

# Cross Pollination

## Newsletter of the Halton Master Gardeners



### September Garden To Do List

- ❑ Bulbs - Plant spring flowering bulbs such as crocus, tulip, hyacinth & daffodil now, until before freeze up of soil. Water bulbs after planting.
- ❑ Perennials - Divide or transplant spring and summer flowering perennials such as iris, daylily, peony, phlox as the weather cools. Make sure you water in the new divisions well. Fill gaps in borders with autumn flowering plants such as ornamental cabbage, sedum and mums to extend the colour to the end of the season. Plant goldenrod and asters for pollinators.
- ❑ Grasses & tall perennials - leave the stems and seedheads on for native insects & birds and to create winter interest. Read [Six reasons to NOT clean up the garden this fall](#) for pollinator friendly ideas
- ❑ Roses - Stop pruning roses to avoid formation of weaker stems which won't survive the winter.
- ❑ Trees - Plant new trees and shrubs now to give them at least six weeks before frost. Water trees until freeze up, especially ones that were planted this year. Stop feeding and fertilizing shrubs and trees to encourage stems to harden off.
- ❑ Collect seed and herbs for drying.
- ❑ Feed the soil - Add compost or manure to garden beds.
- ❑ Leaves - Attach the grass catcher bag to the mower and collect a ready supply of chopped leaves to layer into the compost pile or use as mulch on the veggie or flower garden.
- ❑ Houseplants - Check houseplants for pests, then start to move indoors gradually. Prune tropicals such as hibiscus and move them into some shade to help transition indoors for the winter, where the light levels are lower.
- ❑ Dig and [store tender bulbs](#) like dahlias, caladiums, cannas and tuberous begonias.
- ❑ Clean up - Clay pots-remove to sheltered location or cover. Cover water features with netting to collect falling leaves. Clean bird feeders, gardening tools.
- ❑ Lawn - Pull weeds before they go to seed to reduce the number of weeds next year. Late fall feeding is best to increase fall and spring root growth and also results in an early spring green up. Overseed early in the month; monitor and pull weeds
- ❑ Veggies - Green tomatoes-harvest to ripen indoors, freeze or use in recipes. Salad Garden - sow seeds to grow lettuce, spinach, arugula and radishes. Mix and sow seed of different varieties into the garden, flower bed or pots on your patio table.
- ❑ Watch for Weeds - Hand pull, rake or cut off at ground level. Keep pulling bindweed to prevent seed formation.
- ❑ Plant [cover crops](#) such as [red clover](#) & [winter rye](#) on bare soil



September 2018



*Tis the last rose of summer,  
Left blooming alone;  
All her lovely companions  
Are faded and gone."*

*Thomas Moore, The Last Rose of Summer, 1830*

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## Canna Lilies: Keeping These Beauties Healthy

Hariette Henry  
Master Gardener in Training

There is no question that Canna Lilies are stunning plants, grown either as the focal point within a container or massed at the centre of an island in a city boulevard. These plants are relatively problem free owing to their shorter growing period but there are some common diseases that can afflict them so it would wise to be able to identify and treat these diseases to avoid losing these lovely plants in the future.

The most common diseases you can encounter are:

1. Canna rust This is a common fungal disease caused by the fungus *Puccinia thaliae*. Symptoms include spore-like orange spots visible on the plants leaves. Sometimes the spots may spread onto the stems. As the infection progresses, the upper parts of the leaves develop a blackish-brown appearance. Such leaves are prone to fall prematurely.

Precautionary measures such as making sure your canna is getting six hours of sunlight a day, providing good air circulation, watering the plants at the soil level as opposed to spraying the leaves, ensuring the soil bed drains quickly and not over-watering are all measures that you can take particularly in the hot humid weather we are experiencing to maintain a healthy plant.



If the rust appears, the affected foliage should be pruned-off immediately and disposed of (not in the compost pile). To stop the spread of the Canna rust, you can use commercial anti-fungal sprays. Spray both the upper and underside of the leaves. Using copper or sulfur-based fungicidal preparations is recommended. Make sure that the spray lists Canna rust on the label and follow the application directions.

Continued ...

*Where flowers bloom so does hope.*

- Lady Bird Johnson, Public Roads: Where Flowers Bloom



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### Canna Lilies Continued ...

2. Viruses Cannas can also be susceptible to viruses particularly if they've been subject to Canna rust. Following are the most common Canna viruses;

- Yellow mottle virus
- Bean yellow mosaic virus
- Yellow streak virus
- Aspermy virus

In the case of these viruses, the leaves develop a flecked or puckered appearance and may display green or yellow irregular splotches. This is usually accompanied by streaks appearing along the crown of the leaves. These viruses do affect the blooms which become discoloured.



Bean Yellow Mosaic Virus

These viruses are fairly rare and unfortunately there is no known remedy. Elimination of the diseased Cannas is the only solution. The diseased plant along with any others within touching distance should be dug-out and disposed of in waste collection.

3. Canna Botrytis Blight is another problem that can affect Canna Lilies. It usually impacts older stems and leaves. It is caused by the Botrytis cinerea fungus. This fungus appears as a white growth on the canna leaves. The leaves develop dark spots. The flower buds are covered in a thin, gray sheet of fungal spores. As with rust the best way to avoid or at least control blight is through good cultural practices such as watering in the early morning, maintaining good air circulation around the plant and pruning away spent decaying foliage. Retail fungicides can be used to control symptoms but cannot eradicate the fungal spores. Copper-based fungicides are recommended for use in this situation.



Botrytis Blight

These diseases are, of course, not the only problem to potentially affect the health of Canna Lilies. They can be attacked by a host of insects such as Japanese Beetles once they have been weakened by pathogens. The best course of action is buying from a reputable grower and of course maintaining good cultural practices.

Continued ...



***Plant and your spouse plants with you.  
Weed and you weed alone.***

*Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Father of the French Revolution 1712 - 1778*



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Canna Lilies Continued ...

### Over-wintering Cannas in Canada

Though Cannas are not native to Canada, (their native range extends from South Carolina to Argentina and includes the Caribbean islands), there's no reason we can't preserve these tender rhizomes for future seasons. The process is relatively simple:

1. Once their summer beauty has faded and leaves are yellow, died back or killed by frost and before the ground freezes, cut back the dead foliage to approximately 2 inches.
2. Carefully dig your Cannas with a shovel or spade.
3. Continue digging and cut all around the clump.
4. Lift the rhizome clumps out of the ground and shake off any excess soil.
5. Rinse the rhizomes to remove dirt.
6. Air dry the rhizomes in a well ventilated area at 20-26 C/70 -80 F for at least a week.
7. Store in a cool, dark and humid place (fruit cellar or basement) with good ventilation in a cardboard box covered in vermiculite or peat moss.
8. Check throughout the winter and discard shriveled, diseased or insect-infested rhizomes.
9. In spring, replant outdoors after all danger of frost is past. Alternatively, you can get a jump on the growing season by potting them up early indoors.



*To see a world in a grain of sand and heaven in a wild flower  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour.*

William Blake 1757 - 1827 'Auguries of Innocence'



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### Phytophotodermatitis - Getting 'Burned' in the Garden

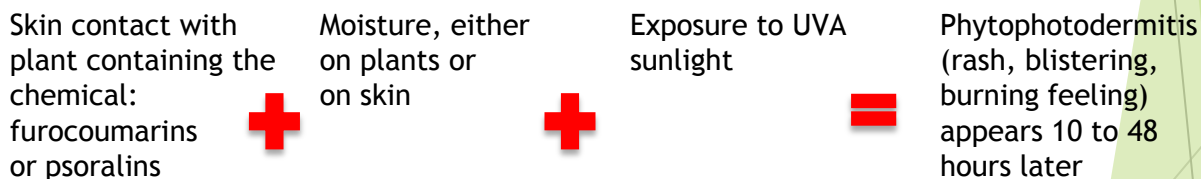
Janet Mackey - Halton Master Gardener in Training



It was a great July morning to get to work weeding the fenced area of our large vegetable plot at the local community allotment garden. The sun was shining and we had just harvested 75 garlic bulbs that looked amazing!

I began weeding around the inside of the fence, wearing my usual long-sleeved shirt and good gardening gloves. I reached for a large Queen Anne's Lace plant and pulled with 2 hands so that I could be sure it would be entirely removed.

As I extracted it, my hands sprung back with force, which caused the plant's flower to graze my chin and cheek. 'Hmmm', I remembered back to the previous month, where I'd worn shorts and short socks and brushed by a Queen Anne's Lace flower in a pathway that had resulted in a small blistering rash, 'it was only the flower, and no stems broke.' I was very wrong. Thirty-six hours later, my skin was prickling and that night the burning began. This continued for 3 to 4 days along with extreme itchiness. I've learned that I'm now very sensitive to exposure from some plant chemicals. With this particular plant chemical, its effect is further activated by moisture (sweating skin, garden dew, watering, rain) as well as sun. To add to the problem, when I finished gardening, I immediately went for a 1 hour hike. Even though I went home after the hike, removed my clothing and showered, the exposure and effect were already set. Here's the likely scenario:



Furocoumarin, the chemical present in plants of the carrot family such as Queen Anne's Lace, Wild Parsnip and Giant Hogweed, celery and parsley, acts in combination with Ultraviolet A light. After exposure to the plant sap and sunlight, blisters form 10 - 48 hours later. When the blisters resolve, there is a dark, streaky hyperpigmentation that can last for months. In addition, some members of the rue (Rutaceae) and the mulberry families (Moraceae) are also known to cause photo dermatitis (i.e., garden rue, gas plants and fig trees). Plants such as poison ivy, poison oak, poison sumac contain a different chemical irritant called urushiol oil.



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*Phytophotodermatitis - Getting 'Burned' (cont'd)*

While these plants cause a strong reaction in me, they may, or may not in you. After my experience and knowing my sensitivity, I will now go to most natural areas with long sleeves, long pants and if planning to work directly with the soil, gloves. Washing gloves and tools and showering after working in an area near these plants is also routine.

In addition, here are some other suggestions:

- Use a cream or sunscreen to provide a layer of protection to exposed skin
- If you think you've had exposure and you're sensitive to these plants, wash the areas for 15 minutes using a de-greasing soap (basically dish detergent).

If by chance, you or someone you're with is directly exposed to a plant that can cause phytophotodermatitis, particularly Giant Hogweed, here is the protocol recommended by the *Canadian Red Cross*:

- Protect the area from sunlight.
- If sap gets into the eyes, rinse thoroughly with water for at least 15 minutes, or until EMS personnel arrive.
- Encourage the person to seek medical attention.
- Photo from: Halton.ca: <https://bit.ly/1lYsqCi>



If you experience a strong reaction from contact with a plant I encourage you to seek the advice of a physician, particularly if it's in a sensitive area or on your face. The burning and itching can be alleviated somewhat by applying cold compresses or ice packs covered in a towel. Speak to your pharmacist about topical creams while you have the reaction and to help heal the skin once the blisters are gone. Lastly, the affected area may be sensitive to sunlight for months or even years. Protect the area by keeping it covered, wearing sunglasses, and applying sunscreen.

<sup>1</sup> Safety & Health Assessment & Prevention, Washington State Department of Labour & Industries, <https://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Dermatitis/files/phytoderm.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>University of Illinois Extension: Plants that Cause Skin Irritation, <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/jsw/downloads/PlantsThatCauseSkinIrritationFactSheet.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>Canadian Red Cross, Comprehensive Guide to First Aid & CPR, [http://www.redcross.ca/crc/documents/comprehensive\\_guide\\_for\\_firstaidcpr\\_en.pdf](http://www.redcross.ca/crc/documents/comprehensive_guide_for_firstaidcpr_en.pdf)



What do you get if you cross a four leaf clover with poison ivy?



A rash of good luck?



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### Question of the Month

*"I'm wondering why my Bee Balm is not flowering and leaves are browning on the bottom of the plant. Last season it had powdery mildew. Is there anything I can do?"*

-from the Dundas market

Many plants can be attacked by powdery mildew which is a fungus, but older varieties of Bee Balm or *Monarda* are especially susceptible. Powdery mildew is worse during hot, dry weather and poor air circulation encourages it to spread. It looks like a gray, powdery dust on the buds and leaves.



#### Prevention & Treatment

- Improve air circulation by cutting back or thinning plants.
- Divide Bee Balm every 2-3 years, particularly if it has a dead spot in the centre of the plant.
- Remove any leaves showing signs of powdery mildew to yard waste (NOT compost) so that the spores cannot overwinter.
- Water the soil or root zone, rather than from overhead. Bee balm prefers evenly moist soil.
- Add a 2 inch layer of mulch, such as shredded bark, to help the roots retain moisture.
- There is some evidence that spraying the plant with just water or [a spray of milk powder and water](#) is effective against powdery mildew.
- Plant mildew resistant varieties.

#### Encouraging flowering:

- Make sure the plant is getting at least 6 hours of direct sun
- Add organic matter to feed the soil around the plant
- Keep soil evenly moist
- Deadhead to encourage blooming
- After all flowering is over, cut to shorter stems



*Monarda, or Bee Balm is a beautiful addition to the garden, supports many of our native pollinators and is a favourite of hummingbirds too!*

*Photo- USDA Forest Service*

*Did you  
know?*

Some ladybugs actually feed on powdery mildew!



Adult 20 spotted ladybeetle [Psyllobora vigintimaculata](#), a North American mycophagous coccinellid, grazing on a patch of powdery mildew fungi.  
(photo by Jack Kelly Clark)

<http://ucanr.edu/sites/urbanIPM/files/216857.pdf>

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## What's Growing On?

### Halton Master Gardener Events

#### Gardening for Nature in Hamilton Party

Sat. Sept. 8 - 1- 4:30 p.m.  
First Unitarian Church of Hamilton  
170 Dundurn St. S. Hamilton  
Presented by: Pollinator Paradise Project &  
In the Zone (Carolinian Canada)



radio

#### Halton MGs Online Chats with CBC Radio

This is the last month for our online  
chats! Send your own questions to us by  
Tweet to [@CBCHamilton](https://twitter.com/CBCHamilton) or via email  
to [hamilton@cbc.ca](mailto:hamilton@cbc.ca)  
Sept 4<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>

#### Fall Garden & Tree Care

Thur. Sept. 13- 6:30-8:30pm  
Burlington Public Library  
Central Branch  
Presented by:  
Burlington Sustainable Development  
Committee  
To register: 905-639-3611 ex. 1321  
or email: [environment@burlington.ca](mailto:environment@burlington.ca)

#### Putting the Garden to Bed for Winter

Wed. Sept 26 6:30-8pm  
Milton Public Library  
Central Branch

### Garden Events in our Community



#### Why Lavender? Thursday, September 8, 2018 6:30 - 8:00 pm

Ireland House - Museums of  
Burlington  
2168 Guelph Line, Burlington  
ON, L7P5A8  
905-332-9888  
Visit: [Inside Halton](http://InsideHalton.ca)



#### ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS

Sat. Sept. 15 - (11am-4pm) Wetlands  
Discovery Day

Sun Sept. 23 - Ikenobo Ikebana Show

Fri Sept. 28 @7 p.m. Dr. Nancy Turner:  
Indigenous Peoples Use of Plants

Sat/Sun. Sept 29/30 - Chrysanthemum &  
Dahlia Show

Visit: [Royal Botanical Gardens: Events](http://RoyalBotanicalGardens.org/Events)



*"Grass is just a flower bed in waiting"*

Author Unknown



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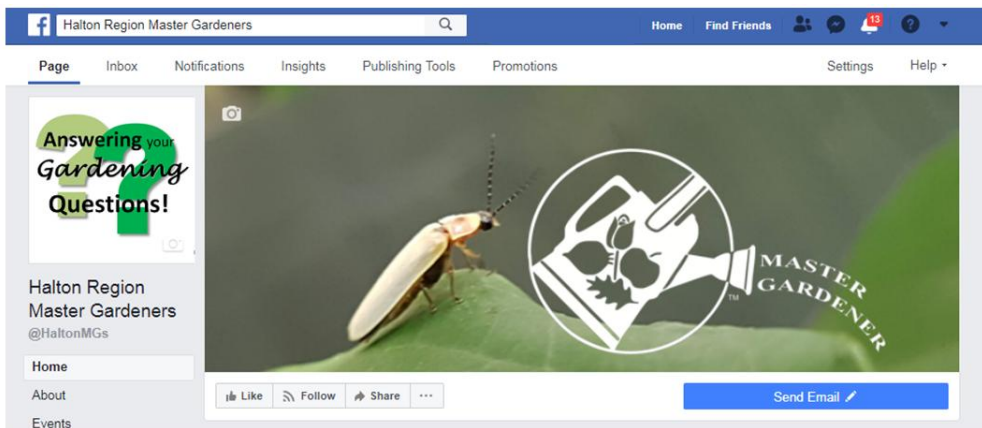
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We're now on Facebook! Visit our page for fascinating info, photos and local events. Search for "Halton Region Master Gardeners" and "Like us"!



Let us know if you are struggling with a plant, disease or pest issue in your garden and we'll include some possible solutions in next month's newsletter for others who may have the same problem.

Email [HaltonMasterGardeners@gmail.com](mailto:HaltonMasterGardeners@gmail.com) with your garden concerns.

### MY HAMILTON INCLUDES NATURE!



Nature is all around us. Take a photo and show us what you've spotted lately.

Tag us @EnvHamilton and  
@HamiltonNaturalists'Club  
and use the hashtag  
**#HamOntBiodiversity**

Let's celebrate our unique  
biodiversity!



Bruce Belin



Katie Hayashi

To learn more about  
how you can support  
pollinators and other  
biodiversity, visit:

<https://www.hamiltonpollinatorparadise.org/>

On August 1<sup>st</sup>, the Hamilton Pollinator Paradise Project launched a campaign to celebrate Hamilton's unique biodiversity. We are inviting you to look around you and take a photo of what you've spotted lately and share with us on social media!

**Can you name a tree unique to the Carolinian zone and describe a notable feature?**

**If you think you know the answer, email:** [haltonmastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:haltonmastergardeners@gmail.com)

Please use in the subject line **READERS CHALLENGE**. Include a photo of your garden with a brief description and it may be included in upcoming issues of **Cross Pollination**.