

September 2020

The Strathcona Gardener

Growing with the Community

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President's Message

Hello, Fellow Gardeners! What an unpredictable year it has been! This growing season has been a strong reminder of how flexible we gardeners have to be in our expectations. Six weeks ago, my "Charlie Brown" tomato plants were barely surviving, and now the tomatoes are growing profusely and even ripening. Six weeks ago, my cucumber plants were struggling terribly through the wet and the cold, and now they are growing so strongly that I am giving cucumbers away right and left because I cannot keep up with them. And...there are countless blossoms to be seen so **here is hoping** for many, many frost-free nights. However, I had a major problem with my peas. I planted two 20 foot rows this year at Old Man Creek Community Garden, one on the south side of my plot and one at the north side. The peas on the north side had lovely growth and production; however, the south row was simply sad. They barely grew a foot and a half in height, produced a few peas, and then the leaves turned yellow. A moist yellow; not a dry yellow. Same type of peas from the same package. What gives? However, my poppies are terrific! The flowers did not last long, just a day or two, but they were in reds, purples, and pinks! Visually, stunning! And now the pods are drying. I have to share a few of the many photos I took of them.



Now for one of the many enjoyable aspects of membership in our garden club ... the SCGC board members are organizing a fall perennial plant sale at Smeltzer House on Saturday, September 12, 2020. (Brenda has already sent out emails to all our members to announce the sale.) The sale will begin at 1:00 p.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. and will also be open to the general public. The sale will be an opportunity to find new plants for your gardens and to find repeats of what you may already have. The prices are unbelievably low, so the opportunity is great. However, the plant

sale will not be a success without our members' donations, especially of perennials they are dividing. Our fundraising coordinator, Susan, has already potted 20 and is excited to bring them to the sale. SCGC member Marj is also getting plants ready. If you can donate plants, please drop them off between 11:00 a.m. and noon on that Saturday morning at Smeltzer House. We are planning to set up on the grassy area immediately to the left of the parking area so we will have lots of room. In keeping with AHS guidelines, the safety of our members is a very important priority so we will be asking all participants to wear masks, even though the sale is outdoors. We will also be asking you to either wear disposable gloves or sanitize your hands or both and maintain the AHS distancing measures. We will have a dedicated entrance and a dedicated exit, and we will have signs to indicate the flow for buyers. If you miss something and want to go back, just exit and start again! We thank you for helping us out this way. Also, if you are planning on buying plants, please consider bringing lots of change in the form of Loonies and Toonies to avoid having to receive change. This is Susan's request since she will be handling the money for the sales. We hope for a wonderful day so that many of you will attend.

Since the council chambers are still not available to us, we have decided to have another ZOOM meeting on Thursday, September 10, 2020, at our regular meeting time of 7:00 p.m. Because ZOOM allows us a certain type of flexibility, we have opted to go far away to connect with our September guest speaker. In fact, all the way to Ottawa-Carleton. Our speaker is Julianne Labreche. Julianne is a Master Gardener, a freelance writer, a presenter, and an overall gardening enthusiast. She volunteers as a Master Gardener in the Ottawa-Carleton area. Her topic of presentation is "Going Grassless". This will be Julianne's first time on ZOOM, but she will be in the very capable hands of SCGC member Marianne who will be hosting once again. If you attended our June ZOOM meeting, you know that the meeting went very smoothly, thanks to Marianne's skills. Those of you who already have the ZOOM app and are comfortable using it will find connecting with Marianne very easy. However, if you have not used Zoom please download the ZOOM app from the app store online lots of days before the event. If you wish some assistance, we can send you a link with a brief tutorial. Please let me know. If there is any interest, Marianne has agreed to host a trial run on Thursday, September 3, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. Marianne tells me that 50 of you attended our ZOOM meeting in June. She has the capacity for 100 so we would love to have more of you attend. I know that I will look forward to comfortably sitting in my living room with a glass of my favorite red stuff and enjoying Julianne's wonderful presentation.

We will be holding our Annual General Meeting on October 8, 2020. We are required to by our Constitution. However, I am not certain at this time where it will be held, whether through ZOOM as a virtual meeting or at a meeting place in the County building. The following positions will be up for election in October: treasurer, membership coordinator, phoning coordinator, fundraising coordinator, and newsletter editor. In addition, while Andrew, our vice-president, generously agreed to coordinate the snacks last year, the snack coordinator position is actually vacant. Please consider contributing to the garden club by sitting on the SCGC Board. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you to all for continuing to support our garden club. Remember, your 2020 membership will be extended to 2021. Our membership coordinator, Pat, will be finding a way to get those 2021 membership cards to you early in the fall.

Take care to all.

Donna

Next Meeting

September 10 **Via Zoom (instructions in separate attachment)**

7-9 pm **Speaker: Julianne Labreche**

Topic: "Going Grassless – How to Ditch the Lawnmower"

"My husband and I turned the front yard into a pollinator garden. North America has a love affair with turf grass. I make the argument that going grass less is easier and a lot more fun."

Julianne Labreche has been a master gardener for over a decade. She currently coordinates the Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton (MGOC). Her training to become a master gardener was through Dalhousie University. Since then, she has also completed certification to be a Master Naturalist through Lakehead University. Since retiring three years ago, she focuses her interest on pollinator and wildlife gardening. She worked for a decade as a journalist and currently freelances for the Lee Valley Gardening online newsletter, as well as a publication called Fifty Five Plus. Julianne edits the MGOC newsletter, Trowel Talk, distributed to gardeners throughout the Ottawa-Carleton and Lanark County regions of Eastern Ontario. At home, her wildlife and pollinator-friendly garden is certified with the Canadian Wildlife Federation and Monarch Watch. She has prairie roots, growing up in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Upcoming Meetings

2020 Regular Meetings

October 8 Annual General Meeting
Myrna Pearman, Biologist and Site Manager, Ellis Bird Farm
"Ellis Bird Farm – Garden and Research"

2020 Special Events

Sep 12 Perennial Plant Sale; see details following
Nov 26 Christmas Potluck Social
5 – 9 pm Log Cabin

Election 2020 – At the October 8 Meeting

While our election is not as big a deal as some others, it is still vitally important to the ongoing success of the Strathcona County Garden Club. We have diverse positions to be filled, duties to commence in January 2021 for a 2-year term:

Treasurer Membership Coordinator Phoning Coordinator
Fundraising Coordinator Newsletter Editor Snack Coordinator

Please consider bringing your skills, ideas and enthusiasm to our Board of Directors.

Perennial Plant Sale

The Strathcona County Garden Club is going to hold a **Perennial Plant Sale** on **Saturday September 12** in the yard at **Smeltzer House**. It's a chance to get some excellent plants grown locally at can't be beat prices! Plus it's our only fundraiser this year - another good reason to donate and attend. In addition to perennial plants, you can donate indoor and outdoor gardening materials, such as terrariums, pots, etc.

Fall is a great time to transplant perennials. This explanation comes from Growing a Greener World blog:

The cool air and warm soil temperatures are the perfect combination for establishment. The cooler air is kind to plants and especially to ones that have just lost a major portion of their roots from being dug up. In addition, soil temperatures are still warm, creating an excellent environment for the production of new root growth. Rather than continuing to transfer energy into new foliage and above ground growth, plants are now transferring energy into their roots and storing nutrients and resources for the cool months ahead

Donors please label, label, label! Include the name, light preference, color, height/width, watering. Any information is better than none.

Everyone please bring small change (loonies, toonies) in preference to large bills to simplify our checkout process. Also bring your own boxes/bags if possible.

Times:

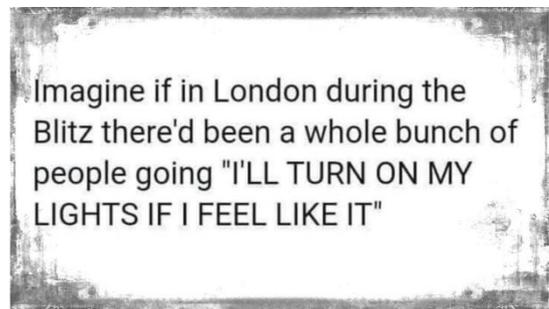
Drop off - 11 - 12 pm

Set up - 12 - 1 pm

Sale - 1 - 3 pm.

AHS guidelines will be followed:

outdoor event, physical distancing, separate entrance & exit, hand sanitizing or gloves, masks or face shields. We have a huge grassed area to work within so the plants will be separated with lots of space between. The number of buyers at one time in the sale area will be monitored and may be limited for safety and distancing purposes.



We'd love for you to attend the sale and find the perfect plants. The Board is taking strong measures to ensure the safety of members, volunteer staff and the buying public.



How to Grow Garlic from Bulbils

This article was originally published in Seeds of Diversity ebulletin August 2016.

We offer bulbils from 48 varieties of garlic to help gardeners and garlic collectors preserve the amazing (and delicious) diversity of our favourite bulb.

*Bob Wildfong, Executive Director
Seeds of Diversity Canada*

The usual method for growing garlic is to break each bulb (the part that grows under the ground) into cloves, and to replant the cloves separately in autumn. Each clove grows into a whole new bulb, which is harvested in mid-summer. Normally, growers remove the scapes (the flower stems) in early summer, to allow bulbs to grow larger. That makes sense, and it really makes a difference. If you leave the scape intact, the plant divides its energy between scape and bulb growth, so the bulb ends up smaller.



However, if you let the scape grow and mature, at about the same time that you harvest the underground bulb you can also harvest tiny teardrop-shaped "bulbils" from the top of the scape. Each bulbil is like a tiny garlic clove, and it will grow if you plant it. After one season, most bulbils grow into a small round bulb that isn't divided into cloves, sort of like a crocus or tulip bulb. These "rounds" can be peeled and eaten, but if they're planted for a second year they usually grow into a regular garlic bulb, with the usual cloves.

Bulbil-grown garlic is genetically identical to its parent plant, because bulbils aren't true seeds. Just like the cloves in the underground bulb, they're divisions of the parent plant so the garlic that you harvest two years later is cloned from the original. That means you can grow different varieties right next to each other with no crossing, because there's no pollen involved in this propagation.

Why grow bulbils?

Two years might seem like a long time, but the main advantage of bulbil-grown garlic is that properly harvested scapes don't carry soil-borne plant diseases that infect the underground bulbs. Growing garlic from bulbils can reduce the transmission of diseases and pests that can be carried on cloves, or on soil. Once the initial two-year wait is over, as long as you continue to plant in soil that hasn't been exposed to garlic diseases or pests, you can just plant the cloves every year as usual, harvesting great garlic every year.

Many growers have found that bulbil-grown garlic is larger and more vigorous than conventional clove-grown garlic. The reason could be that it suffers less from disease pathogens that inhibit the plants' growth. The same effect is well known with potatoes, another clonally propagated crop. When potatoes are grown year after year in soil that contains disease organisms, the diseases build up in the potatoes themselves, and the yield declines. But if certified disease-free potatoes are planted, they grow large and beautiful. The same thing undoubtedly happens with garlic, but there's no such thing as certified disease free planting stock for garlic. Bulbils might be a way to create your own!

Another reason to grow from bulbils is that some garlic varieties produce many more of them than cloves. For some typical varieties, an average scape can produce over 50 bulbils, whereas an average bulb has only 4 to 6 cloves. Even though it takes two full seasons to go from bulbil to mature garlic, you can multiply some varieties much faster with bulbils.

How to plant bulbils

Plant bulbils in the fall and harvest in mid-summer, just like cloves. Remember though that bulbils are very small, so their green sprouts will also be very small, like individual blades of grass. It's very easy to lose them in weeds, so we suggest planting them in containers for the first year. Deep containers are best to allow good root growth, and since you uproot the "rounds" after the first season, bulbils can be grouped in a container together.

Plant at least 10 bulbils of each variety in a plastic pot at least 6 inches deep (10-12 inches is better). They should be planted just one inch deep, and 1-2 inches apart from each other in the container. A plastic pot 6 inches in diameter should give plenty of room for 10 bulbils evenly spaced.

Sink the container into a hole in the ground outdoors, so the rim of the pot is just above ground level, and mulch with straw or leaves. This will prevent the bulbils from freezing and thawing excessively. In spring, remove the mulch to allow the tiny sprouts to grow. Make sure they're consistently watered and prevent weeds from growing in the containers. At about the same time that regular clove-planted garlic is ready to harvest, you can dig up your bulbils, which should have grown into "rounds" of about 1/2 inch to an inch in size. Plant these in good disease-free garlic beds in the fall, just like cloves, and they should grow into full divided bulbs by the second summer harvest.



"I told him as an expert in the field I strongly recommend wearing it, but he just kept bringing up his 'rights.'"

Membership Perk\$

Present your 2020 Strathcona County Garden Club Membership Card at the following establishments for possible discounts on your purchases. Contact information and more details may be found on the Club website. **Please note this information has not been updated vis-à-vis the Covid 19 issue.**

Apache Seeds Arch Greenhouses Kuhlmann's Greenhouse Garden Market Cannor Nurseries

Aspen Ridge Greenhouse Cal's Grower Direct Cal's Whitemud Garden Centre Arrowhead Nurseries

Salisbury Greenhouse All Seasons Garden Centre BMR Greenhouses & Water Gardens

Millcreek Nursery Ltd Jils Landscape Supply Ellerslie Gift & Garden Sunstar Nurseries Ltd.

Estate Gardens Greenhouse South Cooking Lake Greenhouses

Strathcona County Garden Club Contacts

Board Members	Name	Contact
President	Donna Reimche	
Vice President	Andrew Davison	
Past President		
Treasurer	Bud Milsom	
Secretary	JC Lindberg	
Special Events Coordinator	Brenda Brooke	
Membership Coordinator	Pat Komarniski	
Advertising Coordinator	Cindy Garneau	
Phoning Coordinator	Dorothy Gilbey	
Fundraising Coordinator	Susan Robblee	
Snack Coordinator	Andrew Davison	
Newsletter Editor	Marlene Exner	
Support Volunteers	Name	Contact
Membership Assistant	Pat Barker	
Facebook Administrator	Marlene Parish	
Phone Volunteers	Pat Barker	
	Dian Davies	
	Pegi Gunn-Graham	
	Marj Kennedy	
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