

CROSS POLLINATION

Halton Master Gardeners Monthly Newsletter
SEPTEMBER 2026 | VOL. 19 ISSUE 8

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Halton Region
Master Gardeners



Image: Claudette Sims

Culver's Root, *Veronicastrum virginicum*

By Tinamarie Jones, Halton Master Gardeners

Veronicastrum virginicum, better known as Culver's Root, is one of those terrific native perennials that deserves far more fanfare in Ontario gardens than it typically receives. Tall, elegant, and quietly dramatic, it brings clean vertical lines, midsummer sparkle, and strong pollinator value without behaving like a garden bully. It is especially useful where you want height that feels airy rather than heavy. The flower spikes rise like slim white candles above the border, catching light and movement, while pairing beautifully with grasses, coneflowers, bee balm, asters and other meadow-style companions. Its beauty is matched by its simplicity of care.

This herbaceous perennial was originally collected by naturalist John Barrister (1654-1692) after he moved to Virginia in 1679. In 1753, the famed Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus named this plant *Veronica virginica*. Eventually it was given the name *Veronicastrum virginicum*. The name *Veronicastrum* means 'resembling Veronica', which references the plant's family resemblance to speedwells. When compared with speedwells, however, Culver's Root is taller, more architectural, and boasts distinctly whorled leaves. The species name *virginicum* means 'of Virginia,' using the older botanical sense of Virginia as denoting a broad eastern North American region rather than the modern state alone.



Continued on next page

CULVER'S ROOT, VERONICASTRUM VIRGINICUM (CONT'D)

The common name 'Culver's Root' is traditionally linked to an 18th century physician named Dr. Culver (or possibly 'Coulvert'). Little reliable information is known about this individual. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the plant was viewed as medicine by physicians, and it also has a long history of medical use within Indigenous communities. However, today this plant is known primarily for its beauty and ornamental and ecological usefulness.

In addition to 'Culver's Root', this plant has also been called: Beaumont Root, Blackroot, Oxadaddy, Physic Root, and Quitch.

In terms of appearance, mature Culver's root can grow to between 4-7 feet tall and 2-4 feet wide. Thriving in zones 3-8, the stem of this plant is upright, smooth, and usually unbranched. Occasionally, the stem can sport very fine hairs. This gives the plant its poised, columnar habit. In good conditions its sturdy presence works well at the back of a perennial border or as a repeating accent through a naturalized planting. Even before it blooms, the plant has a tidy, vertical silhouette that makes it easy to spot among softer-textured neighbours.

The leaves are one of Culver's Root's best identification features. They are narrow to lance-shaped, finely toothed along the edges, and arranged in neat whorls around the stem, often in groups of three to seven. This whorled pattern gives the plant a layered, almost tiered look, with appealing dark green foliage that stays handsome through much of the season, as long as soil moisture is steady.



Beautiful Octagonal Symmetry Image: Claudette Sims



Image: [Keystone Wildflowers](#)

The flowers of Culver's Root are a true showstopper: slim, upright racemes can be up to 9 inches long and are packed with tiny white to very pale lavender or pinkish florets which are an eighth of an inch long and tubular in shape with four fused petals. These tiny and densely clustered spikes open from the bottom upward over several weeks in summer. The protruding stamens give each spike a fine, brushy texture, so the whole inflorescence looks both crisp and slightly frothy. Mature plants often carry several spikes at once, creating a candelabra effect that is distinctive and graceful rather than flashy. The plant produces flowers from June to early August. The spent flowers develop into capsules with numerous tiny brown seeds.

Continued on next page

CULVER'S ROOT, *VERONICASTRUM VIRGINICUM* (CONT'D)

In terms of propagation, plants can undergo root division early in the fall. Culver's Root possesses a thick woody taproot as well as rhizomes. For best results, ensure that each rootstock possesses at least one bud. Culver's Root can also be propagated via seed; however, the seeds must be cold stratified. Provide at least three months of cold moist stratification and note that light is required for germination. Seeds can be sown in the fall. Culver's Root grows slowly in the first year but displays more vigorous growth in subsequent years.

Faunal associations are a major reason to make room for this plant. The small, nectar-rich flowers attract a lively mix of native bees (long and short-tongued), bumble bees, small butterflies, moths, syrphid flies, and other beneficial flower visitors. In addition, the plant is the host for the Culver's Root Borer Moth, *Papaipema sciata*. The dense summer spikes are excellent for adding pollinator activity at a time when a sunny border should be buzzing. Deer and rabbits typically show limited interest in the foliage, which is another welcome bonus for many gardeners.

Culver's Root has no serious pest or disease problems in typical garden conditions, though stressed plants may occasionally show powdery mildew, leaf spots or lower-leaf yellowing if air circulation is poor, shade is heavy, or soil swings from wet to very dry. Slugs or chewing insects may nibble young growth now and then, but damage is usually minor.

Any gardener, from beginner to expert, looking for a low maintenance native perennial with incredible visual impact should consider adding Culver's Root to their garden. Although it is typically found in open forests, meadows, and along grassy slopes and prairies from Ontario southward to Georgia and Louisiana, this incredible native could be right at home in your garden as well!

CULVER'S ROOT - DETAILS AT A GLANCE



LIGHT SHADE

DAPPLED SUN

FULL SUN



MOIST

MEDIUM

Plant Type, Family: Perennial Wildflower, *Plantaginaceae*

Height/Width: (H) 120-210 cm (4-7')
(W) 60-120cm (2-4')

Features: Tall white candelabra-like flower spikes with dark green whorled leaves.

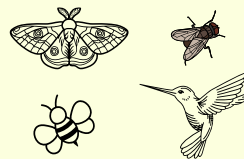
Faunal value: Larval host plant for Culver's Root Borer Moth (*Papaipema sciata*). An insect magnet.

Companion Plants: Common Ironweed (*Vernonia fasciculata*), Blue Vervain (*Verbena hastata*), Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), Spotted Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium maculatum*).

Landscape Uses: Quick spreading rhizomatous roots, adaptable to a variety of settings including rain gardens.

Native Range: Manitoba, Ontario & Quebec, down to Florida

Supports



[Plants of the World](#)

Read More!



- Dickinson, R. and Royer, F. (2021). Plants of Southern Ontario. Lone Pine Publishing, China.
- Gray, R. and Booth, S. (2024). The Gardener's Guide to Native Plants of the Southern Great Lakes Region. Firefly Books Ltd, Richmond Hill, ON.
- [Pruning Culver's Root with Sean James](#)
- [Missouri Department of Conservation](#)
- [Illinois Wild Flowers](#)
- [The Perfect Native Plant for Pollinators](#)
- [The Morton Arboretum](#)
- [Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center](#)



SEPTEMBER GARDEN 'TO DO' LIST

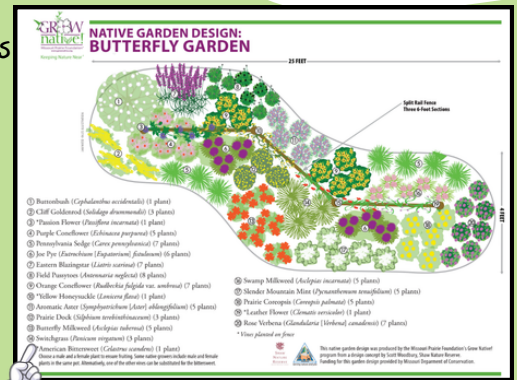
By Claudette Sims, Halton Master Gardener

- ☐ **Rethink** – This is a great time to rethink your garden design. Add [keystone plants](#) which support biodiversity. Add a variety of [flower shapes and colours](#) and strive for [continous bloom](#) across the seasons. Create appealing structural layers by adding native grasses, perennials, sedges, evergreens, shrubs and trees. Garden with [plant communities](#) that match your particular sun/soil/moisture conditions. **Grow Native!** has lots of [garden designs](#) to inspire you!
- ☐ **Perennials** – Divide or transplant spring and early summer flowering perennials, e.g., **iris**, **peony**, **phlox**, native **Wood Poppy** and **Canada Anemone** as the weather cools. Soak the area around the plant the day before to make digging easier. Water the new divisions well into the fall. Other perennials can be transplanted or divided if needed when flowers fade.
- ☐ **Veggies** – Remove plants that have stopped producing and sow bed with a '[green manure](#)' **cover crop** such as winter peas or annual ryegrass. **Seed cool-loving crops** such as spinach, radishes, pak choy, and mustard greens. When the weather cools, **gather ripening fruit** such as tomatoes, eggplants, and peppers. Leave veggies such as leeks, onions, lettuce, broccoli and rapini until needed; they can withstand light frost. **Gather seeds** from ripening crops such as dill, peas, peppers, and tomatoes for next year. **Pests** – During garden clean-up, **leave some stems** of kale, broccoli or other brassicas as **winter food** for hungry rabbits; doing so may reduce damage to valuable ornamentals during the cold months.
- ☐ **Houseplants** – Transition houseplants to a shadier location and monitor weather forecasts. If temperatures fall below 10°C bring them inside. Read about [how to bring in plants, not problems](#) on our Halton MG website.

“Large drifts of plants will attract and support more pollinators than single stems.”



CLICK HERE! for the link



- ☐ **Lawn** – Choose a rainy day to overseed the lawn, then cover seeds with a top dressing of fine compost or manure. Half the height of the blades of grass should still be visible. Fall feeding with a slow release mineral or organic fertilizer will increase root growth for an early spring green-up. Dig or cut off weeds at ground level. Rake fallen tree leaves into flower beds. [Landscape Ontario](#) has more great lawn care suggestions.

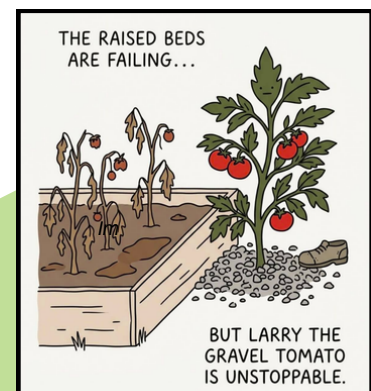
- ☐ **Diseased foliage** – Prune out and remove any diseased foliage. Dispose of diseased plant material in the garbage. Removing branches to improve air circulation can help reduce the spread of disease.



Diseased stems showing [Peony Anthracnose](#).
Photo: Master Gardeners of Ontario FB



See Janet's article on [Page 5](#) on how to build great raised beds!



Gardening Humour FB



BUILDING A RAISED VEGETABLE BED: LET WINTER DO THE WORK FOR YOU!

Janet Padiak, Halton Master Gardener

Creating a raised vegetable bed is most effective when done in the early autumn, for several reasons:

- There is ample end-of-the-year plant material such as fallen leaves and garden trimmings for the basis of the rich and friable soil that vegetables love.
- The warm temperatures and rains of autumn work to break down the plant material.
- By spring, the bed is ready for topping up with potting soil and planting.

The first step is to decide where you are going to put the vegetable bed. Sun and access to water are essential. Most crops need 6-8 hours of sunshine to produce abundantly. Some crops (lettuce, chard, some Asian greens) will grow in areas with 4 hours of sun, but the big producers—tomatoes, peppers, beans, squash—need more. Avoid placing the bed near trees; over time tree roots can grow upwards into the fertile soil of the bed even with a liner of landscape fabric. These roots will be very difficult to eradicate in a few years' time.

Investigate what material you want to use for the frame. Lumber is cost-effective and relatively easy to build using a few DIY skills. Cedar is better than pine for longevity, although even cedar will break down after a decade of use. Pressure treated wood is generally considered safe for use (arsenic was discontinued in 2006) but not advised if the goal is organic gardening. Frames made of logs or stones can also be effective.

There are excellent steel forms available for those with more generous budgets. Steel is very durable although prone to absorbing heat. As the beds are typically much larger, this is not a significant issue.



Image by Dudecorp :
Raised cedar beds can be a garden asset.



Steel raised beds are spacious and durable.
Image: Thanks to Sydney W.



Effective use of steel beds in a narrow laneway.
Image: Dudecorp

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BUILDING A RAISED VEGETABLE BED: LET WINTER DO THE WORK FOR YOU! (CONT'D)

The frame of the raised bed is placed directly on the earth or grass. Plain cardboard or yard waste bags are laid on the ground first and layers of plant debris are added as available. This is often termed 'lasagne' style gardening. Layers can include: dried leaves; fresh leaves; chopped stems; grass clippings; kitchen waste such as vegetable trimmings, coffee grounds, and eggshells; small branch clippings (especially in the lower layers); and pine needles. Try to keep a ratio of 2:1 of brown material (such as dried leaves) to green material (such as fresh leaves).

Image: Janet Padiak, HMG



Image: Janet Padiak, HMG

This may take a couple of months to fill the bed - the goal is to add the material as it becomes available. If possible, over-fill, as the material will break down and compress over the winter.

In the spring, add a layer of completed compost or potting soil. If the soil level is not yet to the top of the bed, don't worry, it can still be planted. Your vegetables will love it! And you can plan to add more organic material next autumn.

*Cross section of layers of
garden material, 'lasagne' style*

Finished Compost
Dried Leaves
Chopped Stems
Grass Clippings
Dried Leaves
Composted Manure
Dried Pine Needles
Green Kitchen Scraps
Dried Leaves
Plain Cardboard
Lawn Trimmed Short



More Information:

- Jennifer Hoglin. [A Practical Guide To Raised Beds.](#)
- Joe Lampl. 043 - [Raised Bed Gardening, Pt. 2: Perfect Soil Recipe.](#)
- Benedict Vanheems. [Make an Instant Raised Bed for Less Than a Coffee.](#)





By Hariette Henry, Halton Master Gardener

The [Eastern Cottontail](#) (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) is likely the rabbit you have encountered in your garden this season. The reason these animals have appeared is due to the availability of food, shelter and favourable weather conditions we have experienced this year. When favourable factors align, the potential for rapid rabbit population growth is greatly increased.

A rabbit's [reproductive capacities](#) explain why these animals are able to achieve high numbers very quickly. The gestation period averages 31 days, and a doe (female rabbit) typically gives birth to 4 to 12 young. Immediately following birth, the doe enters a postpartum heat that allows her to become pregnant again within 24 hours while still nursing.

The presence of rabbits in residential areas is common across North America. The primary draw for them is the availability of high-value forage such as tender lawn grass, clover, and low-growing weeds that provide a steady supply of food over the warmer seasons. During the colder months rabbits typically shift their diet to woody plants and they can, and sometimes do, strip the bark from young trees and shrubs to access the soft, nutrient-rich cambium layer below.

Rabbits apparently like living on the edge, meaning edge habitat such as thickets, hedgerows or treed areas that meet grassy meadows. This does resemble many of our backyards where trees and taller shrubs border our properties and expanses of flower beds and grass can be found in the centre. A form of escape cover is essential to rabbits and they never move too far away from brush piles or thickets that provide a quick escape from their many predators. Any landscape that supplies a combination of the above is considered good from a rabbit's point of view.

“ I have rabbits in my garden this year feeding on my plants. Can you tell me why they have become a problem this season and what I can do about them? ”



Image: Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)

How can you keep visiting rabbits or any other pest at bay? Click [here](#) to read effective, safe, eco-friendly strategies that should help manage the rabbit population. Each of these methods has advantages and disadvantages. A combination of methods is likely most effective and gardeners should reflect on the time spent and the cost of control against the damage the rabbits are causing.

- Physical barriers like fencing are among the most effective ways of keeping rabbits out of the garden. The ideal fence should be made of chicken wire or hardware cloth with openings that are less than an inch wide. It should be at least 2 – 3 feet tall with the bottom buried underground by at least 6 to 8 inches.
- Rabbits rely on smell and taste to choose their food. Planting species they dislike (garlic, and onions) around plants you want to protect can work.
- Raised beds are another safeguard against hungry rabbits.
- In fall and winter, you can shield the bark of young trees from gnawing activity with ¼” hardware cloth or spiral protectors. This protection should extend at least 2 feet above the snow level.
- Wire cages around shrubs can also prevent access to tender stems in winter.
- Where rabbit browsing is a problem, consider reducing sheltered hiding places near vulnerable plants, while retaining brush piles and other habitat features elsewhere for wildlife.
- Fencing off spaces under decks and buildings also removes them as shelter options.



Garden Journeys Open Days

Featuring Gardens in the City of Hamilton
(Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, Glanbrook, Stoney Creek & Waterdown)

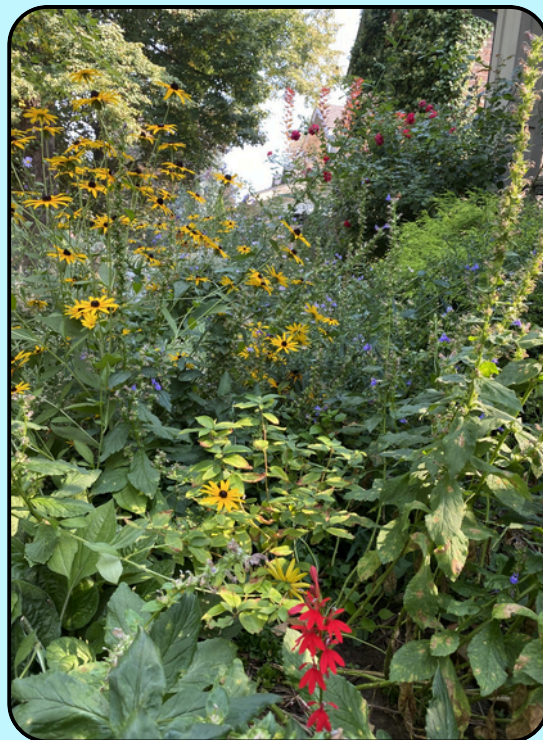


Garden Journeys



Open Days

August 8 - 9
14 - 16, 2026



As this year's Garden Journeys Open Days comes to a close, we want to thank everyone for making this event a resounding success! Whether you welcomed visitors to your garden, volunteered your time, or came out to explore, your participation was the key to make this event welcoming, fun, and full of inspiration for everyone. Together, you showed that beautiful gardens can support biodiversity and strengthen local ecosystems right in our own neighbourhoods.

We are especially grateful to our nearly 60 host gardeners for sharing their incredible gardens, and to the many volunteers whose energy kept everything moving smoothly. We also would like to offer special thanks to the City of Hamilton's "City Enrichment Fund" for their support of this event.

An event by the Halton Region Master Gardeners,
supported by Hamilton's "City Enrichment Fund"

All details on the website: [Garden Journeys' Open Days](https://www.haltongardeners.ca/garden-journeys-open-days)

Questions? Email us at: gardenjourneysopendays@gmail.com



The Monarch Journey

Applicant News!

Congratulations to all 60 applicants that took part in the 2026 Monarch Awards!
Garden visits are now complete and the assessments will be delivered by email in September.
We look forward to celebrating together Monday, October 19, 2026 - 7pm - Dundas Town Hall.

The Monarch Journey Newsletter: Click on each issue to OPEN and READ

The Monarch Journey
Creating Communities of Biodiversity
Monarch Awards Applicant Newsletter
Vol 1, Issue #5 - July 29, 2026

Journey Notes
Most of us have plants in our gardens that were already there or planted before we realized they could spread into natural areas and cause harm. Some may remind us of a person, place or time in our lives. When plants are sold at nurseries or shared by well-meaning friends, it's natural to assume they're safe choices for our gardens. This week, we'll look at which invasive plants and noxious weeds are problematic, why, and what we can do when we find them in our gardens.

In the Garden
Invasive plants: can spread beyond our gardens and crowd out native plants, reduce habitat and disrupt the food webs that support insects, birds and other wildlife. **Ontario's Noxious Weed List** has a different purpose: it identifies plants that may threaten agriculture, livestock or nearby horticultural land. The two terms are not interchangeable, but both help us recognize that some plants that may cause harm.

Resources to Explore
The Canadian Coalition for Invasive Plant Regulation (CCIPR) explains how invasive plants enter the horticultural trade, how they spread and why gardeners are encouraged to choose native or non-invasive alternatives.
Check out the [Grow Me Instead](#) Resource.

Eco-Gardening Tips
Problem Plants:
Take a Look at Your Garden
Are any invasive plants spreading into nearby beds, under fences or toward neighbouring properties? Notice whether they are spreading by seeds, runners, roots or plant fragments.
Ask: Do I know what this plant is and the best way to control it? Different plants require different methods, and established patches may take several years of repeated effort (see article below). Use a plant ID app to identify.
Try This: Start with a manageable area. After checking effective removal methods, work from the outer edge.
One Small Action: Bag flowers, seed heads, roots and other plant material that could regrow. Do not compost it. Seal it in a black plastic bag, allow it to heat in the sun, and dispose of it according to local waste guidelines.
Resource: Read [Invasive Plants](#) from Halton Region Master Gardeners for help identifying problem plants and choosing an appropriate removal method.

Wild Ginger
Native to Asia, this plant is a great substitute for Periwinkle (which is an aggressively spread weed in natural areas according to CCIPR & Master Gardeners).

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The Monarch Journey
Growing Communities of Biodiversity
Monarch Awards Applicant Newsletter
Vol 1, Issue #6 - August 5, 2026

Journey Notes
A healthy garden depends on more than the plants we see. Planting in layers—groundcovers, perennials, shrubs and trees—creates food and shelter for wildlife, while caring for the soil and leaving organic matter in place supports the many organisms working below ground. You may have heard of "chop and drop," a simple way to return organic matter directly to the soil surface. Find out more by watching this [video](#).

In the Garden
Healthy soil is full of life. Roots, fungi, bacteria and other organisms work together to release nutrients and support growth. Plants, fallen leaves or natural mulch help retain moisture and protect the soil, while decomposing plant material adds organic matter. Leave some patches of bare soil for ground-nesting bees, and keep mulch away from plant bases, where trapped moisture can encourage decay, disease and pest damage.

Resources to Explore
PLANT SELECTOR - BASIC SEARCH
To find plants by layers, begin with the Birds Canada [Guide](#) to find your zone. Choose plants [HERE](#).

Eco-Gardening Tips
Layers, Soil & Organic Matter:
Healthy soil is full of life. About half its volume is pore space that holds air and water. Is your soil loose and crumbly, or hard, compacted, cracked or slow to absorb water?
Ask: Can water soak into the soil without pooling or running off? Is bare soil covered with plants, leaves or mulch, and can roots and soil organisms get the air and moisture they need?
Try This: Add organic matter (garden clippings etc.) gradually with compost, shredded leaves or other decomposing plant material. This can improve soil structure, help it absorb and store water, and feed fungi, bacteria and soil organisms. **More** is not always better, so consider a soil test before repeatedly adding compost. See link below.
One Small Action: Avoid walking on garden beds or working soil when wet. Compaction crushes pore spaces and makes it harder for air, water and roots to move through the soil.
Check out this [Resource: Soil Tests](#) University of Guelph Soil Testing Lab.

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The Monarch Journey
Growing Communities of Biodiversity
Monarch Awards Applicant Newsletter
Vol 1, Issue #7 - August 12, 2026

Journey Notes
A wildlife-friendly garden can be lively and abundant while still allowing care for the people and spaces around it. Thoughtful plant placement, clear sightlines for safety and attention to how plants grow help keep the garden safe and contained. Purposeful groupings and habitat areas can also help plants work together, creating food, shelter and nesting spaces for the many creatures that visit or make their homes in our gardens.

In the Garden
Stand back and view your garden from the sidewalk, driveway or neighbouring property. Are sightlines clear for pedestrians and cars? Are plants leaning or spreading beyond their space? Look within the garden, too. Can you spot areas that provide shelter, soft landings, exposed soil for ground-nesting bees or an area where plants have been grouped with similar needs?

Resources to Explore
Choosing the right plant for the right place is easier when you can narrow down the possibilities. The [Network of Nature](#) plant database lets you search for native plants by growing conditions, including light and soil moisture, as well as by plant type—trees, shrubs, vines, grasses and perennials. It's a useful place to begin when you're filling a gap, planning a new garden area or looking for a plant that will be well suited to a particular spot.

Eco-Gardening Tips
Take a Look
Notice which plants have grown taller or spread farther than expected, especially near sidewalks, entrances and property lines.
Ask Yourself:
Do plants have enough room to grow, and are they grouped with others that share similar needs?
Try This
Prune, stake or thin plants that block a path or sightline. If this becomes an ongoing job, the plant may be better suited to another location.
One Small Action
Choose one area and strengthen its purpose—perhaps by adding a soft landing, grouping plants with similar needs or leaving a small patch of bare soil for ground-nesting bees.

Network of Nature
Suggestions for front yard gardens. See full resource - Page 14.

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The Monarch Journey
Growing Communities of Biodiversity
Monarch Awards Applicant Newsletter
Vol 1, Issue #8 - August 19, 2026

Journey Notes
As this year's Monarch Journey comes to a close, we celebrate the 58 gardens—and YOU, the gardeners behind them—who are creating healthier habitats and adding biodiversity in their neighbourhoods. We are also grateful to the expertise from the Monarch Award Teams, planning volunteers and members of Halton Master Gardeners for the time and care they have given to making this program possible.

Looking Ahead
Fall is a good time to plan some steps for next year. Consider filling gaps in bloom time with native plants, dividing or transplanting existing plants, or enriching the soil with compost, chopped leaves or other plant material. When expanding garden beds, think of turf as area rugs and runners rather than wall-to-wall carpet. Expand gradually so you can learn what works in your garden. [Here's a video of Douglas Tallamy, Nature's Best Hope](#) for inspiration.

Your Garden Journey Continues
Your garden feedback will arrive by email in September and will include both Highlights and Suggestions. There is no need to make every change at once—gardening is a journey, and each small step makes a difference.
Please join us for the 2026 Monarch Awards Celebration on October 19 at 7 p.m. at Dundas Town Hall. Details to follow.

Eco-Gardening Tips
A Gentler Fall Clean-up:
Fall maintenance doesn't have to mean clearing everything away. Standing stems, seed heads and fallen leaves provide winter food and shelter for birds, insects and other garden life.
Take a Look: Notice where leaves and sturdy stems can remain without covering paths, sidewalks or drains.
Try This: Leave healthy stems and seed heads standing until spring. Move leaves from lawns and hard surfaces into garden beds or beneath shrubs, leaving some whole for overwintering insects. Remove diseased material, invasive plants and unwanted seed heads.
One Small Action: Choose a new area where you will leave the leaves and stems this winter.
Winter Planning: Make notes about crowded plants, gaps in bloom and changes you would like to make next year.
Resource: [Native Plant Trust—Ecological Gardening](#)

Plant that has Not budged has Not done its job. Doug Tallamy (Image: Ken MacDonnell)

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Thank you to all those who participated!

Media Contacts: Janet Mackey, Kate Sault, Co-Chairs of the Halton Region Monarch Awards

Questions? Contact: monarchawards.hmg@gmail.com

Garden Inspiration!

Why do we need different shapes of Flowers?

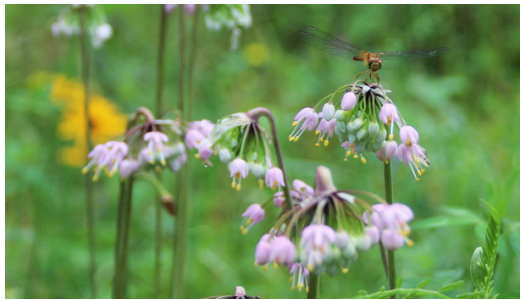
All plants are not created equal, neither are the insects that favour them. Here are a few!



Tubular: Long Narrow flowers that are accessible to fragrant flowers.

Anise Hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)

- Long-Horned Bee (*Melissodes* spp.)
- Bumble Bees (*Bombus* spp.)
- Leafcutter Bees (*Megachile* spp.)



Nodding Umbel: Flowers hang down and nectar accessed by all visiting insects.

Nodding Onion (*Allium cernuum*)

- Leafcutter Bees (*Megachile* spp.)
- Small Resin Bees (*Heriades* spp.)
- Sweat Bees (*Lasioglossum* spp.)
- Bumble Bees (*Bombus* spp.)



Compound Umbel: Numerous, small flowers on a large standing platform with shallow flowers accessible to all insects.

Golden Alexander (*Zizia Aurea*)

Larval Host Plant for:

- Black Swallowtail (*Papilio polyxenes*)
- Ozark Swallowtail (*Papilio joanae*)
- Rigid Sunflower Borer (*Papaipema rigida*)



Complex: Flowers with nectar concealed in spurs that can only be reached by pollinators with long tongues.

Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)

Larval Host Plant for:

- Columbine Duskywing Butterfly (*Erynnis lucilius*)
- Rusty Patch Bumble Bee (*Bombus affinis*)
- Small Sweat Bees (*Lasioglossum* spp.)



Composite: Two types of flowers on one flower head - big landing pad for all types of pollinators.

Smooth Blue Aster (*Symphyotrichum laeve*)

- Bumble Bees (*Bombus* spp.)
- Leafcutter Bees (*Megachile* spp.)

All Images Inspired by Photographs by:
Sundaura Alford-Purvis, [A Cultivated Art](#)



What's Growing On?

By Trish Moraghan, Halton Master Gardener

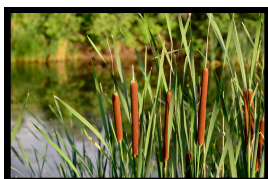


Education Programs and Resources



Preschool to Grade 12

Learn at parks, in school, at home, virtually



[Learn more here](#)

SEAN JAMES'
Autumn Splendour

GARDEN TOUR & PLANT SALE

Saturday, September 26, 2026

OPEN GARDEN: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

GUIDED TOURS: 10:30 AM & 2:00 PM

Limited capacity • Register online to reserve your spot.

Discover Sean James' garden in its autumn peak. Sweeping drifts of goldenrods, asters, autumn colour, and ornamental gardens at their finest.

If we're lucky, we may even spot the elusive Bottle Gentian.

Catch Sean Among the Plants

- Ask questions • Talk plants
- Discover new favourites

Event Details & Registration

<https://grownativehalton.ca/event/autumn-splendour/>

Donations Welcome

Supporting Sean's vision of creating more habitat for pollinators, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and other wildlife.

[Learn more here](#)



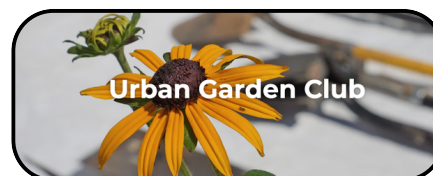
Garden Programs

[Learn more here](#)



Tree Programs

[Learn more here](#)

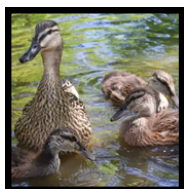


Urban Garden Club

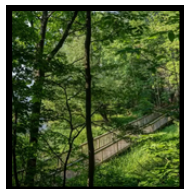
[Learn more here](#)



What's Growing On?



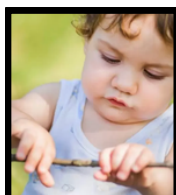
[Birding](#)



[Forest Therapy](#)



[Bloom Watch](#)



[Nature Babies](#)

Check our [calendar](#) for events



HALTON REGION MASTER GARDENERS



Bringing Plants Indoors, Without Bringing Problems

[Learn more here](#)



Ask a Master Gardener

(What native plants grow well in dry shade? When is the best time to prune hydrangeas? Something is eating my squash. How do I become a Master Gardener?)

[Learn more here](#)

Monthly Garden To-Do Lists



[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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