



Carleton Place & District Horticultural Society

November 2025

President's Message

Cultivating Lifelong Engagement: How Youth Gardening Programs Foster Interest in Horticulture

Early experiences with plants often inspire a lifelong appreciation of the natural world. Structured youth programs—such as our Young Gardeners Workshops and other programs like the Boy Scouts' Gardening Proficiency Badge—offer valuable opportunities for practical learning that nurture curiosity, responsibility, and environmental awareness. These programs do far more than teach how to grow plants. They cultivate habits of observation, care, and stewardship that extend well into adulthood. My lifelong interest in gardening began in 1964 when I grew a small vegetable patch to earn my Boy Scout Gardeners Badge.



Learning Through Experience

Gardening provides a tangible connection to natural processes. When children prepare soil, sow seeds, and tend living plants, they witness cycles of growth and renewal firsthand. Youth programs guide participants through these steps, developing patience and perseverance as they see results emerge slowly but surely. Such experiences build confidence and self-reliance, qualities that translate easily to other areas of life.

Education and Personal Development

Youth gardening complements formal education by bringing science to life. Participants learn about soil structure, plant biology, and ecological balance while developing problem-solving and planning skills. Group projects and community gardens encourage teamwork and communication, and documenting garden progress promotes reflection and critical thinking. In this way, horticultural learning becomes both intellectual and practical.

Health, Wellbeing, and Environmental Stewardship

The physical and psychological benefits of gardening are well established. Working outdoors offers exercise, fresh air, and a sense of calm that supports mental health. At

the same time, caring for soil and plants nurtures a respect for ecological systems. Many youth programs now emphasize sustainability—through composting, water conservation, and the use of native plants—helping young gardeners understand the principles of environmental responsibility.

Lifelong Impact and the Role of Societies

Early gardening experiences often lead to lifelong engagement, whether as professional horticulturists or passionate amateurs. Horticultural societies can play a crucial role by partnering with youth organizations, offering mentorship, and recognizing young gardeners' achievements through awards or exhibitions. Such collaboration ensures that enthusiasm is sustained and that societies remain vibrant, forward-looking communities.

Conclusion

Our Young Gardeners Workshops sow more than seeds—they cultivate curiosity, discipline, and a sense of connection to the living world. Supporting and growing these initiatives will ensure that the next generation will carry horticulture's values of care, beauty, and stewardship into the future, enriching both their own lives and the wider community.

Happy gardening!

Rick



Tulip Bulbs Donation

The Carleton Place and District Horticultural Society extends heartfelt thanks to The Ottawa Cancer Foundation for their generous donation of a large box of Goldrush Yellow and Great Lakes Purple tulip bulbs. Our volunteers were delighted to plant them at the Victoria School garden last week. This thoughtful gift will inspire hope and beauty each Spring for years to come.

The Ottawa Cancer Foundation provides no-cost, non-medical support for people who have received a cancer diagnosis, or are receiving cancer care treatment, or even someone who is supporting a loved one or friend with cancer.

Rick Roberts
President, CPDHS



December Annual Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on December 3rd, 2025. We will have our Christmas Potluck followed by the Annual Meeting (AM), Elections, and floral demonstration.

The meeting will start earlier than usual at 6pm, doors open at 5:30.

Our guest will be Nora Kazda from Wild Blooms Farm. She will be demonstrating wreath making.

Ruth Anderson, District Director and Cindy Zorgel, Assistant District Director will be joining us as the District 2 representatives.

Once again, we will be doing a collection for the Hunger Stop Food Bank. Please see next page for more information on the items that are most needed.

CPDHS Board Members

With our December AGM and election of Directors just around the corner, we're excited to invite members to consider standing for nomination to the 2026 Carleton Place & District Horticultural Society Board. We have 6 existing Board members who are willing to be nominated for 2026, but that leaves us with 4 empty seats.

What does the Board do?

We meet a week or two before our general meetings (eight times per year) to plan upcoming events, review finances, and brainstorm new ideas. Between meetings, we stay in touch via email to ensure things move smoothly.

Board members help bring our society to life by organizing events like Seedy Sunday, Earth Day, plant sales, flower shows, youth programs, workshops and more. We also handle behind-the-scenes essentials—such as coordinating speakers, managing member communication and social media, overseeing memberships and finances, and staying connected with District Two and the Ontario Horticultural Association.

No special experience is required, just a love of gardening and a willingness to help nurture our community, and the ability to work as part of a dedicated team. Our goal is to inspire gardeners of all levels and share our passion for horticulture through events and education. Please direct questions to Rick Roberts or a CPDHS director.

Rick



The Flower Show Committee was delighted so many people participated in the Fall Flower Show bringing specimens and edibles and creating designs. Twenty-six people participated in the show, many for the first time. We appreciate your efforts and hope that you will continue to participate in future Flower Shows.

Barbara Fowler, Director, CPDHS

2025 CPDHS Photo Competition Results

Well done everyone. Please take a few minutes to view all the photo competition on display. Congratulations to our winners!

Class 1 – Red and white: 1st Place: Laura Cupper
2nd Place: Sheila Gibson
3rd Place: Rick Roberts

Class 2 – Structures: 1st Place: Cheryl Moore
2nd Place: Catherine Barr
3rd Place: Debbie Guthro

Class 3 – Food for thought: 1st Place: Logan Calkins
2nd Place: Sheila Gibson
3rd Place: Logan Calkins



Class 1: Laura Cupper



Class 2: Cheryl Moore



Class 3: Logan Calkins

Best in Show:
Class 2: Cheryl Moore

Thank you.

Rob Drapeau
Director, CPDHS

Food Bank Donation

CPDHS will be doing our annual Food Drive at our December 3rd Meeting. Please consider bringing in an item or two to help support those in need during the holiday season.

Here is a list of the items most needed:

- ▶ Cleaning supplies
- ▶ Personal hygiene supplies
- ▶ Hamburger/Tuna Helper
- ▶ Taco kits
- ▶ Easy sides (instant potatoes, boxed stuffing, Sidekicks, rice pouches)
- ▶ Condiments
- ▶ 1L juice
- ▶ Jarred or pouched baby/infant food
- ▶ Kid snacks (granola bars, fruit cups, juice boxes, cheese & crackers)
- ▶ Cereal

Cash donations are always appreciated (cash donations will receive a charitable receipt). Our society will be making our annual cash donation as well.

Thank you for your generosity in advance!

The Making of a Rock Garden

Paul Pietsch has had a special interest in rock gardens for more than 50 years, since he first saw one when he was enrolled in the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture (grad '71).

Our volunteers at Victoria School Garden (VSG) knew this; some of us had seen the impressive rock garden at his home and had come away with tiny "roly poly" succulents, hens and chicks, or prickly pear cactus. So when we proposed that he create a small rock garden as part of the new Heritage Museum garden this summer, we weren't surprised to see his delight. It became his summerlong project.

There are two main styles of rock garden. He asked us to choose between a sloping garden, like one he had created on a large slope at the Oakville Museum (when he was President of the Oakville Horticultural Society there), and a rock wall garden like the one at his current home. We chose the rock wall style.

Our volunteers hauled in LOTS of rocks to the site from locations around our rocky county. Special thanks to Jen Butler, Kiah Barton, Anita Ruus, Debbi O'Malley, Irene Tobis for muscle and to Cheryl Moore and Carlo Beaudoin for their tractor. Paul set to work building the wall.



Paul hard at work.

He then brought lots of sandy gravel to fill the space. And more rocks.

Over the years, Paul had installed many rock gardens, basing their design, in part, on his observations of natural escarpments and other rocky hillsides as he traveled around southern Ontario.

His design vision for our rock garden, or "theme" as he called it, was for it to include only short plants, for close viewing from an adjacent rock walkway. The plants also



Sloping style rock garden - Town of Oakville Museum - created by Paul Pietsch in the 1980s and still going.



Paul, in all his glory, with a smile on his face.



The new rock garden.

had to be interesting and unusual. We saw cacti and succulents appearing.

He told us that this was a work in progress, that it would continue next year. As the frosty weather approached, Paul took some of the plants home for overwintering in his greenhouse.



But then, to our surprise, he told us he had planted spring bulbs! In keeping with the theme, they will all be short flowers – snowdrops, snow crocus, muscari, mini narcissus, and botanical tulips. So we'll be watching for them in spring, and then over summer we'll see how Paul's garden grows.

Irene Tobis, VSG/Heritage Gardens Coordinator
Director



SIDEBAR: Blue-Eyed Grass, *Sysrinchium angustifolium*, not a true grass but a member of the lily family, acquired by Paul at our CPDHS September native plant giveaway, is a candidate for inclusion in the rock garden next year, as it grows only 4-10 inches tall.

This newsletter is published by the Carleton Place and District Horticultural Society and is distributed to its members free of charge.

We depend on our members for its content. If you would like to contribute, please send your submissions to: cphorticulture@gmail.com

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