

# CROSS POLLINATION

Halton Master Gardeners Monthly Newsletter  
JUNE 2024 | VOL. 17 ISSUE 5

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Halton Region  
Master Gardeners



Image: Janet Mackey

## Trumpeting Beauty: Hairy Beardtongue *Penstemon hirsutus*

By Janet Mackey, Halton Master Gardener

I'm quite convinced I could find a spot in every garden for Hairy Beardtongue. It grows happily in mine right next to the concrete pavers that edge the driveway. It has snow piled on it through the winter and blooms happily in part-shade underneath the large city-planted Silver Maple, *Acer saccharinum*. And just look at those flowers, ranging from whitish-pink to mauve (no filter used in the above photo - honest) and yet, it's small, it might be overlooked. It makes a great low, front-of-border plant at 30-60 cm (1-2') in height. It's a clumping perennial that very gradually expands to fill gaps in those challenging areas with dry, sandy or clay soils and even shade.

I love how the flowers of Hairy Beardtongue open in late May and early June, just in time for the emerging specialist bees, including the aptly named [Distinct Mason Bee](#). If these amazing features weren't enough, it has more! It's the larval host to the Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly, Saunders' Sallow and Verbena Bud moths. Finally, according to the Xerces Society, *Penstemon hirsutus* is known to be frequented by newly hatched bumblebees.



Distinct Mason Bee  
Image: [Vermont Centre for Ecostudies](#)

Continued on next page

**TRUMPETING BEAUTY (CONT'D)****Faunal Associations of *Penstemon hirsutus***

Sanders Sallow Moth  
Image: [Flickr](#)



Baltimore Checkerspot  
Image: [Alabama Butterfly Atlas](#)



Larva of Baltimore Checkerspot  
Image: [Alabama Butterfly Atlas](#)

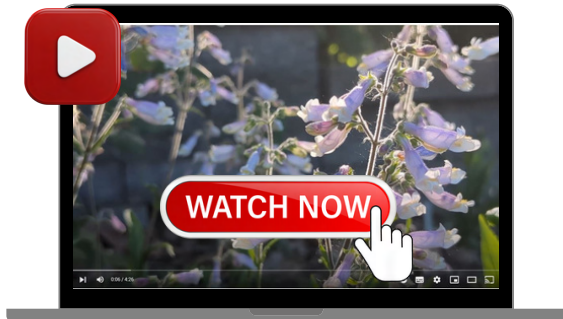


Verbena Bud Moth  
Image: [Bud Guide](#)

Other visitors include: sweat bees, leafcutter bees, and newly hatched bumble bees.

**Learn More About Growing Hairy Beardtongue**

View the video below for an indepth look at growing *Penstemon hirsutus* from seed.



*What a *Penstemon hirsutus* (Hairy Beardtongue) seedling looks like in the spring.*

**What's in a Name?**

If you're looking for this plant, be sure to use the botanical name *Penstemon hirsutus*. It is less available than *Penstemon digitalis* in the nursery trade but don't worry, it's easy to propagate from seed. The common name, Hairy Beardtongue, comes from the delicate hairs attached to the stem and petals.



Image: [Xerces Society](#)

The hairs on the three lower petals resemble a tongue, forcing the bee to travel further into the flower to reach the nectar source. Fine lines on the interior of the flower act as runway lights to direct pollinators.

**Propagation:**

- Requires 4-6 weeks of cold/moist stratification.
- Seeds should be spread on the surface of the soil as they require light to break dormancy.
- You can also propagate with [soft-wood cuttings](#) after the bloom is done.

**Native Range & Habitat**

- Dry woods; rocky fields; bluffs
- Occurs in most of eastern Canada and northeastern USA.



Image: [USDA Plants](#)

**Cultural Conditions and Plant Care:**

- Full sun, part sun, part shade, shade
- Moist to dry
- Well-drained, thin, sandy or clay soils
- Cut back after flowering or allow some seeds to disperse on the soil as it is a shorter-lived perennial species (3-5 years)
- Divide in spring or fall about every 3-5 years

**For More Information**

- [Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Database](#)
- [A Cultivated Art - A List of Companion Species](#)
- [Xerces Society](#)





## JUNE GARDEN 'TO DO' LIST

By Claudette Sims, Halton Master Gardener

- ☐ **Perennials**—Stake and support tall plants (e.g., peonies, delphiniums). You can give certain perennials a "[Chelsea chop](#)" (e.g., [ironweed](#), [asters](#), goldenrods, monarda, phlox) to keep them shorter and sturdier and encourage more stems and blooms. (see article page 10 for more details)
- ☐ **Veggies**—Stake or cage vegetables like tomatoes and beans as needed. Mound **potatoes** to maximize production and protect tubers from sun exposure. Avoid blossom end rot by watering **tomatoes** regularly. Direct sow **warm season veggies** such as corn, beans, cukes and squash, and flowering annuals such as nasturtiums and cosmos. Grow **herbs** near the kitchen for easy access. Keep invasive mints and oregano in containers to contain spread.
- ☐ **Lawn**—Follow [good cultural practices](#) to have a healthy lawn. Mow high, water less frequently, but deeply, feed with compost.
- ☐ **Water** newly planted trees and plants regularly; water lawn and existing trees less frequently but deeply. Potted plants will need more frequent watering. Use soaker hoses for [water wise gardening](#).
- ☐ **Weeds & Invasives**—Do weekly rounds of your garden to remove weeds and invasive plants. Use a line trimmer to keep weeds under control on bricked areas or driveways. Here's a good [ID guide](#) for most weedy plants. Note that some native plants are included in many "weed" guides.



How to deal with weeds-for the artistic gardener 🥰

“ Always make sure you correctly ID a pest before taking action. Know the pest's life cycle and use appropriate [Integrated Pest Management](#) (IPM) strategies that do the least harm to the environment. Attract beneficial insects to your garden to keep it in balance.. ”



Box Tree Moth Life Cycle



- ☐ **Spring bulbs**—Pinch off tops to prevent them from going to seed. When leaves turn yellow they can be removed and bulbs can also be lifted, divided and replanted if too crowded.
- ☐ **Pests**— Whenever possible, resist the urge to reach for a pesticide so that predatory insects have a chance to feed on insect pests. **Japanese beetles** appear in June. Hand pick, knock into a bucket of soapy water, or use a hand vacuum to suck them up! **Aphids** can be squished or knocked off plants using a strong spray from your garden hose. Make this totally non-toxic [mosquito trap](#) that will attract female mosquitoes and reduce overall numbers. Reduce **earwig** numbers with [traps](#) to leave in the garden where earwigs are present, e.g., paper rolled up and secured with masking tape. Each day, tap the paper straw against a bucket of soapy water to empty the trap, then return to the garden. Replace the traps and repeat. **Squash bug** control—all you need is duct tape and this [cool video](#)! Inspect boxwood pests like **Box tree moth** (BTM) on a weekly basis. Watch this BTM [training video](#) to learn more. Note: BTM caterpillars were active earlier this year, you may wish to review the timing of a BTK application in image above as well as the **UPDATE** on the following page.



## BTK & BOXWOOD: UPDATE

Janet Mackey, Halton Master Gardeners

### What is it?

BT stands for *Bacillus thuringiensis*, a type of bacteria found in soil and on plants. There are many types of BT found in nature. Most of these cause diseases in various insects.



Aerial spraying of BTK has been used to reduce the population of Spongy Moths. Image: [CTV News](#)

BT products have been used for about 30 years as a pesticide to reduce the impact of damage from pests in agriculture and are registered for use in

Canada. Since it's considered effective, low-risk and relatively safe, it's available to landscapers and home gardeners. BTK is one specific strain of BT named 'kurstaki'. It is specially formulated to kill caterpillars. It is NOT selective in the type of caterpillars that are killed. It will impact ALL caterpillars that come into contact with it when eating leaves that have been sprayed.

### Is it safe to use BTK as a home gardener?

Health Canada has deemed it safe for use by individuals. The Safety Data Sheet for Safer's BTK advises individuals of risk of skin and eye irritation.

When using BTK:

- Avoid breathing vapours.
- Wash thoroughly after handling.
- Contaminated work clothing should not be allowed out of the work area.
- Wear protective gloves, eye protection, and face protection (respirator). [Safety Data Sheet](#)



### How Does it Work?

When a caterpillar eats the leaves that were sprayed with BTK, the bacteria is ingested and it produces crystals which harm the digestive system. In a short time, the caterpillars die.

**My boxwood are infested with the box tree moth larvae. I've heard BTK works. How do I use it?**



Read: [Time to Re-Think Boxwood](#)

If you have an infestation, begin treatment when the caterpillars first appear. It is most effective when applied on a cloudy day and no rain for at least 24 hours.

### Update for May 2024


Because of some unexpected warm weather in March, the box tree moths were active earlier in the season and the first course of treatment was needed during the month of May. According to recent reports, as of this week (May 24/24), later instar caterpillars are getting ready to pupate in areas near Lake Ontario where there have been higher degrees days than last year at this time. The more advanced larvae are noted in areas that have microclimates such as in fenced yards or near buildings.

The next application of BTK will have to wait until the 1st instar of the larvae appears. Routinely scout your shrubs to investigate when to treat. It is best to treat when they are under 1 inch in length.

**At this time there are NO PRODUCTS OR CONTROLS that can be directed at pupae or adult moths.**

([Ontario Nursery Crops](#) May 2024)

In previous years, the 2nd generation appeared near the end of June. It is expected earlier this year.

Master Gardeners of Ontario recommend replacing boxwood with an alternate plant ([See Suggestions HERE](#)) as the treatment to maintain boxwood is not sustainable at this time. 

### Further Information:

- [Boxtree Moth Update](#) Ontario Nursery Crops
- [Boxtree Moth Training Video](#) Ontario Nursery Crops

## THE DIRT ON SOAP (and other pesticide homemade recipes)

Claudette Sims, Halton Master Gardeners

With recipes galore on the Internet and social media, it's not surprising to see so many recommendations for homemade pesticides and herbicides. We need to rethink these practices to ensure that we are making the right choices for our gardens and the environment. What does Health Canada have to say about homemade pesticides?

**Health Canada advises consumers to be aware that preparing, storing, and using homemade pesticides may pose health and environmental safety risks.** Homemade pesticides do not undergo any scientific evaluation and do not have label directions that the user can follow to ensure safe use or effectiveness. While some recipes, such as mixtures of soap and water, are not likely to pose human health risks, other recipes that require cooking and boiling may pose health or environmental concerns.

Risks of  
Homemade  
Pesticides –  
[HEALTH  
CANADA.](https://www.healthcanada.ca/en/healthycanada/healthy-living/pesticides/)



When a home remedy is used to deal with a plant issue:

- There are no labels that tell you how much, where, when to apply, or how often. This may result in overuse and harm to people, pets, plants, and the environment.
- No guidance is provided regarding wearing gloves or protective clothing. For example, pepper sprays can be very potent if they get in your eyes or on your skin.
- First aid directions are absent if a child or pet accidentally comes into contact with the substance. Also missing will be the effect on the surrounding environment, such as harming bees or making the soil toxic.

Ingredients may seem 'better' because we're familiar with them but they can also contain additives that are harmful. If cooking and/or mixing is required, you may be exposed to toxic fumes. Finally, cooking utensils can be contaminated in the process of preparing a home remedy.



### Homemade Soap Sprays

Homemade soap sprays, at the wrong concentration, can cause [phytotoxicity](#) which results in burnt leaves because the leaf's [cuticle](#) is damaged by the soap. [Garden Myth: Dishwashing Liquid as an Insecticide.](#) Homemade soap sprays are not the same as commercial insecticidal soaps. Commercial sprays are based on fatty acids chosen to reduce phytotoxicity (e.g. adverse plant effects).

Many household dish washing products are detergents and not soaps. Most contain other ingredients such as perfume or grease cutting agents. They can do damage to foliage and soil.



Image: Laidback Gardener

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## THE DIRT ON SOAP (CONT'D)

### “I Don’t Want to Use Chemicals”

This is an admirable idea, but everything is a “chemical”. Water is a chemical-literally  $H_2O$  – 2 hydrogen atoms and one oxygen. Homemade sprays aren’t better because they use “natural” ingredients-those are still chemicals. They can be just as deadly as commercial sprays. For instance, ammonia is sometimes recommended for killing slugs around hostas. But it will also kill all the important soil biota that your plants need to survive and can kill beneficial animals like frogs. (See: [Controlling Slugs with Ammonia](#) – Which Methods Work?). Plus it may only be effective (if at all) at high concentrations.



### Sprays are used for a REASON

We often hear from gardeners who spray plants without knowing WHY they are spraying. Ask yourself some questions before reaching for any spray bottle.

- Is there a disease issue? If so, what is the disease?
- Have you spotted a “bug”? Can you ID the bug to learn if it can harm your plant?
- What type of damage are you seeing on the plant?
- Is there a way of treating the issue without the use of any pesticides?

Most bugs just eat other bugs. You need to have a positive ID on an insect or the disease BEFORE you spray. By randomly spraying, you may be destroying the very bugs that will keep your garden in balance.

### Plant Damage and Disease

Many plant diseases are better controlled by changing cultural practices, e.g., avoiding overhead watering, pruning to encourage air circulation. You should also assess the damage on your plant. Is it mostly cosmetic, or serious enough to harm the plant? Plants are meant to be eaten – the monarch caterpillar is a good example of an insect that most gardeners welcome in their garden, even if it eats leaves. If you have holes in leaves, it means your garden is alive.

### What Exactly Is Insecticidal Soap?

Commercial insecticidal soaps contain potassium salts of fatty acids. “The fatty acids disrupt the structure and permeability of the insects’ cell membranes. The cell contents are able to leak from the damaged cells, and the insect quickly dies.” ([University of Connecticut](#)) Commercial insecticidal soaps are very reasonably priced and far superior to homemade recipes. They can be purchased as sprays or in concentrated form. Keep in mind that insecticidal soaps, whether commercial or homemade will kill non-target beneficial insects as well, so they should be used with caution outdoors. Commercial insecticidal soaps are more effective for dealing with difficult pests like mealy bugs and scale on houseplants. Insecticidal soaps are only recommended after all other options are tried and have failed.



Image: Laidback Gardener

Continued on next page

## THE DIRT ON SOAP (CONT'D)

If you are using homemade insecticidal soap because you think it is “natural”, think again. Review the ingredients for Dawn Dish Soap - ([Dawn® Dish Soap Ingredients: What We're Made Of](#)). It contains 21 ingredients not intended as pest control.



### Baking Soda (Sodium Bicarbonate/SBC)

Baking soda is often recommended for powdery mildew, a fungal disease. “Baking soda itself is not likely to control fungal disease in your garden or landscape, but very easily could cause leaf damage if used at a higher concentration.” “While SBC efficacy increases with concentration, so do the [phytotoxic](#) effects, presumably due to sodium content...Phytotoxicity is even more problematic on foliage, where even a 1 percent SBC solution can cause severe foliar damage, including interveinal chlorosis”. ([Linda Chalker-Scott](#), Ph.D.)

If you have powdery mildew issues, I would recommend that you start with a simple water spray on leaves (I know this sounds counterintuitive, but there is research to support it) or use a milk spray, both of which have proven successful and do not harm plants or the environment. “Most recently, a spray made of 40% milk and 60% water was as effective as chemical fungicides in managing powdery mildew of pumpkins and cucumbers grown in mildew-prone Connecticut.” (see: [Using Milk to Prevent Powdery Mildew—Grow Veg.](#))

“Other treatments have been more successful in powdery mildew control, including horticultural oils, potassium bicarbonate, potassium phosphate, sulfur, milk, and even water sprays.” [Miracle, Myth or Marketing: Baking soda – will fungi fail and roses rejoice?](#) Dr. Linda Chalker-Smith

### Vinegar (Acetic acid)

Vinegar is another homemade herbicide which is often recommended for killing weeds. It's true that vinegar (acetic acid) is allowed under [The Pesticide Act](#) as a herbicide. However, household vinegar typically contains 5 to 8% acetic acid by volume, with pickling vinegars having the higher acid content. At these concentrations, vinegars usually only kill top growth, leaving the root unaffected. Gardeners may think vinegar is effective because the weeds initially die down, but they are more than likely to regrow. (See: [Vinegar: A Garden Miracle—Garden Professors](#)). The commercially available herbicides for domestic use containing acetic acid often contain additional ingredients, such as surfactants, that make the product more effective. There are many products registered containing acetic acid—some are for domestic use. You can search products here: [Health Canada—Consumer Product Safety](#).



Two  
Commercially  
available  
fungicides

### Hydrogen Peroxide

Hydrogen peroxide is another homemade remedy suggested for fungal issues. It certainly has antifungal properties, but it can also be phytotoxic (poisonous to plants) at levels required to control pathogens and thus is typically not recommended. Peroxide may work in some cases, but the problem is knowing in which case it works, when to spray, and what concentration to use. That information is very difficult to source reliably. There are many reliable fungicides available that have been tested by Canadian scientists for use on plants.

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## THE DIRT ON SOAP (CONT'D)

### Rubbing Alcohol (Isopropyl Alcohol)

Rubbing alcohol is excellent to use as a disinfectant for garden tools, but it is also sometimes recommended to kill insects. It can certainly be effective to control scale insects if applied with a cotton swab directly on the insect. However, it should not be used as a foliar spray.



Sometimes our message against homemade recipes like vinegar for weed control, is misunderstood and gardeners mistakenly conclude we favour products like glyphosate. Comments from concerned gardeners such as; *"Master Gardeners should be recommending effective homemade recipes instead."* and *"They should not be recommending products like glyphosate"*, misinterpret our intent.



Glyphosate (usually sold as Round up) is not approved for cosmetic use to treat things like weeds in lawns, so Master Gardeners would not recommend it. Glyphosate is allowed on plants that are concerns for human health such as poison ivy, and yes, we might recommend it for that use if it is warranted.

Recommending the use of commercial products also does not mean that we endorse the indiscriminate use of pesticides. Pesticides should only be recommended after other strategies have been tried. Gardeners are encouraged to use registered products because they have been rigorously tested, have instructions for use, and warnings about potential issues. By contrast, many homemade recipes are not effective and can harm plants and the environment. We've seen the harm they do when members of our Facebook forum post images of plants killed or damaged by homemade sprays.



Ground Beetles are beneficial insects which can be harmed by pesticide use.  
Image: Canadian Wildlife Federation

### In Conclusion

Many pests in the home and garden can be managed without pesticides. Beneficial insects may be harmed when using any pesticide. Ground beetles (photo) eat slugs and many pest larvae such as spongy moth larvae, cankerworms, army worms, cutworms, and snails. You might be surprised to find beneficial lady bugs chomping at your aphids.

If you must use a spray in your garden, make sure you know why you are spraying by identifying the issue.

Use the correct spray approved for that particular plant, disease or pest. Grow plants suited to your sun, soil and moisture conditions and keep them healthy with proper irrigation and fertilization. Pests and disease occur with greater occurrence on stressed plants (i.e., planted in the wrong environment). Most weeds can be controlled by hand-pulling, mulching, or weeding tools.



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## THE DIRT ON SOAP (CONT'D)

## Further reading about pesticides and homemade recipe myths:

- [Are Home Remedies a Good Solution? – Penn State says NO!](#) – Penn State Extension
- [Blossom end rot cannot be fixed by adding calcium to your soil](#) – Savvy Gardening
- [The Dangers of Homemade Pest Control Remedies](#) – UC Master Gardener Program
- [Dawn Dish Soap Saving Wildlife](#) – Environmental Communication: Greenwashing
- [Do Pine Needles Acidify Soil?](#) – University of New Hampshire Extension
- [Health Canada–Pesticide Label Search](#)
- [Horticultural Myths](#) – Lynda Chalker-Scott
- [Miracle, Myth or Marketing: Baking soda – will fungi fail and roses rejoice?](#) L. Chalker-Scott
- [Pesticide Home Remedies](#) – National Pesticide Information Centre
- [Non-Target Insects and Beneficial Species](#) – Beyond Pesticides.org
- [Using Milk to Prevent Powdery Mildew](#) – Grow Veg.
- [Using Pesticides in Ontario](#) – OMAFRA (search for pesticides on the allowable list for home gardeners)
- [Vinegar: A Garden Miracle](#) – Garden Professors





WWW.ACTION13.CA

**ACTION 13**  
COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION

• JUNE 8TH & 9TH 9:00AM - 3:00PM  
18 BENDEMEER ST, DUNDAS.

• JUNE 22ND 10:00AM - 1:00PM  
GREEN BLOCK, ECO FAIR  
KERR ST, DUNDAS.

**Back by popular demand the Action 13 plant sale is:**

**June 8 & 9**

**\$4 each.**

**Location: 18 Bendemere Ave. in Dundas, at Mayfair Ave**

**[MORE INFO. HERE](#)**

**ACTION 13**

**PLANT SALE**

ALL PLANTS ARE GROWN BY VOLUNTEERS, USING LOCALLY SOURCED NATIVE SEEDS.

**85 SPECIES!**

Common Name	Latin name
American senna	<i>Senna hebecarpa</i>
American spikenard	<i>Aralia racemosa</i>
Anise hyssop	<i>Agastache foeniculum</i>
Aster, Arrow leaf	<i>Symphoricarpos angustifolius</i>
Aster, Calico	<i>Symphoricarpos angustifolius</i>
Aster, Heart-leaved	<i>Symphyotrichum angustifolium</i>
Aster, Large leaf	<i>Symphyotrichum angustifolium</i>
Aster, New England	<i>Symphyotrichum angustifolium</i>
Aster, White panicle	<i>Symphyotrichum angustifolium</i>
Beardtongue	<i>Penstemon sp.</i>
Beardtongue, Calico	<i>Penstemon calicatus</i>
Beardtongue, Fox	<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>
Bee Balm, Spotted	<i>Penstemon hirsutus</i>
Big blue	<i>Monarda punctata</i>
Black cohosh	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Actea racemosa</i>
Blazing star, prairie	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>
Blue grama	<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>
Blue haze	<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>
	<i>Onosmodium gracilis</i>

## Native Perennials: Doing the Chelsea Chop

by Allyn Walsh, Halton Master Gardener



Image: [Karen Bussolini](#)

Want longer bloom times for your native plants? How about shorter, bushier plants that don't flop? You may want to do the [Chelsea chop](#). Not a new dance step, the Chelsea chop is a gardening technique so named because in the UK it is commonly done at the time of the Chelsea Flower Show in late May. Of course, in colder climates like ours timing is a little different.

### What is the Chelsea Chop?

This technique involves cutting down an herbaceous perennial by a third (for the timid) or a half (for the more experienced). The entire stand can be cut down, or just sections of it. Cutting plants in this way encourages branching and the resulting plant is shorter and sturdier. Bloom time is delayed as the plant sends out new flower buds. In addition, some of those tall native plants that tend to flop over (I'm looking at you, [Symphyotrichum](#)!) can be maintained in a more upright form, giving a managed look to native plant gardens.

#### SOURCES / FURTHER INFORMATION

- [Taming the Wild](#) Chelsea Ruiz
- [Chelsea Chop](#) (video)

### How do we do the chop?

As mentioned, May is a bit early in our climate in Ontario. Once the chosen plant has got a good amount of foliage, it is ready to be chopped. In Southern Ontario, the Chelsea chop is usually done in early to mid June, depending on the maturity of the perennials, generally before the flower buds appear. The resulting blooms tend to be slightly smaller but that may not even be noticeable. As with any cutting technique, it is best to make the cut just above a leaf node. To get the longest bloom time, cut just part of the stand of plants, and repeat with a different section 2 weeks later. The later cuts will bloom later. Cutting at different heights is another way to bring variety to the look of the stand.

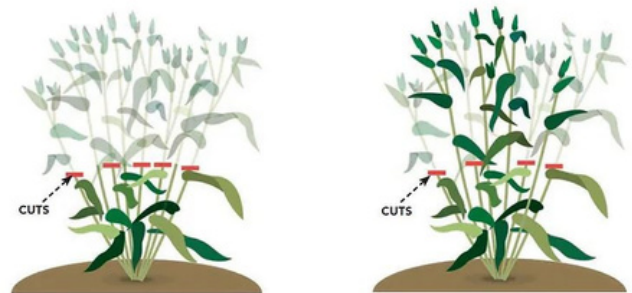


Image: [Blooming Boulevards](#)

### Which plants respond best to being chopped?

Lists of plants that respond to this technique are a bit contradictory. As a rule of thumb, native perennials that respond well to the Chelsea chop are those that bloom in summer and fall and are repeat bloomers with a mounding habit. Asters, *Symphyotrichum*; Coneflowers, *Echinacea*; Black Eyed Susan's, *Rudbeckia*; Joe Pye Weed, *Eutrochium*, all lend themselves to this technique, but so do many others - Goldenrod, *Solidago*; Tickseed, *Coreopsis*....the list is long! Those that do not respond to this technique tend to be spring blooming perennials, such as *Aquilegia* and those that bloom only once in a season such as Iris. We recommend experimenting a bit and see what happens. After all, isn't trial and error part of the fun of gardening?





By Hariette Henry, Halton Master Gardener

Removing [Goutweed \(\*Aegopodium podagraria\*\)](#) is challenging. But it can be accomplished with perseverance and time. You may need a multi-year plan and will have to inspect the problem regularly, adjusting strategies as you progress.

Goutweed is a non-native, invasive species, brought to N. America in the mid-1800s. It tolerates a wide range of soil and light conditions making it highly adaptable. It spreads vigorously through underground rhizomes and new plants can grow from rhizome fragments which remain viable in the soil for up to 5 years. Most Goutweed infestations are the result of intentional plantings gone wrong. Sadly, it is still popular in the horticultural trade and sold commercially at garden centres across Ontario.

Control efforts should focus on preventing the spread of this invasive species. If you do have a problem, focusing on the outer edges of the patch first should be the priority. For best results, choose a [removal method based on the size of the infestation](#).

You mentioned that you've been weeding by hand. Digging and pulling is usually recommended for smaller areas. It is best done after a rainfall when the soil is soft. Dig out and remove the entire plant, sifting out rhizomes as much as possible. Store the plants in heavy, dark garbage bags while awaiting disposal through your local municipality. Continue removing plants from new sections, working from the outer edges in. Monitor recurrence in cleared areas at least once a week. Dig out any new plants as they re-appear, continuing to remove as much of the rhizome as possible.

“Is there a recommended strategy for battling goutweed? I've been weeding by hand but it's slow going.”



Photo: Missouri Botanical Garden

Repeat inspection and removal until there are no goutweed plants for a year. [Replanting the area with native plants to avoid other invasives from taking hold is important.](#)

Solarizing, is effective for medium to large *sunny* areas, but should only be used if there are no trees or large shrubs present. It is best started in spring when plants

re-emerge. Use a hoe, lawnmower or spade to cut the goutweed to ground level and water thoroughly. Cover the wet area with heavy, clear plastic and bury the edges in the soil to trap the heat and “cook” the plants. Keep the plastic in place for at least six weeks. Remove and inspect and continue solarizing as needed. Replant the area when the goutweed has been eliminated.

A strategy for medium to large infestations in *shady* areas is smothering. Again, use a hoe, lawnmower or sharp spade to cut the goutweed down. Cover the cleared area with heavy, black plastic or cardboard to block sunlight and starve the plants of water. Weigh down the edges with rocks, bricks or other heavy objects. Scout the perimeter weekly. Smothering starves the goutweed of sunlight and water, but it might require leaving the tarp in place for more than one season. If the area is very large, work in sections. Replant with native plants when the goutweed has been eliminated.

You might be interested to know that there is a [Goutweed Support Group on Facebook](#). And there are also efforts being made to stop the sale of invasive species through the nursery trade by [CCIPR, The Canadian Coalition for Invasive Plant Regulation](#), a group calling for change to protect the environment, biodiversity and Human Health.





# Garden Inspiration!



**Rebecca McMackin**

***Cultivating Beauty & Butterflies***

Rebecca McMackin is an ecologically obsessed horticulturist who helps people create and care for beautiful gardens that provide habitat for birds, butterflies and soil microorganisms.



[Click](#) on the image above to view the TED Talk (12:00 min.)



Rebecca McMackin's  
Newsletter:  
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Rebecca McMackin](#)



*"They're not  
blooming for us!"*



Follow Rebecca on Social Media

*"Lawns should be area rugs, not  
wall-to-wall carpet."*

[Brooklyn Museum Garden](#)

# What's Growing On?

By Trish Moraghan, Halton Master Gardener

## THE HAMILTON & BURLINGTON ROSE SOCIETY 65th ROSE SHOW

*An exhibition of cut garden roses and floral design*

Saturday June 22nd (1 to 5 PM ) and  
Sunday, June 23rd (10AM to 3 PM)

Royal Botanical Gardens, Burlington  
Free Entrance to the Show with RBG Admission

For more information contact: [hbrosesociety@sympatico.ca](mailto:hbrosesociety@sympatico.ca)



### Oakville Garden Tour



Sunday, June 9th 10 AM to 4:30 PM

[Learn more here](#)



### Grimsby Garden Tour

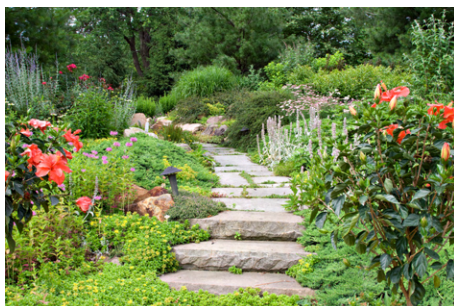
Saturday, June 22nd  
10 AM to 4 PM

[Learn more here](#)



### Guelph Rain Garden Tour

Saturday, June 15th 10 AM to Noon



[Learn more here](#)

### Stories Behind Common Plants

A workshop exploring stories about  
people and plants



Saturday, June 8th 1 PM to 3 PM  
Blackwood Gallery, Mississauga

[Learn more here](#)



# What's Growing On?



**Royal  
Botanical  
Gardens**



[Music Nights](#)



[Bloom Watch](#)



[Summer Camps](#)

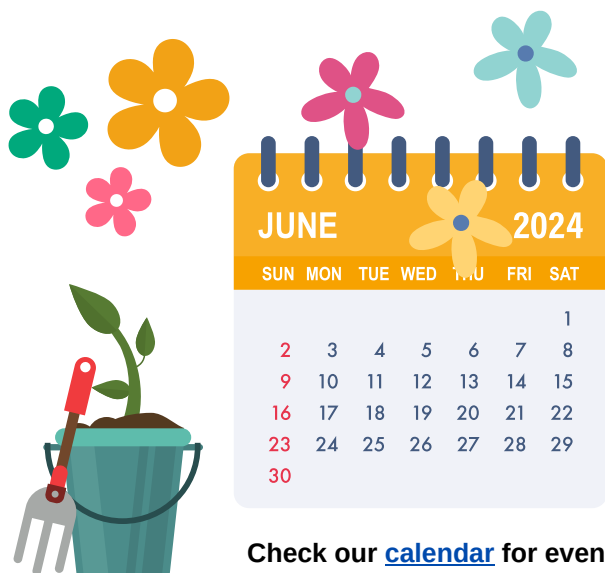


[Yoga](#)



Saturday, June 22nd at 10:00am  
Streetsville Pollinator Garden

[Learn more here](#)



Check our [calendar](#) for events

## Halton Master Gardener Advice Clinics

Visit us with your gardening questions at  
the Burlington, Hamilton and Dundas  
Farmers' Markets

[Burlington](#)

9 AM to Noon

Wed. May 22, 29, June 5, 19

Friday May 24, 31 and Sat. June 8 and 15

[Ottawa Street, Hamilton](#)

Saturday 9 AM to Noon

June 1, July 6, Aug. 3, Sept. 7, Oct. 5

[Dundas](#)

Thursday 2 PM to 6 PM

June 20, July 4, 18,

August 1, 15, 29 and Sept. 12 and 26

## About Our Newsletter

Cross Pollination is published monthly from February to December and is written and prepared by our dedicated volunteers. Halton Master Gardeners are experienced gardeners who have studied horticulture extensively and continue to upgrade their skills through technical training. We strive to provide science-based, sustainable gardening information to the general public. The information in our newsletter has been verified by our volunteers to the best of our abilities, but given the scope of horticulture and science some concepts may not reflect current knowledge. The content displayed in our newsletter is the intellectual property of Halton Region Master Gardeners and their authors. It can be shared in its entirety, but specific content should not be reused, republished or reprinted without the author's consent.

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