



Cross Pollination

October 2009

Coordinator's Corner

Getting Your Continuing Education Units

Master Gardeners are expected to provide current and up-to-date advice and information to the gardening public. One way to achieve this is to participate in Technical Updates. The Halton Region Master Gardeners were well represented at the Guelph Technical Update on September 19th. Dr. E. Ann Clark started the morning off with an outstanding talk "The Future is Organic". She is one of those people who is exceedingly knowledgeable about a complex subject, but is able to present the information in a concise and accessible manner. The next presentation about the future "Pollinator Park" to be located in a decommissioned landfill site in Guelph, showed the city's dedication and positive vision regarding conservation. Sean Fox, Assistant Manager and Horticulturalist, talked informatively about gardening with native trees and shrubs. There were 3 tour options in the afternoon and I was delighted to be able to tour Vicki Beard's incredible garden of mostly native trees and shrubs.

For those of you who were unable to attend a Tech Update this year, there are a number of avenues to fulfill the continuing education requirements. Summer workshops and horticultural classes and talks, research and reading are only a few of the ways that we can keep current in today's constantly changing world. As the end of the calendar year draws near, consider how you can extend your gardening knowledge.

Quick Facts from the Guelph Tech Update:

- Grass pollen is a major allergen, so if your neighbour is staring at your Goldenrod and concerned about pollen, tell him to mow his lawn before it flowers.
- Only shallow rooted plants can be planted on the landfill site so as not to disrupt the clay cap.
- Organic gardening is less about no this and no that, and more about problem avoidance by design.
- Trees "talk" to each other-they let each other know if this is a big flower/fruit year.
- *Rosa palustris*(swamp rose) is great for a low problem area.
- The average life of a city street tree is 6 years.



Halton Region

Master Gardener Meetings:

7:15 p.m. RBG - Rooms 3 & 4

Please bring something for the draw table and change to buy tickets:

- \$2.00 each
- 3 for \$5.00
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A friendly reminder - please bring your own cup for beverages.

2009 meetings:

- October 7th
- November 4th
- December 2nd

Other Garden-Worthy Dates

- ☐ October 17 – MG Coordinators' conference
- ☐ October 23 to Nov 1
Mum show - Gage Park, Hamilton

REFRESHMENTS SCHEDULE:

MEETING	SNACKS (& NAPKINS)	BEVERAGES (& PAPER CUPS)
OCTOBER	Marjorie Latimer	Marjorie Latimer
NOVEMBER	Doris Calder	Jess Cronin
FEBRUARY	Donna Parker	June Wright
MARCH	Karen Walsh	Patty King
APRIL	Maureen Millar	Larry Aldebert

Mystery Plant - Do you know what this is?



The Stinking Rose aka Garlic *Allium sativum* var. *sativum* and *ophiosco*

Submitted by Joyce Killin

This Mediterranean native (often called the "stinking or reeking rose"), is member of the Onion family and a perennial grown as an annual. Preferring the cooler seasons, garlic is planted in the fall and harvested in late summer, with the optimum time for planting garlic being September to mid October. However, I have successfully harvested a crop from garlic planted in December when the snow was flying!

Extremely easy to grow with bulbs from a reputable source*, (you can save your largest garlic bulbs for planting your next crop or buy new ones each year). Requiring virtually no care and not much space, garlic is the ideal garden crop.

** Using supermarket bought garlic is not recommended as these bulbs may contain diseases and/or have been treated to discourage germination.*

Production

The return on garlic is very generous with one pound of cloves producing 7 to 10 pound of garlic bulbs. For each clove planted a whole new bulb emerges. My harvest this year was 50 bulbs from a 16 square foot raised bed.

Soil Preparation

Garlic likes a rich well drained soil with lots of organic matter, preferring drier soil conditions, in a sunny location and kept weed free by mulching. The largest cloves produce the largest bulbs; smaller cloves can be planted closer together and for harvesting garlic greens. Do not plant where other Onion family crops have grown in the last three years and rotate the crop each year. For acidic or poorer soils add compost or well rotted manure, wood ashes, dolomite lime or crushed oyster shells.

Planting and Maintenance

Garlic should be planted before the first hard frost to allow root development before winter sets in. Break the bulbs apart keeping the cloves and their papery husks intact. Plant each clove 3" to 4" deep and about 4" apart in rows 6" apart, mulch heavily to suppress weeds and to retain moisture. Water only during extreme drought as moisture is usually adequate from fall through to spring-time.

Possessing pesticide properties, garlic is rarely bothered by pests or diseases. It is a good companion to beets, cabbage, carrots, cucumber, lettuce, peppers, summer savory, strawberry and tomatoes, however, is best planted away from beans, peas and sage.

Harvesting (really two harvests)

The first - the scapes, the immature flowers stalks, are interesting culiques that can be used to add garlic flavour to stir fries and salads. Remove them once they appear on the plant usually about a month before the "real" harvest as this helps bulb growth.

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When the remaining foliage starts to yellow and die back it is time to harvest. Carefully dig up the bulbs being attentive not to pierce or bruise them.

Lay them out in a single layer to dry in a very dry area with good air circulation and indirect light, for about at least a week and up to three. I usually allow one day in the sun before moving my garlic into the shade. Do not allow any moisture or rain to come in contact with the bulbs during curing as this can cause them to rot. Once cured, cut off the foliage and snip any remaining roots.

Storage

First use the bulbs with separated cloves or those that have been bruised or have damaged cloves. These will have the shortest shelf- life. Store the bulbs away from potatoes in a cool dry place. Properly stored garlic will keep for months and even until you next harvest.

Varieties

Soft necks *Allium sativum* var. *sativum* have a soft stalk that ends above the cloves and can be braided easier than the hard necks *A. sativum* var. *ophiosco* which have a stalk that is surrounded by the cloves making the cloves easy to remove.

Flavour and strength is different between the two and in each type there are lots of varieties to choose from.

Garlic Lore

Through the ages, garlic has been loved and hated and one ancient legend says "When Satan stepped out from Eden after the fall, garlic sprang up from the spot where he placed his left foot, onion where his right foot touched."

Now synonymous with delicious culinary favourites such as Caesar Salad, Garlic Bread and even Garlic Ice-cream (tasted at the Stinking Rose Restaurant in San Francisco), garlic is not only a staple of the kitchen but is said to confer health benefits (both preventative and curative).

Such an easy crop to produce and a tasty ingredient in the kitchen as well as a must for the medicine cabinet garlic is an amazing crop to grow.

References: www.saltspringseeds.com, www.damseeds.ca, www.motherearthnews.com, www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening, Herbs - the Complete Gardening Guide by Patrick Lima.

Karen's blog on her Butterfly Garden

Here we are in suburban Burlington, circa 1958. For many years I had milkweed growing in a no man's land in between the two houses. This space had flocks of Monarchs until our neighbours rebuilt their house which left us with absolutely nothing in the no man's land.

I was worried about the Monarch Butterflies since they can only lay eggs on milkweed and that is the only plant that the caterpillars can feed on - hence my desire to build a butterfly garden.



Stage 1 – Bare dirt



Stage 2 – Fence and Forsythia removed



Stages 3 & 4 - The flagstone is from my neighbour's front step which he tore down and I have now happily recycled. (Many harty thanks to my hubby for doing the hard work!)

Plants

I am going to use as many native plants as I can. Some of the common milkweed originally in the space actually survived the demolition and is trying to come up.



Stage 5 - Planting

I have started my own swamp milkweed from seed which I received at a Master Gardener's meeting.

Other native plants:

Black-Eyed Susan, Joe-Pye-Weed, New England Asters.

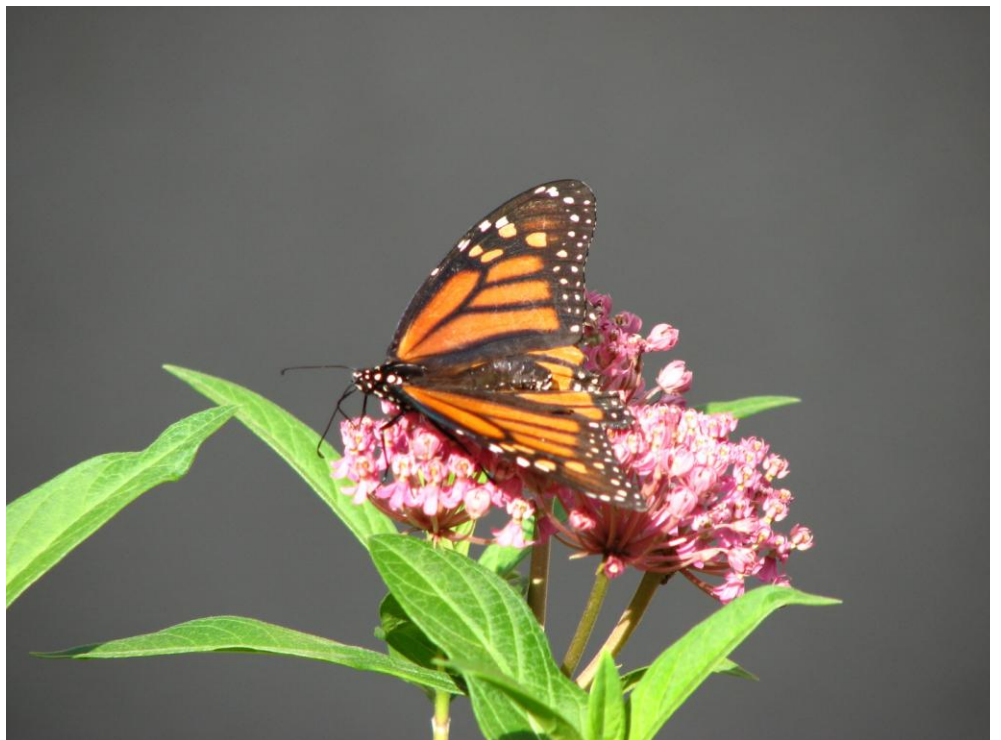
Perennials: Purple Coneflower, Butterfly Weed, Bee Balm

Annuals: Marigolds and Zinnias (from Seed)

Shrubs: Buddleia

In between the flagstone I want to plant a bunch of creeping thyme.

It is also recommended to place a bird bath and also some pans of sand for the butterflies.



Here are my last two pictures of my butterfly garden for this year. I am absolutely amazed at how mature the plants look - this being only their first year!



Pomona is the Roman goddess of fruiting trees and orchards. Her name derives from *pomum* or fruit. She loved the cultivated country and held no interest in forests and rivers. In her right hand she bore a pruning knife and used it to remove overabundant growth, to prune out branches that straggled out of place. Sometimes she would make a cut in a tree and would graft into it a twig from another tree, and she would rejoice to see one tree bearing two kinds of fruit. Sometimes she would train a vine to grow along an elm-tree. She took care, too, to ensure that her favorites did not suffer from drought and altered the flow of streams near the thirsty roots of her trees.

Pomona was so devoted to her gardens that she turned away suitors. Vertumnus, a god presiding over the cycle of seasons and the fertility of the earth, could not resist her charms. He made many attempts at wooing her in different guises but did not succeed until he allowed her to see himself in the god's natural splendour.

Today she is found only in the form of statues and on buildings. She is usually carrying a large platter of fruit or a cornucopia.

Submitted by Patty King