



Friends of the Central Experimental Farm

Fall 2015 Newsletter

Volume 27 No. 4

Maples in the Arboretum

By Robert Glendinning



Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*)

At this time of year the maples are the stars of the Arboretum, and the autumn colour of our native Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) stands out with its yellow, orange to red tones. There are just over 30 species of maples in our living collection both native and imported. The cultivars of those species number over 80. This is probably one of the largest collections of maples in Canada.

There are some imposing specimens of the Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*) in the Arboretum and campus, predominantly the 'Wieri' cultivar a beautiful cut-leaf variety. Other than the Sugar Maple, native maple trees are well represented.

Native maple trees

The Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) can be found in our collection sporting some beautiful fall hues. You can also find the Freeman Maple (*Acer xfreemanii*), which is a cross between the Silver and Red maples, and seems to perform well in urban spaces. You may remember that the Freeman is being tried on Ash Lane (see the Winter 2015 newsletter).

Another native in the Arboretum is the Black Maple (*Acer nigrum*). This maple is closely related to the Sugar Maple and its unique feature is that its leaves droop, making it look as if it needs to be watered. You can find some mid-sized specimens between Buildings 72 and 74.

The Manitoba Maple (*Acer negundo*) is a survivor that grows from cracks in cement in the urban landscape. It is often referred to as a weed tree, but it is worth taking a look at the cultivar 'Kelly's Gold' near the Arboretum entrance as its lovely spring/early summer gold colour redeems the species.

The above are all examples of large trees, but these next two are on the smaller side. The two specimens of Striped Maple (*Acer pennsylvanicum*) in the maple collection do not do the small understory tree justice. It seems to be resistant to cultivation, which is a shame as its lovely striped bark would be welcome in a shade garden. Similarly the Mountain Maple (*Acer spicatum*) that is planted in the Arboretum really shines in the wild. Both species offer a warm yellow fall show.

European maple trees

The Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*) is well represented in the collection. It has been a controversial tree in the modern landscape as it self-seeds and muscles out the native Sugar Maple in urban forests.

People love the "red Norway maple," which is usually

the 'Crimson King' cultivar. There are some other interesting cultivars in the Arboretum such as 'Globosum,' which has a nice globe form and is an interesting choice in smaller gardens. The variegated leaf form of the 'Drummondii' cultivar is striking, but it is not stable and will constantly revert to plain green. These leaves must be pruned out or they will overtake the slower growing variegated form. One cultivar that I am quite fond of is the 'Palmatifidum', which has deeply divided leaves creating an airy look.

An interesting tree that is probably a cultivar or form of Norway Maple would be Dieck's Maple (*Acer xdieckii*). You will find it below the oak collection. It is probably one of the few in existence and I can't believe it's still standing. The leaf is unique and deserves preservation.

Another European maple that we have in our collection is the Sycamore Maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and you will find an old specimen near the service road. I find it a bulky version of the Norway Maple. There are two notable cultivars in the maple collection. One, 'Atropurpurea,' has leaves that are dark green above and purple beneath, however this does not dramatically change its appearance from the species. The other, 'Leopoldii', is a small, untidy-looking shrub for us, but it has yellow leaves that are splotted with pink and purple.

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President's message - Message du président

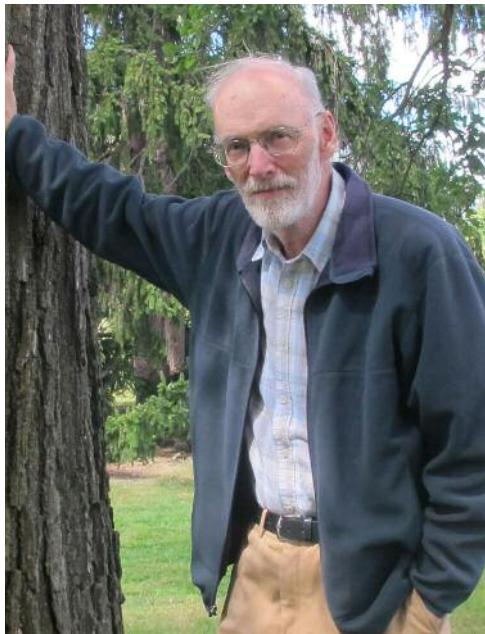
Strategy Review in the Works

The Friends of the Farm aim to preserve and enhance the public spaces of the Farm, to promote the historical significance of the Farm, and to support the Farm's owners Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, in this work.

There are many things the Friends do well based on our 26 years of experience. These include the following:

- Helping to maintain and improve the Ornamental Garden beds,
- Engaging the public by holding events at the Farm throughout the season,
- Planting trees and shrubs along the Merivale Shelterbelt,
- Helping to maintain and improve the Arboretum and Shelterbelt,
- Educating the public through lectures and tours of the Gardens and the Arboretum,
- Taking the public on tours of other gardens so that they are aware of the possibilities,
- Helping to update the mapping information for trees and shrubs on the Farm, and
- Publishing books about the Farm.

There are some things the Friends could perhaps do better with more participation and funding, such as:



Eric Jones

- Raising the profile of the Farm, the Arboretum and the Gardens through interactive programs,
- Adding new features such as gazebos and

memorial benches to welcome and remind people of the site's history,

- Stabilizing areas such as the Hosta Garden in the Arboretum,
- Controlling the dog-strangling vine and other invasive plants in vulnerable areas, and
- Building stronger relationships with interested groups and the public.

Of course, greater participation and funding comes from having a clear vision and communicating it to our supporters. To that end, the Board of the Friends will be undertaking a strategic review over the next few months to look at priority goals and ways of achieving them.

Any input from members and the public is welcome at all times. You can talk to us through email info@friendsofthefarm.ca or regular mail, or (better yet) face-to-face.

I've enjoyed my turn as President and look forward to continuing in 2016 as Past President. I'd like to thank those who help with Friends projects over this period and for years to come. Vive the Farm!

Un examen stratégique... bientôt!

Les Amis de la Ferme (les Amis) ont pris l'engagement de préserver et d'améliorer les espaces publics de la Ferme, de promouvoir l'importance historique de celle-ci et de seconder les propriétaires, Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada, dans leur travail.

Forts de leurs 26 années d'expérience, les Amis s'acquittent avec succès d'un bon nombre d'activités. Ils ont notamment :

- veillé à l'entretien et à l'amélioration des massifs de plantes dans les Jardins ornementaux;
- obtenu le concours du public avec la tenue d'événements à la Ferme au cours des saisons;
- planté des arbres et des arbustes le long du brise-vent Merivale;
- assuré l'entretien et l'amélioration de l'arboretum et du brise-vent;
- mené des projets éducatifs à l'intention du public par le truchement d'exposés et d'excursions dans les jardins et l'arboretum;
- servi de guides aux membres du public lors d'excursions d'autres jardins afin que

ces derniers puissent entrevoir les possibilités;

- participé à la mise à jour de la cartographie des arbres et des arbustes de la Ferme; et
 - publié des ouvrages au sujet de la Ferme.
- De plus, les Amis estiment pouvoir faire mieux, moyennant une participation et un financement de plus grande importance par rapport aux activités suivantes :
- mieux faire connaître la Ferme, l'arboretum et les jardins en instaurant des programmes interactifs;
 - ajouter de nouvelles installations telles des pavillons et des bancs commémoratifs pour y accueillir les visiteurs et rappeler l'histoire du site;
 - consolider certains endroits comme le jardin d'hostas dans l'arboretum;
 - contrôler la croissance du romarin de Russie et d'autres plantes envahissantes dans des régions jugées comme étant délicates; et
 - établir des liens plus solides avec les parties intéressées et les membres du public.

Bien entendu, une plus grande participation et un financement accru découlent d'une vision claire, et les Amis se doivent de la partager avec les personnes qui leur accordent un appui. À cette fin, le conseil d'administration des Amis entreprendra un examen stratégique au cours des prochains mois et se penchera sur les principaux objectifs et les moyens nécessaires pour les atteindre.

Nous ferons bon accueil en tout temps aux membres des Amis et du public qui voudront nous faire part de leurs commentaires par courriel à info@friendsofthefarm.ca, par la poste ou, mieux encore, de vive voix.

J'ai exercé mon mandat de président avec un vif plaisir et je me réjouis déjà à l'idée de servir à titre de président sortant en 2016. Je désire remercier toutes les personnes qui ont accordé leur aide aux projets des Amis lors de l'exercice de mes fonctions et qui continueront à le faire à l'avenir. Vive la Ferme!

Eric Jones

Maples in the Arboretum *(continued from Page 1)*



Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*)

Asian maple trees

I confess I am torn between our native maples and those from Asia. You are probably familiar with the Amur Maple (*Acer tataricum* subsp. *ginnala*) because it is commonly planted in our city. Beautiful fall colour is the main selling feature of this small tree, which you will find throughout the Arboretum and campus.

One of the most well-known Asian maples would be the Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*) which is not reliably hardy in Ottawa, but we have two mature specimens that did not suffer from this harsh past winter. The secret is proper siting and hardy genes. If you want a similar effect you should seek out the Korean Maple (*Acer*

pseudosieboldianum) which has a similar habit yet is completely hardy. There are no available red and/or dissected foliage cultivars and, in fact, you will have to look for this one. Its autumn colour is amazing, seeming to display yellow, orange and red at the same time, usually on the same leaf.

Two other gorgeous small maples you should look for in the maple collection are Manchurian Maple (*Acer manshuricum*), with its smooth gray bark and rose red fall colour, and the Three Flowered Maple (*Acer triflorum*) with amber fissured bark and hot orange fall colour. Both are trifoliate meaning three leaflets make up the leaf, not like our traditional image of a maple leaf. These two trees are at the top of

my list and I could write an entire article about how special they are.

Paper Bark Maple (*Acer griseum*) is related to the last two and can be found in a protected site among the evergreens in the circle, which is that area of the Arboretum within the circular road. This is a beautiful tree with cinnamon coloured birch-like bark and further south it can really become an amazing tree. Here it requires careful placement if it is to survive.

The last tree I will comment on is the Painted Maple (*Acer mono*). It has smooth bark and I find the leaves beautiful because they bend upward, cupping slightly. Its leaves change colour late too. This is a very obscure tree that deserves to be planted more often.

There are other maples I have not mentioned, but you should come to the Farm to check all of them out; they offer beauty every season of the year.

Robert Glendinning, groundskeeper/propagator with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, was one of the leaders of a tour of maples in the Arboretum in September.



Amur Maple (*Acer tataricum* subsp. *ginnala*)

Urban Forest and Tree Identification – Arboretum Tour

From 10 am to noon on Sunday, July 19, a public walk led by Owen Clarkin and Roman Popadiouk took place at the Dominion Arboretum. Titled "The Urban Forest and Tree Identification," the tour's goal was to help the public recognize and appreciate the different kinds of trees that grow in our region. We are very fortunate to have available in Ottawa such an outstanding outdoor classroom as the Dominion Arboretum. General tips and methods for identifying trees to the family, genus, and species were shared, with discussion of the particular importance of: habitat, growth form, bark, twig characteristics (buds, leaf scars, leaf arrangement), leaves, flowers and fruit.

Beginning at Building 72, the tour started with an exploration of the trees along Walk C in the *For the Love of Trees* book, the Old Windbreak Area loop. We stopped at, examined, and discussed many kinds of trees such as Japanese Elm, Redbud, Pecan, Ponderosa Pine, Swamp White Oak, Amur Corktree, Persimmon, Paulownia, Wych Elm, Sycamore, Rock Elm, Blue Ash, and River Birch.

The first portion of the tour concluded as we arrived back at Building 72. We then began a second lap with an exploration of the trees along the book's Walk A, the Circle Area. Here we focused especially on coniferous trees and nut-bearing trees. We examined a wide variety of trees such as: Eastern Hemlock, Bald Cypress, Dawn Redwood, Pitch Pine, Jack Pine, Red Spruce, Hackberry, Shagbark Hickory, Black Walnut, Sweetgum, and Douglas-fir.

With the midday July temperature rising and risk of information overload increasing, we concluded the tour back at Building 72 where some friendly discussion continued on for about a half hour in the shade.

Owen Clarkin has been studying trees since the age of four. In addition to leading public nature hikes, he regularly contributes to local and worldwide plant identification forums on social media.

What Happens on the Bus, Stays on the Bus!

By Denise Kennedy

Once again, this year's bus was full of enthusiastic friends and the band played on! Our first day of the three day trip was to Sonnenberg Gardens near Rochester, N.Y., then back to Ontario to see the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington and from there to Parkwood Estates in Oshawa. Both Sonnenberg and Parkwood offered tours of their stately homes, evidence of yesteryear's opulence and magnificent gardens that were once privately owned. What secrets those walls have kept through the years!

Of the 52 passengers on the bus only 14 were new to the Friends of the Farm. The majority of the passengers were returning clients, much to the delight of the organizers. Thank you everyone!

An exciting new tour

Here is a sneak preview of next year's tour. From July 12 to 15, 2016, we are offering a 3 night/4 day trip. On the first day, we will drive to Domaine Joly de Lotbinière in Quebec (www.domainejoly.com). At this unique natural site is one of the most beautiful gardens in North America. After our visit there, we will have a free evening in the old part of Quebec City. On the second day, after a luxury bus ride, we will visit the splendid Reford Gardens (www.refordgardens.com) and sleepover in Rimouski, Quebec. On the third day, we will visit the wonderful thematic gardens at Edmundston, New Brunswick's Botanical Garden (www.jardinnbgarden.com) and return to our hotel at St. Jean Port Joli on the St. Lawrence, dinner included.

As usual we offer reserved seating, first come, first served. Don't delay, call today!

Denise Kennedy is the Friends of the Farm Tour Manager and leader of the Macoun Memorial Garden volunteer team.



Happy bus trippers

Denise Kennedy

'Fall Frenzy' On-line Silent Auction

Looking for that special gift for someone for the Holiday season, then look no further! The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm are hosting a fall on-line silent auction to raise funds to help meet our goals. Auction items will range from paintings to quilts to gift certificates.

Don't miss out. Bidding starts at 9 am Thursday, November 12, and ends at 12 pm noon Saturday, November 21. Visit often and bid!

For more information visit our website www.friendsofthefarm.ca/events.htm



Friends of the Farm Board of Directors, 2015-16

Judy Dodds - president	Donna Pape - volunteers
Eric Jones - past president	Yvonne Ackerman - membership
Mary Ann Smythe - secretary	Caroline Dabrus - gardens
Marsha Gutierrez - treasurer	Shari Haas - events
Kate Harrigan - fundraising	Jeannine Lewis - at large
Richard Hinchcliff - newsletter	Matthew LaCompte - at large

Used Book Drop Off

- Saturday, October 24, 10 am to 3 pm.
- Please note that we do not accept magazines, textbooks or encyclopaedias.
- Location: Building 72, Arboretum, CEF.
- For more information, visit www.friendsofthefarm.ca or call 613-230-3276.



Upcoming Guided Tree Tours in the Arboretum

The following are the remaining 2015 guided tree tours in the Arboretum. Although the tours are free and open to the public, please register in advance at info@friendsofthefarm.ca or call 613-230-3276. Donations to the Friends of the Farm will be kindly accepted during the tour. See www.friendsofthefarm.ca for more information.

October 25 - **Tree Seeds and Fruits**, by Bettina Henkelman and Katrina Siks

Trees produce seeds, nuts and other fruit as part of their normal reproductive cycles. Many trees rely on other organisms to help spread their seed and ensure survival and evolution of the species. A by-product is the great appeal of tree seeds and fruits to humans. This tour will show some interesting specimens in the Arboretum and help explain what trees have to offer and what we need to protect.

November 15 - **Tree Forms and Shapes**, by Owen Clarkin and Bettina Henkelman

Tree identification and winter preparation. Check friendsofthefarm.ca later for more information.

Robert and Sylva Christenson – Missionaries at the Shelterbelt

By Barbara Woodward

Robert and Sylva thrive on hard work and community service. In 2014, the Experimental Farm benefited from these services when the couple came from Sandy, Utah, USA, to spend eighteen months living in Gatineau, Quebec, as service missionaries for the local Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS), sometimes called the "Mormon" church. They returned home to resume "civilian life" at the end of this July.

Their membership in the LDS church is deep-rooted, and goes back to ancestors who joined the fledgling Church in the early 1800s. Robert's great-grandfather became the first LDS proselytizing missionary in Canada when he arrived in Toronto in 1836.

Service missionaries

Service missionaries help with the work of local LDS churches throughout the world. At the Gatineau church, Robert and Sylva taught, helped with home repairs, visited the sick and lonely, and also taught English language classes. The couple volunteered for this assignment and paid all their expenses, without any funding from their church. They could have gone almost anywhere in the world but wanted to go to a place where French is spoken, partly because Robert learned the language as a missionary in France in the 1960s.

Civilian life in Sandy, Utah

Before they retired two or three years ago, Sylva taught high school English and Robert was self-employed as a certified financial planner and investment advisor. The couple had a long list of postponed activities to pursue on their return home, including visiting their children and grandchildren, working on their hobbies, serving in their community, remodeling their house, taking some vacations and making major landscape changes in their yard. At home Sylva loves to garden and maintains numerous flower beds, three apple trees and a vegetable garden, while Robert's gardening experience is more limited. Their flower gardens contain lots of petunias, marigolds, roses and lilies. Sylva also likes succulents, daphne ("the most lovely and fragrant bush"), basket of gold, veronica, snow-in-summer and woolly thyme.

Robert notes that many of the same vegetables and fruits are grown in Utah as are grown here, however Utah's desert climate demands greater irrigation and greatly influences plant selection. Drought-tolerant plants like sedum are becoming more popular in western USA. Utah's maple trees are scrub trees and not "the large and magnificent ones you have in Canada." Scrub oak trees and sage brush are common in Utah.

Finding the Farm

Because LDS Church leaders encourage members to do broader community service, Sylva looked online for opportunities. The Friends of the Farm appealed to her in every way. After all, "What could be better than working with good people surrounded by the beauties of nature?"

Robert feels the Experimental Farm is a little like New York City's Central Park. Both he and Sylva strongly support natural landscapes integrated into city areas, which they say Ottawa has had the foresight to preserve unlike many other cities. The couple also notes that, given the on-going conversion of prime farmland into residential and commercial buildings, areas like the Farm highlight



Sylva and Robert Christenson

R. Hinchcliff

the importance of educating the public on the sources of the food they eat and on farmland. They hope this example will influence municipal planning in other cities to establish a more harmonious relationship between nature and man-made structures.

Choosing the Shelterbelt

Sylva and Robert loved the Shelterbelt because it is spacious and the broad fields there are so peaceful. They also liked the physically demanding work and the variety of tasks that include weeding, removing grass, trimming, laying mulch, and occasionally planting bushes and some trees. They appreciated their "awesome team leader, Polly McColl" and recommend the Shelterbelt team to those who have the physical capacity for a little harder work.

The couple would love to see the entire western border of the area filled in with shrubs and trees to protect the rest of the Farm from eroding winds. They know this will depend on the generosity of private donors.

Parting thoughts

Robert and Sylva say the Farm, with its beautiful surroundings and friendly co-workers, is the ideal work environment. In fact, Sylva and Robert say that on leaving Canada they "left many dear friends we met at the Farm. We feel that volunteers at the Farm are some of the best people in all of Ottawa. They are a delight to work with."

Their Day to Shine

By Blaine Marchand

Despite what seemed to be an interminable winter and a late frost in early May, everything was coming up peonies at the Central Experimental Farm (CEF) this past spring. Despite dire predictions, the blooming was luxuriant, particularly when the Canadian Peony Society (CPS) held its annual peony show at Jean Piggott Place, Ottawa City Hall, June 6th and 7th.

Thanks to efforts of Bill Wegman's peony team members, Lynne Zeitouni (along with her husband Sami), Kathleen Hatherill and Sue Morton, choice buds from among the CEF's extensive collection of cultivars were selected, recorded, cut and then stored in the fridge in Building 72, cooling the heels of their petals 'till their day to shine. And gleam they did amid the 625 entries from across the country, which were on display over the two-day event. A number of the peony team members came Friday evening and Saturday morning to help with the set-up of the entries while others volunteered over the two days. As a result, as one municipal councillor joshed before the opening ceremony, "City Hall has never smelled so sweet".

'Haleigh's Hallelujah', an intersectional or Itoh peony (a cross between a tree and a herbaceous peony), stood out. Bred by Donald Smith in 2004, this magnificent double flower is yellow flushed with deep rose pink and red flares at its centre, which give it an inner

luminosity. The blooms are six inches in size. It was selected for the Court of Honour and then was declared by the judges (the Society's Reiner Jakubowski, Judi Denny and Mary Ellen Simerson) to be the Grand Champion (Best in Show). Along with a ribbon, the win brings with it an antique silver trophy, donated to the CPS by the Ottawa Horticultural Society ten years ago.

The trophy will be on view in Building 72 until next year's competition in Calgary.

The CEF took 10 other first place wins for different categories in the competition, winning a total of 35 ribbons for placing in the top four of entries in various classes. In some categories, the CEF took all four! This is a testament to the care lavished on the peony gardens by the peony team, which works there Thursday mornings during the growing season and by the groundskeepers under the infectious enthusiasm of Jean-Pascal Gratton.

The gardens were also one of the area gardens visited by CPS members on Sunday morning. Coming from across the country, many were anxious to see first-hand the collection as it is well known to have one of the largest holdings



R. Hinchcliff

Peony show at Ottawa City Hall

of varieties developed by Professor A.P. Saunders, whose father, William Saunders, was the first director of the CEF. The visitors were not at all disappointed. The Saunders' peonies were at their breath-taking best and so the members left suitably impressed. A few even returned home and this fall will be planting Saunders' peonies of their own, having bid for roots donated by CPS members at an auction the night before.

Blaine Marchand, who tends a collection of over 500 peonies in Osceola, Ontario, has been on the Friends' peony team since retirement. Past president of the Canadian Peony Society and editor of its newsletter, "Paeonia Nordica", he is the author of eight books.

2015 Friends of the Farm Peony Team with J-P Gratton

Back row L to R: Bob Barron, Kathy Hatherill with Samantha Landry behind, Blaine Marchand, Bonnie McWhirter with Elizabeth Gomes behind, Kathy McDougall, Monica Brownness, Nancy Irving, and Stephen Joy.

Front row L to R: Fedaa Khirallah, Sue Morton with Lynne Zeitouni in front, J-P Gratton (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada), Bill Wegman, Anne-Marie Hogue.

Absent: Barbara Woodward, Bernadette Walker.

Inset: 'Haleigh's Hallelujah', Best in Show, Canadian Peony Society Show, 2015



Victorian Tea, 2015

Featuring Best Hat and Best Costume Contests



R. Hinchliff

Congratulations to Polly McColl and all her volunteers for a very successful event.

Top, from left to right: Kim Bigelow (left), winner of best costume contest; William Saunders, first director of the Central Experimental Farm, and his wife Sarah Agnes Saunders (aka Martin McLeod and Louise Moore) welcoming guests to the Farm; Josephine and Lara Crone, winners of best hat contest.

Second from top: Doug Shouldice, former president of the Friends of the Farm, and Denise Kennedy; Rhonda Wilson, Fiona Wilson, Valerie Wilson and Dale Simmons; Yvonne Ackerman and below her, serving tea, Cathy Ternan.

Third from top: Greg Heppenstall; Rebecca Lynn Cragg of Camellia Teas of Ottawa, with a Victorian-era Japanese party; Joan Shouldice serving tea to Stephanie Heppenstall.

Bottom right: Harpist Kalah Morrison-Partridge.

Gardening With the Masters

Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton have again offered advice and inspiration in a series of lectures sponsored by the Friends of the Farm. Mary Ann Smythe reports on the last three lectures of 2015.

Three for the Price of One, April 21

Master Gardeners: Edythe Falconer, Jose Pazdzior and Laura Henderson

Participants were treated to three mini lectures for the price of one.

Earthly Delights

In keeping with the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations declaration of 2015 as the International Year of Soils, Edythe Falconer addressed the future of what gardeners lovingly call "dirt," but which is actually only one component of soil. Because the world is losing soil 10 to 40 times the rate of replenishment, Edythe encourages gardeners to "feed the soil in our own gardens to keep it healthy and our plants looking their best."

Her advice – keep the soil well nourished by adding compost, mulch and manure. She also recommends using food waste as garden compost and peat moss to decrease the pH of soil and help with water retention. Composting, says Edythe, is key to keeping plants growing and healthy, and maturing gracefully with age.



Keeping the Garden Going Strong

Jose Pazdzior's tips for keeping gardens looking great came just in time for the start of the gardening season. First priority in spring is garden maintenance – prune trees and shrubs, fix any landscape issues, assess winter damage and soil erosion, clean up gently around emerging plants, add compost and mulch to flower beds, remove spent bulb foliage, and divide fall-blooming perennials.

Summer signals time to feed the soil with organic matter and compost, monitor for pests and pest damage, water newly planted species and other plants as needed, divide plants regularly to ensure adequate space for roots and stems, and groom annual planters and relocate them to get the best sun. In the fall, it's time to divide and move perennials that have bloomed, allow annuals to self seed, put up winter protection, and clean and oil tools.

Trees and Shrubs for the Urban Garden

Trees and shrubs aren't usually at the top of gardeners' wish lists – we often consider them too big for our limited space. Laura Henderson debunked that notion stressing that the key to adding trees and shrubs to gardens is planning. Plant trees first as they take about four years to grow and plant ground cover under them to dress up the area. Use bushes and shrubs to add texture (plant a mix of shrubs with long, short, oval and feathery leaves) and colour, and layer them for best effect. "Bushes are your friend as far as maintenance goes, but be careful to choose plants that are native to Ottawa and non-invasive."

Among Laura's recommendations, Hopa crabapple (a front-lawn tree with a dramatic show of colour in early spring), hibiscus, alpine current (grows in sun or shade), blue arrow juniper (ideal for a corner as it's only two feet wide), peonies, false spirea, invincibelle spirit hydrangea (a hardy, radiant-pink bloomer that flowers from spring to frost), and, for winter interest, ivory halo dogwood, a compact, mounding variety whose wine-red twigs are striking against the snow.

Rejuvenating a Tired Garden, May 5

Master Gardener: Mary Reid

Botox for gardens? No, not really. But like "mature" adults, ageing gardens may need minor cosmetic enhancements to look their very best. Mary Reid, owner of Green Thumb Garden Centre, packed a lot of valuable information and helpful hints into her presentation to a rapt audience. Her first piece of advice: "Do it yourself. Don't pay someone if you have the skills to do it on your own. And definitely have a plan."

Planning starts with these basic questions: What's wrong with your garden? What don't you like? What would it take to make you happy with your garden? The answers to these questions should form the foundation of your rejuvenation plan.

Mary also recommends looking at your whole property, not just your garden beds, because there may be elements in your yard that detract from the beauty of your plants – a pile of edging or wheelbarrow parts that should be discarded, a broken fence, chipped pavers, peeling paint, rotting flower boxes, a broken shutter. Discard, paint, repair – take care of the hardscaping first and your garden will thank you for it.

If you're planning a major renovation, Mary recommends taking one step at a time. "Divide the yard into sectors and attack one sector at a time. You won't be overwhelmed or overworked. Your first priority should be remedying what makes you unhappiest and will give you the greatest pleasure once fixed."



A ratty looking garden usually benefits from a general tidy-up – deadheading, edging, weeding. "Weed to see what you have," Mary advises. "It's surprising what beautiful plant(s) may lie under that tangle of weeds." A tired garden usually signals that plants need to be divided while an overgrown garden indicates too many plants or plants that have simply grown too big for the space. "If your garden is jam-packed it's no time to be sentimental," says Mary. "There's likely some 'thugs' among your plants and it's time to get rid of them."

Adding a new bed or renovating an existing bed requires a bit of homework. Things to consider include physical features of the property, slope, drainage, soil, materials on hand, and sun exposure. If you need to move a significant number of plants around in one of your beds and introduce new varieties to accommodate sun exposure, ensure coverage of all blooming periods. If you simply want a new look, Mary recommends digging up the existing plants, putting them in pots, and moving the pots around until you are completely happy with the new layout.



Gardening for Continuous Joy, May 19

Master Gardener: Judith Cox

Maintaining colour in our gardens throughout the season is often problematic. However, like most problems, there is a solution. Actually, many solutions according to Judith Cox. Head Gardener at Saunders Farms, Judith knows of what she speaks. She encourages gardeners to "develop your own style. Create something that says to you: 'Here's my garden and I love it.'"

"Planning," Judith says, "is where joy begins." She suggests seed catalogues, garden magazines, and TV shows for inspiration and ideas, but cautions against unrealistic expectations. "Most showcase gardens have several staff to keep them picture perfect. Most likely you only have a staff of one." She also suggests visiting nurseries and touring the Farm to see how plants look in real life.

Judith admits it's "tough to be joyous before your spring garden emerges." However, you can prepare for spring blooms by starting plants indoors by seed and by planting bulbs in the fall. She suggests using bulbs to create a swath of colour or integrating them among other plants in your garden. As spring flowers die off, it's important to have the next generation ready to pop up – for example, lilacs, forsythia, flowering crab, magnolia, and iris reticulata. In early June, the garden really wakes up – time for roses, daylilies, daisies, evening primrose, and peonies to bloom. Where there are gaps annual planters are a good solution. But think beyond the box – planters filled with herbs (with marigolds in the middle to ward off bunnies and squirrels) or overflowing with plants that only bear leaves. Another suggestion – fill a container with morning glories climbing on a wire to add height and interest.

Judith also recommends accessorizing your garden. "We use jewellery to dress up an outfit, so why not do the same with our gardens. Statues, bird baths, or wind chimes, and larger structures such as a pergola, arbour or



A. R. Buckley, *Canadian Garden Perennials*, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 1977

twig fencing are great for adding interest."

In autumn, Judith finds that most gardeners "fall down on the job. Gardens begin to look tired and there's little colour." To round out the gardening season, she suggests coneflowers for a blast of colour, perennial hibiscus, which lasts into early October, rudbeckia, hydrangea, and small bushes such as Japanese maple or burning bush.

When winter approaches, we close the door on another gardening season. This is when Judith suggests "extending the joy of your garden by moving it indoors." Potted scented geraniums or fragrant herbs on the window sill will brighten a stormy day. And as the nights grow longer, snuggle up with a seed catalogue or garden magazine to plan for next year. After all, planning is where the joy begins all over again.

Mary Ann Smythe is a long-time volunteer on garden, book sorting, newsletter and events teams, as well as on the Board of Directors of the Friends.



The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm is a volunteer organization committed to the maintenance and protection of the Ornamental Gardens and the Arboretum of the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Membership in the Friends of the Farm costs \$25 per year for an individual and \$45 per year for a family, \$20 Seniors/Students. Membership fees support the many projects of the Friends of the Farm.

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Shelterbelt Keeps Growing – Thanks to Our Donors

Polly McColl and the Merivale Shelterbelt team of the Friends of the Farm were pleased to plant seven new trees and seven forsythia shrubs in late June. They were purchased with funds from generous donors in a program administrated by the Friends’ Deborah Higdon-Leblond.

The donors were recognized in a ceremony on September 13. Pierre Corriveau, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Eric Jones, President, Friends of the Farm, commented on progress that had been made at the Shelterbelt and thanked the donors and hard-working Shelterbelt volunteer team, who had made it possible.

Because of bad weather, the ceremony was held in Building 72, after which donors and their families went to see their inscriptions on the plaques at the Shelterbelt pavilion.

The seven new trees included two Norway Spruces, one Colorado Blue Spruce, two hackberries and two elms. Two other small trees were donated and Joan Speirs provided six lilac bushes from the nursery.

Polly was also grateful to Jean-Pascal Gratton and his team for other trees from the nursery. When trees there get too big, they are often given to the Shelterbelt. Two euonymous trees were planted this year to go with some Douglas-fir and wingnuts. Polly wasn’t sure how well these will do in the difficult growing conditions but was keen to try them as an experiment. “After all,” she said, “this is the Experimental Farm.”



Polly McColl supervising the planting of another tree at the Merivale Shelterbelt



The Friends Shelterbelt team at work



R. Hinchcliff

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Please make cheque or money order payable to: "Friends of the Farm." A receipt for income tax purposes will be issued for all donations of \$10 or more.

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Soil – The Great Provider *(continued from Page 12)*



For the home gardener, maintaining and improving soil relies heavily on one or more methods of composting. Composters come in all shapes and sizes. Some are veritable works of art and are commensurately priced. Others are strictly functional. The smallest I can think of are the Vermicomposter and the Bokashy kitchen composter.

Ways to build compost

What follows is a modest catalogue of ways in which to build compost, and enrich and maintain soil permanently:

Stationary composters – These are readily available at various outlets. If there is a handy person in your family they can be built on site.

Mobile composters – Some are not all that attractive until you fully appreciate what they accomplish. They usually consist of a circle of close-meshed wire to a height of around two feet. The loose ends of the wire can be secured with twist ties.

Manure tea – This “tea” is a mix of well-rotted manure steeped in water and used as a power drink for plants.

Green tea – Even weeds can go into green tea as long as they have not gone to seed. That and other organic garden wastes are steeped in water and later served as a nutrient-rich supplement for plants.

Lasagnas – Lasagnas are a garden version of the Dagwood Sandwich. The site for a new bed is close-mown and often layered with sheets of wet newsprint. Coarse materials are laid down first and then covered with finer compost and additional soil. This method eliminates the need to double-dig.

Hugels – Hugels have long been in use in European countries. They are similar to lasagnas but can take even coarser material in their base layers. They are now becoming known and more popular in North America. The Indore system as used in China and India for centuries is another version of layering.

Sheet composting – This practice is a slim version of lasagnas and hugels, and involves laying garden wastes directly on the ground and then covering them with black landscape fabric until they have broken down.

Trenches – The use of trenches is convenient when dealing with difficult soil situations. Trenches can accommodate raw or finished compost. If compost is raw, trenches need to be left fallow for a year.

For additional information I refer you to **Composting in Canada** by Suzanne Lewis. This compact and informative little book is full of practical ideas and excellent illustrations.

Edythe Falconer is a Master Gardener, special advisor on the Friends' Heritage Rose team, and frequent contributor to this newsletter.

This article also appeared in the September issue of The Edible Garden, which is published monthly on the website of the Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton. The editors of The Edible Garden were happy to share this article with the Friends of the Farm. “Our publications have much in common in our mutual celebration of everything that grows and the importance of healthy soil in all of our endeavours.”

Soil - The Great Provider

By Edythe Falconer

This is the International Year of Soil. What is soil and why are we giving special attention to it in 2015?

Consider the following:

All life on and in the earth depends upon it, directly and indirectly. This very thin and still mysterious layer on the surface of our planet is an active mediator between earth and sky – atmosphere and lithosphere.

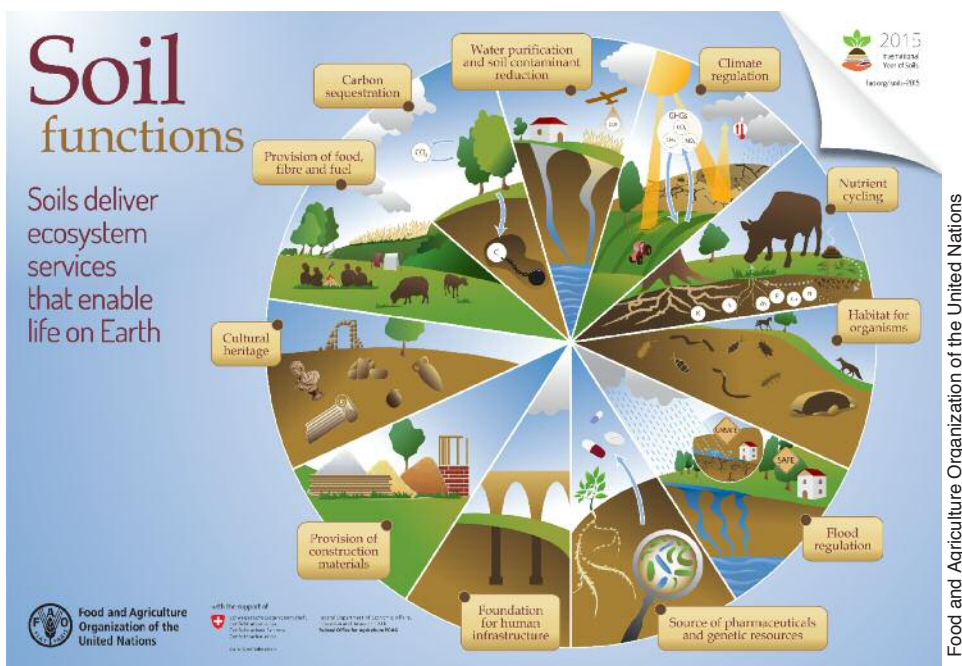
Forming naturally, it takes between 500 to 1000 years to create one inch of new soil on the surface of the earth – depending upon geography and weather. However humans are depleting the soil base at a rate much faster than it can be replaced.

The mystery beneath us accommodates a biomass that in terms of volume exceeds all biomass above the surface. Biomass includes all living and decaying plants and animals of the universe both above and below the earth's surface. In farming and gardening practices we have only now begun to appreciate the enormity and the importance of this difference.

The populations of these underworld creatures include bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes, arthropods and earthworms. One teaspoon of undisturbed soil can contain from 100 million to 1 billion bacteria. Several yards of fungi can be cradled in a second teaspoon. Of the more visible creatures there can be as many as 5 to 30 earthworms in a cubic foot of soil.

Soil inhabitants have specific roles to play in this vast underground ecosystem. That's what it is – an ecosystem. For example bacteria are decomposers of organic matter, collectors of soil nutrients and fixers of nitrogen. Fungi have similar functions and form mutually beneficial associations with roots drawing important minerals from the soil around them and receiving carbohydrates from plants above. Soil organisms help to form soil aggregates that are essential to good moisture and nutrient retention.

More than 90% of us now reside in urban settings – the rest in rural or semi-rural locations. That translates into a human population that is on average no longer in touch with the land that feeds it. This situation is somewhat mitigated by the many community gardens that now dot cities, and by other developments such as school gardens and shared growing space in backyards. Urban agriculture is no longer a contradiction and in Ottawa a course at Algonquin College now instructs in its practices.



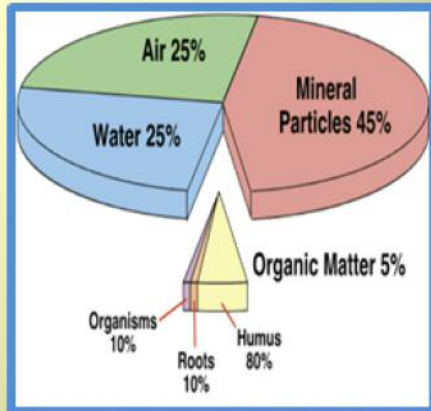
Unfortunately most urban biomass in the form of household and garden organic waste still goes into landfill despite green bin and other efforts. In nature this valuable material would be absorbed back into the land to enrich and maintain existing soil. Nature's cycle of replenishment has essentially been broken to the detriment of our soil base.

Those of us who have yards – even small ones, or who live in proximity to community gardens, have viable alternatives to discarding valuable biomass into landfills where it serves no useful purpose. We can use our surplus biomass to enrich the soils that we have, whether they be sand, silt or clay-based.

Building and maintaining your garden's soil

The options for building and maintaining a soil ecosystem in our own yards are many. In addition to nurturing billions of underground creatures, we need to seek and establish a balance of four factors as is illustrated in the pie chart. What the chart tells us is that in order for soil to support growth it must also have a composition based on only slightly flexible percentages of each component.

Well-balanced soil is 25% water, 25% air, 40+% mineral particles, and up to 10% organic matter. Air is as essential to most soil organisms as it is to us. The same goes for water. Let's think that 25% water is high think about us. Fifty to 75% of the human body is water. The mineral portion of the chart is comprised of a mixture of sand, silt and clay. Although the piece of pie reserved for organic matter is a mere sliver, it is nevertheless crucial to the good functioning of soil.



Well-balanced soil is 25% water, 25%, air, 40+% sand, silt and clay and up to 10% organic matter.

Continued on Page 11