

GREENLEAF

www.oshawagardenclub.ca

June 2020

From our President

Wow! What a club!

Here we are in our 4th month of COVID-19 restrictions and still going strong. While we are still unable to meet as we regularly do, we are finding ways to keep active and to play our part in the community.



Thank you to all of you who have renewed your memberships and to those who have joined in recent months to bring our membership back up over 200 and to qualify for the higher OMAFRA grant. This is very important to us this year given our reduced revenues. Despite not meeting at this time, many have realized the benefits of receiving discounts at local nurseries and greenhouses that have been negotiated on behalf of our members. This year we had our first-ever members only evening of shopping at Witzke's Greenhouses where 73 of our members enjoyed the 20% discounts. It was so much fun actually seeing and greeting other members and guessing who was behind the masks. Thanks to Judy Jaeger and Anne Sewell for coordinating all of that and making it such a great club activity.

Social Media and online tools are playing an even bigger part in how we keep connected and will continue to do so in the coming years. Our Friends of the Oshawa Garden Club Facebook page now has a membership of over 365 and represent a different demographic than we tend to have in our regular OGC membership. This is also becoming a source of new members for the club as garden enthusiasts, especially newer gardeners, learn more about what our club has to offer. Even if you are not a social media person yourself, I would encourage you to visit that page to just find out more of what is happening on a day-to-day basis, to see pictures and videos of other people's gardens, and to learn from the exchange of information there.

Things have been different for me and for your board of directors during these times. It takes longer and more effort to stay in touch on things but it is working. We had a "social" Zoom meeting for our board several weeks ago to get used to meeting over the internet. Two weeks ago we had our first official board meeting by Zoom but were cut off part way through the meeting even though we had been told we were good for a full two hours. Fortunately we did get some financial matters sorted and we resumed the meeting on June 8th when our regular club meeting would have been taking place. This has been a big learning curve for all of us. There have also been some changes in our board which you will see noted below. We also looking forward to the eventual return of our Greenleaf Editor, Sherry for the September edition. We miss her dearly.

You will see below in the reports that we are once again back in the community performing some very meaningful activities to make Oshawa a better place to live, to give members an opportunity to be active and to fulfill our mandate to celebrate and encourage the promotion of horticulture in the local area. We are also continuing our tradition of giving back to our community through partnerships serving Durham Region. Even the City of Oshawa is changing up how they do things during these challenging times with the introduction of Giving Gardens and a Virtual Peony Festival in which your OGC is taking part.

I do feel badly, though, that not everyone has been able to benefit from some of the activities that the club has been able to arrange. The COVID-19 regulations and requirements have meant delays in getting some project started and has limited volunteer opportunities because of social distancing requirements but they are a start. Hopefully in coming months we will be able to create more opportunities for our members to be involved. One thing we are working on is a virtual plant sale that will involve pre-ordering and curbside pickup. This is not what we are used to, again, it is a start at getting back to normal.

The OHA Conference and AGM in London during July has been now officially cancelled but most clubs are now finding new and interesting ways to keep in touch and to stay active in their communities.

Restrictions are now easing a bit but continue to stay safe, keep your distance but keep in touch with our community as we are all in this together. I look forward to seeing all of you in person someday soon and to feel your pent-up energy being released to celebrate that day.

Stay Calm and Garden On! We will get through this together.

Merle Cole

president@oshawagardenclub.ca

OGC at Witzke's Greenhouses Shopping Event

Not quite a typical OGC Meeting but 73 members found it to be good therapy for the COVID-19 Blues. What is not to like about spending money, at a 20% discount, on quality plants at a local grower and wholesaler nursery like Witzke's. This has been a family business since 1970 and now Bianca Witzke is carrying on the family tradition.

A great time was had by all and many thanks again to Judy and Anne for arranging this, scheduling the shopping and to the board members who took part to keep everything on schedule and working smoothly. The pictures tell the rest.

<http://www.witzkesgreenhouses.ca>



Many Thanks to the Owners and Staff of Witzke's for a Wonderful Shopping Event.

City of Oshawa Giving Gardens

The OGC was asked to help the City of Oshawa convert 12 flower gardens on the north side of City Hall to vegetable gardens this summer. The gardens, at the corner of Centre and King Streets, would produce food to be shared with individuals and families in the local area who were facing food insecurity, a very real thing during the current emergency. We asked our community partners, the Durham Master Gardeners, to join us in the project. A quick call to Ann Couch was made to ask her to rally her Therapeutic Gardening volunteers who were at loose ends when their project at Hillsdale finished up. A week ago the combined teams from OGC and DMG met at City Hall to plant the already tilled beds with a large variety of vegetables and herbs along with some marigolds from the City greenhouses. The City has planted traditional floral displays at the entrance to the park and everything looks great. We have also reached out to the We Grow Food organization to help with harvesting and distributing the produce when it is ready.

There may be a need for additional volunteers later in the season for weeding and sowing new crops. If you are interested, contact the Ann Couch or the President.



Member Sources and Resources

Our Friends of the Oshawa Garden Club Facebook Page continues to grow, now with 370 member who are busy sharing information on sources of plants, materials, ideas and expertise. It is a great place to have your questions answered and to share pictures of your gardens. [Friends of the Oshawa Garden Club Facebook page](#)

The Oshawa Public Libraries are also making free instructional videos and other gardening materials on line and free of charge. Click on this link to connect. [OSHAWA PUBLIC LIBRARIES](#).

If you have other great sources and resources to share with your OGC friends, please let us know by emailing Judy Jaeger jaegerj080@gmail.com . Please provide contact information and specialty of the business or website.

The Parkwood Project

We are back in business. I spent last Thursday morning helping to weed the gardens that were renewed last summer and things are looking good. The grounds are not yet open to the public but limited numbers of volunteers are now being scheduled to be back in the gardens to cultivate and clear new areas of the Tennis Court Gardens while respecting safe distancing and avoiding cross-contamination of tools and surfaces.



If you would be interested in being a part of this project as a volunteer, please contact Robin Burns at robin.burns2814@gmail.com .

I will let the pictures tell the rest of the story.



The Peony Festival

This week details have been released on the **Virtual** Peony Festival that the City of Oshawa will be featuring this year. For details of the event go to <http://www.oshawa.ca/peony>

The Oshawa Garden Club will be a part of this celebration through the production of some short video tours of member gardens that feature peonies. I will be working on those videos with Jill Snape and Greg Merlin in coming weeks. Check for them on the City site about mid-month.

There are lots of ways to engage!

Apart from our [Art Contest](#) , the [Canadian Peony Society](#) is having a photo contest and the Matsuyama Bonsai Society is promoting voting for the best Canadian Bonsai through [Bonsai Penjing Canada](#).

Everyone is invited to share past photos and stories illustrating their previous memories at the Peony Festival by tagging [@OshawaCulture](#) on Twitter with the hashtags #OurOshawa, #OshEvents and #OshawaPeonies. Select memories and images will be shared on the City's social media platforms.



A Different Kind of Plant Sale!

Our Annual Plant Sale was cancelled due to the current restrictions and we still have plants in inventory that were over wintered and many members have set aside plants for donating to the sale. WHAT TO DO? We are organizing a curb-side sale of plants over the next 2-3 weeks where those interested can see what plants are available by appointment. Social distancing measures will be in place and we encourage you to wear personal masks or scarfs.

Currently we have one location in Whitby where inventory is now available for purchase; a second location in Oshawa will be set up in the next few days.

Interested in donating plants: We are looking for plant donations to increase our inventory so if you have plants that you can pot-up to donate by June 15th please contact Judy Jaeger at jaegerj080@gmail.com or 905-404-9108 to arrange pick up or to drop off and if you need pots or more information. Please include a label identifying the plant(s). All donations must be in pots or containers already.

Better still, sell a few of your surplus plants to friends and relatives in your bubble and donate the proceeds to the OGC. Save those extra steps.

Interested in purchasing plants: Contact Judy Jaeger at jaegerj080@gmail.com for details on location(s) and how to set up a time to check out the plants available. Please be patient. This is new to us and we are all volunteers so delays may happen.

Updates about the sale and available plants will be posted on the [Friends of the Oshawa Garden Club Facebook page](#).

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Judy Jaeger
905-404-9108

Virtual Garden Visits

All of us are used to visiting community gardens, the gardens of neighbours and friends, as well as inviting others in to enjoy our gardens during the growing season. As gardeners it is difficult for us to not do that, but it is recommended that we not congregate in each other's gardens and that we should practice safe social distancing.

FRIENDS OF THE OSHAWA GARDEN CLUB FACEBOOK PAGE

[OGC on Facebook](#). Click
[Vist to Jill's Garden](#) Click

OGC Board Update

Board Member Valerie Allen has unfortunately found it necessary to tender her resignation from our Board of Directors due to health issues. Val recently underwent surgery and we wish her well in her recovery. This was Val's first year on the board and we have appreciated her enthusiasm in the role. I personally got down and dirty with her heeling in plants left over from our plant sale last year so that they would be safe over the winter. She has always brought a smile and goodwill to our meetings.

As a consequence, we will be require one more new Board Member in November and will have a few other positions to fill as other board members reach the end of their tenure.

Please consider putting your name forward to Robin Burns at Robin.Burns2814@gmail.com if you would be willing to help play a leadership role with this wonderful organization. As we can all see, the times, they are a-changing, and we need to keep our leadership strong and focused on keeping the OGC strong as well.

OGC Webmaster Position

It is with regret but with great thanks that we also accept the resignation of Jim Cook as our Webmaster. Jim has been in the position for a number of years now. No, Jim has not given up on us but he, and his wife Tracey (a Durham Master Gardener and OGC Member), have found greener pastures in Nova Scotia. In fact they are very green, having been part of a former golf course with a lovely view of the north shore. We wish Jim and Tracey and their doggies well in their new home and thank them for their support over the past many years.

That means we need a volunteer webmaster to take over from Jim as of November. There is a small stipend for the position and an established website that is done in Dream Weaver and on an established platform. The position requires related skills to maintain the existing site however, with some work, it would be possible to deliver the site with a different software base. Content is provided largely by OGC members however creative ideas on content delivery would be welcome. There is an established third-party membership payment system imbedded that is primarily turnkey with only minimal management requirements. Jim will be available to support someone with the transition.

If you would like to learn more or to indicate your interest in exploring this important position, please contact myself, Merle Cole at president@oshawagardenclub.ca or James Cook at webmaster@oshawagardenclub.ca.

See you in September, if not before. Have a great Summer!!!!!!!