

The Greenleaf Newsletter

Oshawa Garden Club



March / April
2026

Contents

President's Message ..	2
March Meeting on Zoom	3
Upcoming Club Meetings and Events: ..	4
April Meeting in Person at LVIV Hall	4
Upcoming Events and Links	5
Personal Introduction & News from the City of Oshawa	6
A Break from Winter ..	8
Vandermeer Hosting Free Seminars	8
Spotlight on Native Plants - Spotted Joe Pye Weed	8
- New England Aster ..	9
The Robert McLaughlin Gallery	10
Orono Seedy Saturday	11
Cannington Seedy Saturday	12

Cover photo "Iris Reticulata" by Rose Mary Mason

Submission deadline for May/June newsletter: April 15



The Oshawa Garden Club (OGC) is an active member of District 17 of the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA)



President's Message

The end of winter is in sight! Spring officially arrives March 20, although we know there will still be wintery weather well into April.

While we are waiting, it's time to read the seeds catalogs like a gripping novel, visit a nursery like it's a southern vacation and scan the earth diligently for the first signs of awakening.

Our March 9th speaker will be on Zoom. Darren Heimbecker of Whistling Gardens will lead us on a tour of the gardens, and our Bus Tour this year will be a day trip to the site!

On Monday April 13th we return to LVIV, catch up in person, and the speaker will be Garry Edwards on his garden Meadow View.

Mark your calendar for our incredible Plant Sale, May 23 at the South Oshawa Community Centre. Thank you to Carmen and Janice and the rest of the team for all their work.

In July, District 17 along with District 4 are hosting the OHA conference to be held at Durham College, July 24 to 26. If you volunteer, your conference costs will be reduced significantly.

Finally, it's time to start thinking about opening your garden to other members for Sharing Gardens. Jill Snape, our Past President will be coordinating this year.

Let's Stay Connected,
Rose Mary Mason

Oshawa Garden Club President

President@oshawagardenclub.ca



The Greenleaf Newsletter

Oshawa Garden Club

The Greenleaf is a newsletter of the Oshawa Garden Club.

President:
Rose Mary Mason

Newsletter Editor:
Cecile Willert

Winter meetings on Zoom (Jan/Feb/Mar)

Regular meetings:
38 Lviv Blvd, Oshawa
Doors open at 7:00 pm
Meetings start 7:30 pm

E-mail address:
info@oshawagardenclub.ca

Web address:
oshawagardenclub.ca

Facebook:
“Friends of the Oshawa Garden Club”

Photo (left) by Rose Mary Mason



March Meeting on Zoom

Speaker: Darren Heimbecker, Owner, Botanical Garden Founder/Designer Whistling Gardens

Monday March 9, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Topic: Whistling Gardens - Then and Now

Description: A look back on the development of the botanical gardens and a number of plants that worked out really well along with a few that didn't. Presentation also covers perennials, shrubs, trees and conifers.

About Darren: After receiving a degree in Outdoor Education, Darren left his 18 year nursery career to purchase a 56 acre farm in Wilsonville, Ontario with his wife Wanda to fulfill his lifelong botanical vision. In 2006, Whistling Gardens Nursery and Garden Centre were established, attracting plant collectors from across Canada and the United States. May 26th 2012 marked the official grand opening of "Canada's Newest Horticultural Playground" as the multi-award winning privately owned botanical gardens features 22 acres of lush landscaped manicured gardens home to North America's Largest Public Peony and Conifer Collections.



Their fountain Amphitheatre display has become a popular day and nighttime attraction which has approximately 110 jets choreographed to new world music, composed by Darren. Three years in the making, in 2022, the Festival of Fountains - The Night Garden introduced guests to a highly visual immersive experience of music, water, and lighting. *"By working with engineers and technology experts around the world, we believe we have created a theatrical fountain experience unlike anything ever seen before in Canada."* This is currently the only show of its kind in Canada which introduces custom made international technology, receiving a Best New Event Nomination at FEO. In 2024, the Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation, recognized the Festival of Fountains as a 2023 Innovator of the Year Award Regional Finalist! The gardens also host several diverse special events annually.

Since its inception, peer groups have recognized Whistling Gardens and owners, for their best business practices, horticultural excellence and garden design as a recipient of numerous municipal, provincial, national, and International awards. Garden Awards and recognition include: Canada's Best New Garden Experience Award, Sustainable Tourism Ambassador of the Year Award, Millstream Award, and Federal Medal Recipient of the Canada 150 Award. Notable accolades include Best Local Attraction and Wedding Facility, Top 10 Botanical Garden in Canada, Top 10 Conifer Gardens of the World, Best Gardening Event of the Year "Peony Festival", Best Botanical Gardens of The Year, Top 10 Amazing Places of Norfolk County and recognized with a Canada 150 Garden Experience Designation.

In 2023 Darren and his wife Wanda received the prestigious Garden Tourism Person(s) of the Year Leadership Award at the International Garden Tourism Conference held in Victoria, British Columbia recognizing their efforts in establishing garden diversity and innovation. He has also been recognized as 1 of 20 Canadians Shaping Our Future Gardens by Garden Making Magazine and remains a regular guest contributor to Fine Gardening Magazine. When he's not in the gardens, you can find Darren in the studio composing music and choreographing for the upcoming theatrical fountain performances.

April Meeting in Person at LVIV Hall

Speaker: Garry Edwards from Meadow View Gardens

Monday April 13, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

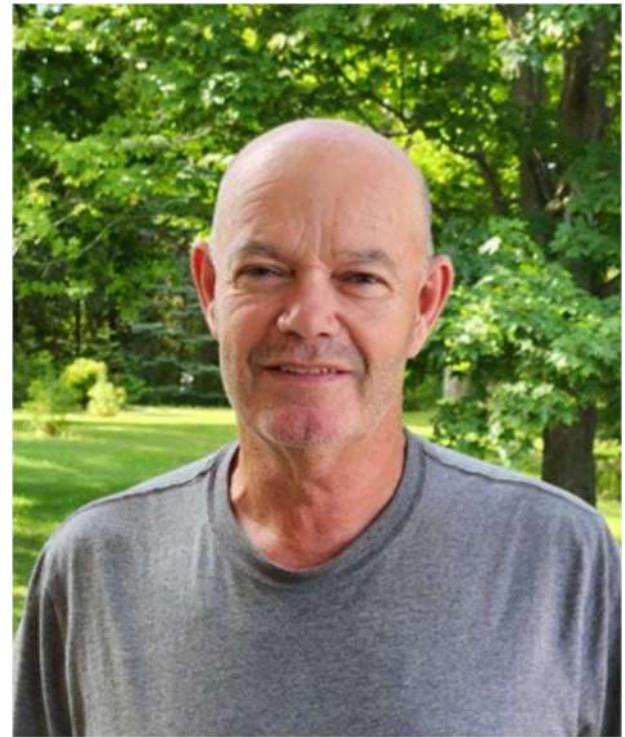
Doors open at 7:00 p.m.

50 years a professional nurseryman, grower, horticulturist and plantsman. Garry has grown plants in the warm and wet climate of Devon, England to the frigid cold of Muskoka, Ontario and now to Northumberland County in Ontario.

Topic: Meadow View Then and Now

In 2014 Garry moved to their current location and established Meadow View Gardens and Nursery.

The 7 acres of gardens and grounds over the last seven years had become a very successful wedding venue, which is now no longer in operation. He is now re-establishing the nursery where he will be growing a range of woodland plants, Alpine and rarely seen perennials and bulbs. He has recently launched a youtube channel where he is hoping to pass on some of his gardening and growing knowledge that he has gained over the past 50 years.



“Tulip on Fridge” by Rose Mary Mason

Upcoming Club Meetings and Events:

Monday March 9, Meeting on Zoom at 7:30 p.m.

Presenter Darren Heimbecker, “Whistling Gardens - Then and Now”

Monday April 13, Meeting at LVIV at 7:30 p.m.

Presenter Garry Edwards, “Meadow View Then and Now”

Coffee Social Club, Mondays 10 a.m. Tim Hortons @ Ritson/Adelaide, Tuesdays 1 p.m. Tim Hortons @ King/Wilson

Saturday May 23, Annual Plant Sale, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Upcoming Events and Links

By Rose Mary Mason

Orono First Seedy Saturday
February 28 from 10-2 p.m.
20 Station Street, Orono (Durham County Seniors Complex)

Cannington and GBGC Seedy Saturday,
March 21 from 9-2 p.m.
38 Pete's Lane, Pefferlaw (Lion's Recreation Centre)

District 17 AGM
April 25 from 9 -12 p.m. at Club Carib, 600 Wentworth E, Oshawa

CLOCA:
<https://www.cloca.com/maple-syrup-festival>

Purple Woods Maple Syrup Festival
Dates: March 14-22 and March 28-29, 2026
Time: 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. or 12 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Location: Purple Woods Conservation Area, 38 Coates Rd. E., Oshawa

Lantern Walk
Dates: March 27 and 28
Time: 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Location: Purple Woods Conservation Area, 38 Coates Rd. E., Oshawa

Friends of Second Marsh:
<https://www.secondmarsh.ca/>

Earth Day Cleanup/Great Lakes Watershed Cleanup in partnership with Durham Rotary Clubs
April 26 at 10 a.m. - Volunteers Needed!
Make your Earth Day count! Help us clean up along Colonel Sam Drive and around Oshawa Second Marsh. Gloves and bags will be provided.

Blooming Boulevards:
<https://www.bloomingboulevards.org/book-online>
Saturdays at 10:00 a.m. online
March 14 Design Your Own Pollinator Garden
March 28 Goodbye Lawn!
April 11 Wildflower All- Stars for Sun or Shade
April 25 Native Plants for Tough Sites

Links of interest:
Dorte Windmuller, our January Speaker:
Cliffcrest Butterflyway and Pollinator Garden
<https://www.pollinatorgarden.ca/>

For Trees and Shrubs check out LEAF - Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests

<https://www.yourleaf.org/>

Save the Date! Our Annual Plant Sale is Coming!

By Carmen Lint

Get your gardening gloves ready! The Oshawa Garden Club is thrilled to announce that our annual Plant Sale will be held on Saturday, May 23rd, 2026.

Whether you are looking for sun-loving perennials, native plants, or some vegetables, this is the place to be. Our members have been busy winter sowing and nurturing a fantastic selection of plants that are locally grown and ready to thrive in your garden.

- When: Saturday, May 23rd, 2026
- Where: 1455 Cedar St. Oshawa
- Time: 9:00am-1:00pm - Arrive early for the best selection!

Interested in volunteering or donating plants? Keep an eye for upcoming sign-up sheets. We can't wait to see our community come together to make this our best sale yet!



Kentucky Coffee Tree by Alison Babin

Personal Introduction & News from the City of Oshawa

Article and Photos by Mark Denee, Supervisor, Parks Horticulture | City of Oshawa

Happy mid-winter! This has always been my favourite season. Perhaps a bit strange for a gardener, but I have a love for the beauty of freshly fallen snow, as well as a deep appreciation for the “slowing down” of life that winter seems to force upon us. I find great personal value in the rest and reflection of the cold and snowy months. And browsing seed catalogues.

For those of you I have not met, let me introduce and share a bit about myself. My name is Mark Denee, and I have been, since July 2023, the Supervisor, Parks Horticulture for the City of Oshawa. I grew up in a family plant business - first a retail garden centre called Denee Floral (later Denee Garden Gallery) in Dundas. Then my parents started a wholesale greenhouse/nursery called Park Perennials (later the Epic Plant Company) in Niagara-on-the-Lake. I went to the University of Guelph for horticulture, initially more interested in the business side of my degree, but at some point, developed a passion for the plants. Between the books by Phillips & Rix, the Jelitto seed catalogue, and the Perennial Plant Association’s annual symposium, I very quickly became what is called a “plant nerd”. I have many fond memories of my first garden in Queenston, the corporate gardens around my parents’ house, and the trial gardens we had at the nursery.

Over the years, large wholesale production of plants became less interesting to me. I had always longed for something more public facing, and the twists and turns of life brought me initially to the City of Hamilton for a few years, and then eventually to this great job in Oshawa. After about thirty years in Niagara, moving to Oshawa was quite a life-change, but my partner Maggie and I eventually found a new home in Kawartha Lakes, a new garden, and a 5 year old Border Collie mix rescue, and we love them all dearly.

Parks Horticulture at the City of Oshawa operates with three Gardeners and a Working Foreperson. In the spring and summer, we supplement that crew with seasonal and student staff to plant and maintain our horticultural assets. From our little old greenhouse to the Peony Festival, and from the established Lakeview Park to the new Rose Valley Community Park, this job has many opportunities and great satisfaction. My personal favourites are the Monarch Waystation at City Hall, Gold Point Wildlife Reserve, and all of Ed Broadbent & Lakeview Park.

Some exciting news from the City of Oshawa Parks to share with you all:



Monarch on Liatris at City Hall, August 2025

Personal Introduction & News from the City (continued)

- **New parks.** Two brand new parks opened in late 2025. Rose Valley Community Park on Thornton Road N, just north of Rossland, features a relatively large, formal garden that includes over a dozen varieties of roses and 30 varieties of perennials and shrubs. Also, downtown at the corner of Bond & Simcoe is the new Veterans Square that features over 40 varieties of perennials and shrubs.
- **New peonies.** Through a generous donation from Ingrid Janssen, we were able to add six new peonies to the collection at the Oshawa Valley Botanical Garden. These were planted in the fall of 2025:

Catherine Louise (Menard/D'Aoust)
Joker (Bockstoce/Landis/Rogers; Henry Landis was from Willowdale)
Josette (Brethour)
Soft Salmon Saucer (Cousins/Klehm)
Canary Brilliants (Anderson)
Vanilla Schnapps (Seidl/Bremer)

They will, of course, take a few years before they “strut their stuff”, but very cool!

- **New plantings.** We’re very excited about a joint Horticulture & Forestry mini forest project with Little Forests Durham and the Rotary Club, with support from the Oshawa Garden Club. Location has been selected and planting date is still to be determined. Stay tuned!

Finally, while we’re waiting for the Oshawa gardens to bloom, let’s all put on our boots and enjoy wintery weekend hikes at one of the local conservation areas. Feeding the songbirds at Lynde Shores is a fun winter activity. When spring arrives, Stephen’s Gulch in Bowmanville is an absolute gem for spring-blooming ephemerals - trilliums galore, plus many others. One of my all-time favourite plants is the gentian (*Gentiana* sp.); we were very pleased to discover the related native *Gentianopsis crinita* blooming at Heber Down in Whitby a couple of summers ago. Something about the typical purple-blue flower colour and their shape draws me in. All our local conservation areas have much to offer.

Stay warm and enjoy the rest of winter!



Gentianopsis at Heber Down, September 2023



Milkweeds and Rudbeckia hirta at Gold Point, July 2025

Vandermeer Hosting Free Seminars

What's not to love about free events? Check out Vandermeer's website for details of events this winter and spring.

<https://www.vandermeernursery.com/pages/events>

The following seminars are advertised as free, no registration required:

- February 28: New & Noteworthy Varieties for 2026
- February 28: Seed Starting 101
- March 7: Berries, Fruit Trees & Beyond
- March 14: Vegetable Gardening for Beginners
- March 14: Growing Vegetables in Containers

A Break from Winter

By Michelle Benn

This is a youtube channel that offers 70 garden tours - mostly around New York State.

<https://www.youtube.com/@WhispersInTheGarden/videos>

The presenter, Jay, narrates the garden tours and reveals his gentle and kind heart.

Just what we need to lift our mood in the middle of winter and with all the angst in the world.

Spotlight on Native Plants - Spotted Joe Pye Weed

Eutrochium maculatum

By Michelle Benn

This native gets the "spotted" in its common name from the purple-spotted stem. The leaves are whorled around the purple stem giving the plant some architectural interest even when not in flower.

- Light = **Full Sun** to part sun
- Soil = **medium to wet**
- Size = 5-6 ft H x 3-4 ft W
- Flowering = pink-purple, July - September
- Seed Germination = cold stratification 30 -60 days, takes 10-20 days to germinate at 21 deg C.
- Sowing = see note on following page
- Rabbit resistant
- Native, Larval host to Three-Lined Flower Moth (feeds on florets), Eupatorium Borer Moth = Ironweed Clearwing Moth (bores through roots), Ruby Tiger Moth (feeds on foliage), and Common Pug Moth (feeds on florets)

To prevent self seeding, you can deadhead in the fall after flowering. If you have a large area and don't mind the reseeding, you can leave the seeds for the birds.



Photo by Katy Chayka

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Spotlight on Native Plants - New England Aster

Symphyotrichum novae-angliae

New England Aster or Michaelmas Daisy

By Michelle Benn

- Light = **Full Sun** to part sun
- Soil = medium moisture, well drained
- Size = 3-6 ft H x 2-3 ft W (taller with more moisture)
- Flowering = purple, some pink, September - October
- Seed Germination = cold stratification 60 days, takes 20+ days to germinate at 20 deg C
- Sowing = see note

Rabbits may eat asters, so it is best to protect it in spring until there are other plants to choose from.

This native plant is a larval host to the pearl crescent butterfly.

To prevent self seeding, you can deadhead in the fall after flowering. If you have a large area and don't mind the reseeding, you can leave the seeds for the birds.

Do the Chelsea Chop (reduce height by 1/3 to 1/2) in June to prevent asters from flopping.

Often during flowering, the lower leaves on the stem shrivel and dry up. This is common and nothing to worry about, but it may be helpful to plant a 1-2 ft ground cover in front to hide the dry foliage.

Sowing

Sowing = scatter the seed on the surface of the soil and cover lightly with 1/8" soil.

If winter sowing, germination should occur in Spring once daytime temperatures are above 20° C.

Once the plant grows several inches tall or gets 2-3 sets of true leaves, you can separate the seedlings and transfer to larger containers.



Photo by Peter M. Dziuk

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The Robert McLaughlin Gallery

By Alison Babin

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery (RMG) was founded in 1967 and built in 1969, a response to the need for a permanent home for the arts in Oshawa. It is located at 72 Queen Street, by the McLaughlin Library branch. In 2025 the OGC was approached to help with their backyard garden space. This space is used for children's camps during the summer and hosts events on occasion. There are 4 raised beds, lots of trees, and lots of shade tolerant vegetation. In 2026 we will be helping with the 4 raised beds and taking an inventory of the existing plants and trees and suggesting a plan for the future. RMG believes in indigenous plants which will benefit pollinators and the environment. Added to the city run Monarch Station out front, these beds will provide huge benefits to our struggling native insects. So come and visit the Gallery <https://rmg.on.ca/> and check out the back gardens while you are there! And if you are interested in getting involved, please email Alison at info@oshawagardenclub.ca.



Photo by Allie Snape

Look closely to spot the finches feeding on the echinacea.



Photos by Alison Babin

SEEDY SATURDAY

Orono Horticultural Society

Saturday, February 28th
10 AM – 2 PM

Durham County Senior's Complex
200 Station St, Orono

SEED SWAP • LOCAL VENDORS • KIDS MAKE'N TAKE

Membership Drive \$20/person • \$35/couple

SEEDY SATURDAY

Save your seeds



Save the date

Get ready for spring with lots of vendors, speakers, seeds, seed-swap, native plants, children's activities & more!

MARCH 21 2026

Pefferlaw Lions Community Hall

Co-Hosts: Cannington & Georgina-Brock Horticultural Clubs