

The Watering Can

December, 2012

Newsletter of The West Carleton Garden and Horticultural Club,
P.O. Box 326, Carp, On. K0A 1L0



Take a bough Tim ...

Tim Dyer (owner of the [Carp Garden Center](#).) arranged many boughs, and more, before his audience of about 30 members at our November meeting. In just over an hour, from his stock of pine, spruce, fir, juniper, and cedar boughs, Tim deftly fashioned four Christmas



arrangements including a wreath, table centre, outdoor pot, and a personal champagne glass place setting of bough cuttings and a ribbon.

While home handy-man tools (wire cutter, box cutter, pliers, and hammer) would get a do-it-yourselfer to the same end-point, Tim demonstrated his craft using a time-saving commercial “pincher” mechanism to secure a mixture of species’ boughs to a 12” wire form for his wreath-making demonstration.

His pot arrangement, using sand as the bough-anchoring medium, can be readily placed in urns for the season and then replaced with other arrangements for the next gardening season. Using a plate as the base for his table centre, Tim used a half Oasis block to accept prepared conifer boughs and two candle holders. How do you position boughs in a champagne glass? Fashion an open grid of scotch tape, stuck to the outside of the rim of the glass, and place small bough pieces in the grid openings. Add water to the glass to keep the boughs hydrated.

(See photos of Tim’s creations on page 3.)

Next Event December 11, 2012

Holiday Potluck Dinner & Social

Seating @ 6:30 pm - See details on page 3

Edible Landscaping: Reilly - style

In the past couple of years vegetable gardening has become a new focus for me. Apparently I am not alone. Somebody is buying all those vegetable seeds and packs of pre-started plants at the stores.

I can plead guilty to starting too many seeds for my dedicated vegetable garden. Last season many of my extra beets, purple lettuce and “Bright Lights” swiss chard found a place in perennial beds – replacements for traditional space-fillers such as marigolds and geraniums.

As seen below, the huge leaves and variety of stem colors of “Bright Lights” swiss chard provide visual interest in an ornamental grass bed. As of November 18, after many frosty nights, we are still harvesting leaves for meal-time ‘steamed greens’.



“Bright Lights” swiss chard is at the base of ‘Tiger Eyes’ sumac (with yellowing leaves). Left of sumac is Autumn Feather Reed Grass (Calamagrostis brachytricha) and right is “Heavy Metal” Red Switch Grass (Panicum virgatum ‘Heavy Metal’).

Needed: for Club’s Float Entry “We’re Bloomin’ Crazy” in Carp’s 2012 Santa’s Parade

Again this year our club is entering a float in the Dec. 8 Santa Clause Parade. A profusion of artificial flowers (alone or in arrangements) are solicited to achieve the desired ‘summery’ look.

Delivery of floral contributions, by 3 pm, Friday, Dec. 7 to Lorne Montgomery’s barn at 281 Old Coach Road, Carp, would be much appreciated.

Volunteers to be on the float, attired as flowers, butterflies, or garden critters are also wanted. More info from: Nancy Argue at 613-622-1122.

Newsletter changes:

I look forward to taking on the responsibility of producing our club's newsletter. Thank you Denise (Burnham) for a job well done over the past few years.

I hope that the changes to this issue of The Watering Can meet with your approval. I have two objectives for the newsletter. The first is to increase the gardening content of the newsletter. Some of this can be done by tapping into non-members' areas of expertise much as has been done with this issue's article on Black Walnuts: a gardener's idea/question leads to finding a local expert, such as Hank Jones, who can provide additional local knowledge for the response. I encourage members to send me their questions ... and perhaps a lead to whom can be the local expert responder.

My second objective, through my continuing exploratory internet queries, is to provide club members with clickable links to a range of gardening topics (sometimes marginally-related) that address sustainability issues – a hot topic in many sectors of the ornamental gardening and food self-sufficiency sectors. The "Clickables" column in this issue initiates this effort. I invite members to inform me of web sites/blogs that they have found informative and useful.

From reading this issue of the newsletter you'll note that it is geared to computer-connected members (all those clickable links!). Moving in this digital direction addresses the communication preferences of the 'youngsters' in our community. The digital newsletter is easy to forward to local friends who may then be motivated to attend our meetings ... and bolster our membership. Members without email accessibility will of course continue to receive print copies of The Watering Can.

Your feedback on the new features of The Watering Can is important to me.

Phil Reilly (reilly@magma.ca)

A Bounty of Black Walnuts! by Phil Reilly

This fall's production of nuts on our 30-year old black walnut tree has been outstanding: the minivan load of nuts are from just one tree. In gathering the fallen nuts I pondered, "were these nuts, having been in contact with the ground for a couple of weeks and become blackened, of consumable condition?"



A Bounty of Black Walnuts! (continued)

In the past I had just allowed the squirrels to eat or cache them. But this year, following a recent introduction to Hank Jones of Constance Bay, I set upon a quest to harvest the nuts for human use. Hank maintains an extensive web site (treenuts.ca) with much information about nut trees and traditional uses of nuts. To facilitate access to walnut meat, Hank has designed a labour-saving electric walnut de-huller which mechanically removes the outer husks from the nut and preserves the integrity of the nut. In the future, as a service available at the newly-created [Torbolton Centre \(evolving from the former Torbolton Public School on Woodkilton Road\)](#) Hank will provide public access (by prior arrangement) to his de-huller. (Hank's huller is pictured below).

Hank responded to my walnut questions as follows:

"Black walnut (Juglans nigra) husks darken quickly once ripe. Leaving the husk on invites mouldering that can affect the taste of the kernel. It is best to remove this green husk as soon as the nuts are ripe (i.e. when they fall from the tree.) Like all temperate nuts, once cracked, they are best kept fresh by freezing. However, black walnuts in the shell keep fresh for years.

Besides the edible kernel, the husk and the shell are also usable. The green husk is the source of the only naturally colorfast North American plant dye. Dried, and in gel capsules, it is sold as a high-priced vermicide. Shell grit added to floor paint improves traction; a finer grind becomes a cosmetic skin exfoliant. The shell sawn into cross-sectional slices is a crafter's dream material!

The black walnut (a North American native species) has become naturalized in our eastern Ontario region over the last three centuries. It is fond of city heat islands, but often grows well elsewhere. Ottawa's urban forest has hundreds of mature trees, producing on average thousands of bushels of whole nuts annually. Many other edible nut tree species are also found in our urban forest: oak, butternut, buckeye, hazel, hickory, chestnut, beech, ginkgo, nutpine and hackberry. If the portion of nut trees were to increase (and be used), the urban forest would be better called an urban agroforest!"



Right:
Hank Jones'
Nut Huller

Take a bough Tim ... (continued)



Above, Tim Dyer demonstrates placement of small conifer branches in an Oasis floral foam block whose thickness has been cut in half.



Left, a champagne glass for table decoration, holds a handful of conifer branches. The grid of clear scotch tape attached to the glass's rim, separates and secures the branches.



Above, Lieslie Alvarenga claims her draw prize of the urn-filler crafted by Tim, co-owner of the Carp Garden Center. Note the use of fern fronds for color contrast in this arrangement.

In Memoriam: Geof Colley



We are deeply saddened at the loss of our much valued member, Geof Colley. Adeline introduced this fine gentleman to our club three years ago and he generously got involved in all our events and activities. He even embraced his role as a Garden Gnome on our 2nd Santa Claus Parade float and was hoping to be a "Flake" on our "Winter Wonderland" float.

He and Adeline spent many hours at the Reading Garden and manned the Carp Fair Booth for more than their fair share of hours. We were thrilled when they announced that they had been married in a quiet ceremony last year.

We were also relieved when Geof agreed to take on the Treasurer's role in 2011. His 40 years at Deloitte as a Chartered Professional Accountant certainly qualified him for the job. He also volunteered these services to the Alzheimer Society, the Neighbourhood Services and the Parkdale United Church. When he resigned last month due to his illness he again displayed his great integrity by ensuring that our books were thoroughly overhauled so that Pam could take over. In retrospect, we now see what a difficult task that must have been for him.

To pay tribute to a dear departed member and in recognition of his tireless efforts, our club will plant a tree at the Reading Garden in Geof's honour in the spring. Our heartfelt condolences to Adeline and Geof's family.

December 11, 2012 Pot Luck Dinner: a Reminder

Attendees are asked to contribute a pot luck dish: appetizer, main course, side or dessert. Please bring serving utensils for your dish.

Plastic cutlery and paper plates and cups will be provided. Feel free to bring your own cutlery, plates, etc if you wish.

Please arrive between 6:00 – 6:15 with your food so that it can be set out. Dining will start at 6:30.

There will be an after-dinner slide show of the gardens on our 2012 Garden Tour. Garden owners and their helpers who made our 2012 Garden Tour so successful have been invited to join us to receive our public thanks for their participation.

Members are asked to bring a garden-related item, (new or used) or a Holiday Floral Arrangement which will be auctioned off during the "Silent Auction". This is a great opportunity to get a beautiful arrangement for your holiday celebrations.

'Clickables' by Phil Reilly

There are many great internet resources for gardeners. Below are 'clickable' links to some web sites that I refer, with confidence, to others.

[The Evergreen Foundation, situated at the Don Valley Brick Works](#) in Toronto, has an extensive native plant and tree data base and tips for choosing native plants. Their Brickworks facility, open all year, is Canada's first large-scale environmental community centre. During gardening season there is a farmers market. Cafe Belong, located in one of the renovated brick-making buildings, is an up-scale cafe featuring locally-grown farm produce. An extensive garden curios and environmentally-aware garden products store awaits your exploration.

The Canadian Wildlife Federation has a self-administered [Backyard Habitat Certification Program](#) and, once certified, a purchasable long-lasting sign which proclaims your achievement. Their offices, at 350 Michael Cowpland Drive, Kanata, have quite extensive native plant demonstration gardens. Be sure to tour their indoor information center too - there is much take-away info featuring their wildlife preservation opportunities and stories.

The Ottawa Forest and Greenspace Advisory Committee has a useful table indicating [the salt-tolerance and environmental \(light and water\) preferences of trees](#).

The Ottawa Horticultural Society interprets the above table to arrive at a listing of [Average Urban Tolerance of Trees in Ottawa](#). This is a very useful resource to have handy when considering some of the less-than-hardy trees and shrubs offered by some garden vendors.

For those wanting great organic gardening tips, visit [Phil Nauta's web site](#). Phil, born into a London-area nursery family, has a certificate in Organic Landscape Management from Gaia College on Vancouver Island. He also has a local connection: his wife Heather is daughter of Merle Nicholds - a former mayor of Kanata.

Heather Nauta's web site, [Healthy Eating Starts Here](#), is for those interested in vegetarian/vegan organic diets. Heather trained as a Holistic Nutritionist and took courses from the School of Natural Cookery.

How Do Rare Black Dahlias get Their Color?



This links to [a recent Scientific American summary article](#) for those interested in the chemistry of plant colors.

West Carleton Garden Club Contacts (2012 -2013)

President - Donna Caldwell (839-2079)
Vice President - David Hinks (839-2248)
Treasurer - Pam Leeks (839-1928)
Secretary - Denise Burnham (839-7316)
Newsletter - Phil Reilly email: reilly@magma.ca
Program, Website & Facebook - Anne Gadbois (256-7161)
Plant Sale - Mary Reynolds (832-0408)
Hospitality - Mary and Roy Reynolds (832-0408)
Flower Show - Nancy Argue (622-1122)
Membership - Brenda Baird (839-3094) and Anne Crosley
Yearbook - Lorraine Jeffrey (839-7355)
Members at Large - Laurie Lord and Sharry Featherstone -
Past President - Anne Gadbois (256-7161)

West Carleton Garden Club has:

Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings of the West Carleton Garden Club begin at 7:30 pm the second Tuesday of the month (September to May) at the Carp Memorial Hall, 3739 Carp Road, Carp.

Web Site: <https://sites.google.com/site/westcarletongardenclub/>

Facebook: Search: 'West Carleton Garden Club'

A Reading Suggestion. By Phil Reilly

The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature Deficit Disorder. Richard Louv. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill. 2011.

Richard Louv, a journalist with an extensive presence on the web, has written eight books on connections between family, nature and community. The following [link to his blog](#) provides a recent article on the dilemma presented to a society which is progressively growing up with no appreciation of what happens in, and what tangible and psychic benefits we get from, the natural world.

As a group, gardeners are more connected to the Earth's productivity and intricacies of local webs of life: soil's flora & fauna, predator/prey relationships, and human's health dependence on clean air and water and productive soil. We are in a good position to pass on our 'earthly' knowledge and experiences to our immediate family and friends. Through our love of gardening, we are also well-positioned to advocate for community planning principles providing nearby nature areas and community projects which instill self-sufficiency skills.

This brings me back to my recent connection with Hank Jones and his laudable vision of creating an alternate learning center at the former Torbolton Public School. I encourage members to ponder their possible participation in the proposed [programs of the Torbolton Center](#).