



# Carleton Place & District Horticultural Society

April 2026

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## President's Message

The growing season is just around the corner, and many of you are already busy starting seedlings indoors and planning your spring garden cleanup. If you don't have the time or space to start your own seedlings, remember that your CPDHS membership card offers a 10% discount at many of our favourite local nurseries... an easy way to get your garden off to a great start.



It has been wonderful to see the photos submitted for the Race to Bloom Spring Flower Photo Contest. They offer a hopeful glimpse of the season ahead, with both natural landscapes and home gardens beginning to show signs of renewal. Keep them coming...

As you get out into your gardens this spring, please keep our Annual Plant Sale on May 23rd in mind. This event is not only a great place to find plants to fill those empty spaces, but it is also a key fundraiser that supports our society. If your peonies, irises, hostas, or other perennials are ready for division, consider donating a few. Simply pot up rough clumps and drop them off at 238 Lyndhurst St. by May 20th. Our potting up volunteers then sub-divide them and prepare the plants for the sale. If you need help, Carlo Beaudoin leads a team of volunteers who can assist with digging donor gardens. New plant sale volunteers are always welcome.

We have an exciting year ahead, thanks to the hard work of our committees and special interest groups. Be sure to check the newsletter and website for upcoming events, competitions, and meetings.

Looking forward to another wonderful summer in the garden,

Rick Roberts

## May 6th Meeting - Thoughtful Gardening



Nicole Bennett of Summersweet Garden Design and Maintenance will share practical garden design principles and how to apply them in your own landscape. She'll address common design challenges and simple, effective solutions, explore how to incorporate native plants and edibles seamlessly into your garden, and discuss strategies for creating year-round interest—including in the winter months.

Nicole is a horticulturist with associate diplomas in Agriculture and Horticulture from the University of Guelph and 18 years of experience in the landscaping industry.

# Creating Bird Friendly Gardens

By Deb Crosby, CPDHS Climate Change Committee Member

As Ontario communities continue to support local biodiversity, gardeners can play an important role right at home. Planting with birds in mind helps strengthen local ecosystems, supports pollinators, and enhances neighbourhood green spaces.

## Try to incorporate Native plants

Native plants are well adapted to Ontario's climate and provide essential food and shelter for local bird species. Consider adding:

- ▶ Serviceberry for early blossoms and summer berries
- ▶ Red Osier Dogwood for fall fruit and nesting cover
- ▶ Purple Coneflower for seedheads that feed finches
- ▶ Wild Bergamot to attract hummingbirds and pollinators



## Thoughtful Use of Non-Native Plants

Non-native plants can complement native gardens by extending bloom periods and offering additional nectar sources. Suitable options include:

- ▶ Bee Balm hybrids for hummingbirds
- ▶ Sunflowers for seed loving birds
- ▶ Black-eyed Susans seeds attract small birds
- ▶ Zinnias vibrant colours and seeds attract small birds
- ▶ Lavender for insect activity that supports small songbirds

\* It is critical to avoid invasive species that can spread into natural areas. \*

## Birds You May Spot Locally

A bird friendly yard can attract a variety of species throughout the year, including:

- ▶ Ruby throated Hummingbird
- ▶ Goldfinches
- ▶ Many sparrow species
- ▶ Yellow Warbler
- ▶ Black capped Chickadee
- ▶ Northern Cardinal
- ▶ Downy Woodpecker

## Simple Ways to Support Urban Wildlife

- ▶ Leave some seedheads standing through winter for seed-loving birds.
- ▶ Provide a shallow water source.
- ▶ Plant in layers—trees, shrubs, perennials, and groundcovers (consider berry-bearing ground cover) create valuable habitat.
- ▶ Leave the leaves in the fall. When we “clean up” our yards too thoroughly, we remove the insects, seeds, and shelter that birds rely on through winter and into spring. Keeping leaves on the ground helps protect next year's food sources and habitat.

# What's Blooming in Your Garden

## May Meeting

By Barbara Fowler, Flower Show Committee

The Flower Show Committee is inviting each member to bring a bloom or a bouquet of blooms from their garden to the May meeting. The single bloom or bouquet of blooms should be in a clear glass container. This will not be a judged show, but an opportunity to share what is blooming in your gardens and to brighten the hall during our meeting.

## Flower Show Committee Workshop

By Barbara Fowler, Flower Show Committee

**Date:** Saturday, April 25th, 2026

**Time:** 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

**Cost:** \$10.00

**Place:** Community Room, Anderson's Independent Grocer, 455 McNeely, Carleton Place

Registration is required; a maximum of 20 people will be admitted. This can be done at the April Horticultural Society meeting or by email: [cpdhsflowers@gmail.com](mailto:cpdhsflowers@gmail.com)

No experience necessary!

Helen Halpenny, well-known designer and judge, will be the facilitator. There will be a demonstration of an Illuminary Floral Design (definition follows). Helen will show how to make this design while emphasizing the elements and principles of design.

There will also be a workshop portion, where participants will make their own design, Visible Use of Water (see definitions below). Bring your own container, such as a clear tall glass vase or glass cylinder, if making an Underwater Design. If making a Water-viewing Design, containers such as pie plates, casserole dishes or shallow dishes work well. Thrift shops are great places to get interesting containers.

Flowers, greenery, branches, marbles, stones, gravel, etc., will be provided (or bring your own if you wish). Bring along a kenzan if you have one – some will be available to borrow if you don't. Also, bring a paper and a pen to help plan your design.

**Illuminary Design** – A design that incorporates light or lights as an integral part of the design.

**Visible Use of Water** – A design that must include water that is clearly visible. Any design in which water is an important component. May be water-viewing, underwater, etc.

**Water-viewing** – A traditional line design, adapted in Canada in the 1960's, with a dominant line of plant material and great use of space, in a shallow container with ½ to 2/3 of the container surface showing water. Modern line design does not fit this definition but could be used in a design that calls for the Visible Use of Water.

**Underwater** – A design with part(s) placed under water to create interest. Although the design must have part(s) under water, no definite percentage is required. A portion of the design must be above the water line. The parts under water and out of water must form a unified design.

# Spring Rose Pruning: Setting Up for a Strong Summer

By Rick Roberts, President, CPDHS

As winter loosens its grip and temperatures begin to warm, April is the time to get after your roses. In our Zone 5 climate, a good spring pruning goes a long way toward keeping plants healthy, improving air flow, and setting the stage for a full season of blooms.



Timing matters. You're looking for that window after the risk of deep cold has passed, when buds are just starting to swell but before the plant has leafed out. Around Carleton Place, that's usually mid to late April, give or take depending on the year.

Start with clean, sharp tools. A good pair of bypass pruners will handle most of the work, though older, thicker canes may call for loppers. It's worth wiping your tools down between plants to avoid spreading disease.

First, deal with any winter damage. This past season brought a stretch of colder-than-normal weather, and many roses are showing more die-back than usual. Dead wood will look dark and brittle, while living tissue is green and moist inside. If you're unsure, lightly scrape the bark with your thumbnail. Green means it's still alive, brown means it's time to go. Prune back to healthy wood, making your cut about a quarter inch above an outward-facing bud, angled slightly so water sheds off.

Once the dead and damaged wood is out, take a look at the overall structure. Remove any canes that cross or rub together, since those spots can become entry points for insects and disease. The goal is an open, vase-like shape that allows light and air to reach the centre of the plant.

How hard you prune depends on the type of rose. Hybrid teas and floribundas can be, and probably need to be cut back quite firmly, often to about 12 to 18 inches. Shrub roses usually just need some thinning, shaping and removal of winter-killed canes. With climbers, go easy in spring. Remove dead wood and focus on tying canes in more horizontally. Canes trained at a shallow angle, up to about 45 degrees, tend to produce the most flowers.

When you're finished, clean up thoroughly around the base of the plant. Diseased material shouldn't go into the compost—I prefer to burn it or dispose of it in the garbage. A layer of compost or well-rotted manure will give your roses a good start, and mulch will help hold moisture and keep weeds down, especially if we get the hot, dry stretches that are being forecast with the forecasted El Niño pattern.

A bit of attention now pays off all summer. Healthy, well-pruned roses are more resilient and far more rewarding when bloom time arrives.

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)

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