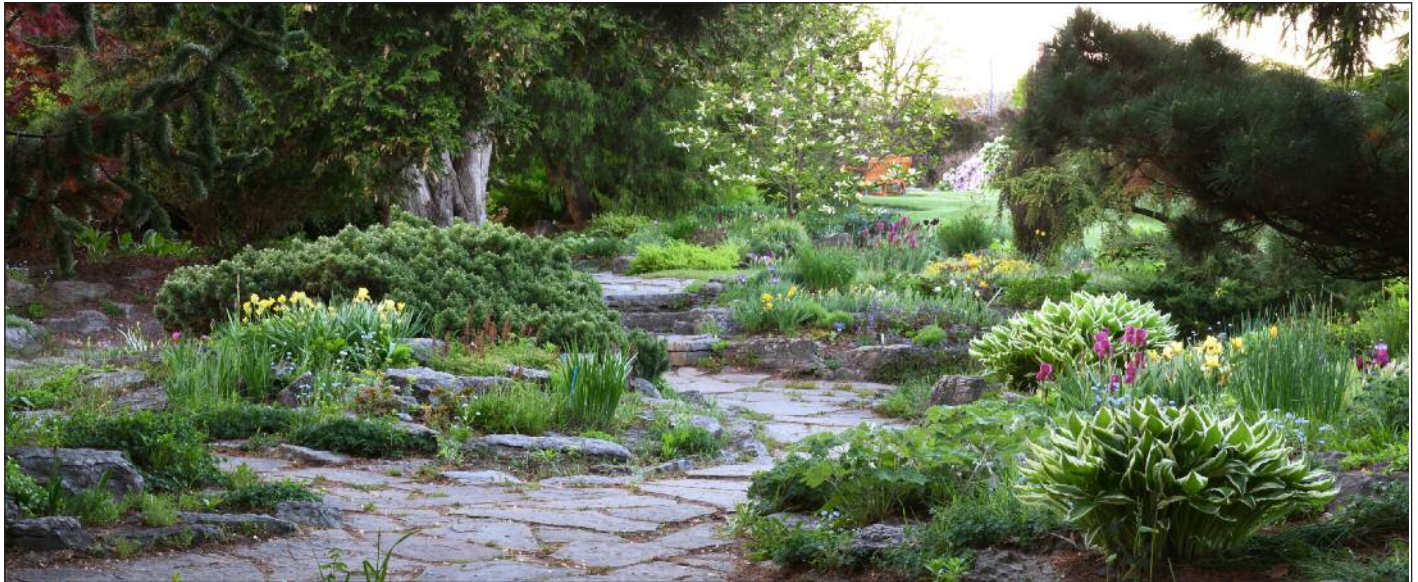




Friends of the Central Experimental Farm

Summer 2019 Newsletter

Volume 31 No. 3



R. Hinchcliff

Rock Garden, June 7, 2019.

The Rock Garden at the Central Experimental Farm

By Annie Creighton

"The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature.

To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul."

This is one of my all-time favourite quotes by Alfred Austin (1835-1913) a British Poet Laureate and avid gardener. The volunteers at the Farm understand this. It is what keeps us coming back each week.

The Rock Garden at the Farm has evolved through various incarnations. There was a rock garden in the 1930s, which Isabel Preston, renowned horticulturist at the Farm, described as not a true rock garden in the British sense. Rocks had been used to create beds for dwarf plants, but little design had been considered. Appropriate planting pockets and soil amendments to accommodate the growing needs of plants that were generally associated with rock gardens, were not included.

The early days

The current Rock Garden was built during the years 1947-1952 under the direction of Preston's colleague Warren Oliver. (She had retired in 1946.) Various plants were tried in the early years with mixed success. And conifers that were planted then as dwarf varieties grew into large trees, shading many of the plants. As well, the garden suffered from neglect for many years.

In 2005, Brian Worobey, a member of the Board of the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm, suggested that the rock garden was looking derelict (*see Brian's profile on page 5*). The daylily/iris team that attended to the rock garden as time permitted clearly had limited opportunity to

maintain it. The garden had been more or less abandoned for far too long so it was a question of survival of the fittest, or most aggressive, plants and shrubs.

Brian headed up the new team in the Rock Garden for the first three years and then passed the torch to Caroline Dabrus, who was on the daylily/iris and explorer roses teams. Drawing on the professional expertise of Sharon Saunders, the then Lead Hand and Horticulturist at the Ornamental Gardens, the team started to seriously attack the overgrown and weedy garden space. When Caroline moved on in the summer of 2016, Annie Creighton took over as team leader.

Kate Hadden, a long-time dedicated volunteer at the Farm, recalls her first day of

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We Need to Know

In previous newsletters we discussed the issue of increased population living around the Farm, and greater attention being paid to the public areas of the Farm. Also, more events and attractions are happening on the site, which increases visitor numbers. But we don't know much about exactly who uses the Farm and for what purposes.

The Central Experimental Farm Advisory Council (CEFAC) was set up in 1999 to engage the public and provide advice and recommendations to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in its stewardship role of the Farm. The Council helps to ensure broad public participation in the Farm's management, as it includes associations and groups representing a broad spectrum of local and national interest, as well as tenants such as the Friends of the Farm.

The Council held a strategy session in the Fall of 2017 to find out how they could better

fulfill their mandate. One of the key findings was that the "Council should review the public environment regularly (perhaps every 2 years), identifying how the use of the Farm is changing. In view of a deepening public relationship with the Farm, there will be a greater need to understand how people interact with the space and what they learn about it. CEFAC should suggest opportunities (and limits) to the use of space given this evolution."

Based on this finding, the Council is putting together an online survey that will allow it to determine how people view the Farm and how they use it. When the survey is ready, we'll be informing members through our normal channels (Farm Notes and social media) but we also want to cast the net wider—even beyond the National Capital Region—so that all visitors and stakeholders have a chance to be heard.

The Advisory Council is not trying to foster

a particular image or impression of the Farm. Rather, the objective of the survey is to get an unbiased reading of how people interact with the Farm, whether their interaction be on a regular or infrequent basis, and whether or not they are affiliated with any group that has a direct link to the Farm. The results can be analysed to show how factors such as affiliation affects people's views about the Farm.

Based on experience, we know that many people see the Farm as an outdoor gym for routine exercise. Others view it as a nature reserve or park. Others still see the Farm as a research lab for agriculture and food.

Over time, populations shift, views evolve, and it's important to understand these changes. The Farm's future depends on it.

Eric Jones

President, Friends of the Farm.



Votre opinion nous est importante

Dans les bulletins précédents, nous avons abordé la question de l'accroissement de la population qui est établie autour de la Ferme, et de fait une plus grande attention dirigée vers les endroits publics de la Ferme. En outre, plusieurs activités attirantes se déroulent sur les lieux, ce qui contribue à une hausse du nombre de visiteurs. À vrai dire, nous ne connaissons pas tellement ces personnes qui viennent sur la Ferme, et ce qui les pousse à le faire.

Le Conseil consultatif des Amis de la Ferme expérimentale centrale (CCAFEC) a été créé en 1999 avec l'intention de mobiliser le public et de fournir des conseils et des recommandations à Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada dans son rôle d'intendant de la Ferme. Le Conseil prête son aide en s'assurant d'une vaste participation du public dans la gestion de la Ferme, à laquelle se prêtent des associations et des groupes provenant d'un vaste champ d'activités d'intérêt local et national, ainsi que des locataires comme les Amis de la Ferme.

Le Conseil s'est réuni lors d'une séance stratégique en automne 2017 pour déterminer

la meilleure façon d'exécuter son mandat. L'une des conclusions est la suivante : « Le Conseil devrait faire une analyse, sur une base régulière, tous les deux ans peut-être, afin de voir la teneur des changements dans l'utilisation de la Ferme. En vue de renforcer la relation du public avec la Ferme, il sera hautement nécessaire de comprendre comment se fait l'interaction des gens avec ce qui constitue les espaces de la Ferme et l'information qu'ils en retiennent. Le CCAFEC devrait être en mesure de suggérer des occasions et (des limites) dans l'utilisation de l'espace, compte tenu de cette évolution. »

Selon ces conclusions, le Conseil a prévu de lancer un sondage en ligne qui permettra de déterminer comment les gens voient la Ferme et comment ils utilisent ses espaces. Une fois que le sondage aura été conçu, nous informerons les membres de la façon habituelle (Notes de la Ferme et médias sociaux), et nous voulons aussi étendre la consultation – au-delà même de la région de la capitale nationale – pour donner l'occasion aux visiteurs et aux parties intéressées de faire leurs commentaires.

Le Conseil consultatif n'a nullement

l'intention de projeter une image ou impression particulière de la Ferme. Le sondage présentera plutôt une image exempte de tout parti pris sur la façon dont les gens prennent contact avec la Ferme, que la fréquence en soit régulière ou occasionnelle, ou en raison d'une affiliation ou non à un groupe ayant un lien direct avec la Ferme. L'analyse des résultats démontrera comment certains facteurs, une affiliation p. ex., peuvent affecter le point de vue des gens par rapport à la Ferme.

L'expérience a démontré que bien des gens voient la Ferme comme un gymnase extérieur où y faire des exercices de routine. D'autres la voient comme une réserve naturelle ou un parc. Pour d'autres encore, il s'agit d'un laboratoire de recherche en matière d'agriculture et de produits alimentaires.

Avec le temps, les populations se déplacent, les points de vue changent, et il est important de comprendre ces changements. L'avenir de la Ferme repose sur eux.

Eric Jones

Président, Les Amis de la Ferme.

The Rock Garden at the Central Experimental Farm ...

(continued from Page 1)

wandering up and down the paths in the Rock Garden exclaiming, “Oh dear!” and “Good grief!” because there did not appear to be a single rock plant visible in the expanse of weeds. That year was spent systematically weeding from the north end to the south end of the garden, then starting the process all over again. From time to time you could hear a shout of glee as a piece of dwarf phlox or campanula emerged.

Adding treasures

We have come a long way since those early days. Robert Glendinning at Agriculture Canada is a serious plant enthusiast and likes nothing better than starting seeds of obscure and interesting plants. The rock garden team receives long lists of plants from him and we are able to choose what we would like for the Rock Garden.

Upon Sharon’s retirement, it fell to Annie Creighton to decide which areas could be revamped and planted with some of Robert’s treasures. Our approach has been to leave overgrown areas controlled but not emptied until we have replacement plants. Dog strangling vine is well controlled now, but like so many gardens at the Farm in the spring we have far too much *Ornithogalum umbellatum*, Star of Bethlehem, which tucks itself into tiny crevices and is difficult to eradicate. We have vast quantities of *Geranium sanguinum* and various sedums that need to be tamed. Our constant aim is to introduce plants more suitable to a rock garden.

Rock gardens can bring a natural, rugged beauty to any landscape including those with difficult growing conditions, rocks, and tree roots. Ideally, rockeries provide a series of eye-catching vignettes that

paint an overall picture. The Rock Garden at the Farm is no exception. As you step down to the meandering paths, a diversity of plants catches your eye.

Typically, rock gardens contain varieties which grow naturally on high mountains where they will stand up to poor rocky soil, harsh winds, sun, and drought. We have been introducing alpine plants, such as *Aethiommema*, *Orostachys* and the very delicate *Campanula coclearifolia* (aptly named Fairy’s Thimble) amongst others. The soil is amended to accommodate each plant’s needs. We were excited to find that some of the borderline-hardy plants from Robert survived this past winter. The endless snow no doubt helped. There are also some very shady areas so we are amassing a collection of primulas for these spaces.

What lies ahead?

The water feature in the Rock Garden has been out of commission for many years. We hope it will be operating again this season. Stay tuned - it will be spectacular. Plants will be removed and heeled in, while the old structure is removed and a new one installed. That will enable us to plant



A tour group in the Rock Garden, May 18, 1985.

The Ottawa Citizen

appropriately once the construction is completed. We have plans to introduce plants such as *Iris japonica*, *Primula denticulata*, *Primula japonica*, and perhaps some delicate Maidenhair Ferns. In the meantime, our small but mighty team continues to control geraniums and add dashes of colour to complement existing plantings.

Annie Creighton worked at Kiwi Gardens in Perth for many years before moving to Ottawa to be close to her four grandchildren. She enjoys gardening and playing tennis as well as volunteering for the Stephen Lewis Foundation, Grandmothers Advocacy Network, Centrepointe Theatre, and ChamberFest.

Gifts That Keep on Giving

Are you looking for a unique gift for an upcoming special occasion? The Friends of the Farm offer a variety of ways to mark an event or celebration.

You could consider giving the gift of membership to a loved one—we offer a variety of categories over a one- or two-year period. See our website for more details and easy payment methods www.friendsofthefarm.ca/become-a-member.

Another excellent option is a donation to the Friends to serve as a tribute to a family member or friend. Your gesture to those you cherish will help the Friends tend the Farm, and enhance the enjoyment that all our visitors will take in this landmark feature of Ottawa.

The Friends of the Farm also offer photocards that feature beautiful images of the Farm. When you purchase a membership or make a donation on behalf of a special someone, you could let them know by sending one of these cards. You can purchase cards at the Friends' office in Building 72 in the Arboretum, and when you advise us of your membership or donation gift, we would be happy to send out the card. For more information, contact membership@friendsofthefarm.ca or call the office at 613-230-3276.

Upcoming Events, 2019

For more information, visit www.friendsofthefarm.ca or call 613-230-3276.

Got Bats? Arboretum tour by Bettina Henkelman

- Saturday, July 6, 8:30 pm.
[Rain day: July 7]
 - Meet at Building 72 in the Arboretum.
 - Learn about our flying furry friends, Ottawa's bats species, their superpowers and their habitat. Catch their aerial acrobatics and eavesdrop using a special bat detector.
 - Bring a flashlight, good footwear and bug repellent!
 - The tour is 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 kindly accepted.
- *Check website for information on this and other tree tours this year.*

Victorian Tea

- Saturday, July 20, 2 to 4 pm. [Rain Day: July 21]
- Enter the contest for best hat and best costume (men and women).
- Bring a patio chair and listen to live music.
- Location: Under the trees in the Arboretum near Building 72, east of the Prince of Wales roundabout.
- Free parking; tickets for formal tea \$15, reservations not required.



Art on the Farm

- Saturday, August 17, 10 am to 4 pm.
[Rain day: August 18]
- Artists will display and sell their original

- works under the trees of the Arboretum.
- Event also features a sale of art books and prints.
- Location: near Building 72, in the Arboretum, east of the Prince of Wales roundabout.
- Free admission and parking.

Cooking with Edible Flowers and Herbs

- Master Gardener Fall lecture by Nancy McDonald.
- Tuesday, September 10, 7 to 9 pm.
- Building 72, Arboretum, Central Experimental Farm.
- \$12 for members of the Friends, \$15 for others.
- See www.friendsofthefarm.ca for more information and to sign up.

New Opportunity to Dedicate a Bench in the Beautiful Arboretum

The Friends of the Farm have purchased three high-quality benches, which have been placed in select areas around the Arboretum. The public is invited to purchase elegant dedication plaques that will be attached to the benches. These plaques will provide a lasting and significant way to celebrate loved ones. The benches will benefit all who visit the Arboretum and wish to rest and appreciate the splendour of their surroundings.

With a payment of \$7,000, a person or group of persons may



choose an available bench and receive a dedication plaque that will remain in place for ten years, with an option to renew. A Canada Revenue Agency tax receipt will be issued for the \$7,000 donation minus the cost of the plaque. Conditions will be laid out in a legal contract between the Friends of the Farm and the donor. Further information may be found on the Friends' website www.friendsofthefarm.ca or obtained from the Friends' office.

This celebration bench initiative follows in the wake of the Friends' very successful donor tree program (1991 to 2005) which enriched the Arboretum with over 1,000 trees and dedication plaques. The Merivale Shelterbelt program (2005 to 2018) added a lovely and protective swath of trees and shrubs along Merivale Avenue, and provided a dedication wall featuring celebration plaques. These programs have been discontinued. The new celebration bench program in the Arboretum is a welcome addition and allows the public to participate in the Farm in an enduring manner.

Board of Directors
Friends of the Central Experimental Farm

Volunteers Thanked for Their Years of Service

At the Friends' 2019 Annual General Meeting in April, Director of Volunteers Donna Pape thanked the following volunteers for their years of service:

5 Years: Linda Butcher, Sue Cumming, Anne Darley, Lily Foo, Jose Guevin, Deborah Higdon-LeBlond, Nancy Irving, Marc LeBlond, Robert Leslie, Anne Maurais, Janet Stephenson;

10 Years: Gwen Addison, Indu Arora, Barbara Dempsey, Aruna Ghatalia, Kitty Langill, Cathy MacGregor, Martin MacLeod, Betty Jean O'Riordan, Pat Peterson, Marilyn Snedden, Bernadette Walker;

20 Years: Polly McColl;

25 Years: Sally Hill;

30 Years: Louise Moore.

Brian Worobey—Rocking the Volunteer Experience

By Joan Butcher

The Rock Garden at the Farm was looking rather derelict in 2005. There were many weeds, no alpine plants, and the flagstone was in poor shape. This was not surprising, given that it could be tended only when the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm (FCEF) busy Daylily-Iris Team had time to spare.

One of the Friends' garden volunteers was especially concerned by the state of neglect in the rockery, and decided to take action. Brian Worobey, a former federal government research scientist, is a long-time devotee of rock gardens. His love of hiking and geology fostered a keen appreciation for a rockery's many elements, e.g., land topography, rocks, plants, perennials unique to rock gardens, shrubs, trees, and water features. He has a rock garden on his property in Ottawa, and knows they need significant tender loving care in order to thrive.

Brian began his campaign for a revitalized rock garden by discussing the issue with Sharon Saunders of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. She agreed that the area needed additional care and attention. His next step was to seek help from fellow members of the FCEF Board of Directors.



For Brian, as a classical guitar player, breaking fingernails on his right hand is a gardening hazard. Here he provides the music at a Friends of the Farm Art Exhibition in 2009.

His pitch to the Board was successful, and a new team was created to renew and provide continuing care for the Rock Garden. He led the group for three years and has continued as a team member thereafter. For the first three years, he had three to four volunteers, as well as two or three short-term summer students. The TLC has had the desired effect, and the Rock Garden is now in excellent condition.

An all-round volunteer

Brian has certainly met the goal he set when he became a volunteer with the Friends, namely, "to support continued care and growth of a national treasure—a farm and gardens—in the heart of the City of Ottawa." Not only did he take charge of the Rock Garden project, he served on several other garden teams including those for the Explorer and Heritage Rose Gardens, the Shelter Belt, and the Arboretum. He was a member of the FCEF Board of Directors with the responsibility for managing volunteers. In addition, he was in charge of the For Love of the Farm fund raiser for three years and assisted with the set up and tear down of many of the Friends' special events.

Brian's interest in gardening and soil began in his youth, living on farms in Saskatchewan and Alberta. His initial education was in Biochemistry, and he worked in that field for some ten years as a technologist in research at Agriculture Canada and Health Canada laboratories in Ottawa, Saskatoon and Winnipeg. He resumed academic pursuits at the University of Manitoba, completing an Honours BSc, MSc and PhD.



Photos by R. Hinchecliff

Dr. Worobey's PhD thesis work was on biochemical interactions in natural chemicals in soil.

When he returned to Ottawa, it was as Research Scientist in Pesticide Metabolism at Health Canada's Sir Frederick Banting Research Laboratories. Eventually, he moved into policy, risk assessment, and management of pesticides in food, including five years of intensive NAFTA negotiations on the harmonization of pesticide regulations.

In summing up his experience to date at the Central Experimental Farm, Brian said, "I have worked alongside so many wonderful people in the gardens. Added to that is the satisfaction of helping give something beautiful and lasting to the people of Ottawa and all of Canada. This is volunteerism at its best."

Tech Support Opportunity

Do you have some time to offer? Do you have technical skills you'd like to share? The Friends of the Farm are looking for a volunteer tech person who is comfortable with minor hardware and software issues. We are not looking for an expert, but rather someone who could come into the office from time to time, or as needed, to troubleshoot any issue we might have. Website experience would be ideal but not crucial. Some experience with

app creation would also be a bonus as we'd like to explore this area further, if guided by the right person. You would mainly work with our admin staff, and at times with the volunteer and membership directors.

Please contact the membership director, Deborah Higdun-LeBlond by email, membership@friendsofthefarm.ca for more information or if you believe you can help us out.

These are a Few of My Favourite Things ... In the Rock Garden

By Annie Creighton

It is seriously difficult to choose just a few favourites when you are a committed plant collector. And in a rock garden, elements such as colour, bloom time, height, soil requirements, and continued interest with seed heads or foliage, must all be considered.

Pulsatilla vulgaris. Formerly called *Anemone pulsatilla*, this plant is a real winner. Its common name is Pasque Flower, as in certain places, even sometimes Ottawa, it flowers in time for Easter or Passover. In fact, the juice of the purple sepals has traditionally been used in Europe to colour Easter eggs. Upright, bell-shaped flowers emerge shortly after the first leaves very early in spring. The rest of the finely divided leaves follow the flowers so you really get to appreciate their delicate beauty. The 3-5 cm flowers are borne singly on stems 10-15 cm tall. The huge purple goblets are furry on the outside and silky inside, with bright golden stamens. Can you tell I love this little plant? Following the cheerful flowers are lovely silky-plumed seed heads that are excellent in delicate flower arrangements and continue to look attractive long after the flowers are gone. *Pulsatilla rubra* is a dark red, *vulgaris* is purple and *alba* is white. *Pulsatilla* thrives in full sun in well-drained soil.



Annie Creighton

Pulsatilla vulgaris

Gentiana. The first time I saw these lovely blue flowers they were growing on the side of unpaved roads in the Yukon. I was immediately smitten. The intense blue jumped out at me from the gravel. My first sighting was likely *Gentiana acaulis*, or Stemless Gentian, which is hardy to Zone 2.

Gentiana verna, or Spring Gentian, is a little less hardy. It's a clump-forming plant but worth tracking down and tucking into a protected corner. There are a number of superstitions associated with the Spring Gentian, e.g., it is bad luck to bring a gentian into the house for fear of being struck by lightning and, it is dangerous to pick one, since, supposedly, death will follow.

Gentiana septemfida var. *Lagodecbiana*, the Summer Gentian, is one of the easiest to grow, and features masses of small cobalt-blue trumpet flowers in mid- to late summer. It is excellent for cascading down a wall or in alpine troughs but should have some afternoon shade in hot summers.

Dryas octopetala is a low-growing, spreading perennial with leathery leaves that are white on the undersides. The delicate flowers, with eight creamy white petals, are held 6-10 cm above the leaf mat. The feathery hairs of the seed head first appear twisted together and then spread open into a ball. *Dryas* grows in dry areas in gravel soils so is ideal for trailing over walls or rocks.



Annie Creighton

Gentiana acaulis



Peter Lesica, USDA Forest Service

Dryas octopetala

Rideau Canal Promenade

The Rideau Canal Promenade, a series of outdoor exhibits beside the pedestrian/bike path along the Canal, was officially unveiled on May 14, 2019.

Each of seven exhibits includes sculpture, plaques and illustrations that highlight the history and cultural significance of that particular location of the Rideau Canal. The seven sites are the Ottawa Locks, Shaw Centre, Pretoria Bridge, Lansdowne Park, Dow's Lake, the Central Experimental Farm, and Hartwells Lockstation. The CEF site is in the Arboretum beside Dow's Lake.

The Department of Canadian Heritage developed the Rideau Canal Promenade in partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Parks Canada, the NCC, and the City of Ottawa. The Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn, Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, and the Algonquins of Ontario were also involved.



Why Volunteer in the Rock Garden?

By Annie Creighton

You are recently retired. After many years in the workforce, you have no more deadlines and schedules. What to do next? Play more golf, tennis or bridge? Visit places on your bucket list? Learn a language or play the piano? You can do all that but you can also volunteer your time and give back to your community and your city. Volunteering can allow you to follow passions that were sidelined, or squeezed into your working life.

Being a volunteer provides multiple benefits. You remain active, social, and engaged with a renewed sense of purpose. Many people are drawn to volunteer for the Friends of the Farm because they support our national treasure, the Farm and Ornamental Gardens in the heart of the city. Some volunteers have downsized, and have no garden or a much smaller space to cultivate. Some have an innate horticultural instinct and are drawn to the diversity of gardens that the Farm has to offer.

There are many areas to spend time outside after long years of working in an office, so why choose the Rock Garden in particular? Here are some reasons that our current Rock Garden volunteers have for their choice.

For Marc LeBlond, the Rock Garden appeals because of the space it occupies with its different levels, its variety of plants, shrubs and trees, as well as its beautiful paths and rocks.

For Brian Worobey, the Rock Garden was a natural fit due to his love of hiking and geology. He

appreciates the many elements of the garden such as land topography, rocks, plants, perennials unique to rock gardens, water feature, and winding pathways.

And Kate Hadden took advice when it was given. She was told that after a career of research, “the Farm is perfect for you with your love of gardening. You **HAVE** to volunteer.” She likes the variety of work in a rockery, the shapes and positioning of the rocks, and the challenges of creating integrated heights, colours, and textures. That, and the fact there is always some shade in the middle of July.

For Annie Creighton, the Rock Garden was a natural extension of her life running a farm and working at a perennial nursery. It has also proved to be more relaxing than some of her other challenging volunteer activities. She appreciates being able to expand beyond the confines of a city garden, and takes pride in following the intention of the Rock Garden’s original design, helping to bring it back to its former glory.

And Val Gourlay, who passed away in December, volunteered for four years with quiet enthusiasm. She loved working in the rockery as well as in her own large garden. Dedicated to the team, she waged war against weeds. Although she had some physical challenges, she showed up whenever possible. Time in the garden seemed to give her joy and life.

Joy and Life—why we all volunteer at the Experimental Farm.



Marc LeBlond

Members of the 2017 Rock Garden team. Back row left to right: Samir Taha, Annie Creighton, Brian Worobey. Front: Kate Hadden, Kate Driscoll, Marc LeBlond.



R. Hinchcliff

Kate Driscoll, Rock Garden volunteer, June 2019.



R. Hinchcliff

Rob Stuart, Rock Garden volunteer, June 2019.

Volunteer Gardening Teams Turn 30

The very first Friends of the Farm who volunteered their time to help maintain the Ornamental Gardens and Arboretum gathered at Building 72 in the spring of 1989. Then-curator Trevor Cole allocated times and garden areas for each “Green Thumb” team to work in.

“Tools have been purchased and 16 volunteers have logged some 200 hours of happy gardening wearing their Green Thumb aprons,” stated an article in the Friends’ summer newsletter that year. “The weekday crews have worked side by side with the professional

staff while the weekend crew has done a sensational job on their own in the nursery.”

“This is to express my personal appreciation of the work done by the volunteers of Friends of the Farm in helping with the maintenance of the gardens, nursery and arboretum this summer,” wrote Trevor Cole in December 1989. “Without their efforts the gardens would not have been nearly such a credit to Agriculture Canada and to Ottawa.”

Bee City Ottawa – Not to Be

By Julianne Labreche

There is much to learn about bees. That insight occurred to me soon after I started to write a column called *Bee Line* for the Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton.

Bees are especially fascinating creatures because they come in so many varieties. Beyond easily spotted honeybees and bumblebees, there are over 400 species of native bees in Ontario: miner bees; mason bees; leafcutter bees; sweat bees; and many more. Some don't even seem to be bees – at least, they don't conform to the stereotypical image of an insect that stings, lives in hives, or makes honey.

What's really important to know about bees, though, is that many species are in trouble right now in Canada and around the world. Some Ontario bee species are at risk or endangered. And there's the sting. If bees are in trouble, so are we. Bees are like the proverbial canary in the coal mine. Their scarcity is signaling that something is very wrong in our ecosystem.

Plant for pollinators

Bees are an important pollinator of many of the fruits and vegetables that provide us with a healthy diet. Bees also pollinate the wild plants that birds and mammals rely upon. The fact that bee populations are in decline should serve as a clear signal that we should do more to support biodiversity – including in our own front and back yards. Ditch the lawnmower! Plant for pollinators instead.

That's why, when the *Ottawa Citizen* approached Master Gardeners asking that we take on the role of Armchair Mayor and write an editorial describing one thing that would make this city better, I jumped at the opportunity. I pitched the idea that Ottawa should become a Bee City. Bee City Canada is a federally regulated charitable organization that operates on the principle that cities can become champions for pollinators. Cities are a great place to celebrate biodiversity and to encourage pollinators, in part because pesticides are banned.

In the 24 official Canadian bee cities, bee-friendly gardens are being built, seeds are being sown, containers are being filled, and pollinator corridors are being created. Native plants in these spaces are providing habitat for wild bees. Schools, churches and businesses are getting onboard too. Volunteers at Bee City

Canada are providing education sessions, free webinars and information-sharing about bees and biodiversity.

After the Armchair Mayor editorial was published (just before the last municipal election), several city councillors took up the cause, and the city's Environment Committee agreed to study the proposal. An online petition that garnered over 27,000 signatures was organized by a local beekeeper. Letters of support were written, including one from the Board of the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm and others from local horticultural societies.

Last April, the decision came down. The pitch had failed. The proposal to make Ottawa a Bee City was not greeted with enthusiasm by city staff.

Why wasn't the idea of Ottawa as a Bee City embraced?

Initially, there seemed to be a swarm of support. In their report, city staff said there would be too much paperwork with time-consuming requirements to report on progress. But it can be argued that Bee City Canada's reporting form is about as difficult to fill out as a report card. There were whispers that Bee City Canada was the wrong name for a crisis facing all our pollinators. Maybe, but people generally relate better to bees than other pollinators such as flies or moths.

There were accusations that honeybees and wild bees weren't allies. They compete for space and pollen, and need separate spaces. But since Ottawa doesn't even allow beehives except under special circumstances, this seems irrelevant. Bee cities are about pollinator protection, not selling honey.

Whatever the case, Ottawa has chosen not to join the 24 other Bee Cities to learn and share ideas. A few good things came out of the experience, though. City officials have agreed to a pollinator garden, or perhaps a bee hotel, at City Hall or another location. There might be grants for community groups to develop pollinator projects, if provincial cuts don't interfere. The City may create a Pollination Appreciation Day.

Of course, this doesn't stop any Ottawa business, school or church from joining Bee City Canada independently. It also

doesn't stop people from listening to Bee City Canada webinars online, including a recent one I heard about an inspiring all-Ireland pollinator plan. Some days, sigh, it's nice to dream big.

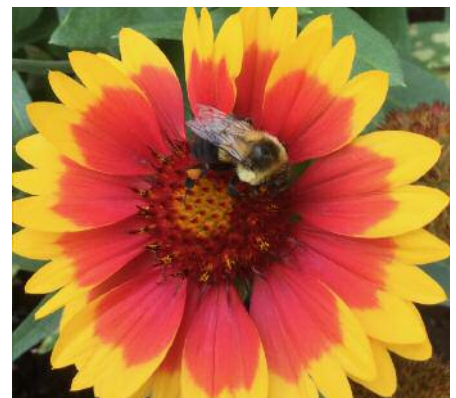
Julianne Labreche is the current coordinator of the Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton. Her Bee Line column appears bi-monthly in their newsletter, The Edible Garden..



Bumblebee and *Asclepias tuberosa*



Bumblebee and *Coreopsis*



Bumblebee and *Gaillardia*

In Memory, Judy Dodds

Judy Dodds, former president of the Friends of the Farm, died on March 30 at her home in Ottawa at the age of 70.

Judy worked for 11 years as a volunteer at the Farm. During that time, she was on the Arboretum team and, among other tasks, proved to be a tenacious battler against dog-strangling vine. She was persuaded to join the Board of Directors in 2011 as Secretary, became Vice-President, and was President from 2014 to 2018.

In his eulogy at Judy’s memorial service, Randy Taylor, Treasurer for the Friends, spoke of how her tenacity in the Arboretum translated into her work for the Board—taking on new projects, changing by-laws, and organizing and planning for future work at the Farm.

Judy grew up in West Palm Beach, Florida, and attended Florida State University. On a whim, she went to Washington, DC to work at the Census Bureau. She ended up making it her career, rising to be Assistant Division Chief. It was through her work there that she met and subsequently married Ken Young, who was in Washington working on a Statistics Canada special project. Upon retirement, she moved to Ottawa with Ken and quickly involved herself in many activities. She was proud to be a citizen of both the United States and Canada.

Judy joined St. Andrew’s upon arrival in Ottawa, and was very active in the life and mission of the church, including the Women’s Guild, the Women’s Missionary Society and pastoral care. She especially enjoyed meeting visitors from around the world during St. Andrew’s summer open doors. She was elected to be an elder, and between 2010 and 2015 was administrative clerk of Session.

She loved the Ornamental Gardens at the Farm and admired those volunteers who got down in the dirt, creating beauty through hard work, caring for and nurturing the plants as they grew and blossomed. And she was a champion for the Shelterbelt project that provides shade and protection from winter’s ravages at the edge of the Farm. She was always proud to be able to speak at Shelterbelt ceremonies and to promote the Farm.

Kate Harrigan, a colleague of Judy on the Board, describes her as “kind, generous, thoughtful, funny, sarcastic, determined, measured, and wise. Judy was a true optimist, a tireless volunteer, a force for good. She was a stickler for by-laws and meeting protocols, always keeping us on track, with humour and honesty. She was a delight to work with.”

Blaine Marchand described Judy’s work for the Friends as being “always guided by her commitment and devotion to the Farm and the environment, by her belief that people can work together to make the world a better place, and by her sly sense of humour. Judy was a woman of grace and graciousness.”

We send our sincere condolences to Ken, to the rest of her family, and to her friends.



Judy Dodds



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.

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Aide-Mémoire

(The Rock Garden, Central Experimental Farm)

Stepping into is stepping away
 from the hubbub, the constant clamour
 of traffic along Prince of Wales Drive,
 insistent as the tasks that dog our lives,
 gnaw at our ears with persistent asks.
 But here, time is by-passed.
 Two sunken paths of interconnected stone
 meander onward, lighten the plod of our soles
 as we stroll past beauty skillfully arranged.
 Amid the outcroppings, in pockets of earth,
 primulas blooms in primary colours,
 rose-pink sepals of *Dodecatheon*
 stream up and away, a meteor shower
 against night dark soil,
 an emerging nautilus of Maidenhair,
 cascades, floats gracefully on the wind.
 Further in, away from summer's unrelenting heat,
 an overhang of Mugo Pine creates an oasis,
 like a cool deep drink of water,
 while the cascade of bright blue bellflowers,
 sprays of rosette *Saxifrage*, overflowing of *Sempervivum*,
 "always alive", offer an aide-mémoire to yield,
 accept the invitation of rock to sit, allow
 this tranquil garden to wash away
 the chatter that nips our hearts and
 take a long slow view of the clattering world.

By Blaine Marchand



Consider joining the Friends of the Farm!

Find our membership form on the website and pay by PayPal or send in a cheque:

www.friendsofthefarm.ca/become-a-member/.

Benefits include discounts on Master Gardener lectures hosted by the Friends, one free adult admission per visit to the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum, quarterly printed newsletters by post, and monthly Farm Notes e-newsletters.

We also accept donations to support our activities and events, which also support the garden teams that maintain the cherished Ornamental Gardens. A variety of donations can be made through our webpage:

www.friendsofthefarm.ca/donations/.



Rock Gardening for Everyone ... *(continued from Page 12)*

as much garden soil. Unless one is an alpine specialist grower or collector of a single genus, for instance, the exact soil proportions don't matter much.

Many plants are happiest growing among rocks, where their roots can reach far down beside the cooler rock faces to find the moisture there and below. Some species can develop roots a foot or more long, and thus are most easily planted as seedlings or young plants. Although few alpines are available in local nurseries, they can be ordered from various mail-order nurseries or obtained by joining your local rock garden club. However, there are enough dwarf plants available locally that

will grow successfully among your rocks without starting them from seed. If you have a larger rocky area and shade, woodland natives like *Hepaticas* and spring ephemerals can start the season. Choose dwarf plants and monitor their growth so that they don't overwhelm smaller species.

Following these guidelines will help you on your way to creating a fascinating miniature landscape, your own rock garden.

Helpful websites

www.nargs.org The North American Rock Garden Society
www.ottawarockgarden.ca The Ottawa

Valley Rock Garden and Horticultural Society
<http://www.srgc.net/site> The Scottish Rock Garden Club
<http://www.ontariowildflower.com/> Andy Fyon's website about Northern Ontario wildflowers.

Josie Pazdzior is a horticulturist who feels lucky to work at doing what she loves best, creating gardens and coaching newer gardeners. She volunteers with the Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton, the Ottawa Valley Rock Garden Society, and the Ottawa Horticultural Society.



Dwarf evergreens and flowering deciduous shrubs such as this *Deutzia gracilis* 'Nikko' add substance in the rock garden.



This tiny rock garden was put together using stones already on the small property, and planted up the next day to enjoy immediately. Normally, the soil is left to settle much longer before planting.

Photos by Josie Pazdzior

One Hundred Years Ago

"Ottawa motorists appreciate the fact that the main gate to the Experimental Farm has been widened a considerable extent, thus permitting the easy access of motor vehicles to the handsome grounds. Formerly there was barely space for an automobile of standard width to squeeze through. There was but an inch or two to spare. Now it is possible for a motorist to shoot through at the speed limit, five miles per hour."
(The Ottawa Journal, August 23, 1919.)

This photo is of the main gate in 1945. It was located off what is now known as Prince of Wales Drive, across from the northern end of the Arboretum. It later became the entrance to the former Sir John Carling Building.



Rock Gardening for Everyone

By Josie Pazdzior

(with fellow rock gardener Rob Stuart)

"In a rock garden we foster a little patch of the wilderness that stands to us for freedom." Jason Hill, English garden writer.

Rock gardens seem to have a special appeal for many Canadian gardeners. Perhaps it is their solidity and timelessness, akin to the ancient rock of the Canadian Shield. Rock or stone also provides an ideal home for many interesting plants.

Defined as a rocky area, natural or constructed, where alpine and other small plants are grown, a well-designed rock garden is full of interest. Many different species can be displayed close together, where the plants and rocks set each other off to best advantage. Classical rock gardens include mainly alpine species, which are brilliant in flower, delicate-appearing but tough, with unusual foliage forms like "buns" and "cushions". Alpines are amazing organisms, surviving extreme winter conditions and producing seeds in a matter of weeks. Together, the plants and the rocks form a miniature landscape that holds its own fascination.

Creating ideal spots for plants to grow

A classical rock or alpine garden seeks to recreate or suggest a mountain landscape where small alpine plants grow in special conditions: well-drained, generally shallow and infertile soil on sunny rock ledges or screes. The main goal of rock gardening is to create ideal spots for desirable plants to grow. Rocks provide a cool root run, lean soil gives excellent drainage, stone mulch reduces weeds, and shade protects plants such as *Saxifragas* from midday sun. Crevices can offer the special habitat that some plants such as *Lewisia*s need.

It's a bit of a challenge to use only "true" alpines. Rarer alpines especially tend to have very specific needs, e.g., some afternoon shade, acid/alkaline soil, or crevices. It can be tricky to do, but choose the plants you want to grow, check their needs, and arrange the rocks and soil to provide spots for different species (or choose plants to fit the spots available).

Dedicated rock gardeners have been known to import tons of rock and sand for their large-scale efforts, sowing hundreds of species of tiny seeds every year. This extreme level of effort is definitely not required for a small rock garden, which can be built almost anywhere, and provides a perfect place to display favorite stones collected on our travels.

Making your rock garden

To make your personal rock garden, assess the rocks already on site (bedrock, walls, paths, random stones). Next, decide what space and resources you want to devote to the project. Be aware that some rock gardens may need a base of gravel or crushed stone to keep things level and prevent the rocks from sinking into the soil. Next, find out where you might get more rocks, preferably free – and start arranging them. There are many ways to do this.

A classical rock garden involves layers of rocky ledges on a slope. Crevice gardens feature vertical, slanted, or horizontal spaces between narrow parallel rock faces, where many plants thrive in very little soil. A scree garden is a gently sloped area of sandy/gravelly/stony ground in which plants grow. Many rock gardens have a mix of these types. You can even have a miniature rock garden planted in troughs.



Dwarf *Daphne* 'Lawrence Crocker' and *Aubrieta* 'Royal Red' (Rock Cress) start the spring bloom in this very personal rock garden.



Crevice garden with the difficult-to-grow *Lewisia cotyledon* growing happily in a crevice.

Purists insist that a rock garden should have the same kind of rock, stratified in natural-looking layers. But you can pile up a heap of rocks, throw some sand/soil mix over them, create some crevices and shade, set out your favorite stones, and still end up with a stunning garden. Or you can make or buy troughs to fill for your balcony or patio garden.

Planting your garden

Every "expert" has their own formula for soil or planting mix, usually with varying proportions of "sharp" sand, some humus, compost or peat moss and grit or fine stone. Some renowned rock gardeners use only coarse sand, which is easy to work with and actually seems to stay moist further down while allowing good drainage at the same time. For my basic rock garden, I have successfully used a simple mix of sharp (coarse) sand with almost

Photos by Josie Pazdzior

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