

# Cross Pollination

Newsletter of the Halton Master Gardeners



May  
2019

## May Garden 'To Do List'

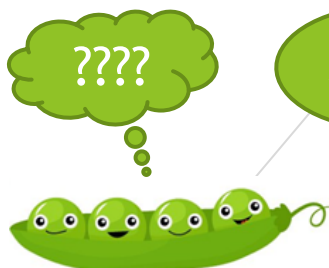
- ❑ **Pollinator Gardens** - Plan to add native plants that sustain birds, butterflies, bees and other insects. Check out [Recommended Plants for a Pollinator Garden](#) for ideas! [Buttonbush](#) is a fantastic butterfly plant and a wonderful alternative to non-native Buddleia.
- ❑ **Perennials** - Cut back leaving 6" (15 cm) stems for solitary bees. Cut stems can be stacked at the back of flower border or against a fence. Divide or transplant perennials as needed when growth resumes. [Hellebores](#) may benefit from tidying up and removal of dead or damaged leaves.
- ❑ **Prune** roses when the forsythia are blooming. Here's a good [pruning video](#).
- ❑ **Tomatoes**- Start seeds indoors; monitor seedlings for growth and re-pot if necessary. **Corn** - sow corn seeds when oak leaves are the size of a squirrel's ear!
- ❑ **Trees** - Inspect trees before they leaf out for scale, fungus or other disease. Check these links for [fruit trees diseases](#) and [magnolia scale](#).
- ❑ **Spring bulbs** - Take photos of your spring garden so that you remember which tulips are producing small blooms and need dividing and areas that might need some spring colour next year.
- ❑ **Lawn** - Wait until your footprints are no longer visible before working on your lawn. Rake up loose/dead grass and top-dress lawn with 1/2 inch (2 cm) fine textured compost; over-seed bare spots in the lawn [when lilacs bloom](#). If it's too cold seed may rot. Areas with moss indicate soil has been compacted and nutrient level is likely low. Aerate and treat.
- ❑ **House plants** - Increase watering and feed, preferably with an organic fertilizer. If the soil is drying out quite quickly between watering, it may be time to repot, one size larger. Note-Hoya & Nile lily (agapanthus) flower when slightly pot bound, so repot these less often.
- ❑ **Hummingbirds** - arrive early May, so put out your feeders or better yet, plant hummingbird friendly plants. More info about plants and feeders at [Gardening in Canada](#).



[Buttonbush](#)  
has fragrant golf-ball  
like flowers!



What  
vegetable  
should you  
never carry  
in a bucket?



A leek!



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## From Seeds to Garden Transplants Part 4 of 5 Part Series

By David Marshall MG



David's Pond Garden

*Last month, David wrote about transplanting your seedlings and introduced the hardening off process. This article provides more detail on how to prepare your tender seedlings for the garden as well as sowing seeds directly and starting perennials for next year ... Editor*

As I write this, the Weather Network's fourteen day forecast shows no frost, so by the time you read this we will have probably seen the last of winter. Over the last fifty years we have moved almost a full zone warmer in our winter minimum temperatures, making the last spring frost earlier, and as global warming takes hold it will get even warmer, so you can start moving your plants from the shelter of your lights to the great outdoors. You must acclimatize them gradually though, because although it may not seem it, the light outdoors even on a dull day is much more intense than grow lights, and sudden direct exposure to the midday sun will burn the leaves of some varieties.

First, move the flats into a shady spot for about five days, then move them to a spot shaded from the sun between about 11am to 4pm for another five days. After that they should be able to withstand full sun, but there is no hurry and be prepared to move them inside overnight if frost is forecast -- the garage is fine. Keep them well watered and you can now plant them in their final resting place.



Tithonia Fiesta del Sol  
ready to harden off



Tomatoes & Marigolds  
Alumia Vanilla Cream



Calendula Lemon Cream

Continued ...

Why did the  
Baba Ganoush  
grow up big  
and strong?



It had good  
auberg-genes!



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Starting seeds - part 4 cont'd

### Starting Perennials for Next Year

Don't put the light away yet though! You can save big on next year's perennials by starting some within the next couple of months to winter them over in rows in an out of the way spot ready for transplanting next spring. The process is the same as for annuals but they may take a bit longer to germinate, and germination is sometimes a bit spotty.

You can find seeds in any seed catalogue or store which sells plants and some suitable ones are bell flowers, monarda, columbines, gaillardia, shasta daisies, fall asters, coneflowers, helenium, lupins, maltese cross, primulas, rudbeckia, coreopsis, sweet William dianthus, phlox, pyrethrum and yarrow.



Clockwise from top right: Lupins, Gaillardia, Monarda, Bell Flowers (Campanula), Black Eyed Susan (Rudbeckia), Coneflowers (Echinacea), Coreopsis.

### Direct Seed into the Garden (Now & End of May)

You can start cool season vegetables directly in the garden now including lettuce, radish, beets, carrots, peas, potatoes, spinach, Swiss chard and turnips. Wait a couple of weeks until the soil warms up for beans, squash, cucumbers, corn and melons, and if you didn't start them under lights, buy cell packs of tomatoes, peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, egg plants, kale and zucchini.

### Coming Up in June

Spring seems to be a little late this year so in our final installment next month we will discuss dividing perennials and growing perennials and shrubs from cuttings.



Sun Loving		Shade Loving	
Day Lily	Phlox	Hosta	Ferns
Rudbeckia	Sedum	Astilbe	Brunnera
Coneflower	Peony	Heuchera	Ladies Mantle
Salvia	Coreopsis	Bleeding Heart	Toad Lily
Veronica	Lavender	Hakonechloa	Hellebore







May 2019

### Berries in the Home Garden: Part 1 of 4 Part Series

By MG Liza Drozdov

*In this issue, the first of our 4 part series on berries, we'll focus on strawberries and raspberries. Next time, blueberries and blackberries take center stage and the final two discuss less common berries such as gooseberries, goji berries, currants and more ... Editor*



What's better than harvesting your own fresh berries for dessert or breakfast every day? It's easy to do and won't require much space in your garden.

You will always find that the berries you grow in your home garden are more sweet, juicy and flavourful than those you buy. That's because commercially grown berries are harvested at the half-ripened stage to allow for maximum supermarket shelf life. That means that the fruit will only contain about 1% of their maximum fragrance and flavour since aroma and flavour compounds don't develop until just before fruit maturity. Some fruit will continue to ripen slightly after picking. You'll see strawberries that are picked pinkish white will turn to red, but they will never reach their full flavour potential or have the full berry fragrance.

#### Did You Know?

Thanks to very complex scientific classification and nomenclature, many **fruits we call berries are not**, while others, surprisingly are. Grapes are classed as true berries, as are bananas, watermelons, eggplants, tomatoes and kiwis.

Even an orange is a sub-type of berry. However, raspberries, blackberries and strawberries are not true berries. They are aggregate fruits, thanks to their structure with the multiple drupes each containing seeds. But to keep things simple for us non-botanists, I'm going to refer (incorrectly) below to the fruits we commonly refer to as berries.

Garden varieties of berries you find for sale in local nurseries or online have been bred from berries that originally grew wild. They've been selected and crossed to bear larger fruit, more prolific berries, produce for longer seasons or to repeat crop.

They grow in a variety of ways: on trees, on shrubs, on canes or as low-growing plants that spread by runners or underground stolons.

Berries are an ideal crop for gardeners with restricted space, as they don't need a lot and many can be successfully grown in containers. They don't require much care, apart from annual pruning and maintenance--and regular watering of course. If you are growing berries in containers, you'll need to carefully monitor watering. Don't ever let them dry out--especially blueberries, as it will disrupt fruit production.



Berry  
interesting!

Continued ...

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### Berries in the Home Garden - cont'd

Even if you don't plan on eating berries yourself, grow a few shrubs as a benefit for wildlife, including pollinators and foraging birds. If you are growing them to eat, make sure you protect your bushes from birds and other wildlife or they will get to the ripe fruit before you do.

There are many kinds of berries hardy to Ontario that are easy to grow, from favourites like strawberries and blueberries to more unusual ones like lingonberries and cloudbberries. The top four favourite berries in North America, based on commercial production and import quantities, are strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and blackberries.

Even if you don't plan on eating the berries yourself, grow a few shrubs as a benefit for wildlife, including pollinators and foraging birds.

### Strawberries

Strawberries have been cultivated and crossed for millennia and all of the plants you'd purchase from a garden center or from online suppliers are hybrids. They are self-fertile and will not need to have another type of berry planted near them to ensure pollination. They will grow from zones 4 to 8, with very little care. Like most berries, they were originally woodland plants, but your strawberry plants will produce more flavourful fruit, and a larger crop if grown in full sun.

Purchase bare root plants in late spring and be sure to only purchase certified virus-free plants to avoid bringing in problems. Verticillium wilt, mildew and leaf blight are very common in strawberries. Mould is also very common in hot, humid conditions, which are typical in an Ontario summer.

Plant your strawberries carefully to ensure they are not too deep or too shallow--which is easily done. Examine the plant carefully and make sure the crown is exactly at soil level. Each plant needs plenty of space to develop and deep root run, like that in a raised bed. Make sure you do not allow the strawberries to blossom in their first year. This will promote root and runner development and ensure a good crop the next summer.

Strawberries need very rich moist soil, which is full of organic matter, both to feed the plants and to retain moisture in the soil. They need regular deep watering, ideally at the soil level. The soil should be well drained and in full sun.

Use a potassium rich fertilizer like comfrey or molasses tonic every two weeks through the summer. Commercial strawberry fertilizers often contain too much nitrogen, which results in lots of runners and leaves at the expense of berries and the fruit that is produced will have a crispy texture and less flavour. Enriching the soil with well-rotted manure and compost will help increase the berry crop.



Continued ...

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### Berries in the Home Garden - cont'd

You'll often see terracotta strawberry jars and towers for sale in garden centers. but they are really not a very good idea. They provide very little room for the required root run, and since the containers are above ground they get hot and dry out too quickly. Strawberries can be grown in containers, providing they are large and deep and they get plenty of water regularly.



Beware of terra cotta  
Strawberry planters

Plants should be mulched with straw in order to keep the fruit clean. This should be done after the first green berries appear to prevent and reduce pests, especially slugs that will hide in the mulch. This will also help reduce mould -- one of the main diseases of strawberries especially in heavy soil. Black plastic sheeting is another good idea (though it doesn't look very attractive) as it will keep the fruit clean and warm the soil. Also if drip irrigation is run under the sheeting, it will ensure no excess water stays off the leaves, so mildew becomes less of an issue.

Birds and rodents love to steal berries so you should net them or you won't get any for yourself.

Do not let them flower/crop the first year after planting. Pinch off any flowers-- though it will be heartbreaking to do! They need to develop roots and build up strength for following year.

Do not allow all the runners to remain on the plant as they will definitely reduce your fruit yield. Thin them to just a few, which you can grow on to replace the mother plant in time.

After three or four years the plants will become less productive and should be removed and replaced as needed, with newly purchased plants or runners that have been allowed to grow on to fruiting size. You don't want to replace them all at once or you'll have no crop that year. Be sure to stagger the plant replacement.

### Types of Strawberries

#### June Bearing

The most popular strawberry, grown for commercial use. They produce one heavy crop a year, in June/July. Fruit only for 2 to 3 weeks, per variety. You can increase the time your berries will provide fruit by planting several different cultivars.

#### Ever bearing and Day Neutral

These will fruit less heavily, but do so all season long, from June to frost.

#### Alpine and Wild

These plants, which must be grown from seed, are quite easy to grow. They don't form runners so older plants must be replaced by new seedlings as needed. The fruits are smaller, but are very fragrant and sweet. These varieties are also hardier and are less susceptible to pests and diseases.

Continued ...



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### Berries in the Home Garden - cont'd

#### Raspberries

These are one of the easiest berries to grow, and they crop heavily. If you plant several different varieties you can extend your harvest all summer long. There are red, black and yellow varieties, all readily available in garden centers and online.



Raspberries grow on lax, flexible canes that absolutely need to be supported on trellises or post and wire structures. This makes them easy to prune and to pick. If they are not tied in and controlled, the berry patch quickly becomes an unmanageable mess and wading through an overgrown raspberry patch doesn't make harvesting berries very easy or pleasant to do.



Image: Finegardening.com

They can grow from three to ten feet tall, depending on the variety and their canes are thorny and bristly. Raspberries are vigorous runners that will sucker and spread happily through your garden, so you'll need to pull out any that pop up where they aren't wanted.

All raspberries produce small white flowers that are very attractive to bees. And, birds will steal the fruit so they need to be protected by netting.

Raspberries are hardy from zone 4 through zone 8 and are adaptable to various soils, though they prefer a slightly acidic soil with lots of compost and organic material. They need moisture and will resent drying out or drought. They have shallow fibrous roots, so you must be careful when cultivating or weeding around the plants.

Heavy mulch is a good idea to help preserve moisture. Raspberries will tolerate a lot of shade and still produce fruit, but will do better in full sun. In spring, feed them with a high-potash fertilizer to encourage fruiting. You could grow raspberries in containers, providing they are large enough and you make sure you water frequently.

There are some viruses that may attack raspberries. If that occurs, you must remove and destroy the plants. Do not compost them or you will risk spreading the disease.

Continued ...



Why did the tomato blush?

Cuz it saw the chick pea.



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Berries in the Home Garden - cont'd

### Types of Raspberries

#### Summer fruiting

These raspberries fruit on second year canes. The first year the cane will emerge and grow, and at that point they will need to be tied in for next year's crop. The second year those canes will flower and bear fruit. The next year all of the canes that have borne fruit must be removed at the base. They will not bloom or fruit again and will just help create a thicket of thorn. Select young shoots and tie them in so they can produce next year's fruit.

#### Autumn fruiting

These varieties bloom later in the year, on new wood. They are shorter plants and won't need supports, which makes maintenance much simpler. After they've finished fruiting in late autumn, cut all the canes down to the ground.

Be sure to see upcoming issues for more on berries in the home garden!



## Gardening Blunders: We Cry. We Laugh.

*Gardening can be dramatic even for the most experienced among us. This month, we have just one 'blunder' to share with you. Lessons lived and learned.*

### Gardening Drama

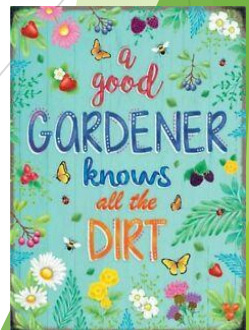
### Heed this MG's New Home Regret

When we moved into our newly built home 30 years ago, I didn't amend the so-called "soil" that the builder spread on the property—you know the "scrapings" that sit in a huge pile baking in the sun for a year, mixed with sub-soil and devoid of life. I lost many plants in that horrible clay sub-soil and many others that survived have never really thrived. If I had to do it over again, I'd start with rich healthy, composted soil teeming with living soil organisms. I'd likely plant a [green manure cover crop](#) to further enrich the soil and wait at least a full year before buying plants at the nursery.

## Ingesting Organisms in Soil Linked to Healthier Immune Systems

*"Eating colorful fruits and veggies is great—but only half the story. There's surprising evidence that our mental and physical health depends on growing them ourselves ... Call it soil-borne wellness"*

See more @ [Psychology Today's article Nature's Bounty: Soil Salvation.](#)



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### Halton Master Gardeners Meeting

Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, at 7:15 p.m.

Hariette Henry, one of our Master Gardeners in Training will do a presentation on growing veggies in containers and we will have guest fitness/personal trainer and yoga instructor, take us through some gardening stretches & warm-ups

- **Royal Botanical Gardens - Plains Road**
- Interested in joining? You are welcome to attend one of our meetings. Just let us know before hand at [haltonmastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:haltonmastergardeners@gmail.com)



### Garden Hacks! Nifty Ideas to Make Your Gardening Easier & More Fun

Have you ever wondered how to keep squirrels from eating your newly planted bulbs? Or how to store that crazy assortment of pots? How about growing potatoes so you can harvest as they grow? Learn this and more in this fun gardening presentation!

- Friday, May 17, 2019 at 2 PM - 3 PM
- Red Hill Library, 695 Queenston Rd, Hamilton
- Presenter: Claudette Sims



### Build it and They Will Come-Creating a Butterfly Haven in Your Garden

Attracting butterflies is all about having the plants they need and no, that isn't only flowers. Find out which plants are best and how to choose them for your garden.

- Wednesday, June 12, 2019 at 1 PM - 2 PM
- Red Hill Library, 695 Queenston Rd, Hamilton
- Presenter: Claudette Sims

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“What’s Growing On” in Our Community



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## Environment Hamilton

### Community Tree Planting

Saturday May 4th, 2019 | 10am-1pm

Park at end of Brampton Street, where Red Hill Trail begins  
Planting site: Turtle Pad | Look for signs

Bring a shovel | family friendly | refreshments

E: treespleasehamilton@gmail.com | P: 905-549-0900



In partnership with City of Hamilton's Forestry division



### Celebrate Victoria Day

by adding the stunning ‘Fireworks’  
Goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa*  
‘Fireworks’) to your garden!

Goldenrod feeds the caterpillars of  
around 115 butterfly and moth  
species!

### Upcoming Garden Tours

#### SECRET GARDENS

•Sunday, June 2<sup>ND</sup>, Dundas

#### NIAGARA ON THE LAKE SHAW

•Saturday, June 8<sup>th</sup>

#### GRAND DURAND GARDEN

•Saturday, June 15<sup>TH</sup> Hamilton

#### BLOOMS for AFRICA

•July 12 & 13 Waterdown





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## “What’s Growing On” in Our Community



**Ancaster Gardeners' Monthly Meeting**  
Tues. May 21 7:30pm  
Ancaster Old Town Hall  
Part 3 of 'Transforming your Garden  
One Step at a Time: Maintaining  
Beautiful Gardens'  
Speaker: Sherry Hayes of Landscaping  
with Style



### Milton & District Horticultural Society

- Sat. May 11, 8am - noon
- Milton Fair Grounds

### Ancaster Gardeners' Huge Plant Sale

- Sat. May 18, 8 am -1 pm
- Food Basics Plaza, Ancaster

### Mount Hamilton Horticultural Society

- Sat. May 18, 9 am -12 pm
- Immanuel Christian Reformed Church

### Burlington Horticultural Society

- Sat. May 25, 8 -11:30 am
- St. Christopher's Church

### Flamborough Annual Plant Sale

- Sat. May 25, 8 am - 1:00 pm
- Waterdown Legion, front parking lot

## Halton Region Master Gardeners

Come Grow with Us

CROSS-POLLINATION **NEWS** LEARN ▾ JOIN REQUEST MEMBERS ▾ CONTACT



Check our [Facebook](#) page AND  
Website:  
[HaltonMasterGardeners.com](http://HaltonMasterGardeners.com)  
under the tab **NEWS** to find  
even more gardening events  
and information!



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