

Gardening Newsletter



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“The Friendly Garden People”
Growing Since 1932

From The Editor



Wishing a belated Happy New Year to one and all! I have no doubt that some of you are already beginning to feel the need to scratch the gardening itch, as our mailboxes begin to fill up with seed catalogues offering lots of new varieties of flowers and veggies.

While Covid is still preventing us from meeting as a group, I'm so happy that we have an executive who continue to stay in touch via on-line Zoom meetings to take care of all of the necessary tasks – so when we are finally able to meet again our club should still be viable. Our treasurer is still keeping all of our bills paid and making sure that our insurance policy doesn't lapse, our president is making sure we all stay up to date with her emails, and our social convenor is still sending out cards (so don't forget to let Mariette know if you know of someone who is ill, or who is celebrating a special anniversary). Our website is still being kept up to date (so keep sending pictures and notices that you'd like to see posted) and our membership coordinator is still accepting on-line

requests from people who would like to join our club.

And at a recent “virtual” meeting, we voted to use some of our available funds to mail out this edition of the newsletter to our members.

I hope that it finds all of our members well and looking forward to another year in the garden. Our executive are already planning how we can safely proceed with our popular plant sale this spring so we'll all have that to look forward to, and hopefully it won't be too long until we can meet again in person. Until then, I hope you enjoy this issue of the newsletter, and as always... Happy Gardening!

Laura Sarson
Editor



Can We Trust Plant Labels?

Many gardeners are willing to push their luck and attempt to grow a few plants that are just barely hardy where they live – they'll provide them perfect growing conditions – plant them in a nice sheltered location – and keep their fingers crossed that we have a mild winter and an early spring. If it only lives a few years, they'll be

grateful for the few years that it did bloom. But sometimes we buy plants that we think are hardy, only to find out that they are not.

Sometimes it's the fault of the buyers – but sometimes it's the fault of the sellers. When a seller rushes a plant to market, it may not have gone through enough field trials to prove how hardy it really is. One good example was when many local gardeners rushed out to buy a beautiful coreopsis named 'Limerock Ruby' which had gorgeous red flowers. All the Facebook gardening sites had happy gardeners posting pictures of their pretty new plant, blooming profusely all summer long. That encouraged more of us to race out and buy one. Then, a year later, we started seeing many gardeners posting about how their plant hadn't come back up, and many were asking for advice, which others were happily giving. They all blamed themselves. Some thought they hadn't fertilized enough, some thought they should have added more mulch, some thought that perhaps their local deer population found it particularly tasty, and others blamed a groundhog. None of them wondered if perhaps it wasn't really hardy to Zone 4, which the label had promised.

But soon posts about its hardiness rating started showing up in warmer parts of North America too. Gardeners in Zone 6 were saying that it hadn't come back for them either. Finally the truth came out. The suppliers had simply assumed that it was a zone 4 plant because most coreopsis are hardy in zone 4. It is now listed as hardy in Zones 7b to 10 and has to be grown as an annual everywhere else. This was an extreme example, but it did start to make gardeners question the label when articles about this plant were showing up everywhere. Many started to doubt whether new plants are still being tested for their hardiness.

In the horticulture industry, it was apparently fairly well known that new production methods meant that plants were NOT being field tested. New plants are now being produced by in vitro culture. A breeder sees a new hybrid that catches his eye, and tens of thousands of plants can be produced quickly from just a single cell of that one parent plant. That means they can have a LOT of plants to sell that have never been grown in a real garden – let alone in a garden in Florida and a garden in Connecticut and a garden in New Brunswick and a garden in

Plant Labels (cont'd)



Nunavit. Who knows where they will grow and where they won't!

For decades, new plants were introduced after being grown from cuttings. Breeders cross pollinated various plants, hoping to end up with a superior plant to the two parent plants. They would grow these new plants in trial gardens, and it often took 20 years for their new "better" plant to show up in garden centres. The breeders took careful notes about weather conditions that they could – or could NOT – survive.

On occasion, the zone hardiness rating actually dropped when it was discovered that the plant was actually tougher than originally thought. When I first started growing *Crocsmia* a decade ago, it was listed as Hardy to Zone 8, but it was so pretty that I decided it was worth the effort of digging up the bulbs in the fall and replanting them the next spring. When winter arrived a bit early, I hadn't dug up my bulbs and I was sure I'd seen the last of them. But the next spring they were back and they bloomed like crazy that summer – and every summer since. Several years later I saw them in seed catalogues listed as hardy to Zone 6. Now they're typically listed as Zone 5 and sometimes even Zone 4!

But that's unusual. Usually the zone should be raised when gardeners here all complain that their new plant didn't survive a winter. It wasn't nearly as tough as the breeders had guessed it would be.

Because of this, many wholesalers apparently now try to protect themselves and simply put "Zone 5" on all the new plants they produce if they think there's a chance they'll grow in a zone 5 garden. It's one of the most common zones that gardeners grow in, and many plants will survive there. And of course, if they don't grow, most gardeners assume that it was because of something that they did wrong! This has two huge disadvantages: 1) Gardeners in Zone 3 or 4 will now find it difficult to find new plants that they think will survive in their gardens as everything is labelled Zone 5. Even plants that would have grown in Zone 4 are labelled Zone 5.

2) Gardeners in Zone 5 will buy plants that wouldn't have survived here, no matter how much care was taken, because they are really only hardy to Zone 6 or higher. For those gardeners in Zones 3 and 4, the wholesalers really don't care that much. They only make up about 1 in every 100 or so of all gardeners buying plants, and they're accustomed to having plants die after a particularly tough winter. Those who work in the industry also say that changing a label is just seen as too much hassle. So even years after nurseries have discovered that a plant they offer is hardier than previously thought, or not nearly as hardy as they thought, the original label is still used until they're "forced" to make new ones due to gardeners' complaints.

This also explains something else that most long-time gardeners have noticed. The label on their new tree said it would grow to a mature

height of 2 meters and it's already 5 meters and it's still growing. A good example is *Diablo Ninebark*, (which is very common here in Moncton gardens). It was advertised on the label and in gardening magazines, as having a mature height of 5 feet. Those of us who grow them know that 10 feet isn't at all out of the question! Experts say that suppliers have known for 15 years that their initial growth estimates were way off – but they've just never really been given a good enough reason to change their labels!

This last warning is one that has been written about in past newsletters, but it likely is worth repeating, as it's a very common mistake that we all make. The way that Americans and Canadians rate their zone hardiness is not the same, so our numbers don't match. There is typically a one zone difference, meaning that a (United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Zone 4 plant would be hardy only to Zone 5 in Canada, and a USDA zone 5 plant would actually be a Zone 6 plant here – so unless you're willing to risk losing it – a USDA Zone 5 plant likely won't be hardy here in Moncton.

For the truly nerdy gardeners (you know who you are!) who are wondering why the Zones vary, in the US rating, they just consider minimum winter temperatures. In Canada, we also take into account the typical snow cover for that region during the periods when we are having the coldest temperatures as snow insulates the plant roots. We also consider the

number of frost free days, the amount of rainfall from June to November, the average high of the warmest month, and even the maximum wind speeds experienced in the past 30 years. So on our Zone maps, there might be a little patch of Zone 5 surrounded on all sides by a "colder" Zone 4.

It is worth keeping in mind that even the carefully designed Canadian zone maps aren't written in stone. They are **guidelines**, and experienced gardeners know that if they are living in a part of New Brunswick that is labelled Zone 5 on the map, there might be one corner of their yard where they can safely plant Zone 6 plants because it is well protected from wind, gets lots of sun and has reliable snow cover all winter. Also remember that different varieties of the same plant can vary – for example, some Japanese maples are hardy to Zone 5 – some are NOT.

Recently there have been articles in various gardening magazines questioning the ACTUAL hardiness of several plants that many WHS members have no doubt tried to grow. Three that were frequently mentioned that are typically labelled Zone 5 that would be more accurately labelled as Zone 6 or even Zone 6B are *Butterfly Bush*, *Rose of Sharon*, and *Kousa Dogwood*. So if you've tried to grow these and been unsuccessful, stop blaming yourself! It wasn't your fault! And if you are growing plants that should be hardy in our Zone and they still don't make it through the winter, blame your neighbour's dog!

Food For The Gods

By: Mariette Lanteigne Sharpe



I was really sad to hear of the passing of former W.H.S. club member, Marion Garland last November. Marion and her late husband Ken were very active club members for many years. Along with her husband, Marion participated in the W.H.S. garden show for the last time in 2013. One of her blue hydrangea was absolutely spectacular. If I closed my eyes, I can still see that breath-taking plant.

Like I said in the September newsletter in the article about her husband, the couple had a small misadventure. They came the day of the show to register their entries and the entries were supposed to be done the night before the show. The Show Chairwoman let them display their entries on a single table but not to be judged. That gorgeous blue hydrangea was the talk of the show. I went to bring them the newsletter for many years and Marion always welcomed me with open arms, and was also always happy to show me her flowers and vegetable gardens.

I remember the last year that they were members, they came to a garden tour potluck and Marion, an excellent cook had brought a dessert called "Food for the Gods". It

was so delicious that I asked her for the recipe. I have to admit that I never made it as my husband doesn't like coconut but I still remember how much I loved it.

Marion was a beautiful looking woman and a real lady. She was always well dressed, with beautiful black hair, quiet, nice, friendly and a wonderful friend. I went to visit her in October at her residence at Camden Terrace to bring her the September newsletter with the article that I wrote about her late husband, Ken, who died in June. We had a nice visit and never imagined it would be the last time I saw her. I went to the funeral home for the service but because of the sudden change of Covid 19 to orange level. the funeral was for family members only the night before. I am happy that they are now both together in Heaven as they were a very loving couple. My sympathy to all her children and family.

A life well lived leaving behind a beautiful bouquet of memories.



Keep the Faith

By: Mariette Lanteigne Sharpe

Mr. Jim DeWolfe, a WHS member for about 10 years at the end of the nineties, died in January

at the age of 93. He was not always able to attend the monthly meetings but found them very interesting and informative when he attended.

He enjoyed gardening and grew all sorts of vegetables like HUGE tomatoes, cucumber, carrots and beans. He also grew glads, sweet peas, roses , etc. and really did enjoy his tulips in the spring.

He even had several small apple trees planted as a hedge between his property and the adjoining property. That gave him a degree of privacy, a wonderful place for the birds and believe it or not, he got a few nice summer apples off the trees. His small backyard was a pleasure for the whole family.

Jim was married for 63 years to his wife, Mary and they had 2 daughters and a son. His son is a club member, Dr. Rob DeWolfe, a dear friend of Donna, Doris and I, and many WHS members. I call Rob, "the man who doesn't own a lawnmower" because 99% of his property is covered with the most spectacular flowers I've ever seen. He invited the W.H.S. club members to visit his property many times and is an excellent host.

In 1980, Jim brought in the first shipment of daffodils for a fund-raising campaign, which continues today. He also helped set up the first Canadian Cancer Society

fund-raising campaign for the Moncton Area.

He was President of MANY Associations and did a lot for the Cancer Society. He was awarded Town of Riverview Volunteer Award and did a lot for the Dobson Hiking Trail. He was the perfect person to be chosen to be Senior Goodwill Ambassador where he greeted visitors on behalf of the Province.

In 2013, the Town started the Jim DeWolfe Community Spirit Award and he was the first recipient. Personally, I think that he was one of my town's biggest volunteers, ever! Not too bad for a man who used to like to tell his children "I was born in a log cabin, under a maple tree, in the foothills of the Blue Bell Mountains", and this, my WHS friends, is the exact place where he was born!

I personally knew Jim and I always took the time to sit down and talk to him for a couple of minutes. I saw him many times especially at the St. Paul's United Church Christmas bazaar and April Church Yard Sale.

He was really a charmer, a very friendly person, had the biggest smile I ever saw, and was one of the best story tellers I ever met.

May his motto, "Keep the Faith" encourage us all in these difficult times!



The garden is the place where all the senses are exploited. Not just the eye and the nose, but the ear – with water, and with the songs of birds and the buzz of bees, and there is texture, too, in plants you long to touch. –William Adams

Buying Seeds



Standing in front of a rack of seeds is difficult for most gardeners. There are just SO many choices and we can't possibly grow them all! The two main reasons that gardeners give for choosing to start plants from seed are the much wider variety of flowers and vegetables available and the potential cost savings if they have a large enough garden. For smaller gardens, the cost of soil and containers and grow lights and seeds doesn't always result in much financial savings over buying a few bedding plants at a nursery. But now, there's a new dilemma. Many of the seed packs you'll see for sale are labelled **non-GMO**; others are labelled **organic**, and the price of those seeds is often much higher. But are they worth the extra cost?

The short answer is no. Companies like Burpee seeds and others, proclaim across the fronts of their catalogues that they do not sell any seeds that are GMO - Genetically Modified Organisms. Other companies label their individual seed packs as non-GMO. On their website, Burpee seeds announces that "Burpee is proud to have supplied home gardeners with the highest quality, non-GMO seeds since 1876" which is interesting because there were no GMO seeds until the 1980's! Vesseys make a similar promise on their website. "Vesseys Seeds Ltd. does not knowingly buy or sell genetically engineered or modified seeds or plants.

Vesseys ...commitment to providing only non-GMO seeds... is the basis upon which our lives depend...a genetically stable source for future generations."

Gardeners concerned about the environment may be tempted to opt for these "non-GMO" seeds over those that aren't labelled in that way. But these claims really are meaningless. It's a bit like advertising that this brand of chocolate ice cream is broccoli free or that their vanilla ice cream contains no Brussels sprouts. This might appeal to kids, but adults know that the cheaper brands likely don't contain them either! It's true that the seeds that are labelled non-GMO are definitely non-GMO. But... **so are ALL the seeds** that do NOT have that label. There is no need to pay extra - they're ALL non-GMO!

Companies who do sell GMO seeds only sell them to large commercial farms - and ONLY when those farmers sign pages of legal documents promising that they will follow the laws of growing and selling produce from those seeds. Farmers who choose to grow genetically modified (GM, or GMO) seed sign a contract stating that they will not save their seed to grow next year, and they must allow the owners of the seed's "patent" to visit their farms at any time.

But because there is so much talk in the news about some of the "disasters" around GMO foods, companies claiming that your seeds are NOT GMO has a definite appeal. We've all heard about the "super weeds"

and "super pests" that have been blamed on GMO practices. GMO farmers are finding that after growing GMO seeds that were treated with "safer" pesticides and herbicides, many pests and weeds are no longer susceptible to the safer types of weed killer or insect killer and they're being forced to use more and more toxic products. We've heard small farmers saying that they are being driven out of business because they can't compete with the massive competition from GMO seed companies like Monsanto. But the fact remains that at least for now, home gardeners couldn't buy GMO seeds if we wanted to!

The other word you might see on seed packets that are carrying a slightly higher price tag is "**organic**" seed. That does have a bit more "meaning", but of course, it doesn't mean those seeds are going to grow healthier veggies than non-organic seeds. Organic seeds simply means those seeds come from produce that was grown organically. You can purchase less expensive "regular" seeds and grow them in good soil and have equally good harvests as you would have if you bought the more expensive seeds. Some of us may opt to buy organic seeds as a way of supporting the organic farmer who produced them, or to send a signal to the bigger seed companies that we support organic farms - but don't spend extra because you think they are "better" seeds.

You'll also see a lot of untrue statements about

how **hybrid seeds** and heirloom seeds aren't really any different than GMO seeds. It is certainly true that just like GMO's, hybrids and heirlooms produce plants that are slightly different (usually better) than their ancestors. Hybrids are created to produce plants with better disease resistance, larger flowers, more crop yield, or other desirable traits. We can make them in our own gardens. Pollen from one variety of flower with huge blooms might be transferred to the flower of another variety that has stronger stems. After years of continuing to do this, we might end up with a real winner! And sometimes bees transfer the pollen for us and that creates a new hybrid! For **heirloom** plants, gardeners simply collected seeds from their "best" plants each year and tossed aside the rest. After years of doing this, they created plants that had all the traits they wanted. But with GMO crops, they are literally inserting genes from one plant into another plant to alter its DNA. The bigger issue is that they don't allow farmers to EVER save these seeds and sell them OR plant them the following season.

So you may (or may not) opt to avoid purchasing GMO foods at the grocery store. But you do NOT have to pay more money for seeds that claim to be non GMO!

Did You Know? So far, there are only 10 commercialized GMO crops in the United States, but others are in development, including tomatoes, pineapple, and wheat.

10 New Year's Resolutions For Gardeners



With the Covid restrictions in place on January 1st, there's a chance that some of us didn't attend any New Year's parties to ring in 2021 and therefore, perhaps, didn't make any resolutions. Or if we did, perhaps we've already broken them. So for all of us gardeners, here's a few that we might want to make now, before the nurseries begin to open and before we order every single new plant we see in those beautiful seed catalogues!

1. I won't buy plants I don't have room for.

2. I'll keep up with weeding, even though it's hot outside and even though the black flies are draining the final drops of blood I have left.

3. I'll stop buying half dead plants at end of season sales this fall and telling myself that I can save them

4. I won't buy a new garden tool every time I misplace the perfectly good one I had.

5. I won't cancel a planned vacation with my family at the last minute because it looks like one of my perennials is about to bloom for the first time.

6. I won't nurse along a sickly looking shrub that hasn't bloomed for five years, just because the picture on the tag was so pretty. I'll give it 4 ½ years and not a day more! If it hasn't

bloomed by then, I'll rip it out – or at least move it to a different spot and try growing it there for a few years!

7. I will always clean my garden tools before I put them away. Every time! Every single time!

8. I'll write a list every time I go to a nursery and I won't buy a single thing that is not on that list.

9. I will seek inspiration in every garden I visit. When this means stealing a small sprig of this or a tiny seed pod of that, I will do my best not to call my friends at meal time asking for bail money.

10. And I resolve that next year on December 30th, I'll remind myself not to make resolutions about gardening because I know that I'll break every single one!



Did You Know?

There is a garden in England called The Poison Garden. It is home to 100 plants which have been used to commit murders. Visitors to this dangerous garden are prohibited from smelling, touching, or tasting any of the plants. Even inhaling the air around the plants is strictly prohibited as past cases of fainting due to inhalation of toxic fumes have been reported. Yet thousands of tourists every year visit this unique garden.

Nearly 1,000 jasmine flowers and a dozen roses go into a single bottle of Chanel No. 5 perfume.

Tips For Growing Healthy Veggies



When we plant our vegetable garden each spring, we likely all have visions of gathering plump, juicy tomatoes by the basketful and picking crisp, green lettuce. Sometimes we did everything we were supposed to do to care for our gardens, but they just didn't produce. But most of the time, if we don't get the harvest we dreamed of, it's because of something that we could have "fixed." There are a few basic mistakes that many new gardeners make and that more experienced gardeners sometimes allow to happen. If we avoid these mistakes, we are more likely to have the crops that we dreamed of.

1. Starting out without a plan. Starting a new veggie patch on a sudden impulse is a bad idea. When Covid hit last spring, many people took up gardening for the first time and many rushed into it. But before any of us plant this spring, we should create our plan as some things change throughout our lifetime. How much effort are we willing to put into caring for it this year? How much do we need to grow? More than last year or not quite as much? Were there diseases in our garden last year that will make us move to a new location this year, or avoid certain crops this year? Do we have a plan

to rotate our crops whenever possible so that crops that used up a LOT of nutrient last year will be in a fresh spot this year and plants that do better in leaner soil can be planted where the nutrient levels are lower? Does our plan allow plants that need a lot of sun to get it, and plants that need a bit of shade to have it? Have any trees grown so much that our old location will be in too much shade this year? Do we have enough tomato cages? Do we have the seeds we want for the crops we plan to grow? Did we ever replace that broken handle on the hoe? If we don't spend time thinking these things through now, and doing some planning, our harvest won't be as good as it could have been! Many of us recall that last spring, many items were sold out long before gardening season was in full swing! Planning always pays off!

2. Making unwise choices about what we'll grow. It's not just first time gardeners that get tricked by all those glossy photos in the seed catalogue or believe all those too-good-to-be true claims about a new hybrid tomato or a pest free green bean. While there's every chance that they could be exaggerating the positives, even the most legitimate claims mean nothing if the variety turns out to be unsuitable for our climate and growing conditions. We have a relatively short growing season here, so we shouldn't be hoping to grow veggies that won't be ready for harvest (Cont'd

I'm not one to gush with emotion, but when I have a moment's fondness to bestow, most times my roses get it.

~ W. Collins

Growing Vegetables



before frost is arriving here in Moncton. There's nothing wrong with trying a few new things each year, but if you've had great success with a certain type of snap pea last year, it's a good idea to grow that variety again this year! As they say, if it ain't broke, don't fix it! If the type of celery you tried last year didn't produce so well, then by all means look for one that might do better. Always check to see where the seed company is located if you're buying from a catalogue. If it's from a part of the country with mostly alkaline soil, the cultivars they are promoting likely won't do very well here with our mostly acidic soil. They might promote a sweet potato that would thrive on Vancouver Island, but would never reach maturity here in Moncton.

If in doubt, research the specific variety before you plant it! For example, if you want a lot of ripe tomatoes all at once, so you can make sauce, grow determinate tomatoes, but if you want a few ripening over a longer period of time, you'll want indeterminate ones.

3. Choosing the wrong spot. Plenty of sun is a must for almost all vegetables. Most fruiting vegetables need a minimum of 6-8 hours of sunlight to do well. Root vegetables may manage with 4-6 hours of full sun and partial shade for the rest of the day. If your garden gets only filtered light for most part of the day, leafy vegetables are

your best bet. Plant your garden as far away from trees as possible – not only because they will cast too much shade but also because their roots will be too much competition for water and soil nutrient. If you start to dig and find that your location is filled with roots or rocks, consider installing raised beds and filling them with good soil and compost for the best harvest.

4. Not preparing the soil. Most vegetables struggle in poor soils. The pH of the soil should be tested and then you have a choice. You can grow crops that thrive in the soil pH you have OR you can amend the soil to match what your favourite vegetables need. Vegetables won't tolerate wet soil – you can always water them if the soil is dry, but if the area is moist heavy clay, increase drainage with ditches, the addition of lots of compost and other amendments, or build some raised beds, straw bale beds, or containers.

5. Planting at the wrong time. After a long winter, even experienced gardeners can get a little anxious to get those plants in the ground every spring. But if we plant things like tomatoes and peppers while the ground is cold, no matter how well we care for them from that point forward, you've done damage that will show up in the harvest. Problems that seem totally unrelated will begin to pop up. Some micro-organisms don't become active until the soil is truly warm, and without them, your plants are unable to absorb the nutrients they need. This

leads to blossom end rot in tomatoes, stunted growth in peppers, and other similar issues. Other crops NEED cool soil to thrive. Spinach will bolt in warm soil and lettuce will become bitter when the days get hotter. Remember that the phase of the moon has NOTHING to do with whether or not it's safe to plant. The moon has absolutely no effect on soil temperature or air temperature or the likelihood of frost. Just watch the long range forecast and if it says it's going to be cool well into the first few weeks of June, your harvest will be much better if you wait to plant until the SOIL is warm. A few days with warm air won't immediately warm your soil, so be PATIENT. And when seed packs say to plant in cool soil, that does NOT mean COLD soil. They won't germinate and they'll likely rot. Using a soil thermometer – or an old meat thermometer – is always a good idea.

6. Under watering and overwatering. We can't control the weather, but we can help our plants as much as we can. It's true that many will "survive" a drought but we need them to thrive for the best harvest, and that means we may need to water them. Water is essential for the plant to be able to carry nutrients up and down the stem, and for the plant's ability to manufacture food through photosynthesis. Frequent wilting will make the plants weak; it will not only affect yield, but make the plants susceptible to diseases. While dry soil can result in poor yield,

overwatering can kill plants with root rot, especially if the soil has poor drainage. In well-draining soils it can flush out soil nutrients. Excess moisture in the soil can create high humidity in the air and that leads to fungal diseases. If your beds are mulched (as they should be) be sure you check deep down for moisture before you water. It might just feel dry on the surface! Deep watering at longer intervals is MUCH better than frequent shallow watering. It promotes deep roots which you need. Try to avoid getting the leaves wet when you water – water the roots – especially with tomatoes and peppers. Blight is caused by a wind-borne fungus that CANNOT stick to the leaves if the leaves are dry. We can't avoid rain, but we can keep them dry when we're watering, as blight can destroy not only this year's harvest of tomatoes, but it also makes that area unhealthy to grow them for years to come.

7. Allowing weeds to thrive. Most of us have some weeds in our vegetable garden from time to time, but we need to remember that they do steal a lot of the water and nutrients meant for your veggies. They have such vigorous root systems and fast growth rates that they can crowd out your plants in no time. Do thorough weeding before planting and continue to pull them – especially ones that will go to seed and multiply like crazy if you don't remove them BEFORE they produce seed. **Cont'd Page 7**

Vegetable Tips

8. Fertilizing errors

Vegetables are heavy feeders because they have to make a lot of food in a short time – some of it for them to grow and some of it to store in the parts of them that we'll be eating. But that doesn't mean that we should be giving them Miracle-Grow all summer long. Over fertilizing can also cause problems. Too much nitrogen can promote excessive vegetative growth at the expense of flower and fruit formation. Lush green tomato plants aren't much good if they aren't producing tomatoes. Adding too much of some minerals can affect the absorption of others. Too much potassium, for example, can prevent the absorption of magnesium, which is essential for the formation of chlorophyll. Too much nitrogen blocks calcium uptake which leads to blossom end rot in tomatoes. Too much phosphorus can also create insoluble forms of calcium that plants can't take in – again leading to blossom end rot. Phosphoric acid used to add the phosphorous in many synthetic fertilizers destroys the trace elements of zinc, magnesium, boron, copper, and others that vegetables need. Seaweed or seafood compost provides these back to the soil. And ammonium sulfate (it will be listed on the label of ingredients in many synthetic fertilizers) is HIGHLY toxic to earthworms which are providing the BEST fertilizer your vegetables could ask for, so avoid

using products that contain it.

Most of us aren't going to constantly take soil analysis tests, so we won't know if there's a specific micro-nutrient missing. The best bet is always lots of good quality compost that has LOTS of nutrients available all summer long, and plant roots can take up the ones they need when they need it. Adding additional organic fertilizers like bone meal, fish meal, worm compost, and blood meal can also provide slow-release micronutrients. Unlike synthetic fertilizers, they also help to balance the soil pH and promote the growth of beneficial soil microbes.

9. Not attending to pests and diseases in time. We're all busy, but as my mother always told me, "A stitch in time saves nine". It's easier to control a fungal disease when it's just showing up on just one plant than when it's spreading through your whole garden. Some insects lay eggs all summer long, so you need to control them before they have the chance. If you see sap sucking insects on one plant, inspect all plants in the area and pick them off or use another natural control. Crop rotation can be crucial in keeping certain diseases and insects under control, but it's also always very wise to look for plants that were bred to be resistant to diseases you know you've had or that your neighbours have reported. There are varieties of tomatoes and potatoes that were bred to be resistant to blight, there are tomatoes resistant to

blossom end rot, spinach that's resistant to bolting, beans and broccoli that are resistant to powdery mildew, and so on. Following these tips can make sure that we all have a successful and bountiful harvest this year.



Not That Bad

By: Mariete Lanteigne Sharpe

As I write this article January is over. Being unable to go to Florida for the winter, I was not looking forward to spending most of my time in front of the T.V., but I must admit, it was not that bad. The weather was great and I really did enjoy going for a long walk every single day, in the woods on a beautiful groomed trail. I completely cleaned my house and found many treasures that were hidden for years. I even ordered a Vesey's seed catalogue and spent many days waiting for the mailman to deliver it! I also completed six 1,000 pieces beautiful jigsaw puzzles that Santa brought me for Christmas. Being stuck at home has sparked a new found interest in that old pastime. I love it as much as gardening. It takes one's mind off problems and also provides a means to accomplish something, as its own reward like gardening. Thank you, Santa.

As you read this article, I would have started my coleus plants from many cuttings and my annual Dusty Miller, that have to be started early because of long germ-

ination. Many people shy away from annuals wanting to avoid any work that has to be repeated each year. I always say that you get out of a garden what you put into it. I still start annuals from seeds because I enjoy seeing them grow and mostly because annuals gives you a dependable long lasting source of bright color that's difficult to get with perennials alone. Dusty Miller has no flower. It has bright silver foliage that makes it so impressive. Unlike annuals that go through a bloom period and then fade gradually, the plant simple gets bigger and better from May until November.

Everybody is anxious to get their hands dirty in their garden. We will have a W.H.S. plant sale on May 29th from 9 to 12:00 PM at our President's house, Claudia Schaerer at 333 Shediac Road, Moncton. Last year many members donated plants for the sale. Many thanks to Claudia and Betty who offered to sell plants off their driveway last year, with the expert help of Laura and Gerry. It was a real success and we raised over \$650.00. Because of Covid 19 a lot of people started to grow their own vegetables and flowers last year. I am quite sure that the number will grow more this year. So if you are a new gardener, please be careful of not buying or growing an invasive plant like pansies, white or purple violets or ajuga plants. They look very beautiful in the spring but they spread easily. On my street, there are many

Not That Bad

lawns completely invaded with ajuga and violet plants because birds dropped the seeds everywhere or the house owner just simply doesn't control the plants. Every year, I spend many long hours digging many white violets from my back lawn from only one plant that was grown by a neighbor a long time ago. Hope to see a lot of members at the Millennium garden for cleaning day on June 2nd and planting day on June 9th, at 9 A.M.

During the last year, I sent 16 cards. Since the last newsletter, I sent a sympathy card to the family of Marion Garland, a get well card to Jim Steeves and Gerry Gillcash, a Thinking of You card to Jim and Judy Steeves, a sympathy card to Rob DeWolfe on the passing of his father and a Happy 80th Birthday card to our W.H.S. membership person, Doris Brown. I would like to mention that Doris is not really 80, she is a sweet 16 with 64 years of experience. Doris, we will celebrate when this virus is over! I always say that good friends are the rare jewels of life, difficult to find and impossible to replace! Happy Birthday from all your many friends in the W.H.S.

Hope you enjoy the following joke:- I sent that "ANCESTRY" site some information on my Family Tree. They sent me back a pack of seeds, and suggested that I just start OVER.

In Loving Memory



It was with great sadness that I recently received a message about the passing of long time club member **Bud Bailey**. Bud and Sharon were very active club members, and exceptional gardeners, and I know that all of our members are thinking of Sharon at this difficult time. Mariette has let me know that she will be sending an article in memory of Bud to be included in the next newsletter, and I know that I won't be the only one missing Bud's friendly smile at future meetings and potlucks. He will be greatly missed.

Society News

While we haven't been able to meet as a group, our executive have been hard at work taking care of all the tasks that need to be done. We've set some dates for upcoming events and tasks. Our society's **insurance policy** has been renewed. Tentative dates have been set for some future events, all based on where we stand with Covid at that time, of course. There was agreement that it is highly unlikely that we will be able to resume our monthly meetings before the fall. Claudia booked Mapleton Lodge for Sept. 28th, Oct. 26th and Nov. 23rd to ensure we had access to those dates if we are able to meet again by then, and asked about rental fees. The City intends to charge \$60.00 per hour for rental (standard fee for all not-for-profits). Our meetings are typically 2 hours, thus \$120.00/meeting. Claudia will check with some other **venues** to

see if there are less expensive options, and will also inquire about our involvement with Millennium Garden, to see if this can reduce our costs at Mapleton Lodge.

We voted to produce **quarterly newsletters** which we'll mail out while the Covid pandemic continues to prevent us from meeting - there will be issues sent out in March, June, Sept & December. Claudia will increase the **e-mail messages** from the club to twice per month so that we don't all lose touch with each other, and she will welcome tips to be forwarded to her so she can include them in her emails. Please forward her any news you hear of any members - birthdays, anniversaries, retirements, etc. and any other gardening news.

Dave contacted **MacArthur's Nursery** to inquire whether they would be willing to support us financially and Mac Arthur's has responded with a very generous contribution of \$1,300.00 again this year. All members are encouraged to **remember their exceptional generosity** when we are out and about shopping for plants and gardening supplies. Their commitment to us over the

years has been outstanding.

We discussed the possibility of a **spring plant sale** this year, (if Covid restrictions allow very small gatherings). We set a tentative date of Saturday, **May 29**, from 9am to 12:00 noon. Claudia has graciously offered her driveway as a location again this year. More details will follow as we watch what's happening with the pandemic. We also discussed the possibility of a small **garden tour** this spring - open only to club members, but there are mixed feelings because of our Covid situation. It's on hold for now.

Millennium Garden clean up has been scheduled for **June 2nd** and planting is scheduled for **June 9th** so mark your calendars now and keep your fingers crossed that we'll be able to meet there and follow social distancing rules. We also discussed the hope that any member who is in that area for a walk along the river would stop and pull a weed or two or deadhead any flowers in desperate need. We will be confirming with the city once again that they will water the beds if we plant and maintain them.

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