

CROSS POLLINATION

Newsletter of the Halton Master Gardeners



October
2019

October Garden 'To Do List'

- ❑ **Bulbs** - Continue to plant spring flowering bulbs such as crocus, tulip, hyacinth & daffodil now, until before freeze up of soil. Water bulbs after planting. Please do NOT plant Scilla as it is now on the [Category 2 Highly Invasive](#) list!
- ❑ Dig [tender bulbs](#) like dahlias, caladiums, cannas and tuberous begonias. Clean, dry and store in a cool, dark, frost free area.
- ❑ **Perennials** - [Divide or transplant overcrowded or underperforming perennials](#) as the weather cools & water in the new divisions well.
- ❑ **Invasive plants** - Target [Category 1 list invasive plants](#) such as [periwinkle](#), [Japanese honeysuckle](#) & goutweed for removal. Replant with suggestions from [Grow Me Instead](#) or [Alternative Plants for Invasive Species](#).
- ❑ **2020 Butterfly Garden** - Prepare containers for [winter sowing of seeds](#) like milkweed, [Joe-Pye weed](#), New York [Ironweed](#), [Pearly Everlasting](#) and [Meadow Blazingstar](#) - all great butterfly plants!
- ❑ **Lawn** - Rake or "mow" leaves and remove to garden beds. Keep on weeding to reduce weeds in spring. This is a great time to sharpen lawn mower blades.
- ❑ **Clean up** - shed, garage, patio, garden etc. Donate unused tools & repair, recycle or throw away broken items. Cover air conditioner, drain & store hoses & turn off water supply. Clean & store pots, watering cans etc. to prevent cracking during freeze up. Cover ponds with netting before leaf fall or remove leaves in pond with a bamboo rake.
- ❑ **Recycle** unwanted black pots and trays with the numbers 2, 5, and 7 at [Green Venture](#) in Hamilton.
- ❑ **Houseplants** - Decrease watering as the days become shorter. Increase humidity by misting plants. Check for pests weekly.
- ❑ **Feed the Soil** - Empty your compost bin into gardens and cover bare soil with organic matter such as compost, leaves, straw, mulch or manure.
- ❑ **Young Trees** - To reduce sun scald, mulch young trees with wood chips. To reduce rodent & rabbit damage, use spiral tree guards & trim grass around tree.
- ❑ **Garlic** - plant end of October until ground freezes. [Detailed info on page 5](#) of this link.



Meadow Blazing Star (*Liatris ligulistylis*) is a butterfly magnet! Check out this [amazing video](#)! Photo: Wildflower Farm



Why wouldn't they let the butterfly in to the dance?

Because it was a Moth Ball!



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Spotlight on Native Plants : *Aronia melanocarpa* Chokeberry

By Halton MG Janet Mackey

Gardeners can support biodiversity and rich ecosystems by including native plants in their gardens. *Once established, these plants require less care than imports as they are naturally suited to our environment*

Aronia melanocarpa, **Chokeberry** is a medium-sized shrub that has delicate white flowers in late spring, edible black berries late in the season and foliage that turns bright orange or red in fall. What more could you ask of a plant!

The 5-petaled, white flowers are clustered into groups of 5-6. The leaves are glossy, elliptic to obovate and dark green in colour, measuring 5-8cm, with finely toothed margins.



The beautiful fall foliage and berries from Black Chokeberry. Photo: [Fine Gardening](#)

The black berries ([pomes](#)) are the size of a blueberry and enjoyed by birds from mid-winter. (They're usually still available in late fall to gather for making jellies etc.)

Uses in Your Garden: hedge; rain garden; group together on the edge of forest canopy; attract wildlife; naturalize a swampy area; good shrub for smaller gardens, foundations & for erosion control. Berries can be made into jellies which are said to be high in anti-oxidants. ([Recipes here](#))

Growing Conditions:

- Soil: adaptable; sand to clay and salt tolerant
- Light: full sun to part-shade
- Moisture: dry (once established) to swampy
- Flower: white - clustered, late spring
- Height: 90 - 250 cm. (3-8 ft.)
- Width: 60-180 cm (2-6 ft.)
- Growth: Slow-Moderate
- Form: thicket, multi-stemmed
- Hardiness: Zone 3

Wildlife Value:

- Flowers attract pollinators
- Birds eat the fruit mid to later winter



Referred to as Aronia Berry: Black Chokeberry is making a resurgence in North America in wines and as a fruit high in anti-oxidants. [Read more HERE.](#)



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Spotlight on Natives- cont'd

Companion Plants:

Betula (Birch) spp., *Asclepias incarnata* (Swamp Milkweed), *Fragaria virginiana* (Wild Strawberry)

Problems:

- No pests, powdery mildew may occur if there is poor circulation
- Suckering; dependent on where it is planted you may want to consider a cultivar that suckers less often (i.e., 'Autumn Magic' & 'Viking')



Aronia melanocarpa is a small shrub suitable for a wide variety of uses in the garden. Photo: [Plant Lust](#)



Not to be Confused with...

Common names can be misleading. Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) has a similar name but is a completely different plant! It also has edible berries but extremely tart, hence the name!

Photo: Sara Williams

'Weeding' Through Gardening Websites

By Emma Murphy, Peterborough Master Gardeners



Gardening resources on the internet are plentiful but can quickly become overwhelming for both novice and experienced gardeners. Over the past year I have noticed certain websites that continually show up at the top of my search results; these sites are **gardening content farms**, a term I learned from fellow Master Gardener Cathy Kavassalis. A content farm (or content mill) is a website that provides limited pay to large numbers of writers to generate a wide range of (user-generated) content which is often specifically designed to maximize page views in order to generate advertising revenue.

Examples include: [gardeningknowhow.com](#), [gardendesign.com](#), [thespruce.com](#), [theflowerexpert.com](#). Many have names that entice you into their site (like a fly to a spider's web). The websites may contain lots of information about gardening, but it appears to be mostly collected from other sites or produced by writers with minimal gardening knowledge. As Cathy puts it "The quality is variable but the sites are created to ensure they show up early in Internet searches to generate ad revenue." For a while I actually didn't notice the content farm sites because I have an adblocker program (so I didn't get the ads). Once Cathy mentioned the sites in response to a...

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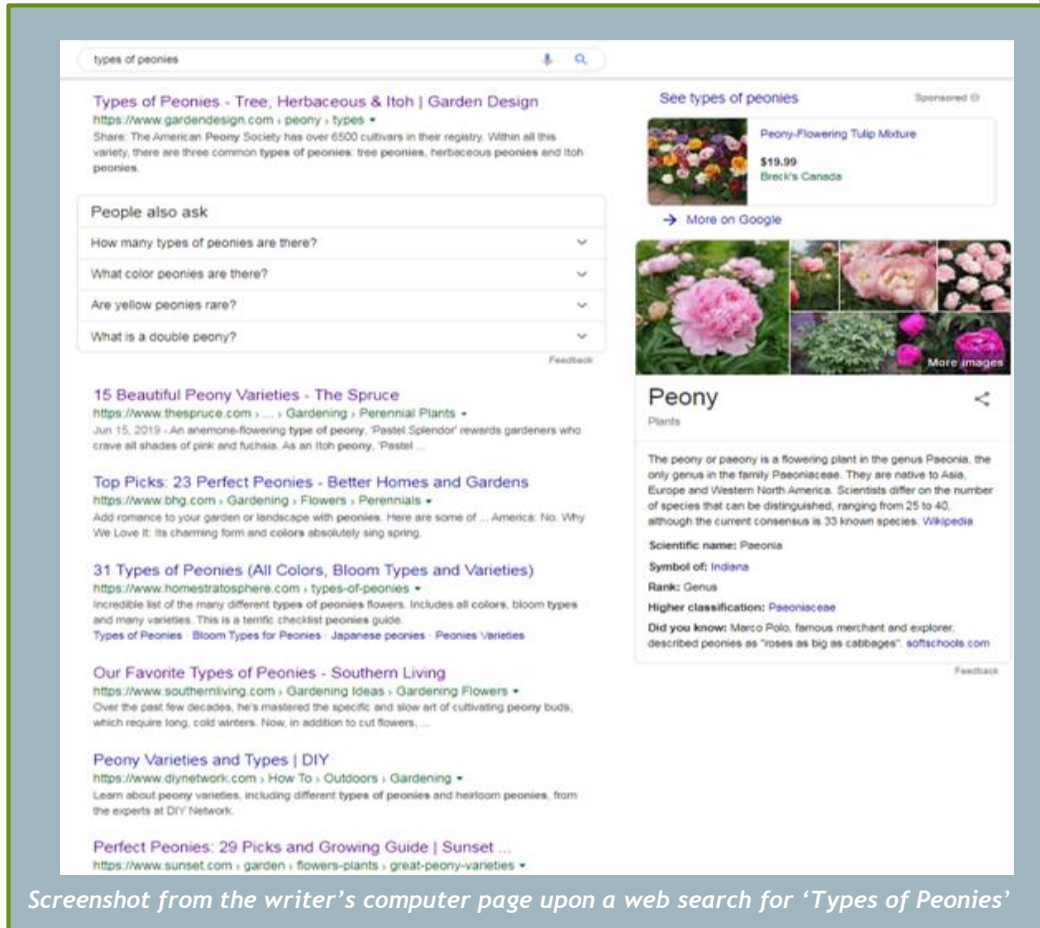
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'Weeding' Through Gardening Websites cont'd

...question on our Master Gardeners of Ontario [Facebook site](#), I consciously looked and was shocked by the number of ads that had been blocked when I clicked on the links - 6, 9, even 15 or more.



So I purposefully put "types of peonies" in the subject line in a Google search, keeping the topic very general. First link up is from [gardendesign.com](#). Some good information there, but 8 ads blocked. And of course first of all I get a pop-up wanting me to sign up for their newsletter (to sell me more stuff).

This is where you have to be an engaged researcher. Often the author may own a business (for example, one that sells expensive peonies); this doesn't mean the information isn't good, but their primary motivation in writing the article is to drive you to their website, or for you to share their article with others to increase their profile. Other sites engage writing generalists to search the internet for information on a topic and repost it on the site, which could mislead you into thinking they wrote the article (usually there is an attribution to the source at the bottom of the page in small lettering).

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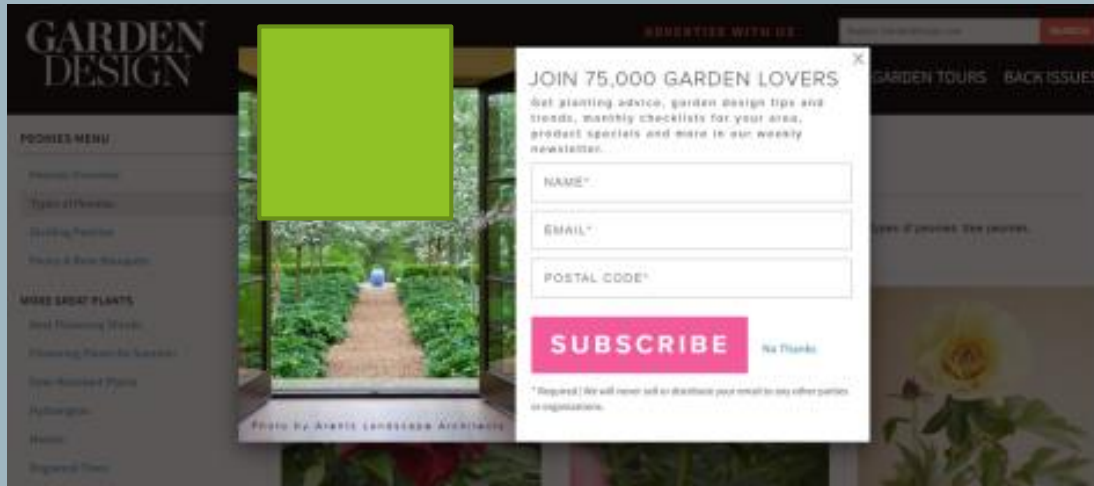


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'Weeding' Through Gardening Websites cont'd

The content provided on these sites are not a bad place to begin your searches, but the quality varies significantly, as these are not generally writers with gardening knowledge. Also if they are reworking other (maybe erroneous) information, they are simply continuing to spread misinformation.

I offer three suggestions to help you find gardening information on the web: If you are doing a Google search focus your search **with as many key terms as you can** so you get what you need, often bypassing the gardening content farms.



Screenshot from clicking on one of the 'content farm' links - 8 ads blocked and a pop-up sign-up form

For example, typing in "ontario gladiolus bulbs overwintering" brings up good local answers from sites such as [TorontoGardens](#) (with Helen and Sara Battersby), Landscape Ontario, an Agriculture Canada publication on gladiolus, and Toronto Master Gardeners. Then the aggregate (garden farm) sites follow, as they have more general information.

Rather than Googling for information, use some of the **great resources available on Facebook and Twitter**. [Master Gardeners of Ontario](#), Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) (through [GardenOntario](#)), and many regional Master Gardener and OHA groups are on Facebook and Twitter - it really is a terrific way to learn (and make new gardening friends). Also there are many good gardening websites to be found (really another entire post) - look for information provided by a government agency (e.g. OMAFRA, USDA, etc.), respected horticulturalists, a botanic garden and/or arboretum, a university, a Cooperative Extension services associated with a university (USA), or a wildflower or native gardening society.

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Thugs and Invasives: *Caveat Emptor!*

By Halton MG Allyn Walsh



As charming plants commonly found in our garden landscapes can become big problems - for us, our neighbours, and our environment. In this series, we will highlight some plant offenders that can take over our gardens, woodlands and meadows if we are not careful.

This monthly series will discuss some of these plants, why they can be problems, and how to control them.

The Not-So-Golden Gooseneck Loosestrife

Beautiful and attractive in gardens and arrangements, the arching white flowers of *Lysimachia clethroides* (Gooseneck loosestrife) seem to be a boon to gardeners. And generally for the first few years they are. Problems tend to arise around year three to four, when this lovely thug may be found to have taken over the garden, displacing other plants including our native species. Its invasive root system makes it very difficult to eradicate, with rhizomes that slowly spread in moist soil with sun to partial shade exposures. By the time a gardener realizes that this is going to be a problem, eradication and control are a real challenge.

Lysimachia clethroides, a native of Europe and Asia, should not be confused with that well known invasive, purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). The two plants are in different families, and it IS acceptable to plant *Lysimachia clethroides* although extreme caution is recommended. Growing 10-15 cm tall, this perennial plant has erect stems, with elliptical glabrous leaves. Each stem produces a terminal spike of small white flowers, with a characteristic bend giving the plant its common name. While it enjoys moist soil and full sun, it will survive, albeit spreading more slowly, in drier conditions and partial shade.

Continued....



The flowers of *Lysimachia clethroides* are quite lovely!
Image by congerdesign from Pixabay



A small swath which is likely to take off in a year or two

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Thugs & Invasives Cont'd

As always, the first step in dealing with *Lysimachia clethroides* is prevention. This is a plant that often appears as a volunteer in one's garden and may have arrived as a division from a friend's offering. While gardeners love to share, it is a sad fact that plants that are being given away are often those that have taken over the giver's garden. Careful siting is important - ideally in a confined area bordered by hardscaping or buried barriers so that the rhizomes can't spread beyond it. However, once the gardener recognizes that other desirable plants are being squeezed out by *Lysimachia clethroides*, it is a matter of deep and careful digging to remove the roots and rhizomes. Expect to do this regularly until the plant gives up the ghost. To facilitate this elimination, the other existing plants may be removed (being extremely careful that there are no *Lysimachia* rhizomes clinging to them) and then planted elsewhere. It may also be possible to out-compete Gooseneck loosestrife with native plants suited to the site. Finally, as the plant prefers moist soil, keep it as dry as is feasible.

Although it is a beautiful plant, be very cautious before planting *Lysimachia clethroides*. It can be altogether too much of a good thing!

Read more about Gooseneck Loosestrife:

- [What is the best method to eradicate Gooseneck Loosestrife from a perennial garden?](#) (Toronto Master Gardeners)
- [Plant of the week: Gooseneck Loosestrife](#) (University of Arkansas)
- [Lysimachia clethroides](#) (Missouri Botanical Garden)



Stay tuned for next month's Thugs and Invaders article!

If you have plants you think should be featured here, contact: HaltonMasterGardeners@Gmail.com

What do gardeners call a dessert pastry topped by fresh lawn clippings?



Pie à la mowed!



Sigh....



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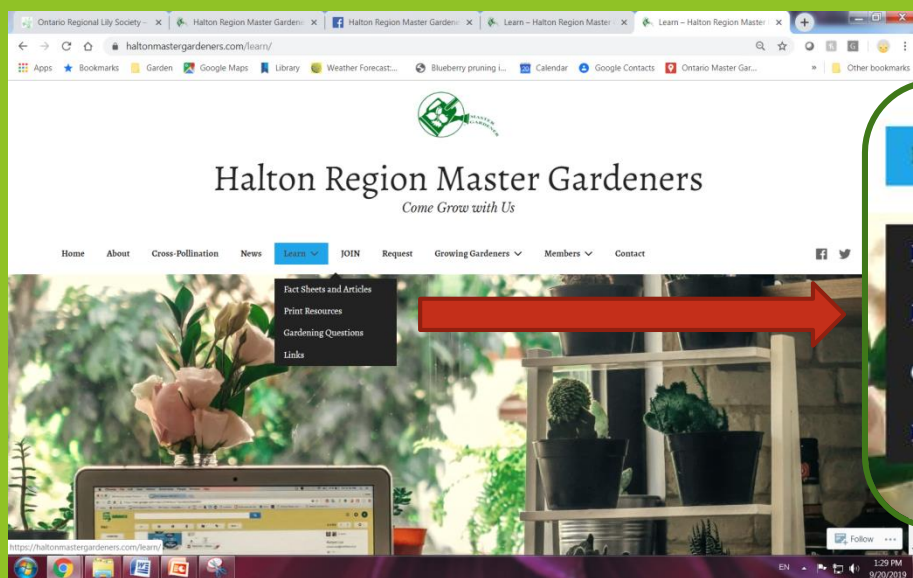
“What’s Growing On” featuring Halton Master Gardeners

Halton Master Gardener Monthly Meeting

- October 2, 2019 at 7:15 pm - 9:30 pm
- [Royal Botanical Gardens](#)
- HMG Janet Mackey will be talking about her gorgeous front “No Mow Lawn” garden renovation!
- Reminder to bring your own mug for refreshments.



HMG Claudette Sims will be talking about fall garden care on Cable 14 (Hamilton) Coming Home episode on October 8th!



Check our Website HaltonMasterGardeners.com under the **LEARN** tab to find Factsheets, Articles, Print Resources, Gardening Questions & Links and our [Facebook](#) page on Monday for a new Native Plant of the week! 



Do you have a gardening question?

Email: HaltonMasterGardeners@Gmail.com



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"What's Growing On" in our Community



ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS

Back to Nature walks at RBG Sundays in October, 2-3:30 p.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
- More info [here](#)



- [Ontario Regional Lily Society](#)
- **Annual bulb sale & auction**
- Sunday, October 6th 1 p.m.
- Rooms 3, 4, 5



The Great Pumpkin Trail

October 24 and 25

Hundreds of jack-o-lanterns light your way along our garden and South Bridle Trail.

[Hendrie Park](#)
[Event Tickets Required](#)

Horticultural Society Meetings

[Ancaster Horticultural Society](#)

- Tuesday October 15, 2019
- Jon Peter, Curator and Manager of Plant Records at RBG
- The Care and Maintenance of Garden Tools
- [Ancaster Old Town Hall](#) 7:30 p.m.

[Burlington Horticultural Society](#)

- Wednesday, October 9th
- Darren Heinbecker of Whistling Gardens on history and what's new in the gardens.
- [Burlington Seniors' Centre](#) 7:30 p.m.



Hamilton Naturalists' Club
Protecting Nature Since 1919

Larks Monday Ladies Birding

- Mondays in October, 9 to 11 a.m.
- Meets at various locations around the Hamilton area. New birders are welcome.

Contact Elaine Serena for locations and meet up points
serene238@gmail.com

Autumn Tree Hike @ McMaster Forest

- Sat, October 26, 10:00am - 12:30pm
- Explore the prairie, ravine, succession, and old growth habitats of McMaster and identify trees and other things of interest along the way.

More information at [Hamilton Naturalists Calendar](#)

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