

Cross Pollination

Newsletter of the Halton Master Gardeners



June
2019

June Garden 'To Do List'

- ❑ **Direct sow** warm season veggies like corn, beans, cukes and squash and flowering annuals like nasturtium, cosmos etc.
- ❑ **Spring Bulbs** - Cut flower stems of tulips/daffodils etc & allow leaves to grow, returning energy to the bulb. Divide & replant tulips if flowers were absent or very small & other bulbs if they are too crowded.
- ❑ **Houseplants** - Gradually bring outside for a 'holiday' to a shady protected area, then move to suitable sun or shade location as needed.
- ❑ **Compost**- Use compost to mulch garden beds and trees. Turn your compost pile and water if dry. Read more about composting [at this link](#).
- ❑ **Lawn** - Feed soil with compost or organic fertilizer. Mow high-3"/7.5 cm. Pull weeds on a weekly basis. For more information on healthy lawns [see this link](#).
- ❑ **Perennials** - Stake & support peonies, delphiniums and other tall plants.
- ❑ **Prune** -spring flowering shrubs after they have bloomed if necessary. Overgrown shrubs may benefit from [rejuvenation](#).
- ❑ **Roses** - Prune laterals of climbing roses to 6-8" after blooming to keep them flowering. Here's a great video on [how to do it!](#)
- ❑ **Veggies** - Stake or cage vegetables like tomatoes and beans as needed. Mound potatoes to maximize production & protect tubers from sun exposure.
- ❑ **Water** - newly planted trees & plants regularly; lawn & existing trees less frequently, but deeply. Potted plants will need more frequent watering. Use soaker hoses for water wise gardening.
- ❑ **Birds** - Keep feeders and bird baths filled & clean.
- ❑ **Pests & Diseases**- Inspect plants regularly.
- ❑ **Squash bugs** -all you need is duct tape & [this video!](#)
- ❑ **Aphids** -plant alyssum near problem plants to attract [hover flies](#) which are basically aphid assassins!
- ❑ **Japanese Beetles** - make their appearance in June. Take necessary steps for control: hand pick, knock into a bucket of soapy water, or use a hand vacuum to suck them up!
- ❑ **Gypsy Moth**: Wrap tree trunks with burlap bands or sticky bands in early June to trap the older gypsy moth caterpillar as it treks from the canopy to hiding places on the ground. Remove trapped caterpillars daily.
- ❑ **Remember** that not all 'bugs' are pests. Most bugs eat other bugs & birds need insects to [feed their young](#). Many plants can survive minor infestations of insects, so avoid reaching for sprays which kill beneficial insects and keep your garden in balance.



Chickadees need over 5,000 caterpillars to feed their young! Spraying kills their food source and beneficial insects too.



Firefly on a lilac leaf-
Hamilton (C. Sims)

Fireflies Need Your Help!

Fireflies are beneficial insects. Their larvae feed on snails, slugs, earthworms and other insect pests. These magical creatures who make their own light to attract their mates & find prey, are in danger due to light pollution. Firefly.org shares [How to Help Tips](#) for making your yard more firefly friendly, including:

- **Turn off outdoor lighting** at night to minimize light pollution.
- Let logs and litter accumulate -a "good environment" for larval fireflies.
- **Avoid lawn chemicals** such as fertilizers & nematodes.



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From Seeds to Garden Transplants Part 5 of 5: Other means of Propagation

By David Marshall MG



David's Pond Garden

In the last four issues we have discussed growing plants from seed, and hopefully those of you who took the plunge have now started moving your plants into the garden. Most people who become addicted to propagation start with seeds, known as sexual propagation, but there are several

methods of asexual propagation. One advantage of asexual propagation is that you get an exact clone of the parent plant, which is not always the case with sexual propagation, and seeds grown from hybrid plants rarely come true to their parent.

The two methods which we will cover here are division and cuttings, but there are other methods, including stooling, tip layering, stem layering, French layering, air layering, grafting, of which there are several types, budding, and more recently tissue culture, which is a commercial process done under sterile conditions to produce thousands of new plants quickly.

Division is a simple method of propagation suitable for clump forming perennials such as phlox, sedums, shasta daisies and delphiniums. It simply involves dividing established clumps into smaller pieces and replanting them. It is usually done in the spring shortly after new growth emerges, but it can be done later if care is taken to not damage the longer stems. If the stems are short it can be done in situ. Step on a sharp spade to slice the clump into two, four, or more pieces depending on the size of the clump then dig up and replant the pieces to be moved. If the stems are long it is best to carefully dig up the whole plant, lay it on its side, and cut through the roots with a sharp knife to make as many divisions as you need. Most perennials benefit from being divided every few years to rejuvenate them. What could be easier?



Why doesn't anybody laugh at my garden jokes?

They are too corny!



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Starting seeds - part 5 cont'd

Cuttings are another way of making new plants and depending on when you make them, they can be soft wood taken from new tip growth in spring or early summer, semi hardwood taken from more mature but still flexible current year's growth in mid or late summer, or hardwood, taken in the fall or early winter after growth has stopped. New cuttings wilt quickly, so it is important to keep them in a humid atmosphere until rooting takes place, usually in two to four weeks. I do this by cutting a clear two-litre soft drink bottle in half and placing it over a 500 millilitre sour cream or similar container. This gives a snug fit so humidity is maintained and little watering is needed. Using a rooting hormone, which can be powder or liquid, helps, but is not essential.

Fill your container with moistened potting mix and firm it down. Cut several stem tips about seven centimetres long and strip off the lower leaves so that none will be below soil level. If the remaining leaves are too big you can cut them in half. Make a hole in the soil with a pencil, dip the bottom centimetre of the cutting in rooting hormone, tap off the excess and place the cutting about two centimetres deep in the hole and firm down. Repeat until the container is full, water lightly, put on the cover and place the container in a warm bright spot, but not in sunlight or it will get too hot. If you want to root a lot of cuttings you can use a seed flat with a clear plastic cover.



After two or three weeks test for rooting by pulling lightly on the cutting. If there is resistance rooting has started and you can shortly start potting up the cuttings to grow on until they are big enough to plant in the garden for good plants next year. Semi hardwood cuttings are made in the same way, just later in the season. The cuttings are usually made a bit longer, and this method can be used for deciduous shrubs too, and even roses can be multiplied this way.

Hardwood cuttings are used mainly for deciduous shrubs and are taken after the plants have gone dormant. Cut twenty to thirty centimetre long sections of a branch up to one centimetre in diameter. plant them to half their depth in a trench in the garden about five centimetres apart. Firm down and cover them with leaves or straw. Over winter the stems will callous over and next spring roots should start to form. When leaves start to grow they can be moved to a wider spacing.

Once you have had a few successes you will be hooked, so be warned!



"To read a poem in January is as lovely as to go for a walk in June."

Jean Paul Sartre

RBG Rose Garden

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HaltonMasterGardeners@gmail.com

HaltonMasterGardeners.com

Japanese Beetles



Question: Besides being plants, what do Roses, perennial rye grass, grapes, and Dahlias all have in common?

Answer: They're all Japanese Beetle Food (as larva or adults) While more than 90 per cent of insects are beneficial or benign in our gardens, Japanese Beetles are one of the more problematic critters for home gardeners. Hand Removal in the morning or evening is one of the best solutions in dealing with these insects, but there are many other steps you can take in reducing the impact on your garden.

Read more at our website [What to do about Japanese Beetles.](#)



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

Over thinking, combined with a little neglect may wind up causing me to lose a Weeping Redbud (*Cercis canadensis* 'Lavender Twist'). This tree is a cultivar of the Native with a lovely weeping habit. After the first year in the ground I thought the leader needed some support to the stake provided by the grower. I used what I had on hand, rubber coated wire. The next year we were busy and I didn't have a look at the tree. This spring, something caused me to have a look and sadly the result was the wire had almost girdled the tree. It looks healthy enough right now, but I may still end up losing the top portion. Never again!.

See this article to learn about [Tree Support systems.](#)



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Berries in the Home Garden: Part 2 of 4 Part Series

By MG Liza Drozdov

In this issue, the second of our 4 part series on berries, Liza focuses on blueberries and blackberries. Coming up in future issues are less common berries such as gooseberries, goji berries, currants.

See our [May newsletter](#) for strawberries and raspberries ... Editor

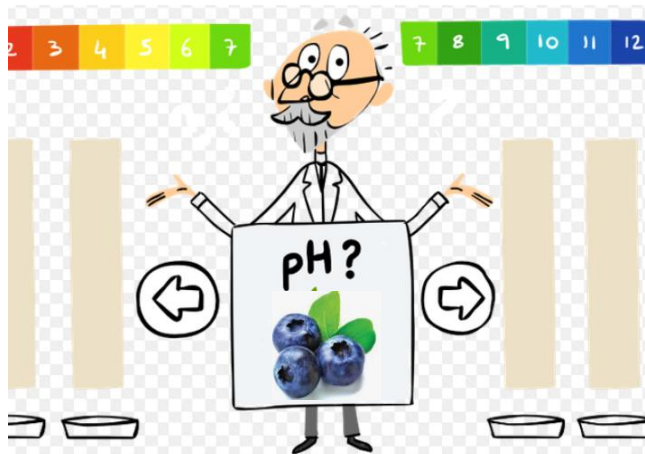


What's better than harvesting your own fresh berries for dessert or breakfast every day? It's easy to do and won't require much space in your garden.

Blueberries

Blueberries are very hardy plants, and they grow easily and fruit prolifically in the wild, so you know they can produce well in the home garden, with little fuss. They'll accept poor quality soil with low fertility, and some are hardy to zone 3. They all have lovely pinkish white flowers in the spring and they provide beautiful autumn colour, so even if they didn't have delicious fruit they'd be worth growing.

There are two main types of blueberries grown in gardens: Highbush (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) and Lowbush (*Vaccinium angustifolium*). They are quite different in their growth habit and management, but produce essentially the same delicious blue berry. There are many cultivars and crosses and named selections of blueberries, all with different growth habits and sizes. Regardless of what cultivar or named variety of blueberry you decide to grow, **one thing is non-negotiable: Acidic Soil**



Did You Know?

The pH scale we all learn about in high school was only invented in 1909. Even more interesting is that its inventor, S.P.L. Sorensen a Danish chemist, was working for Carlsberg Laboratory (the Carlsberg beer company) to advance biochemical knowledge relating to brewing.

See [here](#) for more.

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Berries in the Home Garden - cont'd

A soil with a pH of 4.5 to 5.5 is essential for growing blueberries or other acid loving plants like rhododendrons or azaleas. Without it, these plants can't absorb nutrients in the soil. Easy to use soil test kits are available in many stores to test your soil's pH. Since most soils in Ontario are not acidic, you will likely need to amend your soil.

Blueberries prefer lots of organic matter, ideally made from peat moss and leaf mould. Since very few areas in Ontario have suitable soil, one solution is to grow blueberries in special raised beds, filled with appropriate ericaceous soil. Elemental sulphur can be added the year before planting to bring the soil pH down, and an annual mulch of pine needles, peat moss and fallen leaves will help the plants thrive. They are sensitive to many fertilizers and fertilizing them at all might do more harm than good. If you feel you must feed them, use one for ericaceous plants, like rhododendrons.

Blueberries will die in alkaline soil, so containers--providing they are large enough--are another solution. Also, it's better to water them with rainwater if possible, as tap water in some areas is also quite limy and unsuitable for blueberry cultivation.

Blueberry plants are naturally resistant to diseases and usually don't seem to suffer much insect damage in the garden. What causes them the most problem is the wrong soil or watering the plants with alkaline water.

All will crop better in consistently moist, but not waterlogged soil. A good layer of mulch will help them retain moisture. A natural woodland plant, they will tolerate partial shade but will fruit much better in full sun.

Blueberries are technically self-fertile, but to ensure good pollination you should plant several plants, as well as a few different varieties, together. That will help you get a larger crop, and if you plant early, mid and late-fruiting varieties you can extend your harvest season. This works because the plants flower at more or less the same time, even though the ripening season is staggered.

As with all berry crops, birds are the competition. Your plants need to be netted to keep them from stealing your fruit.

Highbush Blueberries

Highbush blueberries seem to be the most readily available plants in the garden centers, and there are several cultivars commonly on sale. These shrubs can get up to ten feet or more in height, so it's worth looking out for lower-growing and more compact cultivars for the home garden.



Blueberry bushes thrive in containers where it's easier to maintain acidic soil they need.

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Berries in the Home Garden - cont'd

Highbush blueberries have shallow fibrous roots that are very close to the surface, so you need to be very careful when cultivating around the base of the plants. Spread a thick layer of mulch to help keep the roots fed and cool during the hot summer.

They don't need much pruning or managing in the way of raspberries or strawberries. They do not require an annual pruning; just let them grow and remove dead and damaged branches as you see them. Blueberries will only flower and produce fruit on two and three year old growth--so you need to let the plant grow to allow for fruit to form. But, once the branches get older and stop producing, prune out a third of the older growth every year to keep the bush producing.

Lowbush Blueberries

Lowbush blueberries are what we loosely call "wild blueberries" and they are the plants that are cultivated commercially. They are very low-growing plants, only around 12" tall, and they naturally grow in rocky, sandy barrens, and peat bogs and are very tolerant of extreme cold. Unlike the Highbush blueberry with its shallow fibrous root system, the Lowbush blueberry has a taproot and a deep underground system of rhizomes and roots that help it tolerate drought and dry soil, acidic low-fertility soil, and even fire. For decades commercial Lowbush blueberry fields have been maintained by periodic burning. However, they are intolerant of urban pollution, so shouldn't be planted next to streets or in inner city areas.

Lowbush blueberries spread by stolons or rhizomes under the soil, and are easily grown from a seed or a cutting taken from an existing plant. Not generally as available as Highbush blueberries in nurseries, but it is well worth the effort to find and grow them. While there aren't many different Lowbush cultivars available, their genes have been bred into many Highbush blueberry cultivars. That adds soil tolerance, winter hardiness, sweetness of fruit and lower height.

Lowbush blueberry fruits are smaller in size than Highbush, but have more intense flavour, and they may have a higher anti-oxidant content than Highbush varieties.

These plants require specific maintenance to grow them successfully. Lowbush blueberries bear fruit only on second year wood so need to be grown on a two-year crop rotation cycle. The first year they are allowed to produce vegetative growth. In the second summer, plants will produce a crop from the flower bud developed the previous fall. Then after harvest they are burned or mowed to the ground to start again. If allowed to keep growing, the plant will become dense with vegetation which will shade the following year's flower and reduce bud development and berry production, so growers cut them back to the ground every second year. To make sure you get an annual crop from your home garden, divide your planting in half, allowing one half to bear fruit every other year and alternating between the two.

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HaltonMasterGardeners@gmail.com

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Berries in the Home Garden - cont'd

Blackberries

Blackberries, or brambles, are closely related to raspberries, and their care is very similar. These plants provide lots of spring blossom and are very attractive to pollinators. Birds also enjoy the fruit, so they are an excellent choice for a wildlife garden.

Brambles are native to woodland sites so they prefer a rich woodland soil -- one that is full of organic matter. They dislike heavy, wet, waterlogged soil. Blackberries grow and fruit well in part shade so if you don't have a lot of sun in your garden this is one of the best choices for berries.

Blackberries will sucker and spread vigorously throughout the garden and quickly take it over if you aren't vigilant. They need a good root run and are definitely too vigorous to thrive in a container.

Blackberry canes will grow longer and taller than raspberries, and the clusters of fruit are larger and heavier, so they will need to be well supported and tied in carefully. They can bear fruit on canes that are up to two or three years old. However, the older the cane, the less productive it will be, so it makes sense to treat them as a raspberry and cut the canes down after their second year. Be sure to tie in the new canes as they grow in the spring, or they will quickly become a tangled mess.



There are several cultivated varieties available. Blackberries are tough, reliable plants with few pest issues. Mulch the plants with manure or compost to reduce weeds and fertilize in spring with a balanced organic fertilizer like fish, blood and bone meal, topped with a thick layer of compost.



Did you know?

Vaccinium corymbosum, known as highbush blueberry, is native to eastern North America where it typically grows in moist woods, bogs, swamps and low areas. It makes an excellent addition to a native garden with its pretty flowers, summer foliage and brilliant fall colour. It also makes an excellent hedge with the added benefits of fruit which can be harvested or left for the birds.

Blueberries provide fall colour and are a great addition to your native garden

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"What's Growing On" featuring Halton Master Gardeners



Halton Master Gardeners Meeting

Wednesday, June 5th, at 7:15 p.m.

Special Event: Halton Master Gardeners will be visiting Victory Gardens in Hamilton. We'll be getting a little dirty, so bring your own gloves and water for hydration. If you're interested in becoming a Master Gardener and joining us for this event, please use the contact form on our website.

Farmers' Markets

Visit Halton MGs in person to ask your garden questions!

Burlington Mall Farmers' Market

Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

- June 1, 15 & 29
- July 13 & 27

Dundas Farmers' Market

Thursdays from 3 to 7 p.m. on

- June 6 & 20
- July 4 & 18



Look for our sign at the Farmers' Markets

Online Chats are Back!



Spend a relaxing lunch hour listening to Ed Lawrence on CBC radio while following HMG's answer gardening questions online. Send your own questions to us by Tweet to [@CBCHamilton](https://twitter.com/CBCHamilton) or via email to hamilton@cbc.ca Every Monday in June from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Garden Talks!

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

- Monday, June 10th at 7 p.m.
- Stoney Creek Garden Club, Church of Our Saviour the Redeemer, 25 Lake Ave South

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

- Wednesday, June 12th, at 1 PM - 2 PM
- Red Hill Library, 695 Queenston Rd, Hamilton

Presenter: Claudette Sims

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“What’s Growing On” featuring Halton Master Gardeners

Pollinator Garden Workshop



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•Saturday, June 15th

•9:30 to 11 a.m.

•[Sunny Mount Park](#), Milton

Lots of outdoor fun. Free for children age under 12 with one adult ticket purchase. [More information & tickets](#)

Organized by [Milton & District Horticultural Society](#)

Presenters: Halton Master Gardeners Shirley Novak and Janet Hughes-Mackey

Halton Region Master Gardeners

Come Grow with Us

CROSS-POLLINATION [NEWS](#) [LEARN](#) [JOIN](#) [REQUEST](#) [MEMBERS](#) [CONTACT](#)



APRIL 10, 2019

Check our [Facebook](#) page AND Website:

[HaltonMasterGardeners.com](#)
under the tab [NEWS](#) to find
even more gardening events
and information!

When planting your cats make sure to
space them 6 inches apart so they
have room to grow.



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"What's Growing On" in Our Community



RBG Back To Nature Hike

FREE Guided Hike Each Sunday
June through August: 10 a.m.

- 1st Sunday of every month: Hendrie Valley; meet at Cherry Hill Gate parking lot
- 2nd: Princess Point; meet at the Princess Point parking lot
- 3rd: Cootes North Shore; meet at the Nature Interpretive Centre
- 4th: Cootes South Shore; meet at the Aviary parking lot on Oak Knoll Drive, Hamilton
- 5th: Rock Chapel; meet at the Rock Chapel trailhead parking lot

Upcoming Garden Tours

SECRET GARDENS

•Sunday, June 2ND, Dundas

NIAGARA ON THE LAKE SHAW

•Saturday, June 8th

GRAND DURAND GARDEN

•Saturday, June 15TH Hamilton

BLOOMS for AFRICA

•July 12 & 13 Waterdown

For more listings of garden tours visit this [Garden Making magazine link](#).



INVASIVE SPECIES AROUND HAMILTON

FREE WORKSHOP TO
IDENTIFY AND
MANAGE INVASIVE
PLANTS WITH
HAMILTON

NATURALISTS' CLUB
AND EXPERTS FROM
ROYAL BOTANICAL
GARDENS



- Tuesday, June 4th 7-9
 - First Unitarian Church, Dundurn St. S
- Please RSVP with Jen at land@hamiltonnature.org
More events at [Hamilton Naturalists Calendar](#)



**A Day Without
GARDENING
Is like...
Just kidding
I have no idea**