



Woodbridge Horticultural Society Newsletter



www.woodbridgehorticultural.weebly.com

Issue 49, March, 2019

Don't knock the weather; nine-tenths of the people couldn't start a conversation if it didn't change once in a while.
--Kim Hubbard,
(1868-1940)

SPEAKER TONIGHT

Ian McCallum on
Houseplants.



FYI

The Garden Clubs of Ontario are holding a big judged floral design and horticulture show, *Music in Bloom*, at the Royal Botanical Garden Wed. May 29 (10am – 8pm) and Thursday,

May30 (10am - 4pm). The show will use all three auditoriums at the RBG and will include lectures and activities. Admission is free with paid entrance to RBG. For more information please email mardecker12@gmail.com



FLEXING GARDENING MUSCLES

Prune apple trees. Thinning out old, thick branches and dead wood opens up the tree so it will yield more fruit. Cedars can take pruning at any time of the year; make it one of your first spring gardening chores. Cut back dead stems of perennials. Remove protective plant coverings, such

as burlap and evergreen boughs. Buy seeds and look in your area for Seedy Saturdays and Seed Exchanges; a great way to find heritage varieties and meet local growers. Start Dahlia bulbs inside now in a plastic pot, using quality soil. Once the ground thaws, top-dress beds with compost and press back perennials heaved by frost. Before the end of the month, you can sow cooler season crops; onion, leeks, broccoli, cauliflower and kale. They are easily transplanted up to a month before last frost.

NEAT THINGS ABOUT HOUSEPLANTS

The Chinese were the first to enjoy growing houseplants indoors, growing Penjing. Penjing is the art of growing trees in miniature. Bonsai is the Japanese adaptation of it. Houseplants don't grow during the



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winter; no need to fertilize and they require less water. Cacti hardly need any water all winter. Check plants every week to ten days to see if they show signs of stress, like drooping. Both over and under watering will result in the plant's death. Warning signs are wilting, yellowing, and brown leaves. The best way to determine if your plant needs water is to pick up the pot, getting used to how heavy it is when dry, or test the soil by sticking your finger in it. Some indoor plants and their soil reduce toxins in the air, including VOCs, (volatile organic compounds). VOCs come from things that off-gas, like paint, carpeting and most new furniture. They're responsible for 'sick-building syndrome', which includes symptoms like irritated eyes, nose, throat and headaches.

According to a study by NASA, the best plants for filtering air are Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum* 'Mauna Loa'), florist's Chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*), and Snakeplant (*Sansevieria trifasciata*). It is the microorganisms in the soil of these particular plants that act as a VOC magnet, as the plants keep the microorganisms alive. The Victorian era marked when houseplants became popular. They were especially fond of Ferns and were the first to have Wardian cases, an early version of terrariums, developed to keep plants free from London pollution. The wealthier were the first to own Orangeries, similar to greenhouses. The first Orangery was built in 1686 at Versailles. Orangeries were useful for growing tender fruit, (orange pomegranate and olive

trees) and were also a status symbol for royalty, merchants, noblemen and the wealthy. They differed from greenhouses in having non-glass roofs.

THANKS ☺

To Gail, Chris, Elda and Fausto for taking down Valentines from the Wallace House and the bridge on Woodbridge Avenue.

As soon as the weather is favourable, a reminder will be sent out to the membership asking for volunteers regarding the first spring clean-ups for the Wallace House Garden and Armstrong Park.

SUBMISSIONS

If you have a newsletter submission, please call or email Mary (see below) no later than one week before the next meeting.