friends of the farm
les amis de la ferme

FRIENDS *of the* Central Experimental Farm

Spring 2022 Newsletter | Volume 34 No. 2

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ISABELLA PRESTON'S
Gardening Life

When Isabella Preston lived in Ottawa, the gardens at the Central Experimental Farm (CEF) were the focus of her life. She worked in the Horticulture Building, in the greenhouses, in her test garden, and in the public Ornamental Gardens. She lived in the Civic Hospital area, and was able to tend to her plants and gardens at the nearby Farm at any time.

World famous among early 20th century horticulturists, Preston (1881-1964) was the first female hybridist in Canada.

She is a key figure in Canada's ornamental plant history, leaving us a legacy of beautiful new flowers and trees. During her 26-year career at the CEF in Ottawa she earned an international reputation as a plant breeder.

LIVE THE GARDEN LIFE

2022 is *Canada's Year of the Garden*, as proclaimed by Alexander Reford, President, Canadian Garden Council. It "will commemorate Canada's rich garden heritage, celebrate today's vibrant garden culture, and create legacies for a sustainable future."

The theme of this Year of the Garden is "Live the Garden Life." Who better to salute for a well-lived garden life than Isabella Preston?

In our Spring 2020 Newsletter to mark the 100 years that elapsed since Preston began her career at the CEF, we celebrated her achievements. That issue included stories about her background, her lilacs, her Siberian irises, her Caragana, the inspiration she provides to gardeners today, and her own retirement garden. The issue is available on the Friends' website *(Use the QR code at the bottom of the back page.)*

EARLY YEARS

Isabella Preston recalls her early days in the following notes:

I was born in Lancaster, England, in 1881 and was educated at a private school in

Continued on page 4...

PHOTOS TOP TO BOTTOM: 1. Preston's 'Makamik' crabapple, still found at garden centres, is one of those she named for Canadian lakes. Dominion Horticulturist William T. Macoun, the man who hired her to work at the Farm, dubbed the series "Rosyblooms." 2. Isabella Preston in 1926 with her 'Carmenetta' rose that remains available in garden centres. There is one in the Heritage Rose Garden at the Farm. *Friends of the Farm.*

Volunteers in the perennial garden

A New Normal?

At time of writing, the pandemic rules are relaxing, and there's a sense that it's time to get on with it, whatever it, the "new normal" might be.

What will normal look like at the Farm?

We very much hope that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada will be able to move forward with the research and development work that had to be put on hold during the last couple of years. We also trust that the Friends of the Farm will be able to do more gardening work in the public areas, provide more educational activities, and once again stage a range of engaging events.

We know there will be new activity at the northeast end of the Farm in preparation for construction of the new hospital's parkade. Many of the concerns voiced by the community about the hospital and the parkade remain unanswered, including travel distances to and from the transit station, travel distances from bus and parking spots, access to outdoor areas and washrooms, adequacy of the parkade design to provide parking spaces as well as a rooftop park with full-sized trees, and the significant loss of trees on the site.

Some people have been doing their best to keep pressure on the City, the National Capital Commission, and the Hospital to address such issues. Once the parkade is under construction, it essentially puts an end to discussion and restricts options for addressing many of these problem areas.

Looking forward, a commitment to the development of legislation to protect federally-owned heritage properties was identified in the December 16, 2021 mandate letter of the Minister for Environment and Climate Change. If this federal legislation doesn't happen in a timely fashion, we will look to Ottawa Centre's Member of Parliament, Yasir Naqvi, to follow through on his specific pledge to safeguard what is left of the Farm for future generations.

In the much-anticipated normal times, we need to see real protection for the Farm become the norm.

Eric Jones
President / Président

Une nouvelle normalité?

Au moment de rédiger ce texte, les règles décrétées en raison de la pandémie ont subi un certain assouplissement. Nous avons la vague impression qu'il est temps de passer à autre chose, de revenir à la normale, quelle que soit la « nouvelle » normalité.

À quoi ressemblera la normalité à la Ferme?

Nous avons bon espoir qu'Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada seront en mesure de reprendre les travaux de recherche et de développement qui avaient été mis en attente dans les deux dernières années. Nous sommes également persuadés que les Amis de la Ferme pourront s'acquitter de projets de jardinage plus ambitieux dans les espaces publics, et de plus, présenter des activités éducatives et mettre en scène un éventail d'évènements captivants.

Déjà, nous sommes au courant d'une activité nouvelle qui sera déployée dans le secteur nord-est de la Ferme en vue de la construction du parc de stationnement étagé du nouvel hôpital. La collectivité a exprimé ses inquiétudes au sujet de l'hôpital et du stationnement intérieur, et celles-ci demeurent sans réponse : les distances à couvrir pour aller et venir à la gare de transit ou de l'arrêt de l'autobus aux espaces de stationnement; l'accès aux espaces extérieurs et aux salles de toilette; la justesse de conception du stationnement étagé avec les espaces de stationnement nécessaires; l'aménagement d'une toiture-jardin ou d'un toit vert avec de gros arbres, alors que nous déplorons une perte significative d'arbres sur le site de la Ferme.

Certaines personnes ont fait de leur mieux pour maintenir la pression sur la Ville, la Commission de la capitale nationale et l'hôpital afin de les inciter à se pencher sur ces questions. Une fois le stationnement en voie de construction, il n'y aura plus lieu de poursuivre la discussion, ce qui réduira le nombre d'options possibles en vue de résoudre un grand nombre de ces questions.

Envisageons l'avenir et gardons espoir, car un engagement à « présenter un projet de loi exhaustif pour protéger les lieux patrimoniaux appartenant à l'État » est bien indiqué dans la Lettre de mandat du ministre de l'Environnement et du Changement climatique du 16 décembre 2021. Advenant que ce projet de loi fédérale ne puisse être présenté en temps opportun, nous solliciterons l'appui du député d'Ottawa-Centre, Yasir Naqvi, et lui demanderons d'assurer le suivi en regard de cet engagement explicite qui permettra de sauvegarder la Ferme, et ce qu'il en reste, pour le compte des générations futures.

Dans cette nouvelle normalité que nous anticipons vivement, il nous importe tant qu'une protection réelle de la Ferme se manifeste et devienne la norme.

UPCOMING EVENTS 2022

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION
Building 72, Saturday, April 9
10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (VIRTUAL)
Wednesday, May 11
7:00 p.m. (on right)
Speaker: Alexander Reford, Director of Les Jardins de Métis (Reford Gardens)

PLANT SALE
K. W. Neatby Building, Maple Drive,
Sunday, May 15
8:00 to 1 p.m.

USED BOOK SALE
Building 72, Saturday, June 25 &
Sunday, June 26
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

USED BOOK DROP-OFF
Building 72 garage,
Saturday, September 24
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

STAY TUNED!

For more details, use the QR codes below to stay tuned to our:

2022 Events

Facebook


Alexander Reford. *Ali Inay*

AGM PRESENTATION

ELSIE, EVELYN, AND ISABELLA: Women Gardeners and the Shaping of a Canadian Garden

Friends of the Farm are thrilled to welcome Alexander Reford as guest speaker at their 2022 Annual General Meeting.

An Order of Canada recipient in 2021, Reford is director of Les Jardins de Métis (Reford Gardens) in Grand-Métis, Quebec. He is the great grandson of Elsie Reford.

"In 2022," Reford writes, "we are celebrating the Year of the Garden and the 150th anniversary of the birth of our garden founder, Elsie Reford. We are also digging deep into the rich archive of garden material left by Elsie Reford to unearth new information about the story of her garden and its inspiration. Two women were important collaborators on her project, both of whom left their own mark in Ottawa and shaped gardens across Canada: Evelyn Byng and Isabella Preston. One was an avid gardener and alpine enthusiast, the other a brilliant hybridizer and plant researcher."

At the AGM, Alexander Reford will present the story of this unique garden collaboration.

All are welcome to this virtual event on Wednesday, May 11, 7:00 p.m.
Registration is required, at the Friends' website.
TO REGISTER: USE THE QR CODE FOR THE 2022 EVENTS PAGE *(bottom left)*

MASTER GARDENER LECTURES *(VIRTUAL)*

Gardening with Native Plants in Ontario
April 19, with Candace Dressler and Fran Dennett.

Biodiversity at the Crossroads | May 3, with Julianne Labreche.

Paint with Blooms | May 17, with Nancy McDonald.

Another Gardening Year Behind Us
September 13, with Mary Shearman Reid.

FOR DETAILS SCAN THE QR CODE TO THE RIGHT & ACCESS THE **MASTER GARDENER LECTURES** PAGE ON OUR WEBSITE.

ISABELLA PRESTON'S GARDENING LIFE *(Continued from page 1)*

Liverpool. My father and mother were very fond of gardening and as long as I can remember I had a small flower bed of my own. I attended a short course at the Swanley Horticultural College in 1906 but for some years after that I had no garden.

In 1912 my sister accepted a position as music teacher in a College for girls in Ontario and persuaded me to come out to Canada at the same time. For a few weeks I worked on a fruit farm picking raspberries, plums and peaches. In the autumn I attended some lectures on horticulture at the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph and occasionally worked in the greenhouses. The following spring the late Professor J. W. Crow arranged for me to look after some plants in one of the greenhouses. Amongst these there were a few pots of small seedling lilies which he had crossed. Unfortunately, they died. In this same greenhouse Prof. Crow had some dwarf pear trees which I cared for. Watching him emasculate and pollinate the flowers was my first introduction to practical plant breeding.

From 1913 to 1920 I worked under the direction of Professor Crow at the college, and it was in 1916 that the cross that produced *Lilium princeps* var. 'G. C. Creelman' and its sister seedlings was made. *[Forever modest, Preston omits to mention that this new trumpet lily was acclaimed for its beauty and was subsequently used as a parent by other lily hybridizers. See page 6 for more about this lily.]*

In 1920 the late Dr. W. T. Macoun, Dominion Horticulturist, wanted someone to do plant breeding work with ornamental plants and I applied for the position. I wanted to discontinue working with vegetables which I had to do during the war.

I moved to Ottawa and have worked in the Division of Horticulture keeping the collections of perennial plants up to date and testing new varieties of annuals as well as producing new plants by cross pollination. The genera that I have worked with are Aquilegia, Iris, Lilium, Malus, Rosa and Syringa.

A FLYING START TO HYBRIDIZING

During her first year at the Central Experimental Farm in 1920, earning 50 cents an hour, Preston initiated projects that would yield astonishing results:

- **The cross-pollination of a Nodding lilac, recently discovered in China, and the Villosa lilac led to a new class of lilacs named Prestons;**
- **Matching the hardy Japanese rose with the Redleaf rose resulted in her 'Carmenetta' that can still be found at nurseries;**
- **A first cross of Siberian and Oriental irises led to award-winning new Siberians;**
- **Hybridization of ornamental crabapples resulted in a popular new type called Rosyblooms; and,**
- **The development of the 'Ottawa' hybrids, originating from a lily cross, marked the beginning of a famous line of lilies she created at the Farm, most notably her Stenographer and Fighter Aircraft series.**

For more on Preston's work at the Farm, see *Blooms: An Illustrated Guide to the Ornamental Gardens at Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm*, available at the Friends of the Farm's online boutique.

Preston's 'W. T. Macoun' was one of two lilacs chosen to represent the newly-named *Syringa* × *prestoniae*. It can be seen in the Preston Heritage Lilac Collection. Preston named 100 new lilacs. *R. Hinchcliff*

A NIECE REMEMBERS ISABELLA PRESTON

(From the Preston files of Edwinna von Baeyer, kindly donated to the Friends of the Farm.)

Dorothy Burt's mother Margaret was Isabella Preston's sister. Dorothy wrote that the two sisters were always close and 'Aunty Isa' became part of their family. Dorothy remembered asking her aunt if she liked the wallpaper in one of their rooms and Isabella replied "Oh my, no! I couldn't live with such pink paper. I wouldn't have said anything, but you asked me so I must say what I think." "She always did say what she thought," wrote Dorothy, "whether it was giving her sister advice on bringing up children, or how to make tea. Her voice was soft but definite…"

"When you met her, you would think she was an unusual person. She had a direct gaze, dark brown eyes, looked at you very directly, pleased to meet anyone interested in horticulture. She was very shy; her idea of torture was to speak to groups of people.

"She was the shrinking little sister. Aunty Isa was an accomplished pianist, she could play very well, but she didn't like to play for people. Her shyness left her when talking with people about horticulture.

"When Aunty Isa retired and went to live in the little house in Georgetown, we visited her there several times. She had wonderful raspberries, which we had to cover with old lace curtains every night so the birds wouldn't get at them. She was insulted when we tried to wash the berries before eating. 'Nobody washes my raspberries!' she said in no uncertain manner.

"About five years before Isabella's death, her sister Margaret invited her to come and live with her in Philadelphia. Isabella refused and said 'Good gracious child I always want to live on British soil, and I most certainly want to die on British soil.'

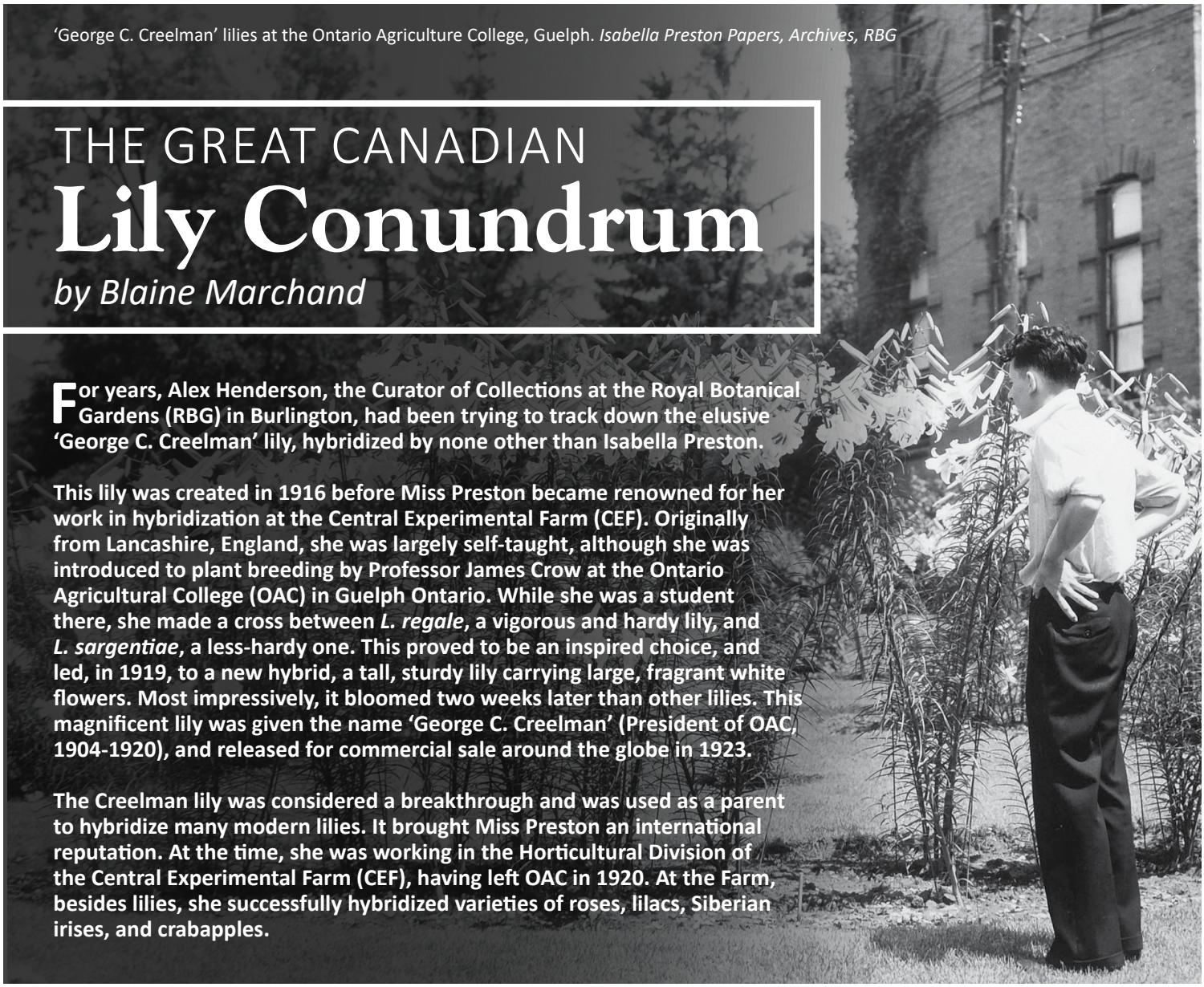
"When she died she asked that her ashes be scattered over her garden and I am sure this was done. People from all over the world came to visit her and she took great delight in showing her garden to these visitors. Her eyes would light up and at these times she spoke without any of her usual shyness. She never had children but she called her lilies her children.

"She was a grand old girl, she had a lot of spunk, a lot of character, I guess that is what it is, in her face, in her body, in her bearing, there was character and that's what you would see when you met her for the first time."

PHOTO ABOVE:
Siberian iris 'Quebec' was one in a popular series that Preston named for Canadian rivers. Her 'Ottawa' and 'Gatineau' were award winners. *R. Hinchcliff*

PHOTOS LEFT TO RIGHT:
Preston's award-winning 'Coronation' lily, named in 1936, when George VI was crowned king. *CSTM Archives AGR437*

Preston, after her retirement, with her beloved lilies at her home in Georgetown, Ontario. Her "contributions to horticulture will forever enrich the lives of the people of Canada and all of northern and short-season climates." (Percy H. Wright). *Isabella Preston Papers, RBG Archives*



'George C. Creelman' lilies at the Ontario Agriculture College, Guelph. *Isabella Preston Papers, Archives, RBG*

THE GREAT CANADIAN Lily Conundrum

by Blaine Marchand

For years, Alex Henderson, the Curator of Collections at the Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) in Burlington, had been trying to track down the elusive 'George C. Creelman' lily, hybridized by none other than Isabella Preston.

This lily was created in 1916 before Miss Preston became renowned for her work in hybridization at the Central Experimental Farm (CEF). Originally from Lancashire, England, she was largely self-taught, although she was introduced to plant breeding by Professor James Crow at the Ontario Agricultural College (OAC) in Guelph Ontario. While she was a student there, she made a cross between *L. regale*, a vigorous and hardy lily, and *L. sargentiae*, a less-hardy one. This proved to be an inspired choice, and led, in 1919, to a new hybrid, a tall, sturdy lily carrying large, fragrant white flowers. Most impressively, it bloomed two weeks later than other lilies. This magnificent lily was given the name 'George C. Creelman' (President of OAC, 1904-1920), and released for commercial sale around the globe in 1923.

The Creelman lily was considered a breakthrough and was used as a parent to hybridize many modern lilies. It brought Miss Preston an international reputation. At the time, she was working in the Horticultural Division of the Central Experimental Farm (CEF), having left OAC in 1920. At the Farm, besides lilies, she successfully hybridized varieties of roses, lilacs, Siberian irises, and crabapples.

Alex Henderson, Curator of Collections, Royal Botanical Gardens. *Adam Carter, CBC*

THE SEARCH BEGINS

In 2007, Alex Henderson's boss, Harry Jongerden, met Allan Goddard, the great-grandson of George Creelman, who was wondering whether the Creelman lily was still being grown. Alex was tasked with determining whether it was in the RBG collections. It was not. Intrigued, he undertook further detective work, contacting nurseries and breeders around the world. After a year of effort, his inquiries remained unsuccessful. But he did not give up the quest.

In 2009, on the advice of the University of Guelph's Rodger Tschanz, Alberta Auger of Guelph, Ontario, approached the RBG with five bulbs that she thought might possibly be the missing Creelman lily. In great excitement and anticipation, the bulbs were carefully nurtured. But when the flowers opened and the RBG's herbarium curator, Natalie Iwanycki, and plant taxonomist, Dr. Jim Pringle, examined the blossoms, there wasn't conclusive evidence that the Creelman lily had been found.

Alex continued his search in free moments. In 2009, he decided to go through the Preston archives and discovered a handwritten note about the Creelman lily. This was fascinating, but did not provide any new leads to help re-discover it.

BREAKTHROUGH

In July 2017, Cynthia Culp of Bancroft Ontario called the gardening segment of CBC's *Ontario Today* asking: "What's so special about these Creelman lilies I have?" Alex, who was on vacation and happened to be listening, was thrilled. He contacted her for more information. These lilies had come from her grandmother and had been passed down through generations. She generously donated five small bulbs to the RBG and they were grown on until they could be verified.

As fate would have it, a third group of bulbs came to light through Donna White of Ayton Ontario. Once again, these plants had been passed along over the years. She donated five bulbs to the RBG in October 2017 and these too were grown on.
There was one important common denominator in the three donations: all of them had originated from the same person – Mabel Trask. She acquired bulbs around 1930 from an open day at the Ontario Agricultural College. Mrs. Trask was an avid gardener and the lilies thrived under her care. A generous woman, as gardeners often are, she shared her lily wealth with others, including her daughter, Enid Whale, Donna's mother.

SUCCESS

In May, 2018, Dr. Pringle and new Herbarium Curator, Nadia Cavallin, used Miss Preston's 1928 notes and confirmed that each of the Whale lilies were true to type. Subsequently, the other two donated lily groups have been deemed to be Creelman lilies.

Alex says his reward for the years of diligent work is that an important Canadian horticultural artifact, long thought lost, has been found. Equally significant is that the lily was developed for the Canadian climate by a woman who worked in a field dominated by men. It speaks, he feels, to the importance of both the RBG and the CEF in Canadian horticulture.

It is noteworthy that the Creelman lily was developed by a woman hailing from Lancashire and later tracked down by a man (Alex) from Yorkshire.

'George C. Creelman' *CSTM Archives AGR478*

If any of you might think you have Creelman lilies in your gardens, Alex would love to hear from you. He can be reached at ahenderson@rbg.ca.

Blaine Marchand, Director of Gardens for the Friends of the Farm, has lilacs and crabapples hybridized by Isabella Preston in his own garden, but no Creelman lilies … as yet!

Jean-Pascal Gratton with volunteer peony team members Bill Wegman, Greg Joy, Mary Pratte, 2010. *R. Hinchcliff*

BEST WISHES TO J-P

Jean-Pascal Gratton has retired from his job as Supervisor, Arboretum and Ornamental Gardens. Known to friends and colleagues as J-P, he began with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in 1990. After helping to clear the Farm's damaged trees from the ice storm of '98, he joined the Arboretum team and was an integral part of the grounds staff ever since.

He had to deal with many challenges to the Farm including extreme weather events and the Emerald Ash Borer epidemic. When a windstorm brought down nearly half of the greatly loved Bebb's Oak in the Arboretum, he went the extra mile to ensure that the tree could be saved.

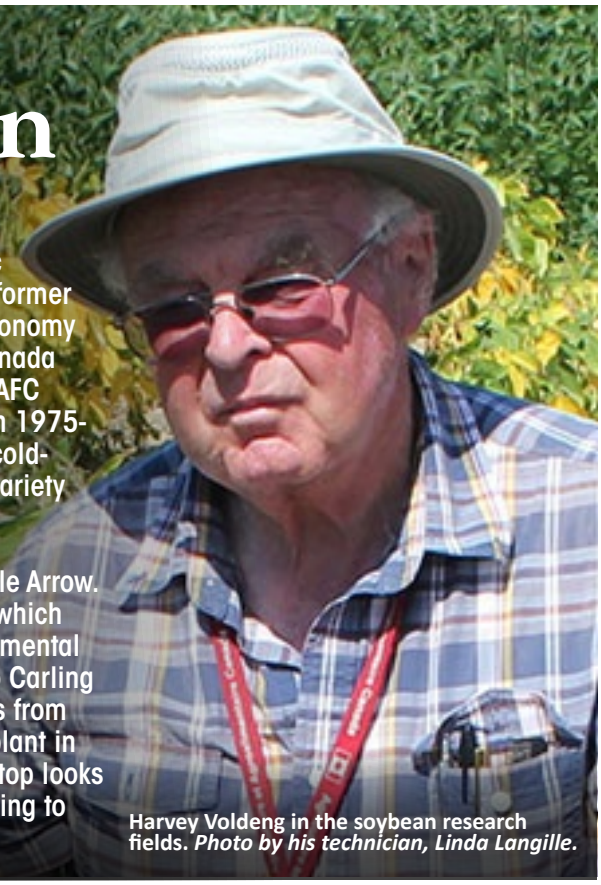
J-P was one of the Farm's great assets, and a strong supporter of our volunteers in the Arboretum, the Ornamental Gardens, and in our fundraising and office activities. His enthusiasm for the public areas and collections was contagious and helped keep the Friends motivated in our role. He even helped directly in some Friends' projects such as preparing rocks to receive dedication plaques.

Above all, J-P was very friendly, engaging, and open to talking about whatever was going on at the Farm. He was one of the Farm's greatest ambassadors. With wife Carole, he will be enjoying their homes in Ecuador and Prince Edward County, Ontario. We wish him all the very best in his retirement.

DR. HARVEY VOLDENG AND CANADA'S

Soybean Revolution

by Joan Butcher



Harvey Voldeng in the soybean research fields. *Photo by his technician, Linda Langille.*

Until the mid-1970s, soybeans were sown in Canada only where the climate was warm enough to allow them to grow to maturity. Our short growing season restricted soybean growing to very temperate area, Ontario's southwest, i.e., the "banana belt", where they were a minor cash crop until the mid-1970s.

But today, soybeans are Ontario's biggest crop, and Canada's third largest in terms of farm cash receipts, and the fourth largest crop in acreage. There are over 80 varieties of soybean, up from the four that were available in the '70s. Canada's soybean-producing territory stretches from PEI to Alberta. How did this agricultural revolution happen?

Meet Harvey Voldeng, BSA, MSc Saskatchewan, DPhil Oxford, a former head of Plant Breeding and Agronomy at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), and in retirement, an AAFC Honorary Research Associate. In 1975-76, Voldeng bred the very first cold-tolerant, high-quality soybean variety available to Canadian farmers.

Harvey named the cultivar Maple Arrow. "Maple" refers to Maple Drive, which runs through the Central Experimental Farm from the NCC Driveway to Carling Avenue. The term "Arrow" comes from the soybean itself. "A soybean plant in the field with good pods at the top looks like an arrow, pointing up, pointing to the future," Voldeng explained.

GOOD SCIENCE AND EXCELLENT TIMING

In the early 1970s, it was clear that farmers in Ontario needed profitable, sustainable protein options to rotate with corn. Soybeans were a natural for this use, with their ability to fix the nitrogen needed by plants into the soil. But although they were a useful, tough crop in many ways, the conventional wisdom was that they couldn't endure the cold. Voldeng was not fully convinced of this. His education and interest in plant physiology led him to believe cold-tolerant genetics could be introduced into conventional soybean varieties, thereby solving the soybean quandary.

The timing could not have been better for initiating research on soybeans. In 1974, because of a shortfall of soybeans, the United States placed an embargo on their export. So with the Canadian market in need of soybeans, growers would be guaranteed good prices for their crop. With the support and guidance of Dr. Lorne Donovan, AAFC's head of soybean and corn breeding, Harvey was able to take on soybean breeding as his full-time job.

The search for a soybean that could resist the cold led to Sweden, a region with a bracing climate similar to Canada. As far back as the 1930s, a Swedish breeder, Sven Holmberg, was searching for ways to provide home-grown sources of protein in case German naval blockades prevented food imports. In Northern Japan and the Kuril Islands, as well as the Amur region of Siberia, he found early dwarf soybeans that were unique germplasm. They provided the soybean with extra tolerance for cool temperatures, they matured early, and were unaffected by the long days during Canadian summers. When Harvey's technician crossed a variety from southern Ontario with the Siberian-by-way-of-Sweden soybean seed, the resulting cultivar proved to be the breakthrough bean.

It was then imperative to get this new, exciting variety out to growers. Four 60-pound bags of breeder seed were distributed among a group of well-regarded and influential farmers identified by seed growers' associations. They were successful in producing soybean crops in fields well north of Ontario's warm zone. Swiftly this good news was relayed to the larger agricultural community, and demand for Maple Arrow took off.

Harvey continued to evolve other soybean varieties in the Maple line – Maple Amber, Maple Donovan, Maple Isle, Maple Presto, Maple Ridge and last, but hardly least, Maple Glen. Developed with his AAFC colleague Dr. Elroy Cober, the Maple Glen food-grade soybean variety has been grown on millions of acres in Canada. In 2015 it was named Ontario's Seed of the Year. It has helped make soybeans a competitive and profitable crop for Canada, securing seed companies a good foothold in export markets. Maple Glen can also be commended for being an excellent parent to other soybean lines. Maple Presto, the earliest maturing variety in North America, was, as Harvey termed it, a "flop". It did not tolerate the cold soils of southern Manitoba, but was still a great source of earliness genes.

Voldeng also pioneered two edible varieties of soybean that could be used for natto, a traditional Japanese food. Intensive effort went into finding a small-seed variety for this niche market, and it was eventually discovered in wild soybean from China. High-protein soybean varieties that could be roasted for dairy herds' consumption in eastern

Continued on page 10...

Broomball game in 1962 between DARA team and RA League Allstars. *DARA archives, courtesy of Catherine Ridout.*

Broomball AT THE FARM

by Richard Hinchcliff

JL Mulligan, a Friend of the Farm, provided a photograph taken in the mid-1930s of her grandfather Wilfred's broomball team. At the time the photo was taken, enthusiastic and competitive broomball matches were being held on the ice-covered Central Experimental Farm (CEF) tennis courts, and Wilfred's team represented the Cereal Division. The games were played under the auspices of the Experimental Farm Athletic Association (EFAA), which was formed in 1923 to manage sporting and social activities of Farm employees. Initially for tennis players only, the EFAA was soon coordinating hockey, basketball, softball, and other games.

A POPULAR SPORT

The Farm tennis courts, originally located near the current Prince of Wales Drive roundabout were used at first in winter as a rink for hockey and skating, but by 1932 broomball had become popular. The rink that year was reserved for hockey and skating on Tuesdays and Thursdays only, and the EFAA executive discussed whether to put up lights on the rink, so that broomball could be played at night.

These must have been fierce match-ups, as "two major accidents" occurred in 1933. It's clear that some players were injured, and games were temporarily suspended at the Farm rink. We don't know the details, but team members participated in a raffle to help the victims, and the EFAA Broomball Committee was asked to change the rules to reduce risks.

Broomball at the Farm flourished after World War II. In the 1948-49 season, an experimental farm team was champion in the 12-team City League. In 1952, women on the 'Aggies' team, representing the Science Service Building, were EFAA champions. Soon after, the Department of Agriculture Recreation Association (DARA) replaced EFAA, and in 1962, the DARA men's team became the RA Broomball League champions.

It is not known when the last broomball game was played at the Farm. Officially, organized recreation ceased to be affiliated with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in 2016.

Wilfred Mulligan, grandfather of Friend of the Farm member JL Mulligan, is front row, second from the right. Wilfred's father and several of his brothers worked at the Farm. His botanist son Gerry Mulligan has had a distinguished career at the Farm and was featured in the Fall 2020 issue of this newsletter. *Courtesy of JL Mulligan.*

WORLD'S FIRST TOURNAMENT?

The Friends of the Farm's April 1989 newsletter tells us that the world's first broomball tournament was held in 1930 at the Farm. Unfortunately, there is no available evidence to support the claim. Although coverage of local sporting events in the press was extensive in those days, there was no story on the broomball tournament. But given that broomball seems to have been a popular sport of the day, perhaps a tournament was organized and held on the ice at the Farm's rink. It is clear that the enthusiastic playing of broomball at the Farm was a key factor in the rise of the sport in the Ottawa area.

A broomball trophy awarded for competition at the Farm. *DARA archives, courtesy of Catherine Ridout.*

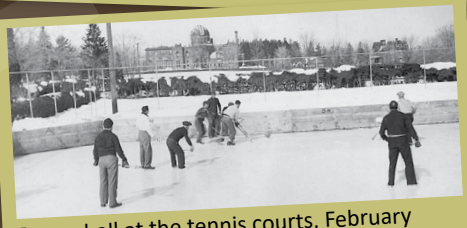
SOURCE OF MERRIMENT

The history of broomball is murky. There were newspaper reports of games in New York, Philadelphia, and Missouri in the 1890s. A game, "the first of its kind," was played in Niagara-on-the-Lake in February 1899 and there are reports of matches in British Columbia in 1910, and St. Catherines and Saskatoon in 1915.

In its early days, broomball was an amusement, rather than a sport. "To the uninitiated the game of broomball is a scream," states the St. Catherines Standard on March 13, 1915. "The ball used for the ordeal is a rugby ball, which when in motion gives no guarantee of the direction it will bounce next. The use of brooms instead of hockey sticks makes the sport highly amusing. The antics of the performers, some of whom are not often on skates, are side splitters." A game of broomball at the Minto Follies in Ottawa in 1926 was described as "the latest short cut to fame or sudden death over the ice route" in an article from the *Ottawa Citizen*. "Doc Pritchard has declined the tempting offer to take part in the game as he considers that his services as a medico will be in requisition on the sidelines." Regardless of potential dangers, the game was a merry occasion. **"There was one continuous roar of laughter from whistle to whistle."**

The nature of the game changed as it developed into a sport. A round ball, about the size of a volleyball, was used and players wore shoes rather than skates. Competitive broomball leagues were launched and teams from Canada, U.S.A., Italy, Switzerland, and other countries have participated in recent world broomball championships.

The "Aggies," EFAA women's broomball champions, 1952. Back row, left to right: Joyce Mould, Barbara Baker, Harry Fleming (coach), Ann Forney, Jean Scott. Front row, left to right: Jen Andrews, Marg Allen. Absent: Shirley Wilson, Barbara Gorman. *DARA archives, courtesy of Catherine Ridout.*



Broomball at the tennis courts, February 1941. The Dominion Observatory and the residence of the Chief Astronomer are in the distance.

Continued from page 8...

Ontario and Quebec were also developed. There can be great variations between these varieties, attesting to the fact that the soybean is amazingly versatile. This is why Harvey has always insisted that a wide genetic base should be maintained through the soybean species.

FROM SOY SAUCE TO SOY EVERYTHING

During the 17th century, soy sauce became an Asian product of interest to the West. It was the prospect of producing soy sauce from the beans that provided the impetus for the first East-West soybean trade. Now recognized as an international super crop, soybeans are the most important bean in the world, economically speaking.

Our supermarkets now carry soy milk, miso, tempeh, tofu, edamame, soy oil and soy margarine, along with soy nuts and many increasingly popular plant-based "meat" and "cheese" products. It is an ingredient in waxes for crayons and candles, solvents, lubricants, hydraulic fluid, plastics, fibres and textiles, and adhesives. Livestock are well nourished by soybean meal and roasted soybeans Soy in the form of oil will undoubtedly be in increasing demand as a biodiesel fuel.

RETIRED IN NAME ONLY

Harvey did not let official retirement from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in 2013 keep him from his job. Working as a Honorary Research Associate, unpaid, he has continued to do valuable plant research. It's not uncommon to find retired AAFC senior researchers coming back to donate their time to science and the public good. Harvey explains it by simply stating "Scientists hate to leave their laboratories."

Having moved on from soybeans to spring wheat breeding, much of his research work in the recent past has concentrated on finding a spring wheat line with resistance to the Fusarium fungus, a dangerous toxin that gets into the grain. As well as reducing grain yield and quality, it poses a risk to animal health and the safety of human food.
When Harvey Voldeng was honoured with an Order of Canada in 2019, the citation read "For his innovative research on soybean cultivars and for his substantial contributions to Canadian agriculture and the economy." Harvey noted at the time that the award was "a recognition that I've worked with some good people." He expressed gratitude for the "really great managers" such as Dr. Donovan and Dr. Tibor Rajhathy, who encouraged his work on soybeans. He is certain that he had two of the best technicians on the CEF, Don Leonard and Ron Guillemette. He also had praise for two great graduate students, Elroy Cober who took over the program, and Gilles Saindon, now ADM of Research at AAFC.

"My working life on the Central Experimental Farm has been a great experience, in spite of the usual trials and tribulations that come along from time to time," said Harvey. "Change is constant, and does not come painlessly. I was very fortunate to be a researcher whose lab was in a city, but at the same time, we were essentially out in the country. So much ground-breaking experimental work was enabled by having the Farm fields right outside our doors."

Joan Butcher, a Friends of the Farm volunteer on the newsletter team, previously worked for the federal government as a communications director.

Friends colunteer Maura Giuliani (right) answering a question about lilacs, 2016. *R. Hinchcliff*

COMING SOON! GUIDED TOURS OF THE Ornamental Gardens

Have you ever wondered what that beautiful climbing rose is called, the one twining its way around the trellis at the entrance to the Rose Garden? Or have you wanted to track down the name of those impressively tall plants in the perennial bed, with their display of bright golden flowers? The Friends of the Farm can answer your questions, while you enjoy the guided tours of the Ornamental Gardens being inaugurated in the coming months.

The tours are expected to last about an hour, and will be offered at times that coincide with the peak bloom periods of the various flowers. For example, the crabapples usually bloom around the third week in May, while the Rose Gardens reach a peak of perfection sometime in June, with repeat flowering until September.

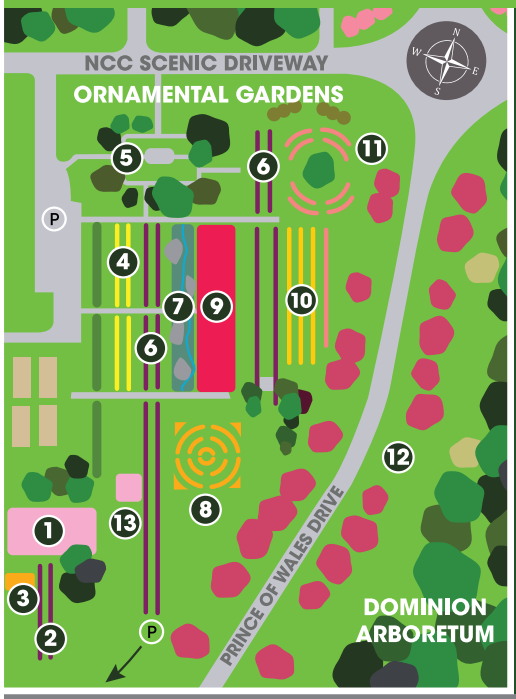
In order to determine the number of tour guides needed, we will be asking those interested in attending a tour to register on-line via the Friends of the Farm web site. This feature on the site will become available as we get closer to bloom time. Our gardening volunteers will be monitoring the flower beds during weekly maintenance so that access to the on-line registration system becomes available for each tour approximately two weeks ahead of peak bloom. We hope to have multiple tours of approximately 10-15 persons each, so that all attendees have an opportunity to ask their questions.

As the details are finalized, further information will be available on the Friends' website and Facebook account, as well as in the Newsletter and Farm Notes. While you are waiting for spring to arrive, you can get a taste of the Ornamental Gardens by checking out the guide mentioned below.

ROBERT STUART
Garden Tour Project Director

BLOOM TIMES IN THE ORNAMENTAL GARDENS

The new *Guide to the Ornamentals Gardens at the Central Experimental Farm* from the Friends of the Farm can help you get to know the beauties of this treasured area of our National Historic Site. The tri-folded brochure, which includes descriptions of each of the gardens' flowers and shrubs, their bloom times, and a handy map (below), is available for download from our website in both English and French. *Use the QR codes below to download.*



BLOOM TIMES ARE AS FOLLOWS *(by number on the map)*

1. EXPLORER ROSE GARDEN
Third week of June; repeat bloomers third week of September

2. PRESTON HERITAGE LILAC COLLECTION *First week of June*

3. LYCETT-LORRAIN DAYLILIES
Mid-July through August

4. PERENNIAL BORDERS
Early June through September

5. MACOUN MEMORIAL GARDEN
June through September

6. LILAC WALKS *(west and east)*
Last two weeks of May

7. ROCK GARDEN *Early May*

8. IRIS AND DAYLILY GARDEN
Irises mid-June to early July; daylilies mid-July to October

9. HERITAGE ROSE GARDEN
June; repeat bloomers September

10. ANNUAL GARDEN
Mid-summer through autumn

11. PEONY GARDEN *Last week of May to third week of June*

12. CRABAPPLES *Third week of May*

Download the brochure here:
ENGLISH ***FRENCH***

Map & brochure design by: Kat B. Design Studio

Farewell and Thanks to Julie Fletcher

The friendly, helpful voice on the phone at the Friends' office, the calm centre of control that has kept us going in COVID, working from her home when the office was locked down – this was Julie Fletcher, our wonderful office manager for the last two and a half years.

Julie decided to join her husband in retirement at the end of March. We are very grateful for everything she did for the Friends, from social media to selling books. And her monthly Farm Notes were dazzling; much appreciated by all. **Many thanks, Julie, and best wishes for your future endeavours.**

Deborah Higdon-Leblond

Volunteer Opportunities!

Are you recently retired and enthusiastic about meeting new people while enjoying the outdoors? Are you interested in protecting the green and blooming spaces at the Central Experimental Farm? Do you love gardening, or would like to give it a try? Do you like working on a team? We are looking for new volunteers for our Garden, Shelterbelt, and Arboretum teams, and for volunteers to assist with Communications, Office Support, and Fundraising Events.

To learn more about volunteering, attend our Volunteer Orientation on Saturday, April 8, at 10 a.m. in Building 72 in the Arboretum. Pre-registration is required on our website www.friendsofthefarm.ca or by calling 613-230-3276. **FOR MORE INFORMATION ON VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, PLEASE CONTACT VOLUNTEER@FRIENDSOFTHEFARM.CA.**

DONNA PAPE | Director, Volunteers

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.

The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm publish the Newsletter (ISSN 1702 2762) four times a year (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall). All members receive the newsletter and it is sent by regular mail or e-mail.

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Consider joining us!

Find our membership form on the website by using the QR code to the right: https://friendsofthefarm.ca/become-a-member/ and pay by PayPal, or send in a cheque.

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

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/.

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