

# The Watering Can

January 2013

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



## 2012's Pot Luck Supper:

### An Evening of Great Food and Good Time

The festively decorated Carp Memorial Hall, featuring member-created seasonal table centres, once again provided the ambience for our club's annual's Christmas Pot Luck Supper. About 50 club members delighted in the evening's savory servings and casual rapport with their friends and tablemates.

President Donna Caldwell (on right in photo below), in addition to her after-dinner thank you's to the evening's organizers, food contributors, and table-centre crafters,



gave special recognition to Denise Burnham (left). Denise was awarded a *Horticultural Service Certificate* from the Ontario Horticultural Association for her extensive efforts to undertake renewal landscaping at the

front of the Carp Memorial Hall. The Horticultural Certificate recognizes Denise for raising \$16,000 from The City of Ottawa, local businesses, and via a Buy-a-Brick Campaign, and for undertaking the garden's landscaping. Funds raised from ScotiaBank allowed a heritage sign to be purchased from The City of Ottawa. In addition to being an active member of the garden tour committee organizing the event, she had her own gardens prepped as one of the 12 gardens on tour.

The evening wrapped up with the announcement of the highest bidders for the wonderful assortment of table centres and other contributions to the evening's silent auction. This year the auction raised \$353.50. Thank you crafters, purchasers, and event coordinator Nancy Argue.



*Left, in its new home at Reilly's, is Denise Burnham's birch log silent auction contribution. Boughs of incense cedar, spruce, and white pine are topped with magnolia leaves and flowering kale buds.*

## We're Bloomin' Crazy .... in Carp's Santa Claus Parade

For Carp's third annual Christmas parade, Nancy Argue and her float construction crew (Ted Barnicoat, Lorraine Jeffreys, David Hinks, John Caldwell, Charlie Argue, and Brenda and John Baird) created, in the warmth of Lorne Montgomery's work barn, a summery tribute to warmer times on a patio.



Parade day (Saturday December 8) was cold and rainy. Float riders (Nancy and Charlie Argue, Ted Barnicoat, David Hinks, Donna Caldwell, Pam Leeks) may be forgiven if they pondered the true connotation of "We're Bloomin' Crazy!"

Biased parade viewers proclaimed our float "best in Parade." Well done, gang!

See more photos of our float on our [Facebook page](#).

See entire parade on the [Huntley Community Association's](#) website click "Play Slideshow."

## Next Meeting, January 8, 2013

Speaker: Donna Christie  
"Houseplants: the Horrifying, Hideous, Hilarious,  
Haunting, Healthy & Heavenly"

A Profile of Donna begins on page 2.

## Celebrating Our Gardening Friends: Donna Christie



Donna Christie in Poland's Warsaw Botanical Gardens. August 2011.

A quarter of a century ago, Donna recalls, she saw an article in a local newspaper inviting people interested in starting a garden club in the area to come to Carp's St. James Church Hall. Donna and husband Ken had settled into an old, gardenless farmhouse near Marathon Village and she thought that joining a garden club would be a good way to learn what she wanted to know about gardening. Donna packed her eldest daughter, now 25, in a snugly and set off for the meeting organized by Nancy Suggitt (Argue) and Rhoda Lemke. There was plenty of interest in starting a club. A steering committee was needed so up went her hand and she's never looked back! With a firm belief that "flowers make a house a home," Donna had her hands on the reins of her new-found hobby.

With her background as a teacher, Donna gives full credit to the West Carleton Garden Club for piquing and developing her interest in and knowledge of horticulture. Like her own young students, she says "I learned by doing, observing, experimenting, listening, making mistakes.... I soaked up information from the myriad of excellent speakers over the years (OK, decades)." She went on club-sponsored trips and tours, bought hardy local well-cared-for material at club plant sales, got seeds from our seed exchange, traded plants with fellow members, and took home plants from club auctions. She learned which members knew about what: vegetable growers, rose enthusiasts, pond people, wild flower lovers, butterfly gardeners, master gardeners, etc. She soon knew whom to ask if a problem arose or if she was just curious about something.

Her parents were not gardeners but her mother began developing a gardening interest late in life from Donna. Her two sisters are now gardeners too. Donna modestly reports that she had no formal horticultural training and never poses as an expert, only an enthusiast. She's been gardening since 1987 when she was in her early thirties.

Over these years she thinks she might have missed a couple of club meetings! Even if the topic of the evening is about an area she's not engaged in, she's still interested in hearing about it.

With some pride, Donna reports "We built the club over the first two years and decided to join the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) in 1989. I served for two years as President of our club (doing the Yearbook and a 4-to-6 page Newsletter at the same time) and five years as District Director taking on the Youth Portfolio, the Environmental Committee, putting together the Provincial Yearbook twice, and assisting in organizing five Conventions at the Provincial level and organizing AGMs, flower shows, Advisory Committee meetings, reports, etc. at the District level. She helped write the constitutions of both the club and the District 2. She also continued to serve our club and District 2 in various roles such as running many elections, chairing the committee to host the District AGM in Kinburn, chairing the Reading Garden Committee for 12 years, chairing the committee that organized the tour to fund the Reading Garden, and serving on the committees to establish the Memorial Hall Garden and the tour to raise funds for that.

Donna and Ken had their second child during these years and she admits that it was challenging, but worth it, balancing a nursing infant, a toddler, clerical work for Ken, and her volunteer commitments. She is still frequently asked to speak to horticultural and other groups in this District, such as seniors, and church and library groups.



*Left, Donna's backyard with sun and shade exposures and garden beds defined with gravel paths.*

While working as the OHA District Director, she was a regular contributor to the OHA's "Trillium" newsletter. Her articles caught the eye of an editor and she was invited to write for *TLC Magazine* and *Plant and Garden Magazine* as well as a column for the *Muskoka Sun* newspaper. The movement to establish a Botanical Garden in Ottawa arose at this time as well. Embracing the movement, as member #11 (testifying to her long-time support of the organization), she served for three years as the organizer of that group's Speakers Series held at the Museum of Nature's auditorium.

*(cont'd on page 3)*

## *Donna Christie (cont'd from page 2)*

The art of floral design became a particular interest of Donna's after organizing and attending many flower shows. "I eventually tried my hand at it and found it to be a great creative outlet which I enjoy very much."

Today Donna continues to enjoy writing, gardening, floral design, and travel and often finds ways of mixing them together. She has returned to teaching at Huntley Centennial in Carp where she teaches Grade 3. "Plants, happily, are part of the Gr. 3 curriculum" she reports. "I run the school Garden Club. We plant and maintain all the school's gardens. Last year we put in a butterfly garden that, along with the others, is also used as a teaching garden. I have 64 young helpers who marvel at finding worms and spiders and seed pods and keep me in touch with the wonder of it all."

Summarizing her gardening experiences, Donna says that "immersed in things horticultural, I learned about this multi-faceted world by a kind of osmosis. I had the opportunity to travel throughout Ontario, meeting and mixing with like-minded individuals. I found gardeners to be bright, individualistic, thoughtful, sharing people with a firm grasp on the importance of environmental stewardship. It was heartening to find that the vast majority of gardeners look to work with nature, not against it. They strive to maintain good environmental practices. They are eager to share their expertise and experiences...and plants...and advice. I've met so many extremely interesting people from varied backgrounds. There is never enough time to garden; there is always more to learn. I was granted a Life Membership by the West Carleton Garden Club and I am proud and happy to be a member for life, a life that has truly been enriched."



*The shady patio area, with western exposure, is geared to relaxation and dining after a day's work.*

For additional descriptions of Donna & Ken's gardens, visit our [club website](#).

Please ....

## **Submit Your Volunteer Hours Forms by January 15**

The Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) annually requires all member horticultural societies to submit summaries of volunteer hours of members' work on behalf of their society. This information is used by the OHA when requesting sponsorship from businesses and grant applications to such organizations as the Trillium Foundation. OHA's annual deadline for receipt of these hours is February 1.

Donna reports that in 2009 and 2010 our members reported 510 hours during each of those two years. In 2011 the hours reported were up to 847. She is anticipating an increase again this year due to the garden tour and Memorial Hall project.

Attached to this email is a digital reporting form that can be submitted to Donna Caldwell by email. Her email address is [wegardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:wegardenclub@gmail.com). Prefer to fill out a paper form? There is one in the 2011 Yearbook that you can remove or photocopy. Fill it in and send to *The West Carleton Garden Club and Horticultural Society, P.O. Box 326, Carp ON KOA 1L0*.

## ***Dare to Dream***

Those receiving this newsletter by email are also receiving a digital copy of ***Dare to Dream***, the newsletter of the Canadensis Botanical Garden Society (CBGS). Our club has taken out a group membership in the CGBS and relays to you ***Dare to Dream*** as encouraged by the CGBS.

"Create your own Butterfly Garden," by Kate Harrigan in ***Dare to Dream*** (Winter 2012 edition), draws attention to Ottawa-area initiatives focusing on Monarch butterfly conservation projects. The [Monarch Teacher Network of Canada](#) (MTN of C), to which Kate belongs, has undertaken the challenge of creating eight Monarch Waystations (gardens satisfying a checklist of criteria) during 2012/2013. [Butterfly Gardens: making your garden butterfly-friendly](#) is a helpful guidance sheet available from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

## **Confining Common Milkweed**

*(by Phil Reilly)*

One reality to be noted by gardeners creating butterfly gardens is that Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), a favourite food plant of Monarchs, is a "runner": it spreads quickly by underground rhizomes. This plant is considered by many gardeners to be too vigorous and weedy for borders. Its rhizomes, in our clay-soil gardens, tend to be about 8-10 inches below soil surface. For those wanting to plant it in a defined ornamental bed, I suggest confining the roots in an 18" deep bottomless container, such as a tree or shrub container used by nurseries, to let it "run" within a circle.

## “Clickables” by Phil Reilly

January’s “clickables” have a natural environment focus. Some lead you to explore distant places, some to reading enjoyment, and a couple lead to sources of native plants and seeds.

Have you explored Washington, D.C.’s [Smithsonian Institute’s many gardens](#)? The gardens outside the National Museum of the American Indian recall the natural landscape environment that existed before European contact, with dozens of plant species native to four habitats: upland hardwood forest, wetland, cropland, and meadow. The Butterfly Habitat Garden at the National Museum of Nature presents plant species that have specific relationships to the life cycles of eastern U.S. butterflies and features four different habitats (wetlands, meadow, woodland edge, and urban garden). The [U.S. National Arboretum, also in Washington, has a great gardening info page](#).

[The Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens](#), on Mount Desert Island, has a decided focus on native plants. Opened in 2007, this 250-acre coastal gem offers nearly a mile of tidal salt water frontage with tranquil island views. It is also one of a very few waterfront botanical gardens in the United States.

What’s that weed? The University of Illinois has a photo-rich [weed identification website](#) to identify broad-leaf weeds, grasses, and grass-like plants.

Identifying about 50 Eastern North American birds by their songs is a snap with the videos and song recordings on [The Music of Nature website](#).

The September 2010 edition of [The Botanical Artist](#) (from the American Society of Botanical Artists) has some wonderful botanical artwork plus an article on Botanical Nomenclature (how to write plant Latin names!). Safari opens this pdf document.

The [Friends of The Farm](#) plans to create, in 2013, a naturalized planting bed in the “New Wave” style pioneered by Piet Oudolf.

[Fuller Native and Rare Plants](#) is a specialty nursery, just east of Belleville, offering a wide selection of native plants.

The [Ottawa Rock Garden and Horticultural Society \(OVRGHS\)](#), with monthly meetings at the Masonic Hall, 30 Churchill Avenue North at Byron, has an extensive annual seed collection and exchange program. Renowned international speakers are often featured at their meetings.

The [Small Farm Canada](#) magazine has many downloadable articles about vegetable gardening.

Corn Gluten Meal as a Herbicide? Corn gluten meal (CGM), as a weed inhibitor in lawns and gardens, has had a lot of press and the product is gaining shelf space at retailers.

(Cont’d next column)

Unfortunately, the science for CGM effectiveness is suspect, especially for areas like ours with frequent rains when weed seeds are germinating. Scouring the Internet for scientific reports from reputable research organizations shows corn gluten meal to be ineffective at best, even with multiple application of CGM.

Two articles on CGM’s ineffectiveness are:

1. [The Myth of Weed-Killing Gluten](#) (an article by a researcher at Washington State University), and
2. [What is the Future for Corn Gluten Meal Based Products for Controlling Weeds?](#) (a 2010 article by researchers at the University of Guelph).

## 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](mailto: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

Past President - Anne Gadbois (256-7161)

## Upcoming 2013 Monthly Meetings

Monthly (September to June) meetings begin at 7:30 pm at the Carp Memorial Hall, 3739 Carp Road, Carp.

### February 12, 2013

Speaker: Rob Caron and Dave Dunn, [Rideau Woodland Ramble](#). *Garden Design: Lessons from the Ramble*.

### March 12, 2013

Speaker: Mark Dallas, [Galette Nurseries](#). *The Wonderful World of Roses*.

### April 9, 2013

Speaker: Lis Allison. *A New Garden in an Old Place: Realities of Making a New Garden with Limited Resources*.

### May 14, 2013

Speaker: Phil Reilly. *Gardens of the Netherlands and Floriade 2012*.

### June 11, 2013

Spring Flower Show, Social and Photo Contest results.

### Website:

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

### Facebook:

On Facebook, search for “West Carleton Garden Club.”