, lose the dip and small 5-pettaled white flowers appear. It than produces seed pods filled with thousands of seeds. At all stages it has a distinctive odor of garlic that intensifies as it the plants ages.

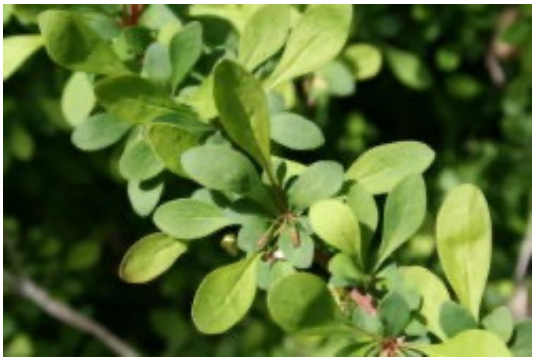
Japanese Knotweed -Fallopia japonica

Japanese knotweed is notoriously invasive, Roots go 10 feet down, thru concrete, So let's eat it, but Never the root, only young stem and new leaves. As it spreads throughout Ontario it will become more familiar as a market vegetable. It's mid-spring shoots resemble asparagus, but taste and behave like an earthier version of rhubarb crossed with fresh sorrel. Use it raw or cooked, especially in savory dishes that need a sour boost.

J**apanese Barberry-Berberis thunbergia**

Japanese barberry is densely thorned with prolific seed production well into the fall. Birds spread the seed far and wide and branch fragments can readily root to form new shrubs, resulting in this invasive often forming dense thickets. It is also capable of becoming established in a variety of habitats, including areas with partial sunlight and deep shade. Due to the bright berries and leaves that Japanese Barberry produces, it has been widely planted across North America as an ornamental plant. Makes a nice filler or line material for designs.

- Forms dense thickets that reduce wildlife habitat, affect native plants and restrict recreational activities along trails.
- The dense growth of Japanese barberry plants shade out native species in the forest understory.
- Japanese barberry is capable of invading undisturbed forests and hybridizing with the common barberry (Berberis vulgaris, another invasive species).
- Can impact agriculture, barberry species are the alternate hosts of black stem rust, a disease capable of causing major damage/loss to grain crops.



English Ivy Hedera helix L., Ginseng gamily (Araliaceae)

Background

European colonists introduced English ivy as early as 1727. It is widely planted for its evergreen foliage and dependability as a year-round “carefree” groundcover. Although recognized as a serious threat to natural ecosystems, parks, and landscapes, it continues to be sold and marketed as an ornamental plant in Canada. Vast resources, time and labor are expended attempting to manage infestations on public and private lands.

Distribution Ecological Threat

English ivy is found throughout eastern Canada. It flourishes under shady to full sun conditions, in soils that are moderately fertile and moist but it is intolerant of drought and salinity. English ivy is an aggressive invader that threatens all vegetation levels of forested and open areas, growing along the ground as well as into the forest canopy. Vines climbing up tree trunks spread out and envelop branches and twigs, blocking sunlight from reaching the host tree’s foliage, thereby impeding photosynthesis. An infested tree will exhibit decline for several to many years before it dies. The added weight of vines also makes trees susceptible to blowing over during storms. English ivy has been confirmed as a reservoir for bacterial leaf scorch (Xylella fastidiosa), a harmful plant pathogen that affects a wide variety of native and ornamental trees such as elms, oaks and maples.

Description and Biology

• Plant: evergreen perennial climbing vine that attaches to bark of trees, brickwork and other surfaces by root-like structures that exude a glue-like substance to aid in adherence.
• Leaves: alternate, dark green, waxy, somewhat leathery; extremely variable leaf forms, from unlobed to 3-5 lobed; typically green with whitish veins.
• Flowers, fruits and seeds: flowering occurs in late summer to early fall, typically under full sun conditions; flowers are small, greenish-yellow and occur in globular starburst type inflorescences at tips of flowering stems; fruits are black with a fleshy outer layer and stone-like seeds.
• Spreads: vegetatively by vigorous growth at tip of stems; and by seed which is consumed by birds and dispersed to new areas; fruits contain glycosides that may be mildly toxic and cause some birds to regurgitate them; new plants grow easily from cuttings or stem fragments that make contact with the soil.
• Look-alikes: Irish ivy (Hedera hibernica), Persian ivy (Hedera colchica), Boston ivy (Parthenocissus japonicus) and Virginia creeper (Parthenocissus quinquefolia). Poison ivy (Toxicodendron radicans) may sometimes be confused with English ivy because of its hairy stems but because it is deciduous, it will lack leaves in the winter. In summer, poison ivy can be distinguished easily by its compound leaves of three leaflets and its clusters of creamy white fruits.

NOTE: The leaves and berries of English ivy contain the glycoside hederin which may cause toxicosis if ingested. Symptoms include gastrointestinal upset, diarrhea, hyperactivity, breathing difficulty, coma, fever, polydipsia, dilated pupils, muscular weakness, and lack of coordination. This feature also helps ensure effective seed dispersal by birds.

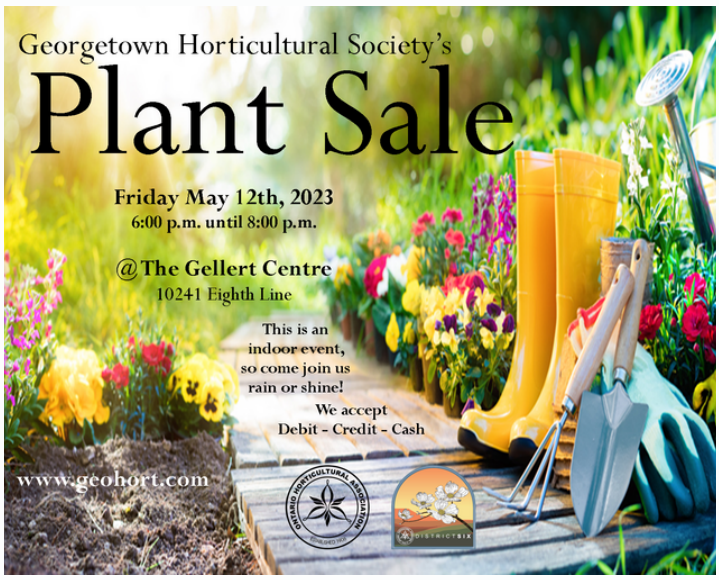
HORT HAPPENINGS

Bring A Guest Month

Bring a guest to the May meeting for free. They can enjoy the guest speaker, view the flower show, meet some fellow gardeners and find out what the GHS is all about.

Share The Wealth

Each meeting there is a Share The Wealth draw. Tickets are 3 for $2. Make sure you bring lots of cash. You may be sharing some of the wealth! Last month, the share of the wealth was $45!



May Flower Show

Next meeting on May 17th. Details on general guidelines, regulations and entry descriptions are found in the GHS yearbook.

Refreshments

At each meeting, refreshments are served afterwards.There is a sign-up sheet on the table asking for volunteers to bring goodies to future meetings. Please consider signing up for a meeting.

Volunteers are needed for the following gardens that the GHS maintains:
Cemetery Garden- contact Sandra Williamson
Civic Garden- contact Lorraine Wilson
Hospital Garden- contact Pat Kennedy
Mary Street Garden- contact Karri Robichaud

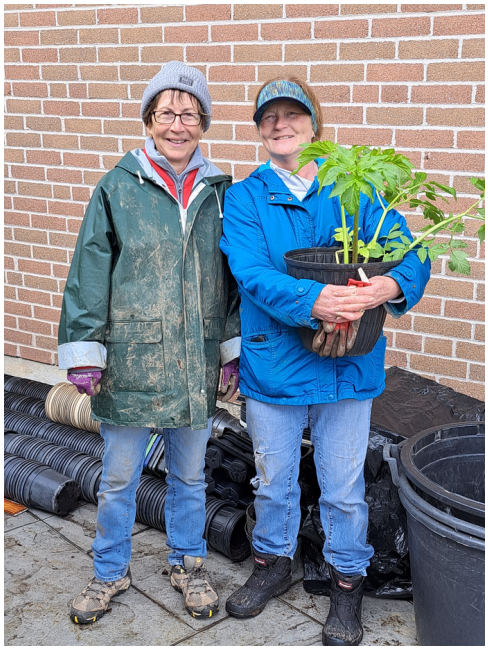
Garden maintenance begins in June.

PLANT SALE 2023

THANK YOU!!!

We are incredibly grateful to each and every volunteer who committed to help at this year's plant sale. We appreciate your dedication and the blood, sweat and mud you endured this year to make our plant sale a success.

With gratitude,
Mary Megelink & Cheryl Strachan



Elza Estavan and Karri Robichaud at the end of a wet, muddy and cold dig for the plant show.