



# Carleton Place & District Horticultural Society

March 2026

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## President's Message

With several days of milder weather in our forecast, we gardeners are reminded that March promises the beginning of a new growing year.

Our region can be both challenging and rewarding for gardeners. Late frosts, fluctuating spring temperatures, and unpredictable rainfall are just a part of gardening in the Ottawa Valley. Yet these very conditions build skilled gardeners. Each season teaches us something new... whether it's choosing hardy varieties, improving soil health, or finding creative ways to extend our growing season.

March is a time to focus on preparation including starting seeds indoors, checking and preparing stored tools, planning vegetable rotations, and drawing up garden plans. Native plants and pollinator-friendly gardens continue to play an important and growing role in our area. Pick the brains of our Climate Change and Biodiversity group for ideas and advice.

I am especially excited about the year ahead for our Society. Meetings, workshops, and community projects are opportunities to learn and connect. Be sure to check listings in this newsletter and our website for details of our upcoming meetings, guest speakers, workshops and special events.

Mark your calendar for next month's meeting on April 1 at 7pm when our guest speaker will discuss Water Gardens, plus Deb Crosby will kick off our new monthly feature Spotlight, with helpful ideas for Planting to Attract Birds.

Volunteers from The Men's Shed are busy building a variety of bird houses which will be available to purchase at the April meeting with proceeds going towards the good works of our Society in the community. Volunteerism is alive and well in Carleton Place.

A do-not-miss special event this month is Seedy Saturday on March 14 from 10am to 3pm at the Civitan Club in Almonte. You will find seed exchanges, exhibitors, workshops & lectures, local horticultural vendors, and expert advice on gardening from societies and garden clubs including CPDHS. This is a big and fun event. Check our website for the latest list of special events scheduled for 2026.

As we begin this 2026 season, I encourage everyone to participate, ask questions, and consider volunteering where you can. Your collective efforts continue to beautify Carleton Place and the surrounding district, strengthen community ties, and inspire the next generation of gardeners through youth activities.

Wishing you all an early spring that is filled with the sights, sounds and fragrances of your gardens emerging from winter slumber

Rick Roberts

# Board of Directors 2026

President: Rick Roberts  
Vice-President: Irene Tobus  
Secretary: Debbie Guthro  
Treasurer: Linda Bartlett

## Directors

Kiah Barton, Carlo Beaudoin, Laura Cupper,  
Barbara Fowler, Kilby McCann



Rick Roberts (President), Carol Beaudoin, Linda Bartlett (Treasurer), Irene Tobis (Vice-President), Debbie Guthro (Secretary), Laura Cupper, Barbara Fowler, Kilby McCann, Kiah Barton

## Coordinators & Special Interest Groups

Updates to this list are reported on the CPDHS website (Our Team)

Advertising & Promotion – Linda Bartlett

Climate Change & Biodiversity interest group – Brenda Cupper (lead)

Flower Shows – Barbara Fowler (lead), Doreen Harris, Heather Lebeau, Valencia Logan

Guest Speaker Committee – Carlo Beaudoin, Debbi O’Malley

Hospitality – Kilby McCann (lead), Margaret Coombs, Cindy Hanna, Beth Hunter

Membership – Laura Cupper

Member Communications – Rick Roberts

Newsletter – Linda Bartlett

Nominating Committee – (2 board members plus 1 member)

Photography Competition (annual) – Rob Drapeau

Photography, Meetings and Events – Rob Drapeau

Photography Spring Climate Change Contest – Daniel Brumar

Plant Sales – Rick Roberts (lead), Cheryl Moore & Carlo Beaudoin (donor digs)

Social Media: Facebook & Instagram – Linda Bartlett

Victoria School Garden & Heritage Museum Garden – Irene Tobis (lead), multiple volunteers

Volunteer Hours Reporting: Rob Drapeau (lead), Linda Bartlett

Youth: School Programs and Post Secondary Bursaries – Debbie Guthro

Youth: Young Gardeners’ Workshops – Cheryl Moore

Website – Rick Roberts



*Nurturing Gardens, Strengthening Community*

# 2026 Program

March 4<sup>th</sup>

**Modern Sustainable Gardening Practices**

Speaker: Alberto Esteban

April 1<sup>st</sup>

**Water Gardens**

Speaker: Nicholas Bott, Aquatopia

May 6<sup>th</sup>

**Thoughtful Gardening**

Speaker: Nicole Bennett

May 23<sup>rd</sup>

**Annual Spring Plant Sale**

Victoria School Garden

June 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Pollinators and Their Habitats**

Speaker: Prof. Jessica Forrest

June 20<sup>th</sup>

**Summer Flower Show & Social**

Zion Memorial Church

September 2<sup>nd</sup>

**Invasive Plants & Other Pests**

Speaker: Wendy Asbil

September 26<sup>th</sup>

**Fall Flower Show & Social**

Zion Memorial Church

October 7<sup>th</sup>

**Trees, Shrubs & Plant Health Care**

Speaker: Davey Tree

November 4<sup>th</sup>

**Gardens, Our Senses & Well-being**

Speaker: Tim Deslippe

December 2<sup>nd</sup>

**Christmas Social and AGM**

Festive Make and Take Activity

# Photo Competition

**Theme: The Joys and Tranquility of Horticulture**

**Class: 1: Plant source containing white as a colour.**

**Class: 2: Vegetation containing fruits and or vegetables.**

**Class: 3: Sunrise or sunset containing horticulture content.**

## Rules

- ▶ Photographs must include horticultural content.
- ▶ The original image must be taken by the member, but printing can be by the member or commercially.
- ▶ Each member is eligible to submit two unmatted 4" x 6" colour photos in each of the classes.
- ▶ Record your name and class number on the upper right-hand corner on the back of the photo.
- ▶ Photographs will be displayed by the competition coordinator for the judging, and display to CPDHS members on a black display board.
- ▶ Photographs must be submitted in an envelope, to the Photograph Convener or the representative, at the October 7, 2026 general meeting.
- ▶ The winning photographs will be displayed, and the winners announced, at the November 4, 2026 general meeting.
- ▶ The best of show prize will be awarded at the December 2, 2026 meeting.
- ▶ The decisions of the judges are final.

## Photography convener:

Rob Drapeau

613 206-4316

drapeau@bell.net

# GARDENERS - What to do in March?

By Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County Master Gardener

Last week, we had an opportunity to attend Seedy Sunday. There was so much enthusiasm for the upcoming season with seed vendors, seed swaps, inspiring presentations and a great place to have questions answered.

This week, it is time to get down to business. Spring will be here in a few weeks, and the sun feels warm after our long, cold, snowy winter. While we may have complained about all the snow, it does provide many benefits to our gardens. For example, snow provides:

- ▶ Insulation that protects soil microbes and overwintering perennials.
- ▶ Insulation of roots from deep freezes.
- ▶ Surface protection that prevents the dreaded freeze-thaw heaving and erosion.
- ▶ Provides slow-release moisture that recharges soil without a lot of run-offs.
- ▶ Stable winter temperatures that preserve soil structure.
- ▶ About 2-3% of the Nitrogen your garden needs.

March marks the start of the sowing season. Decide what you want to sow and look at the space available to you. Remember that once your seedlings start to grow, you will have to transplant them into larger pots, and then into even larger ones. If you are using seeds from last year or happened to find a real deal on them, it is wise to test their viability. To do this, place a few seeds on a damp paper towel. Label them, put them in a plastic bag, and set them in a warm spot (the top of the refrigerator is a good spot). If, in a few days, they have not sprouted or begun to swell, they are not viable. Do not waste your valuable space and time on these. The Old Farmer's Almanac ([www.almanac.com](http://www.almanac.com)) is a trusted source for gardeners in determining when to start their seeds. Check the back of the seed packet to determine if any of the seeds you are sowing need cold treatment before they are sowing.

If you stored tender bulbs (cannas, callas, lilies, dahlias) from last year or are buying them, now is the time to start them growing. If you wait until it is time to plant outdoors, you will have a long wait to see flowers. If you overwintered some annuals, you can take cuttings and start to root them.

With warmer weather, your compost will start to become active again. You can start adding to your compost pile and stir the compost if conditions allow (i.e., it is not frozen).

The best time to prune most trees is early spring, before budburst, to promote faster healing. Avoid pruning spring-blooming trees until after they have bloomed.



Photo credit: Anne Craig, Peterborough Master Gardeners

# Race to Bloom - Earliest Spring Flowers Contest

By Daniel Brumar, Climate Change Group

The CPDHS Climate Change Group organized a Spring flower photo contest to raise awareness of how our changing climate is affecting blooming times. It's sort of a race.

Here's how it works: Participants send entries by email to Daniel Brumar at [DB\\_4321@yahoo.com](mailto:DB_4321@yahoo.com).

Every day or two, an email goes out to membership with the first photos of each species. Entries are judged by the date the photo was taken, not the quality of the photo or the flower.

Once a species is found, no more entries of that species are accepted. We are looking for the first 15 different species in bloom, not the first 15 photos of the same flower.

Participants only win bragging rights. Flowers should be:

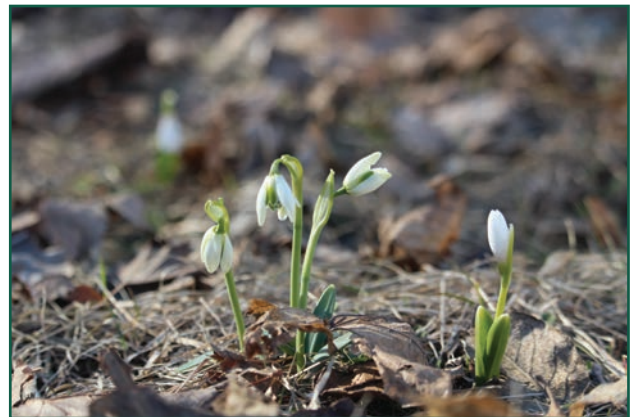
- 🌸 in full bloom, buds open
- 🌸 outdoors within Lanark county
- 🌸 can be in your garden, someone else's garden, a park, a trail, etc.
- 🌸 can be against a wall or a natural sheltered site, but not in a cold-frame/greenhouse
- 🌸 cannot be grown indoors in winter (eg. pansies, forced bulbs transplanted early)

It may be an early Spring this year... things might start blooming before the April meeting.

See the two example photos to spark interest.



Tamarack male & female 'flowers'  
(Apr 29, 2025)



Snowdrops (March 21, 2025)

## Flower Show Committee Workshop

By Barbara Fowler, Flower Show Committee

The Flower Show Committee will hold a Design Workshop on Saturday, April 25, from 9:00 to 11:30 at the Independent Grocery Store in Carleton Place. Helen Halpenny will demonstrate an illuminary design and a visible use of water design. As part of the Workshop, participants will have an opportunity to create their own visible use of water design using visible water. Both of these designs will be included in the Summer Flower Show in June at both the Novice and Open levels.

There will be a non-refundable fee of \$10.00 to attend. There are only 20 places so register early.

Members of the Flower Show Committee will be available at the meeting to answer your questions and accept your registration. You can also register by email at [cpdhsflowers@gmail.com](mailto:cpdhsflowers@gmail.com).

## Birdhouses

By Irene Tobis, Vice-President

At our April meeting, Deb Crosby will be doing the member spotlight on how to plant to attract birds to your yard.

To coincide with that topic, the Climate Change Group will be selling birdhouses created by the Hackberry Men's Shed. These



birdhouses will be available for sale at the April meeting, so please, if you are interested, bring cash to the meeting. The birdhouses will be offered at very reasonable prices, starting at \$20.



They are all made from recycled lumber. This year some of them will be made from upcycled hockey sticks. (What Canadian bird family wouldn't want a house made out of hockey sticks?)

## Winter Sowing Workshop

By Irene Tobis, Vice-President

I held a Winter Sowing Workshop on January 3. We had eight participants, including six of our members +2 guests from the Almonte & District Horticultural Society.

Some of the seeds for the workshop were gathered in the fall from native plants growing in my own yard. I brought other seeds from the Ottawa Wildflower Seed Library's fall giveaways. Cheryl Moore contributed some hazelnut seeds from Scott Sigurdson at Indian Creek Nursery.



## OHA TREE GRANT

CPDHS received a Tree Grant (\$300.00) from the Ontario Horticultural Association. We will purchase a Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) tree to plant at the Victoria School Gardens. We will install a plaque in memory of Daren Brash from donations we received.

## April 1st, Meeting - Aquatopia Water Gardens

At our April 1st meeting, Nicholas Bott, CAC, CIT, Water Gardening Expert, one of the founders of Aquatopia Conservatory, one of the most successful water gardening businesses in North America, will present a seminar entitled "Creating Delightful Water Features For Small Spaces".



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](mailto:cphorticulture@gmail.com)

Editor: Design and Layout: Linda Bartlett

Contributors: Rick Roberts, Irene Tobis, Daniel Brumer, Barbara Fowler and Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County Master Gardeners.

Photos: Daniel Brumer, Rob Drapeau, Irene Tobis, Anne Craig, Peterborough Master Gardeners

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