

Welcome to

Garden Club Gossip & Glee

Your online version of the

MILLBROOK & AREA GARDEN CLUB

**Some Local Garden News:**

Kathy Morton sent thanks for posting the Manvers Historical Society Seedy Saturday notice in the newsletter and says that “they sold hundreds of dollars of local seeds”!

Kathy also said  that it  was “*wonderful to watch young kids coming in with their list from the website They knew exactly what they wanted. Nice to see young people, including young families, interested in gardening.”*

And **Peterborough Master Gardeners** - some who have been and/or are also current members of the Millbrook and Area Garden Club are involved in a terrific project!

With the support of the of Peterborough and the Kawartha Association of Realtors (PKAR), the Peterborough and Area Master Gardeners are partnering with the Peterborough Public Library to revitalize library gardens. This project is in celebration of Year of the Garden 2022, an initiative of Communities in Bloom and the Canadian Garden Council to acknowledge all the benefits that gardens and gardening provide.

"The Peterborough and Area Master Gardeners were very pleased to receive $2000 in sponsorship funding from PKAR for the Year of the Garden project,” says Cheryl Harrison, co-coordinator of Peterborough and Area Master Gardeners. “This funding will go a long way toward the rejuvenation of selected gardens at the Peterborough Public Library. We, in partnership with Library staff and volunteers, plan to use native plants to make the gardens a welcoming place for pollinators as well as an educational opportunity for children and adults.”

[Town Ward: Realtors fund gardening project at Peterborough Public Library | ThePeterboroughExaminer.com](https://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/opinion/contributors/2022/04/02/town-ward-realtors-fund-gardening-project-at-peterborough-public-library.html)

**More local garden news:**

The Truth and Reconciliation Community Bobcaygeon is working on preserving the environmental integrity of 4.8 acres in the middle of town as a *mishkodeh* (a sacred meadow) to be used as a learning space for land-based Indigenous knowledge.  For more information check out: [**https://mishkodeh.org/**](https://mishkodeh.org/)

**Learn About Collecting Seeds and Seed-Starting Native Plants**

The North American Native Plant Society (NANPS) is offering a webinar/workshop on **Collecting and Cultivating Native Plant Seeds on**Wednesday April 13th, at 7:00 PM  where local Omemee grower and super plantsman **Paul Heydon** will share some best practices for collecting seeds, seed storage, and providing optimum conditions for successfully germinating native plant seeds into healthy plants. **One not need be a member of NANPS to participate**.  Click on the link below to register.

[**https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/the-diy-seed-series-collecting-and-cultivating-native-plant-seeds-tickets-265239126367**](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/the-diy-seed-series-collecting-and-cultivating-native-plant-seeds-tickets-265239126367)

**Spring Native Plant Sale**

**And if one is interested in purchasing native plants or together with friends, family and/or neighbours, Paul Laporte of the Ephemeral Ark who will be guest speaker in September is offering many native plants for sale this spring. A large pdf file of the plants is available. If one is interested in receiving the plant list, contact Paul Laporte directly at:**[**pjl@paullaporte.ca**](mailto:pjl@paullaporte.ca)**… Phone: 416-937-1198. Paul has noted that orders should be in by the end of this month to avoid disappointment of being told desired plants are sold out.**

***Place all orders through Paul Laporte.***

A couple of examples of Paul Laporte’s offerings….





Every year gardeners and nursery growers look forward to what plants perennials, annuals and vegetables might be this year’s AAS Winners chosen by  **All-America Selections** (AAS) an American organization which tests new varieties of seed for use in [gardening](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gardening), and promotes plants  judged to perform best.  The plants are then tested at more than 40 independent sites located in 24 US states and 5 Canadian provinces. The testing program first started in 1932  involves top horticulture professionals. <https://all-americaselections.org/product-category/year/2022/>

This is some sage gardening advice from the current judges.

**Spend the time.** Learn by doing. Make mistakes. Take chances. ~*Teresa Bunn*

**Grow what you enjoy**. That may seem simplistic but I have many conversations with home gardeners about their frustrations and failures and not so much about their success. Gardening should be rewarding. I understand that many love the challenge of growing difficult crops, just don’t let it overwhelm you when they fail. ~*Dennis Ferlito*

**I would encourage gardeners to be curious and try new things.** There are so many creative ways to grow and to build a garden that is perfect for you, no matter the size or kind. Don’t be afraid to experiment with new methods, crops, or varieties, because you may discover a new favorite! ~*Kristen Noble*

**Research and read!** If you live in Georgia, don’t try to create an English Garden, lol. Learn your zone and climate and what things do well in your area; otherwise you set yourself up for failure and can get discouraged. ~Jenny Kuhn

**Start Small**. Anyone can easily become overwhelmed by the amount of work and dedication needed for home gardening. ~Cody Whynot

Choose easy to grow, hardy plants, start small, get your hands dirty, and watch them throughout the season. The best fertilizer is a gardener’s shadow. ~Jesse Dahl

You don’t need to try as hard as you think. If you start with good soil preparation and a little bit of fertilizer, you will be successful. You don’t need to helicopter parent your peppers. You don’t need to give them the same level of attention as a puppy or a baby. You just need to put them in a situation where they can thrive, and they will pretty much do all the work themselves. Sure, you may want to stake or cage some of the more unruly indeterminate beasties out there, but even if you don’t, they will still produce for you. ~Samuel J. Schmitz

**Don’t be afraid.** The most experienced gardeners strike out too, but they keep trying. Gardening is as much about the experience as the end result. ~*Owen Vanstone*

<https://laidbackgardener.blog/2022/03/07/great-garden-advice-from-experts/>

The Perennial Snowy Spring Surprise - Snowdrops



Photo by author

**Now the glad earth her frozen zone unbinds,**

**And o’er her bosom breathe the western winds;**

**Already the Snowdrop dares appear**

**The first pale blossom of th’ unripen’d year;**

**As Flora’s breath, by some transforming power,**

**Had chang’d an icicle into a flower,**

**Its name and hue the scentless plant retains,**

**And winter lingers in its icy veins.**

**Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1743-1825)**

For weary gardeners,  it can be such a delight to spot snowdrops, **Galanthus nivalis**in the garden**-**one the very first plants to bloom in spring.

Galanthus translates to the Greek word for “milk,” while nivalis means “snow-like.” In the language of flowers, snowdrops are regarded as symbols of consolation and hope, purity and cleansing.

This little flowering plant was originally believed to be a wildflower native to Britain since it seems to pop up everywhere in the natural landscape. However,  it has been discovered the snowdrop is actually native to  parts of Europe like the mountainsides of Italy  and the Middle East. It is thought the plant may have been brought to Britain when Romans invaded the land in the 1st century!

Snowdrops are perennial spring-flowering bulbs with slightly fragrant blooms.  If planted along walkways not only can the beautiful white blooms be enjoyed, one might even enjoy a waft of fragrance. Since snowdrops are flowering at a time in many areas when not much else is available, they provide early emerging bees and other pollinators a fresh supply of pollen and nectar.

Snowdrop develops two to three narrow, dark green leaves from each bulb, leaves with reinforced tips that help the leaves push up through leaf litter and even snow! Then a dainty nodding pure white flower with a bright green spot at the apex of each petal is produced.  The plants produce teeny white seeds that produce substances which attract ants. The ants collect and transfer seed via underground tunnels…. so that is why new plants might spring up in unexpected places.

Most types of snowdrops propagate via division of the underground bulb and, if happy, can create large colonies.  Snowdrops prefer well-drained, fertile soil and habitats that provide full or partial sunlight.  Because of their small size and time of bloom plus because they enter dormancy in the late spring and disappear, they are good candidates for planting in lawns and under deciduous trees and shrubs . They are also good candidates for planting under deciduous trees and shrubs.

The plants do die back in late spring and the leaves should be left to completely die back since they provide the nutrition required  by the bulbs.   So if planted in the lawn, don’t mow  them down before they die back. Since they completely disappear as the growing season continues on, it is wise to mark their location in garden beds so the bulbs are not dug up by mistake.

The small bulbs, which are planted in the fall, can be ordered from online companies, but are also sometimes available at hardware stores, grocery stores or Canadian Tire. Or sometimes gardening neighbours who have found snowdrops are way too happy in their gardens, will also be happy to share.

Snowdrops became so popular  that in the 19th century there was a collecting craze similar to tulipmania where greats sums were paid for rare specimens. Even today there are those calling themselves “galantophiles” who look to collect rare examples of this small genus of  20 species in the Amaryllidaceae family.   In 2011, *a single* Galanthus plicatus “E. Bowles’ bulb named after the British  horticulturalist and plantsman E.A. Bowles **sold at an auction for $584.00 CDN.!**  And in 2015,  **a plant collector paid $2275.00 CDN** for one sole Galanthus bulb on EBay!

**Note:** Snowdrops are poisonous to eat, leading to dizziness, nausea, diarrhoea and in extreme cases if eaten in large quantities -  death.  Why would anyone eat a whole bunch of these bulbs? Apparently at times, they have been mistaken for spring onions.

Toxicity results from two key alkaloids found in snowdrops -  lycorine and galanthamine. One of the toxic alkaloids, galanthamine is being used as a possible  treatment of Alzheimer's disease under the brand name *Reminyl.* According to the latest scientific studies, galanthamine improves working of certain receptors in the brain!

**The Royal College of Physicians has noted:**

**“Not only are the white flowers of the snowdrop a sight to behold, its bulb contains the alkaloid galantamine – approved for use in the management of Alzheimer’s disease in over 70 countries worldwide, including the UK.”**One can read more in this link:

[White here, white now: the medicinal power of the dainty snowdrop | RCP London](https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/news/white-here-white-now-medicinal-power-dainty-snowdrop)