



August  
2019

### August Garden 'To Do List'

- ❑ **Perennials** - Cut back any tired looking perennials and remove yellowed or dying stems & leaves. Divide perennials such as irises, day lilies on a cool day later in the month of August or in early September.
- ❑ **Weeds** - Every weed pulled now is a thousand weeds you won't have to deal with later! Removing flowers before they go to seed will greatly reduce weeds next year. Don't add flowers or seeds to compost.
- ❑ **Wisteria** - **Continue** to remove the whippy side-shoots from the main branch framework to about 20 cm from their base (about five leaves from the main stem).
- ❑ **Lawn** - Check your local municipality for [watering restrictions](#). Water dormant grass when the blades don't spring back upright when you walk on it and when the blades fold to show their lighter bluish green underside; yellow lawns should bounce back in the fall when there is more rain. Late in the month, over-seed with drought resistant grass, i.e. perennial rye grass or red fescue.
- ❑ **Veggies** - Water during dry or hot weather to avoid stressing plants. Do not over fertilize tomatoes as it can lead to [blossom end rot](#). As you pull out 'old' plantings such as bolted lettuce, add new plantings like chard, radishes, carrots, kale, spinach, turnips, beets.
- ❑ **Strawberries** - August is a good time to [renovate your beds](#)
- ❑ **Asparagus & rhubarb** - Keep well weeded and mulch heavily with straw. Let asparagus fronds grow to feed the underlying crowns. Continue picking rhubarb. Prune off rhubarb flower heads to send energy back to the stalks.
- ❑ **Water** - Avoid watering in the hottest part of the day; water any spring planted trees & plants regularly, & existing trees less frequently, but deeply; water the base of plants, not the foliage, or use soaker hoses.
- ❑ **Pests** - Hand pick, knock into a bucket of soapy water or use a strong spray from your garden hose to knock pests off. Make sure you ID the insect as a pest before taking action. More on [pests here!](#)
- ❑ **Japanese Beetles** - read this [great article on how to control JB's](#) by HMG Cathy Kavassalis
- ❑ **See our [July newsletter](#) for any garden jobs that you may have missed!**

Halton MG Claudette Sims



The hot fiery colours of Butterfly Weed flowers (*Asclepias tuberosa*) light up the August garden & are loved by butterflies and bees.

# CROSS POLLINATION

Newsletter of the Halton Master Gardeners



August 2019

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



By Halton MG Liza Drozdov

*In this issue, the last of our 4-part series on berries, Liza focuses on goji and haskap berries.*

See our [May newsletter](#) for strawberries and raspberries, [June newsletter](#) for blueberries, blackberries and [July newsletter](#) for Less Unusual Berries.

### GOJI BERRIES

Goji berries have been getting a lot of publicity over the past few years as anti-oxidants that possess many health benefits. You'll never find fresh Goji berries available in a market, but you can easily grow them here in Ontario. Gojis, also known as Wolfberries, are members of the nightshade (*Solanaceae*) family, and are related to both tomatoes and potatoes. Native to China and Russia, they are very winter hardy and can be grown from zones 3 to 8. The shrubs absolutely require full sun--like their relatives the tomatoes and peppers, and prefer a neutral to slightly alkaline, well-drained soil.



The thorny shrubs can grow up to 10 feet if unpruned, are drought tolerant and seem to even prefer poor, infertile soil. They will not appreciate your providing them with fertilizer or manure. Goji berries aren't good candidates for container growing, since they form a deep taproot. They fruit on current year's wood and pruning needs to be done in early spring, before new growth starts. Prune to remove dead and damaged wood, shorten laterals and produce an open shape that allows sunlight into the center of the shrub. They flower in late spring with small purple bell-shaped flowers and the long oval bright orange berries are produced in late summer. The berries are very delicate and easily bruised and squished when picking, which is likely one of the reasons it's impossible to find them available fresh!

There are many pests that could attack your Goji berry bush, including Japanese beetles, aphids and potato leafhopper. Powdery mildew and blossom end rot could also appear, and like most berries, they are attractive to birds.

PLEASE NOTE: Goji Berries have been reported by some gardeners, as aggressive plants & have also naturalized in Britain. Consider placing within a confined, raised bed. They can spread by suckering roots or seeds (spread by berries dropping or dispersed by birds). See [University of Washington Botanic Gardens](#)

Continued ...



# CROSS POLLINATION

## Newsletter of the Halton Master Gardeners



August  
2019

Berries in the Home Garden - cont'd

### HASKAPS

Haskaps, also known as honeyberries, are excellent berries to grow in the home garden. The berry looks like an elongated blueberry, and they are uniquely delicious, tasting much like a cross between a raspberry and a grape. Haskap berries ripen about a month before any other fruits, which is ideal for home gardeners who can't wait for the earliest strawberry harvest.



They bloom very early in the year with small, unscented bell-shaped white flowers, which is great for early pollinators who are looking for nectar. They are bee-pollinated and provide much-needed nectar for our native pollinator bees. The Haskap is native to northern Russia and they grow wild across northern Canada, so you know it is extremely cold hardy. It can withstand temperatures of -47 degrees Celsius and exposure to high latitude UV rays. In fact, it will only thrive and fruit well if it receives a sufficiently long and cold winter dormancy period, such as in zones 2 through 4. There are extensive breeding programs being carried out in northern Alberta because Haskaps are a promising commercial crop for Canada.



Unlike most berries, they can't be grown in California! Haskaps need full sun, so make sure they receive at least 6 hours of direct sunlight daily. They are very tolerant of soil types and will grow on clay and shallow soils with neutral pH. They have a shallow, fibrous root system, so can do well in containers, providing they are large enough. Since their roots are so shallow, an annual top dressing of leaf mulch will help keep the roots cool, and prevent weed competition. One thing they absolutely require is at least two different varieties planted nearby to ensure good cross-pollination. Three might even be better, if you have the space.

Haskaps are disease and pest resistant. They are attractive to birds, so will need to be netted, unless you are willing to share your harvest. Individual shrubs will grow to 8 feet tall if left unpruned, depending on cultivar, and they will need to be managed to keep them in check. Since they produce the most fruit on one-year old wood, prune in late winter only to remove broken or crossed branches. Avoid cutting back the branch tips, where the fruit is produced. When the shrub is mature you will need to remove some of the older branches every year to keep the shrub producing. You can prune in mid-summer after the fruit is harvested, so the new growth can develop over the rest of the season.

They start to fruit when they are young plants, so impatient gardeners won't need to wait a long time for their first crop. And the plants will continue to produce well for up to 30 years, with mature plants each producing up to 7 pounds of berries. Harvesting Haskaps can be tricky, since they look ripe before they are ready. They'll be deep blue, but still tart. If they are green inside, they still need time on the bush--they should be purple and red inside. One sign of ripeness is that they start to drop to the ground.

# CROSS POLLINATION

## Newsletter of the Halton Master Gardeners



August  
2019



### Garden Blunders-What were we thinking?

*Gardening can be challenging even for the most experienced among us. Here are some lessons lived and learned.*

#### Planning for the Future Landscape



About 40 years ago a 4 ft. tall Blue Spruce was planted next to this home. It was likely 'just perfect' at the time, especially when adorned with festive lighting in the winter, however over time it has dwarfed the home, overtaking the landscape. When purchasing plants, look carefully at mature size and calculate whether that tree actually fits your space/home.

How to calculate size:

- Houses are about 8 feet per story.
- Tree height: calculate at least 60% of its mature size and measure diameter accordingly.
- Distance from tree: Make sure you leave enough room between a tree and house, fence or other building.

### Eager to Share Your Passion for Gardening with Younger Friends & Family? Try Some Activities for *Growing Gardeners*!

We know that there are many enthusiastic & *budding* young gardeners out there who are eager to get their hands busy to make real changes in the world. Whether it is growing their own food, supporting pollinators, decreasing the impact of climate change by planting a tree, or just plain fun with beautiful flowers- Halton Master Gardeners are here to support you.



Visit our website for:  
Gardening Activities, including a 'Pollinator Scavenger Hunt'

# CROSS POLLINATION

## Newsletter of the Halton Master Gardeners

### 10 Things to Know About Dog Strangling Vine

By MG - Janet Mackey

1. **Dog-Strangling Vine, *Cynanchum rossicum***, (also known as Pale Swallowwort), is an invasive, perennial vine that can grow over 6 feet in one season. Once established in a garden, it is very difficult to stop. Early detection with removal, is the best opportunity to slow its ability to colonize our natural spaces & garden areas.
2. **The stems begin upright**, with no support, and then begin to twine and climb dependent on available supports (i.e., fence, trees) or will twine with other DSV to create a mat covering the ground. It resembles milkweed, having opposite leaves, with a similar leaf shape, milky sap and seed pod. It has a small purplish-brown flower in May/June/July. It has been observed along roadsides, fences and trails in the Hamilton/Halton region.
3. **It is harmless to dogs** however off-leash dogs can unwittingly spread seed on their coat. (...so can humans, on shoes, boots, bicycle tires etc.). **CLEAN up!**
4. **It reproduces by seeds and underground rhizomes** (stems that are under the soil). One square meter can produce 20,000 seeds which are viable for several years.
5. **It colonizes** on hillsides, ravines, fences & disturbed soil in dappled shade & full-sun
6. **This is a problem because:** It shades out native plants that provide habitat and foraging areas for both birds and insects of our region; It is toxic to leaf-eating insects from our region; In forests, tree seedlings are unable to grow because they can't compete for light and other resources; **Monarch Butterflies unfortunately mistake it for milkweed** and lay eggs which do not survive when they hatch.
7. **Controls include:** Cutting the stem, just below the soil level; re-checking throughout the season, to prevent the plant from growing and producing flowers or seed. This will also eventually starve the roots. Watch this video: [Control of Dog Strangling Vine](#)
  - If you don't have time for removal - cut off any flowers or seeds pods and dispose (see note re disposal) to reduce the ability to spread
  - DO NOT try to pull larger plants. The roots will splinter and produce more plants!
  - Remove rootstock and **all** plant parts from the ground so it doesn't re-sprout in regular garbage (**Do NOT** compost or put in yard waste). (Some people choose to compost stems and leaves, but roots and seed pods must be put in regular garbage).
  - Mow plants consistently - preventing them from going to seed throughout the season



**NOTE:** care should be taken in removal as it may cause skin reactions in some individuals (i.e, wear waterproof gloves).

Continued ...



August 2019



# CROSS POLLINATION

## Newsletter of the Halton Master Gardeners



August  
2019

### 10 Things to Know About Dog Strangling Vine or DSV - cont'd



8. **Best Practices** - Planting areas with native species or cover crops to fill the area will help prevent seeds from germinating. Tilling the soil can increase infestation of DSV - as it cuts the roots into multiple pieces with potential to re-grow. Mulching an area (thick layer of leaves or newspaper), immediately after removal may help in the recovery of native plants.

9. If you see a new infestation of dog-strangling vine or other invasive species in the wild, contact the toll-free Invading Species Hotline:

1-800-563-7711

or visit [EDDMapS](http://www.EDDMapS.org) Ontario to report a sighting.

<http://www.invadingspecies.com/dog-strangling-vine/>

10. Read further and share this information with others, especially landowners bordering natural areas. **MORE INFO:**

[http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/ontweeds/dogstrangling\\_vine.htm](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/ontweeds/dogstrangling_vine.htm)

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/dog-strangling-vine>



### Question of the Month



Will spraying dish soap or detergent help me deal with the caterpillars and bugs in the garden?

Cathy Kavassalis - Halton MG

*"The Ontario Ministry of the Environment, has asked that Master Gardeners NOT recommend home made solutions. They have not been tested for safety and impact on non-target species. They can do more harm than good."* C. Kavassalis



**Let's consider soaps.** The problem is 'dish soaps' are not designed to be used on plants. Some of what folks call 'dish soaps' are soaps, and others are actually detergents. Many have additives that provide fragrance, soften hands, improve rinsing and or disinfect. Some are formulated as salts, using sodium that can be harmful to plants; commercial insecticidal soaps use potassium, which is less disruptive to salt balances and the movement of water from the roots to the leaves.

**Some background:** A soap is made from the action of an alkali, such as sodium hydroxide or potassium hydroxide on a fat. Fats consist mainly of fatty acids of varying lengths. These are chains of carbon and hydrogen atoms with a reactive oxygen tail.

Continued ...

# CROSS POLLINATION

## Newsletter of the Halton Master Gardeners

### Questions of the Month: Spraying Soap Solutions

Short chain fatty acids tend to be **damaging to plants (phytotoxic)**: For example, acetic acid or vinegar ( $C_2H_4O_2$ ) is a very short chain fatty acid that is used as an **herbicide**. Insecticidal soaps are based on long-chain fatty acids (10-18 carbon atoms) of potassium (rather than sodium) salts. An example would be potassium laurate  $C_{12}H_{23}KO_2$ . Some dish soaps are made with sodium palmitate:  $C_{16}H_{31}NaO_2$ . It has the right fatty acid, but the sodium is not good. **Excess sodium** in the soil causes salt stress (some plants are more sensitive than others to sodium). In addition, it is likely to have other additives that have not been tested for safety on plants or their impacts on non-target species. I would be particularly cautious around vegetables that can absorb these compounds with unknown consequences.

**Detergents** - A detergent is more problematic. It is an ammonium or sulphonate salt of long-chain fatty acid like sodium lauryl sulfate:  $CH_3(CH_2)_{12}-OS(O)_2-O^- Na^+$ . Detergents are more likely to be **phytotoxic** and there is some research suggesting detergents can harm plants when absorbed through roots (e.g. corn shows impairment to "light-harvesting pigments and cell viability." Environ Monit Assess. 2018 Oct 18;190(11):651). All this is to say, understanding the chemistry and composition of a product is important.

Both soaps and detergents can damage the leaf cuticle (outer coating of the leaf). They strip naturally occurring protective oils and waxes from leaves. For some plants, losing this layer can be deadly. For others, thinning the layers can simply make them more susceptible to fungal diseases and herbivory.

**Prevention is Key** - The bottom line is that any pesticide should only be used if the **level of pest or disease threatens the survival of a plant**. They should not be used where cultural or physical or mechanical measures can be applied.

There are now a plethora of naturally occurring bio-pesticides like Btk available to home gardeners. These can be used when alternative strategies (i.e., row covers, hand-picking etc.) and disease levels merit their use. However, all pesticides have the capacity to impact non-target species and great care should be taken to limit their use and target the problem.



Ladybug larvae are a beneficial insect that will be harmed by the use of a soap solution



A row cover is a preventative measure

**"With the plunging numbers of insects around the globe, this is an issue that is of great concern to me."**

C. Kavssalis

Enjoy reading about Beneficial Insects in Your Garden?  
Go to: [Lions, Tigers & Dragons](#)



August  
2019

# CROSS POLLINATION

Newsletter of the Halton Master Gardeners



August  
2019

**“What’s Growing On” featuring Halton Master Gardeners**

## 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.

•August 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>

### Dundas Farmers’ Market

Thursdays from 3 to 7 p.m.  
on

•August 1<sup>st</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>



Look for  
our sign at  
the  
Farmers’  
Markets



## August Online Garden Chats



HMG’s Patty King, Liza Drozdov, Donna Parker and Claudette Sims team up with RBG experts Jon Peter & Alex Henderson to answer your garden questions.

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)

Tuesday, August 6<sup>th</sup> & all other Mondays in August from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Grab a cool drink, sit back and listen to Ed Lawrence on Ontario Today while we answer your gardening questions!



## Halton Region Master Gardeners

*Come Grow with Us*

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



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

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

HaltonMasterGardeners@gmail.com

HaltonMasterGardeners.com



# CROSS POLLINATION

Newsletter of the Halton Master Gardeners



## "What's Growing On" in Our Community



### RBG Back To Nature Hike

FREE Guided Hike Each Sunday  
until **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



The formal garden at Parkwood Estate



### Hamilton Naturalists' Club

Protecting Nature Since 1919

### Guided Nature Walk Every Saturday in August 11:00 to 12:00 p.m.

Urquhart Butterfly Garden, 128 King St East Dundas Learn about creatures that visit Urquhart Garden. All welcome Free. Cancelled in inclement weather. Be prepared for insects and ticks. Bring water and wear sunscreen. More information at <https://urquhartbutterfly.com/>

- August 3<sup>rd</sup> Butterflies
- August 10<sup>th</sup> Butterflies and Moths
- August 17<sup>th</sup> Dragonflies
- August 24<sup>th</sup> Bees and Bugs
- August 31<sup>st</sup> Biodiversity & You

More events at [Hamilton Naturalists Calendar](#)



**WEEKEND FORECAST:**  
GARDENING WITH  
A 75% CHANCE OF WINE!

August  
2019