



Carleton Place & District Horticultural Society

December 2025

President's Report - A Year In Review

As we turn the last page on this gardening season, I find myself reflecting on what a truly remarkable year it has been. Our gardens weathered their share of challenges. From a late Spring to a long, unrelenting summer heat wave, with a few surprise visits from local wildlife. But throughout it all, we continued to find moments of success, discovery, and growth.

I am genuinely inspired by what our volunteers have accomplished. You brought beauty to our community, shared your knowledge and enthusiasm with gardeners of every age, and nurtured a heartfelt spirit of fellowship. Everything we achieve is rooted in your volunteer efforts, from fundraising to outreach programs to creating our monthly meetings and so much more.

This year, we enjoyed eight monthly meetings featuring knowledgeable guest speakers and engaging topics, beginning with our Past President, Paul Pietsch, in March and continuing throughout the year:

- Paul Pietsch – Grafting and Budding demonstration
- Chloe Hurst – This Gothic Garden in Carleton Place
- Stephanie Benoit – Tiny Forests, Big Impact
- Mary Sherman Reid – Vines and Their Care
- Melanie Ouellette – Native Plant Gardening
- Penny Foster – Canning Jams and Jellies
- Marcin Padlewski – Medicinal Uses for Local Plants
- Nora Kazda – Seasonal Wreaths & Arrangements

We created a new CPDHS logo and banners for promotional and display purposes for the society.

The Flower Show committee organized three flower shows: the Spring Flower Show held at our May meeting, the Summer Flower Show held in July, and our Fall Flower Show held at our October meeting. We had great participation from our members at all three shows.





Member Recruitment Night at CP Arena, March 2025
Our volunteers: Valencia, Bri, and Barbara

Our Hospitality committee held two special events: the Ice Cream Social at the summer flower show and a Jam and Jellies competition at our November meeting. Both events were a huge success.

Our volunteers also strengthened our presence in the wider community through a full slate of events and projects, including youth programs such as Plant a Pasta Garden; EarthFest activities for both children and adults; two Flower Show workshops; our Spring plant sale fundraiser; the expansion of the Victoria School Garden and the Heritage Museum Garden and the creation of its new rock garden; the Annual Photography

Competition; native plant give-away; member recruitment events; and ongoing coaching and financial support for school planting programs and post-secondary bursaries.

As a society, we have much to be grateful for... especially our members' enthusiasm, the tireless dedication of our volunteers, and the friendships that continue to grow from a shared passion for horticulture. As a whole, the society put in over 2000 volunteer hours. My heartfelt thanks go out to everyone who contributed their time, knowledge, and energy throughout the year. You are the roots that keep this society strong.

As we enter the holiday season, may your homes be filled with warmth, laughter, and perhaps some time for a little potting soil under your fingernails. Here's to rest, renewal, and the joyful anticipation of spring blooms just around the corner.

Wishing you peace and plenty both in your gardens and in your hearts.

Happy gardening,

Rick Roberts

The Flower Show Committee thanks everyone who participated in the workshops and shows this past year, including the volunteers who helped set up and take down the flower shows. As we are planning events for next year, we look forward with great anticipation to seeing the beautiful specimens from your gardens and the creativity of your designs.

Barbara Fowler
Director, Flower Show Committee



The Climate Change and Biodiversity Interest Group of CPDHS

By Brenda Cupper

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Interest Group (the CCBDG) (whew – we know that’s a mouthful!) was formed in December 2021 by four Horticultural Society members. We thought that because climate change is the most pressing and important issue of our time, it should be a focal point and theme of the Horticultural Society. We are all aware of the seriousness of climate change –it is, indeed, an existential threat. According to the UN, *“Climate change threatens the very foundations of our societies, ecosystems, and economies, fundamentally altering the planet in ways that jeopardize future generations’ well-being and the delicate balance of life as we know it.”*

Connections between Climate Change and Horticulture: Horticulture can be both a mitigation and adaptation strategy for climate change. To put the activities of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Interest Group in perspective, let’s review the following connections between climate change and horticulture:

- ▶ **Promoting biodiversity:** Diverse and thoughtful planting with native plants, climate-resistant plants and plants that support pollinators increases the stability and resilience of natural systems, thus both mitigating and adapting to climate change. Invasive species should be removed.
- ▶ **Carbon sequestration:** Composting and garden waste management reduce methane emissions from landfills and decrease the use of synthetic fertilizers. Building healthy, carbon-rich soils with composting, no-till gardening, and planting trees and shrubs can effectively store carbon.
- ▶ **Green infrastructure:** Gardens lessen the effects of climate change by providing cooling, managing stormwater, and improving air quality.



Taking Action on these Connections between Climate Change and Horticulture:

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Interest Group undertakes activities primarily for Horticulture Society members but also for the general public. These activities include:

- ☺ the promotion of speakers for the Horticulture Society and other events who highlight climate change to increase awareness and to promote practices/daily solutions to combat climate change. In recent years, the Group recommended several sessions on Native Plants, Invasive Plants, Bees and Plants, Tiny Forests-Big Impact, Climate Change, and Canning Jams and Jellies. Heather Lebeau – a member of the Group from its inception - has been invaluable for her perspectives and recommendations on speakers, as have other members.
- ☺ the promotion of native plants and education about native plants: One member of the Group started a project to grow and maintain hundreds of native plants of 30 different species for two giveaways for planting and for sale at the annual Horticulture Society’s plant sale. In summary, the native plants were offered primarily to CPDHS members at no charge, with

the express purpose of fostering interest in their cultivation. Society members were directed to sources of information for descriptions of species and their growing conditions. Irene Tobis (who did the lion's share of the work) was available to answer questions at the events, along with Deb Crosby, who contributed greatly to the project. Society members were also invited to an "Open Backyard" event at Irene's home, where many of these native plants are growing.



- ☺ production of flyers and other promotional materials to do with climate change and attendance at public events: The Group produced and distributed materials at public events to do with combating climate change. Group members and master gardeners attended the events to raise awareness and encourage action against climate change.



- ☺ the removal of invasive species and education about invasive species at public events: Invasive species often expand rapidly and "outcompete" native and pollinator plants. Daniel Brumar has spearheaded work on invasive species. With the Group, he increased our awareness of the damage invasive species cause and identified areas in Carleton Place where they were taking over. He organized three events for the Group and its friends to remove garlic mustard along a walking trail in Carleton Place. Courtesy of Daniel and members, examples of invasive plants were on display at

EarthFest to help members of the public recognize them and realize that they are invasive.

- ☺ the promotion of canning and preserving food for sustainable practice: Purchasing and eating out of season foods has a significant carbon footprint, and other damaging effects on climate change, such as pesticide use and increased food waste. Growing your own food and canning or preserving foods in season have the opposite effect and also strengthen local farms and communities. Kilby McCann has led this initiative, creating a project – a contest - to showcase jams, jellies and preserves for Society members and raise awareness on the importance of canning and preserving!

Other Activities: The Group undertakes other activities from time to time, including the provision of lists of resources on climate change and the dissemination of Green Christmas ideas. Daniel Brumar organized a Photo Contest for "Last of the Season" blooms. The Group also promotes recognizing the Algonquin Anishnaabe people of this area as the stewards of the land.

Details about the Group: The Climate Change and Biodiversity Interest Group meets monthly. It's made up of six members, and the Group values respect for all members – each one is involved and contributes in their own unique way. The Group makes decisions by consensus and operates informally without written policies and procedures.

Community Gardens Summary 2025

By Irene Tobis

With another excellent group of volunteers, logging more than 600 volunteer hours, we had another excellent year at Victoria School Garden and Heritage Museum Garden. We established some exciting new plantings and maintained the existing gardens through a challenging drought year, with far more hand-watering required than in previous years!



We added new perennials to the Heritage Garden bed we established at the end of last year, and we purchased a truckload of compost to improve the soil there, which had been severely depleted by the invasive large shrubs that had grown there for many years.



Along the east chain-link fence, we planted 11 clematis plants, each of a different variety (10 cultivars donated by former member Debby Lytle and one native variety donated by Debby O'Mally), now on their way to becoming a stunning backdrop for the birdbath statue. Daylilies, donated by me, were planted to shade their roots.

Thanks to rocks hauled in by our volunteers and a number of other society members, as well as the expertise and hard work of Paul Pietsch, we now have a small but beautiful rock garden, which Paul will continue to develop next year, adding interest and variety to visitors' experiences of VSG.

In fact, as the various areas of the gardens developed characteristics more distinct from one another, individual volunteers, with a natural affinity for one area or another, began "adopting" areas of special interest to them to receive special care and attention. Per Anita Ruus's suggestion, we started giving them nicknames. Sheila Gibson, planting hollyhocks, adopted "Holly". I was planting clematis, so I adopted "Clem". Jennifer Butler, planting annuals by the back parking lot (which gets scraped away every winter by snowplows), adopted "Annie". Paul is taking care of "Rocky". And so forth. We expect this will continue next year.



For the first time in a number of years, we planted 100s of new spring bulbs, thanks in part to a planned budget and a donation from the Ottawa Cancer Foundation.

We also got consultation from the Town regarding our trees, several of which seemed dead or in very poor condition. Next year we will again have new gardens to establish, as the removal of trees in VSG and also on neighbouring properties will have created new sunny areas that were previously shaded and/or challenged by juglone from black walnut trees. We will also continue the removal of invasive species of perennials, which has actually been quite successful so far.



We had a good time. We worked hard, and we enjoyed socializing—and discussing gardening—as can only be done with like-minded friends—over tea and snacks afterwards.

We were very pleased to have Sue Crawford and Audrey Downer join us this year. Many thanks to them and to those who returned: Anita Ruus, Irene Tobis, Sheila Gibson, Debbi O'Malley, Jennifer Butler, Mary Beach, Barbara Fowler, and our Master Gardener, Paul Pietsch.

We hope you will consider joining us next year. For more info, just ask any of us. No experience necessary. No need to commit to anything. Just give it a try! Just show up! - Tuesdays 9:30-11:30 am, Thursdays 3:30-5:30 pm.

CPDHS Winter Sowing Workshop

CPDHS member Irene Tobis recommends winter sowing into 4-inch pots, set in plastic tubs, well-watered but with good drainage, covered with recycled window screens, set outside in early January. She has gotten 95% germination and robust seedlings with this method. She, along with other members of the Climate Change and Biodiversity interest group, will be hosting a winter sowing workshop/party on January 3rd at 1pm at her home.

RSVP to Irene at irenetobis@gmail.com or 613-407-4376



*Our members support is the foundation of our society.
Wishing you a peaceful and joyful holiday season.*

Sow in Sorrow Reap in Joy – The Mystery of Winter Sowing

Katrina Boguski, Lanark County Master Gardeners

Winter can be one of the hardest times for gardeners. Spring brings with it the joy of a garden's re-birth; summer sets fields aglow with sunlight and colour, and fall ushers in the bounty of the garden's harvest, but winter on the surface seems to offer nothing to the garden or the gardener. Nevertheless, every year, the garden and the gardener must endure the winter season. Instead of regretting this time, gardeners can turn winter into an opportunity to get a head start on the year and to contemplate the mysteries of gardening that remain unexplained. One of these mysteries is how, in nature, a tiny seed exposed to the winter can develop into a full-grown plant according to some rhythm which it senses. The seeds that nature sows grow heartier and freer than any of the ones we grow inside ourselves or purchase from a nursery's hothouse. Winter sowing allows gardeners the opportunity to plant seeds outside and to watch them grow according to nature's rhythm, even if we cannot explain or even sense that rhythm ourselves.

To sow seeds in winter, use either plastic containers, such as water jugs, or plastic bags. You can also use seed trays covered with plastic domes purchased for this purpose or made from clear plastic packages, such as those containing salad mixes sold in many produce departments. With any of these materials, you are effectively creating a small greenhouse in which the seedlings can get a head start. The seeds will be exposed to nature's rhythm and will emerge as strong and healthy as any other plants that spring up in your garden on their own without your intervention.

Cut drainage holes in the bottoms of the containers to allow excess water to run off. Failure to complete this step can lead to freezing or fungus growth. An electric drill can make light work of this step; just be sure to follow proper safety protocols. Some plastic containers have very smooth surfaces, which may cause the drill bit to slip off, and others may bend when under pressure. If the plastic is soft enough, you can make holes by using scissors or a sharp knife. There also needs to be an opening at the top of the container so that precipitation can get in to water the seeds. If using a water jug, leave the lid off.

Jugs can be cut in half and then taped back together to keep the top and bottom together. Before taping, fill the containers partway with potting soil and plant seeds at a depth that is appropriate for them. Cover with the top portion with the lid. It is best to use seeds that



will mature in 90 days or less, and ones from plants that can be easily transported. There is no need to harden off seeds grown by this method.

Place the containers in an area where they can get some sun but are sheltered a bit from harsh winds, then wait. You will not know exactly how long you will have to wait, but at about the same time the rest of your garden starts waking up from its winter slumber, the seeds you sowed in the dead of winter will start to emerge. At this point, you will need to watch them a little more closely, but nowhere near as attentively as you would seeds sown indoors under grow lights. The seedlings may need a little extra water if there hasn't been much rain or snow, or they may need the tops of the containers opened periodically to let excess heat escape, but, for the most part, they will be independent of your care.

The experience of seeing the seedlings emerge may provide both great joy and great disappointment as you realize how little you had to do with the simple task of winter sowing. All you needed to do was put some seeds and soil in containers and leave them outside exposed to nature's timing.

There are many excellent videos online that go into more detail about each step, but really, the process is as simple as it sounds. The hard part is believing it works. Those who take the risk and try it will be blessed with a head start on the spring. Gardeners will also be left with a sense of wonder as to how it all happened without much help from them.

As the saying goes, "those who sow in sorrow, shall reap in joy." If you are sad because it is winter, or for any other reason, do some winter sowing. You can water the seeds with your tears, and in spring, you can stand in awe at how everything worked out. You will not be able to understand how it all happened, but you will be glad that it did.

There are different methods of winter sowing.

The Ottawa Wildflower Seed Library has an excellent video series on their website on how to winter sow:

<https://wildflowerseedlibrary.ca/instructions/how-to-winter-sow-2/>

Membership 2026

We will be renewing the 2026 Memberships at our December meeting.

The price for Annual membership is \$15.00 per person. In order to keep our records up-to-date, we ask that you complete a 2026 Membership form if your information has changed.

Beat the spring rush and renew early! New memberships are always welcome.

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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Peterborough Master Gardener

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