

# CROSS POLLINATION

Halton Master Gardeners Monthly Newsletter  
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Halton Region  
Master Gardeners



Image: Fiddleheads of Cinnamon Fern [Missouri Botanical Garden](#)

## Cinnamon Fern: A Majestic Addition to Your Garden

By Claudette Sims, Halton Master Gardener

Make a statement in your garden by planting this majestic and stately native fern! Cinnamon Fern (*Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*) grows 60 to 150 cm tall and 60 to 90 cm wide, looking fantastic in every season. In spring, tightly curled 'fiddleheads' magically emerge from the soil and unfurl into graceful pale green fronds. As they mature, the fertile fronds turn a rich brown, resembling giant cinnamon sticks that create a striking vertical accent in the garden. In autumn, the fronds transition to a stunning golden yellow, providing year-round beauty.

### Growing Conditions

Like all ferns, Cinnamon Fern (CF) is relatively easy to grow, making it a fuss-free choice for beginner gardeners. It thrives in medium to wet, well-drained acidic soils, rich in humus. While it prefers full to partial shade, it can tolerate sun if the soil remains consistently moist. It can also be grown in containers but will require frequent watering. A rich potting mix with added compost helps retain moisture. Cinnamon Fern is resilient, with few pests or diseases, and is also deer-resistant.



Cinnamon-coloured fertile fronds  
Image: [Missouri Botanical Garden](#)

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## CINNAMON FERN: A MAJESTIC ADDITION TO YOUR GARDEN (CONT'D)

### Biodiversity Support

While Cinnamon Fern has no pollen or nectar resources, it still plays a role in supporting biodiversity. It serves as a host plant for two moth species and provides protective cover for smaller animals when grown in larger colonies. But its most charming ecological benefit? Hummingbirds collect the soft 'cinnamon wool' from the fronds to line their nests, making this fern a delightful addition to any wildlife-friendly garden.

### In Your Landscape

Cinnamon Fern makes a striking accent plant and works beautifully in shade gardens, woodland settings, and moist areas such as rain gardens or pond edges. Given time and the right conditions, it will spread by rhizomes, forming lush clumps that create a stunning backdrop for flowering plants. It can also serve as a '[soft landing](#)' under trees or as a no-mow alternative to traditional lawns. Pair it with other moisture-loving native plants like Great Blue Lobelia, Marsh Marigold, Foamflower and Blue Wood Aster, along with other ferns, to create a lush, layered effect.



Hummingbirds use the 'cinnamon wool' to build their nests!

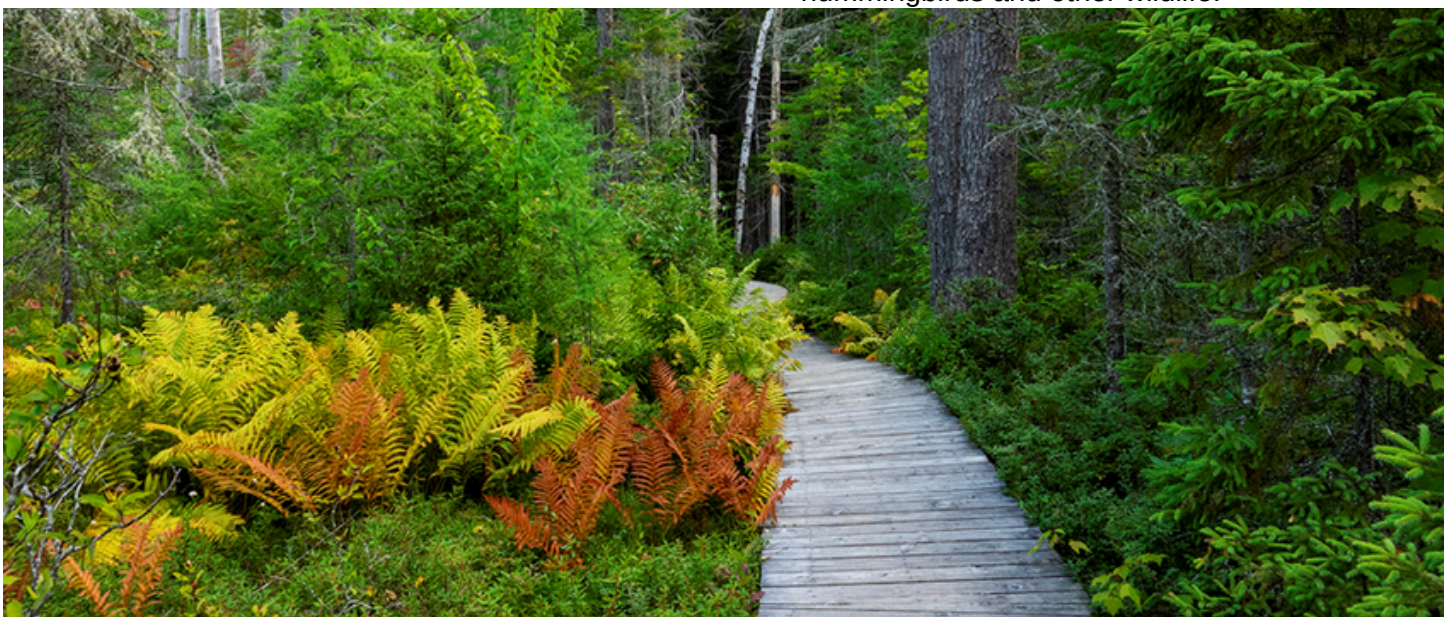
### Native Range

Cinnamon Fern has a wide native range in the temperate biome worldwide. It is found from Ontario to Newfoundland in Canada, and in the eastern U.S. states down to Florida, and including some eastern areas of Central America and South America.

### Fascinating Facts

Traditionally classified as *Osmunda cinnamomea*, this plant was reclassified as [Osmundastrum cinnamomeum](#) as a result of recent genetic research. According to fossil records, it is one of the oldest living plant species, dating back approximately 70 million years to the Late Cretaceous period in North America. Despite its name, Cinnamon Fern does not produce cinnamon. However, its dense root mats, known as osmunda fiber, are harvested as a growing medium for orchids and other [epiphytes](#).

With its striking fronds, low-maintenance nature, and ecological benefits, Cinnamon Fern is a wonderful addition to any native plant garden. Not only does it create a soothing oasis of green, but it also provides an invaluable resource for hummingbirds and other wildlife.



Ferns create a soothing garden oasis.

Image: [Adirondacks Forever Wild](#)

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**CINNAMON FERN: A MAJESTIC ADDITION TO YOUR GARDEN (CONT'D)****Companion Plants**

Clockwise from left to right: Great Blue Lobelia, Marsh Marigold, Blue Wood Aster, Foamflower.  
(Click on the image for the source.)

**CINNAMON FERN - DETAILS AT A GLANCE**

LIGHT SHADE

DAPPLED SUN



MOIST

MEDIUM

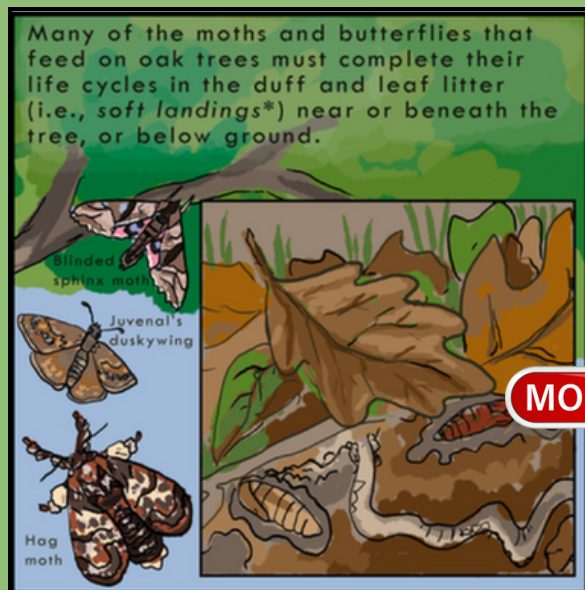
**Plant Type, Family:** Fern, *Osmundaceae***Height/Width:** (H) 60-150 cm (2-5') (W) 60-90 cm (2-3')**Features:** Three-season interest, minimal maintenance, distinctive showy fronds**Faunal value:** Important nesting material for hummingbirds, protective cover for wildlife, host plant for 2 moths**Companion Plants:** Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Swamp Pink (*Helonias bullata*), Great Blue Lobelia, Blue Wood Aster, Foamflower**Landscape Uses:** Woodlands, shade gardens, groundcover**Native Range:** Ontario to Newfoundland**Supports**[Plants of the World Range](#)

Read More!

- [Missouri Botanical Garden](#)
- [Illinois Wildflowers - Cinnamon Fern](#)
- [Adirondacks Forever Wild-Cinnamon Fern](#)

**WHAT ARE 'SOFT LANDINGS'?**

Soft landings are diverse plantings (not lawn) under native trees that provide critical shelter and habitat for one or more life cycle stages of moths, butterflies, and beneficial insects such as bumble bees, fireflies, lacewings, and beetles.



A number of beneficial insects such as fireflies, bumble bees, beetles, and lacewings need soft landings to survive.



## APRIL GARDEN 'TO DO' LIST

By Claudette Sims, Halton Master Gardener

- ☐ **Nature-Friendly Spring Tasks** – Cutting back plants or removing dead leaves is largely an aesthetic consideration-most plants don't benefit from it. Stems or leaves will slowly decompose and return nutrients to the soil as the temperatures warm or will be covered by new growth. Leaving leaves & stems allows native bees & butterflies time to emerge, & gives them places to hide.
- ☐ **Lights Out** – Moths have started to emerge, so turn outside lights off at night to protect them.
- ☐ **'Chop & Drop'** – When pruning or cutting back plants use the '[chop & drop](#)' method to return organic material to the soil & provide nesting material for birds.
- ☐ **Pruning** – **STOP** pruning **oak trees** now to prevent [Oak Wilt](#) Disease. If you absolutely must prune your oak when it is in leaf, treat cuts with pruning paint. Note: This is the only situation where pruning paint is recommended. Prune other trees, shrubs and vines before leaves emerge. Use clean, sharp tools to remove dead, damaged, diseased wood. Prune to improve air circulation and appearance if desired. Cut back branches to just above another branch or a bud. Keep a sharp eye out for cocoons and chrysalises when pruning. [Lavender](#) can be trimmed back when new growth starts to appear; prune back dead or overgrown stems to a vigorous bud. Do not over prune.
- ☐ **Seeds** – Time to start your tomato seeds if you haven't already done so. Start tender annual flowers indoors for mid- to late-May planting. Seed cool weather crops like peas, spinach, lettuce, beets, radishes directly in the garden as soon as the ground can be worked.



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Turn off your lights at night!



Did you know that outside lights at night can harm moths and other insects?



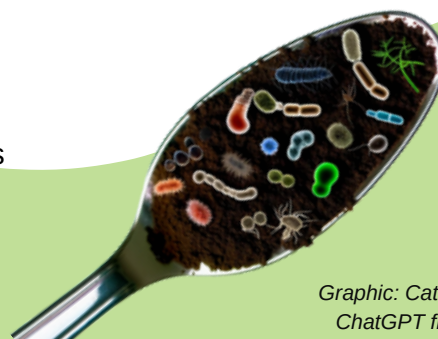
Moths lose valuable energy flying at the light, while fireflies are unable to find their mates. If you must have lights, choose insect friendly yellow bulbs.

”



- ☐ **Lawn** – To reduce soil compaction, walk on the lawn only once you leave NO footprints. Remove leaves or debris but wait for warm weather before overseeding.
- ☐ **Invasive Plants** – This is the perfect time to spot & remove invasive plants like [Periwinkle](#), [English Ivy](#) and [Lily-of-the-Valley](#). [Garlic mustard](#) produces chemicals that can harm beneficial soil fungi critical for our maples and other native plants. Remove individual plants as they appear, or smother larger infestations for at least a season. For comprehensive information about invasive plants visit the [Canadian Coalition for Invasive Plant Regulation](#).
- ☐ **Perennials** – divide or transplant perennials as growth resumes and soil is workable.
- ☐ **Celebrate Earth Day April 22**  
*"We are as much alive as we keep the Earth alive."*  
 Chief Dan George

*One teaspoon of healthy soil holds more creatures than there are people on the planet*



Graphic: Cathy Kavassalis  
ChatGPT from OpenAI





## Effects of Winter on your Garden

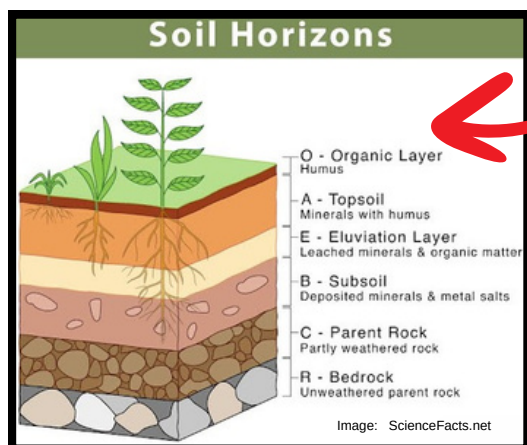
Olga Marranca, Halton Master Gardener

### Spring Has Sprung!

With the beauty of the winter season coming to an end, also come some harsh realities. The end of dormancy and spring emergence is an exciting and beautiful time of year. Native spring ephemerals and spring bulbs such as tulips and crocuses emerge. Early budding trees such as Alders (*Alnus* spp.), Birch (*Betula* spp.), Dogwoods (*Cornus* spp.), Maples (*Acer* spp.), Oaks (*Quercus* spp.), to name a few, provide important food sources for pollinators. Ecodormancy's ending is influenced by temperature, moisture, the length of daylight and yes, *climate change* (see [Spotlight on Science Page 9](#))! Winter weather can be tough on your trees, shrubs and plants. Here are a few issues you may have had and some suggestions as to how to mitigate your losses.

### The "O" Horizon

Last month we learned about the **Pukak** layer, (subnivean layer), (the porous, loose layer of snow formed at the bottom of the snowpack, that provides insects and mammals refuge). As the snow melts away the "O" Horizon is the top most layer of soil, composed of decaying organic matter (leaf litter and decomposing insects). This layer is the overwintering habitat for many pollinators, and it is extremely important **NOT** to disturb it if you can. This layer also provides insulation for tree roots, and "[soft landings](#)" (shelter and habitat for many insects).



### Chop and Drop

Your emerging gardens should still be well nourished with leaf litter, seed heads and decaying organic matter. Beneficial insects, pollinators, decomposers and even predators may well still be hidden within autumn's bounty. Cleanup too early may disturb nesting places and shelters. A set 10°C (50°F) temperature for a few days in a row may **NOT** be the ideal rule of thumb for every garden, if you do have to cut some stems, try to leave 6 to 8" of the stems and "chop and drop" any cuttings to give nesting insects longer to emerge. All insects do not emerge at the same time!



Flat millipede, *Apheloria virginiensis*, feed on decaying leaves, recycling nutrients into the soil.

Photo: [D.J. Weyer CC-BY-NC](#)



Polyester bees, *Colletes* spp. are early spring pollinators. They lay their eggs in nests dug into the soil.

Photo: Heather Holm

### Damage from Snow and Ice Loads

Heavy snow loads make tree branches susceptible to breakage. Proper pruning of dead, diseased, damaged branches should keep your native [trees](#) and [shrubs](#) strong enough to withstand our harsh winters.

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## EFFECTS OF WINTER ON YOUR GARGEN (CONT'D)

### Scarcity of Food for Wildlife

Animals can also suffer the effects of winter weather from a large snow load. Scarcity of food will bring rabbits, deer, mice, voles, shrews and rats to snack on young saplings. You may need a mesh protector around their favorites, especially trees with tender bark. If your tree has been girdled (removal of the cambium layer around the entire tree), you may be able to perform a [bridge graft](#). You will see damage in February when pruning fruit trees. By saving the scion wood or watersprouts, these one year old pieces of wood (3/8" dia. and 15 to 20" long) are ideal to use for bridge grafting (See Figure 1).

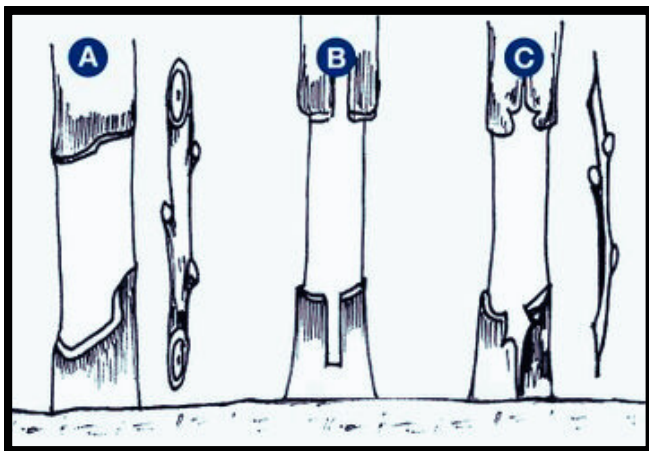


Figure 1: Repair of girdled trunk using scion wood  
Image: M. Danilovich

### Drought in Winter?

Trees and shrubs can also experience drought in the winter. A good practice, particularly for newly planted trees and shrubs, is to provide water to the roots on a regular basis (right up until the ground is frozen). The freeze/thaw cycle can also damage roots of plants, and the fluctuation in soil temperatures can even push roots above the ground. A 5-8 cm (2-3 inch) layer of mulch can help protect roots from damage. Take care not to mulch against the bark of a tree as there is the potential of rot to occur on the bark.

### The Freeze Thaw Cycle

Have you ever noticed deep cracks suddenly develop in tree bark? This can happen to a young tree because of its inability to regulate its temperatures, and if it has not formed sufficient bark for protection. In winter, the warmth of the sun heats the bark of trees, causing the sap to flow. When the temperatures drop below freezing at night, the sap (which contains water) freezes in the trunk. The expansion of the frozen watery sap expands within the phloem layer beneath the cambium layer located just under the outer bark. A white spiral tree wrap which reflects the sun can help eliminate temperature fluctuations by keeping the bark cold. You can also lean a plank up against the tree's trunk on the south-west side. On the positive side, freeze/thaw/freeze/thaw causes the soil to expand and contract, acting as nature's aeration.



Freeze/Thaw  
Image: Davie Tree



Eastern White Pine  
with Salt Damage  
Image: Laura G Jull

### Salt Damage

Most plants (especially evergreens), including trees and shrubs, can be harmed from excessive salt which is absorbed through their roots. In addition, salt can burn their foliage. Plant [salt tolerant native plants](#) and use eco-friendly non-salt options.

#### Further Information:

- [Pruning Trees and Shrubs](#)
- [Salt Tolerant Native Plants](#)
- [Winter Salt Injury](#)
- [Sun Scald on Trees](#)
- [Leave the Leaves](#)





## Cool Weather Vegetables to Plant Now

Janet Padiak, Halton Master Gardeners

April is the month to plant early vegetables that revel in cool weather. This applies to both seed grown crops—such as peas and spinach—as well as crops started in trays such as bok choy and lettuce. These vegetables love the ample moisture of spring and are unfazed by freezing temperatures. In many cases these crops reach maturity in about 60 days and, following harvest, a summer crop can be planted in the same patch.

[Cool weather vegetables](#) are happily free of the pests that appear later in the season. Slugs and earwigs are still overwintering in the ground and are not yet chewing tender leaves. Flea beetles don't emerge until early May and by the time they start feeding, early season plants are sufficiently mature to withstand the damage.

### Here are some vegetables to consider planting this month:

#### Lettuce

Almost all lettuces thrive in cool weather and their rapid growth makes them ideal for an early crop. They come to maturity before the arrival of the long days that trigger bolting (going to seed). Lettuces can be direct seeded when the soil temperature is 10-15°C. They can also be started indoors and transplanted at the 4-leaf stage anytime in April.



Image: J Padiak

*A late April snowfall leaves young lettuces unscathed. Note the wide spaces between the plants where a warm weather crop – such as peppers – can be planted for a main crop.*

#### Peas

Peas are almost always direct seeded, and this can be done when the soil temperature reaches around 10°C, usually mid- to late-April.

If your soil is sandy and warms quickly, you can seed earlier, but if it is heavy and clayey, then later in April is better. Plant peas closely, about 5 cm apart. Most peas like something to climb on, so insert sticks or netting at time of seeding.



Image: J Padiak

[Snow peas](#) ready for harvest on June 4 from a mid-April sowing.

#### Spinach

[Spinach](#) loves cool weather and can germinate in soils as low as 5°C. It is the simplest plant to grow in cool weather, but as soon as the days lengthen and the soil warms, spinach stops producing leaves and sends up a flower stalk, indicating it is past its prime. Dig these up for the kitchen and plant a summer crop in the space.

#### Arugula

There are two genera of [arugula](#) available: the annual *Eruca sativa*; and the perennial wild type *Diplotaxis tenuifolia*. Both types can be put in the ground as soon as the snow is gone and, like spinach, will germinate in soils as low as 5°C. These can be harvested at any stage from baby leaf onwards. The annual arugula, if left to go to seed, will complete its life cycle in one year, but the perennial type will remain in place all year and emerge again next year in the early spring. Both are equally tasty, although *Eruca sativa* has a more tender leaf.

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## COOL WEATHER VEGETABLES TO PLANT NOW (CONT'D)

### Asian Greens

Many Asian greens are best sown as an autumn crop, but there are a number that do well in the spring. Mizuna, leaf mustard, pak choi and tatsoi can be planted in cool soils as early as mid-March. They will grow quickly and in 6-8 weeks can be cut and added to stir-fries and salads. Pak choi and tatsoi can also be started indoors and transplanted into the ground once hardened off.



Photo: J. Padiak  
*Bok choy in mid-April garden.*

### Some tips for early spring gardening:

- With a trowel, loosen the soil of the proposed seedbed to speed warming.
- Use row covers, [cloches](#) or hot caps to prewarm the soil.
- Use a meat thermometer to take the soil temperature, inserting about 5 cm.
- If you have lots of ground-feeding birds like mourning doves, protect newly planted seeds with cloches to reduce seed predation. Remove cloches when shoots are visible.
- Plants that are grown indoors need to be 'hardened off', the process where plants are introduced to bright sunlight and wind gradually to reduce transplant shock. Take three or four days to do this. On the first day, put the plants in their trays outdoors in protected shade for a few hours, then bring indoors for the remainder of the day and the night. Next day, increase the length of the outdoor exposure and, again, bring indoors for the night. On the third day, expose to direct sun for several hours and leave overnight, unless especially windy. The plants are ready to go in the soil on the fourth day.



[Use Trellises and cages to support garden vegetables](#)

### Further Information

- [Some Like it Hot](#) – Beverley Wagar – Halton Region Master Gardener
- [A Gardener's Guide to Weather Prediction](#) – Beverley Wagar – Halton Region Master Gardener
- [Winter Gardening – Yes You Can](#) – London-Middlesex Master Gardeners
- [Cool Season Crops](#) – Peterborough Master Gardeners





## Warming Zones Bring New Possibilities and Challenges for Gardening in Canada

By Nikolina Radulovich, Halton Master Gardener



Climate change is having wide-ranging effects across Canada, including noticeable shifts in the country's plant hardiness zones. In Ontario and other regions, long-term warming trends have led to the gradual northward migration of these zones. Areas historically classified as USDA Zone 5 are transitioning into Zone 6, and some parts of southern Ontario are now approaching Zone 7. These changes can influence which plant species are viable in a given location, with implications for home gardens, orchards, and ecosystems.

A recent [national study](#) examined how changing winter temperatures, frost timing, and growing season length may affect fruit trees across the country. The researchers projected that fruit trees may experience reduced winter damage due to milder cold periods. These conditions could allow for cultivation of late-ripening varieties not previously viable in colder climates. For example, in southern Ontario, longer growing seasons may support late-harvest crops like 'GoldRush' apples, 'Bosc' pears, and 'Encore' peaches, which require extended warmth to fully ripen.



Image: Canva

However, the study also highlights how extreme cold events remain a critical factor in determining what can be grown profitably. In regions like Niagara and Leamington, fruit crops such as grapes, peaches, and apricots become unprofitable if minimum temperatures drop to  $-25^{\circ}\text{C}$  or lower more than once every seven years. Although average conditions are warming, these infrequent but damaging cold events continue to pose risks.

Another measurement, CDD-15, shows how cold a winter is by adding up the number of days with temperatures below  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$ . A decrease in CDD-15 values across Ontario and much of eastern Canada suggests that overall cold stress may decline, potentially reducing the risk of freeze-related damage for fruit trees.

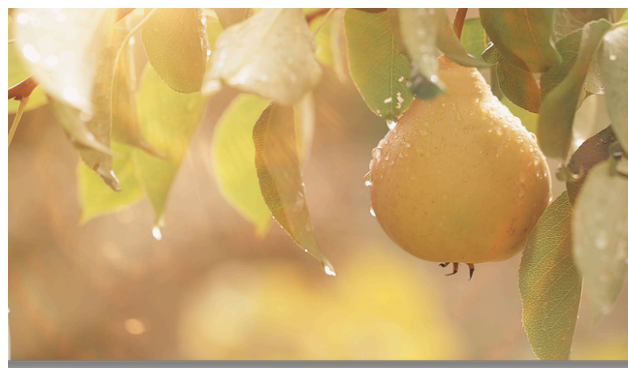


Image: Canva

The study examines S-FROST, an index tracking warmth accumulation before the last spring frost. Higher values can trigger early bud development, making flower buds—especially at full bloom—more vulnerable to frost damage. Even a light frost ( $T_{\text{min}} \leq 0^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) can harm tender crops like apricots and cherries. Don't we all panic when our spring bulbs start showing up before they should? That same early warmth can mislead fruit trees into budding too soon, leaving them exposed if cold returns. While average spring temperatures are rising, late frosts remain unpredictable and hard to manage.

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Warming Zones Bring New Possibilities and Challenges for Gardening in Canada (CONT'D)

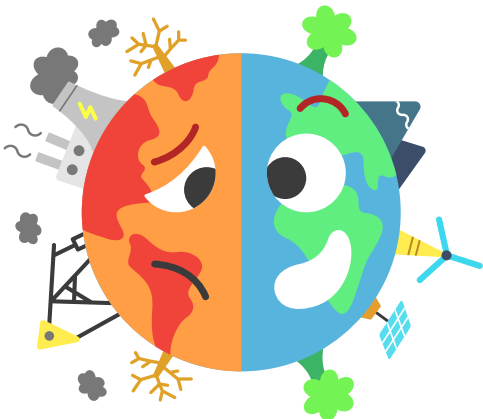
Despite these projections, the impacts of climate change are complex. Many native plants are specifically adapted to historical climate conditions and seasonal cycles. As these shift, some species may experience stress and loss of competitiveness. For instance, plants that rely on prolonged cold periods to break dormancy or trigger germination may no longer receive the cues they need. In Ontario, native species such as Butterfly Milkweed, Seneca Snakeroot, and Flowering Dogwood all require [cold stratification](#) for successful seed germination. Warmer winters and reduced snow cover could interfere with this process, potentially affecting their survival.

Changes in seasonal timing can also affect [ecological relationships](#). Native plants often depend on mutual timing with pollinators, birds, and other wildlife. If a plant flowers earlier due to warmer temperatures, but its associated pollinator has not yet emerged, this mismatch can impact both organisms. These kinds of disruptions are a growing concern in temperate ecosystems as climate change alters long-established patterns.

environments and may outcompete native species for light, nutrients, and space. Climate change can compound this issue by creating conditions that favour fast-growing, opportunistic species over slower-adapting natives. These risks are already being monitored in regions such as the [Lake Simcoe Watershed](#).

Hence, the fruit tree study has several limitations. The projections are based on regional models using agroclimatic indices developed primarily for apple and similar tree species. They do not include detailed responses of individual cultivars or native species, nor do they account for local microclimates, soil conditions, or specific plant-pollinator interactions. Additionally, chilling and forcing requirements—which are critical for fruit set and development—are not yet integrated into the projections, though they are essential to many temperate species.

Canada’s gardening landscape is clearly changing. In some regions, longer growing seasons and milder winters may allow for a wider range of plants, including late-ripening fruit trees, to thrive. But while this could benefit gardens and agriculture, the effects on native species and ecosystems are less clear. Sudden cold snaps, late frosts, and changes in seasonal timing still pose real challenges. As we adapt to this shifting climate, we’ll need to balance new opportunities with the need to protect biodiversity. How should we weigh the economic benefits of a longer growing season against the potential ecological costs?



The lives of specialist bees are tied to KEY plants

SPECIALIST Andrena	MONTHS ACTIVE												REQUIRED PLANT(S)
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
A. accepta								X	X	X			Sunflower
A. arabis				X	X	X							Spring Beauty*
A. erythronii				X	X	X							Trout lily
A. fragilis						X	X	X					Dogwood

Table extracted from [Fowler & Droege](#)  
Illustration: [Bee Friendly](#)

There is also the potential for increased pressure from non-native and invasive species which may expand their range in response to warming conditions. Invasive plants often thrive in disturbed





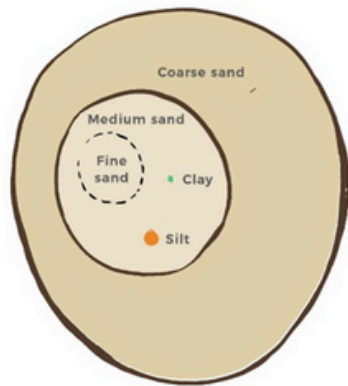
By Hariette Henry, Halton Master Gardener

Good soil is often described as the main ingredient to growing great plants. By following a few practical tips and gardening practices you can work to cultivate healthier soil and a more successful garden. Before making changes, you should always gain a better understanding of the soil you have.

### Soil Texture

#### Get to know your soil!

**Soil texture** refers to the proportions of sand, silt and clay in your soil. Sand particles are the largest, followed by silt, and then clay. For a quick test to determine your soil's texture, scoop a handful into your hand, add a bit of water if it's dry and squeeze.



Soil texture relates to three particle types - sand, silt and clay.  
Image: UC Marin MGs

If the resulting handful falls apart easily you have sandy soil. If you can squeeze it into shapes it's more on the clay side and if it's somewhere in between you have loamy soil. You can do a more elaborate [Soil Texture Triangle Test](#) which requires a few household items and more time.

**Soil structure** refers to the way the sand, silt and clay particles are grouped together to form clumps that vary in size, shape and stability. To assess the structure of your soil, dig up a large chunk from about 6" below the surface. Observe whether the soil particles have a chunky texture and larger pores. If you see organisms like worms and insects, that's a good indicator of soil health. Unhealthy soil structure will appear loose and grainy, without many soil particles clumped together.

*I am new to gardening and I am looking for advice on how to enrich the soil in my garden before planting.*



Healthy aggregation gives soil a chunky texture



Tilling breaks up aggregation and collapses soil pores

Images: *Fine Gardening, The Science of Soil Health, Issue 221*

### Steps for Supporting Soil Health!

Soil health can change over time. [You can improve your soil's health](#) by minimizing disturbances, maximizing soil cover, encouraging an abundance of living roots, and supporting biodiversity.

- **Cover bare soil** - Covering the soil with organic materials like compost, shredded leaves, wood chips or low-growing plants will increase water-holding capacity and feed soil-dwelling organisms that recycle nutrients and build stable soil aggregates, pore spaces, and microbial habitat.
- **Avoid tilling or turning soil whenever possible** - Tilling may temporarily reduce compaction but degrades soil health in the long term by destroying aggregates, pore spaces, and microbial habitat.
- **Suppress weeds naturally** - Keeping the soil surface covered and decreasing disturbance means that weed shoots and seeds will have a harder time emerging from the soil and taking hold.
- **Add organic matter on a regular basis** - As it breaks down, organic matter helps bind soil particles together and retains plant-available nutrients. Invertebrates, microbes, and other soil life will convert biological substances in various stages of decomposition into the nutrients your plants need.



STRICTLY FUNCTIONAL

# Garden Inspiration!

## Protecting Seedlings from Frost

If you're planting outside before [the last frost date](#) for your area, be prepared to protect your seedlings. For lower Hamilton and Burlington, PlantMaps says the last frost date is between April 11-20. If you're on top of the escarpment, or further away from the protected end of Lake Ontario, the date shifts to April 21-30.

You can buy or DIY effective protectors. A run to your local thrift shop might turn up some DIY options too.

Here's how a few of our Master Gardeners are keeping out the cold. Securing the covering against the wind and animals is important! There's no protection from children.



"Some of my winter sowing containers"  
- Carolyn Van Sligtenhorst

Shayla Harbridge: "Here is a success and failure picture from my garden. It's my front yard cold frame with a huge kale plant that is growing new leaves, but surrounded by my lettuce that died after my kids slightly opened the cold frame and the lettuce froze."



"A young lettuce under a hot cap (or cloche as some people call them). The rocks keep the hot caps from blowing away in the wind."  
Janet Padiak



Allyn Walsh's cold frame is in shade most of the day. The May '21 photo shows an early stage of the hardening off process. The seeds were cold moist stratified first. These are

oak tree seedlings - "my first effort of growing oak trees from acorns." They got to the 6 leaf stage before the squirrels got them."



Janet Padiak: "Underneath this row cover is a bed of brassicas (kohlrabi, cabbages and

radishes). This was taken the 5th of May and was used to create a cozy micro-climate underneath. It also keeps the flea beetles from attacking these plants."

Patty King says, "After various attempts at keeping potential seedlings alive over winter ... protecting my seedlings in a rubber container is the winner. No more drowning or upheaval from curious animals."





# What's Growing On?

By Trish Moraghan, Halton Master Gardener

## Bronte Creek Provincial Park Oakville

Earth Day Events

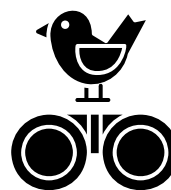


Hiking Trails



[Learn more here](#)

Birding



Biking



## Every Day is Earth Day!



Planting a native tree NOW is one of the best things you can do for our urban forest! The right tree in the right place will...

- Beautify your home and neighbourhood
- Improve the air you breath
- Provide habitat for birds, butterflies and other biodiversity



[Learn more here](#)

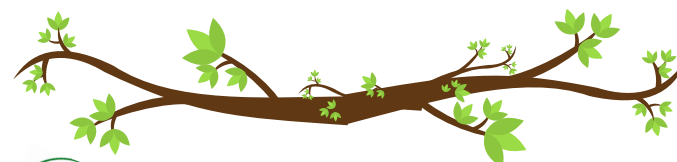
Oakville Green Conservation Area

### Native & Drought Tolerant Plant Selections

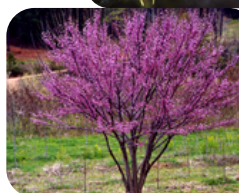


Halton  
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### Native Trees and Shrubs



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# What's Growing On?



[Bloom Watch](#)



[Camp Registration](#)



[Nature Trails](#)



[Discovery at the Fishway](#)

Check our [calendar](#) for events



HALTON REGION MASTER GARDENERS

## Optimize Your Vegetable Garden with a Digital Sowing Calendar



Here's a list of the vegetables and fruits included in the calendar:

- |                   |            |               |
|-------------------|------------|---------------|
| • Artichoke       | • Corn     | • Onions      |
| • Basil           | • Cucumber | • ParsleyPeas |
| • Broccoli        | • Eggplant | • Peppers     |
| • Brussel Sprouts | • Kale     | • Pumpkins    |
| • Cabbage         | • Kohlrabi | • Spinach     |
| • Cauliflower     | • Leeks    | • Squash      |
| • Celeriac        | • Lettuce  | • Swiss Chard |
| • Celery          | • Melons   | • Tomatoes    |
| • Collards        | • Okra     | • Watermelon  |

**A digital sowing calendar is a game changer that helps gardeners track planting.**



[Learn more here](#)

### 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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