



# Woodbridge Horticultural Society Newsletter



[www.woodbridgehorticultural.weebly.com](http://www.woodbridgehorticultural.weebly.com)

Issue 59, May 2021

They have climate in England; we have weather.

--Helena Rutherford Ely, A Woman's Hardy Garden (1903)

## **SPEAKER MAY 17**

Paul LaPorte, on Building Biodiversity with Native Plants.

## **GROWING YOUR OWN FOOD**

Soil, sweet soil! Good soil is soft and fluffy, filled with vitamins, beneficial bugs, microbes and minerals. Don't forget to enhance the quality of the soil in your garden with generous quantities of compost. Just spread two to three centimeters of compost over existing soil and let the earth worms do the work of digging it in, no need to till. Mulch around plants to suppress weeds, keeps much needed moisture in the soil, increases yields and plants stay cleaner and healthier.

Once an onion has sprouted, it can still be used in a recipe. Provided it's not spoiling or molding, it's still fine to cut up for dinner. But if it's too far gone, invest in a good crop of future onions. First, cut off and use the sprouts as green onions. Onions are usually grown from seed, but sprouted onions need to be divided to grow properly. Either have a constant supply of green onions all summer, or allow to grow into full-sized bulbs. By separating them, each onion can grow into a full-sized bulb, and allow you to harvest far more than you planted. All they need is ample sun, water and good drainage.

Try a greenhouse trick from a speaker many years ago. Fill planters with a good potting mix, way before it's time to plant. Once a week, add liquid fertilizer, at least 20.20.20 to watering can and drench the soil. By the time you're ready to plant, the soil will be infused with more than enough nutrients to really get them growing.

For a great conversation starter, grow an on-going Salad Bowl. Buy a pot that is wide, like a bowl. Plastic is ideal, as it's lightweight, making it easy to move where you want it. Or use a hanging basket. Fill with a good potting mix. You can buy young plants and crowd them; much like you'd do with annual flower pots. Or sow seeds of whatever lettuces you prefer, including Swiss chard, as they grow very well together. Harvest the outer, larger leaves, leaving the middle to continue growing. Keep your pots in a spot that receives bright light all day or a few hours of direct sun (at least 5 hours). You can even include fast growing radishes. Radish greens are completely edible. Because of their coarse texture, they don't work well in salads unless they're young and very small. They can be cooked like any other greens, though you'll





# Woodbridge Horticultural Society Newsletter



[www.woodbridgehorticultural.weebly.com](http://www.woodbridgehorticultural.weebly.com)

Issue 59, May 2021

want to use young and tender leaves. The texture of the leaves is why they'd be perfect as a pesto.

After our first March meeting, the question of the annoying problem of fungus gnats in houseplants came up. There are several solutions: 1 part 3% peroxide to 4 parts water, sticky tape, neem oil...but the easiest, no fuss way is to allow the top 3 inches of the plant's soil to dry out. This will make the soil unattractive to adult flies, preventing them from laying more eggs. Eliminate standing water, especially in pots with a drainage tray, or even from other sources nearby, such as leaky pipes, condensate puddles, and so on.

Try *The Three Sisters* planting method, three plants growing together to deter weeds and pests, enrich the soil, and support each other. Instead of rows of single vegetables, this method attracts pollinators, and makes the land richer, rather than stripping it of nutrients. It would also be useful in smaller gardens. Native American communities have used three seeds, corn, beans, and squash, but for more ideas on this native practice, visit <https://www.nativeseeds.org>

Congratulations to Joan Stubberfield for receiving a city Volunteer Award! Thanks for all your contributions.

## STOP GYPSY MOTHS IN THEIR TRACKS!

You may have noticed a certain type of caterpillar or moth on trees throughout Vaughan. They could be Gypsy Moths, invasive, destructive pests that were spotted throughout the community last year and have been found on approximately 500 species of trees. As caterpillars, they are dark-coloured, hairy and have a double row of blue and red spots down their backs; as moths, they are light-brown and white. These insects prefer to eat hardwood tree leaves from oaks, maples, birches and aspens, as well as select shrubs such as boxwood. During an infestation, they may de-leaf any hardwood species. To help control the Gypsy Moth population, the City of Vaughan began city-wide treatment this month in heavily infested areas. Barrier bands have been placed on more than 300 trees and approximately 2,000 egg masses were removed. To receive up-to-date information on the City's continued efforts to control the Gypsy Moth population, visit [vaughan.ca/trees](http://vaughan.ca/trees).

