



*Galt Horticultural Society*  
Ferguson Cottage 

**Join us Monday May 30, 2022 @ 7:00 PM  
for our next General Meeting!**

**Catherine McGill will be speaking to us about 'Planters With A Twist'.**



Catherine is a Garden Council of Ontario Horticultural Judge, OHA Design and Horticultural Judge, District Director, Speaker and she was a chef for 20+ years. She currently does garden maintenance locally.

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84901140502?pwd=SDNVaUpKNGdXTediVVhzcXh4VVZxQT09>

Meeting ID: 849 0114 0502

Passcode: 386424

**Zoom Tips**

*Please use the "Mute" option and keep yourself in Mute unless you are speaking.*

*You can turn off your webcam by using the "Stop Video" option.*

*If you find the video or sound is breaking up, use the "Stop Video" option. Your computer will use less bandwidth since it's not projecting your video and that can help the quality.*

*If you wish to see only the person speaking, select the "Speaker View".*

*If you wish to see only the presenter when screen share is on, select the “Active Speaker Video” option (in the tool bar where the participant windows are).*

*If you don't have a webcam, you can join and you'll see everything on your screen. We won't be able to see you, but we can hear you.*

*If you don't have a speaker, or if you don't wish to speak out loud, use the “Chat” option.*

*You can also connect by dialing in on telephone, so that you can listen to the meeting.*

## **And The Winner Is...GHS April 2022 Photo Contest!**

Congratulations to Nichole Bonner as the winner of our April Photo Contest! Nichole submitted photo #16 'Crocus'.



Thanks to all of our members who participated in our April contest.

**Don't forget to send in your photos for our [GHS May Photo Contest...'Garden Statuary/Sculptures'](#)**

Share your photos by sending them in with **[“GHS May Photo Contest...'Garden Statuary/Sculptures'](#)** in the subject line to [lynne@galthort.com](mailto:lynne@galthort.com) by May 21<sup>st</sup> @ 6pm.

The list of photos will be sent out and **voting will take place between May 22<sup>nd</sup> – May 29<sup>th</sup>. The winner(s) will be announced at our May 30<sup>th</sup> meeting.**

## **GHS April Online Auctions**

We have a number of terrific items coming up for bidding. **Join our Facebook group to view what items we have up for grabs and place your bids!**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/galthort>

## GHS Plant/Garage Sale Is Coming May 7th!



Our spring **GHS Plant/Garage Sale** is to be held **Sat May 7th from 9 am - 11:30 am at Ferguson Cottage.**

**All donations of plants and garage sale items can be dropped off at Ferguson Cottage on Thursday May 5th between 6:00 - 7:00 pm, Friday May 6th between 9:00 - 11:00 am & 5:00 - 6:00 pm.**

If you wish, you can also leave your items on the front porch, if no one is at the cottage. We do recommend dropping off between the hours indicated.

Don't forget to include some information about the plants you are dropping off...

- \*common name
- \*botanical name (if you have it)
- \*does it need full sun, full shade or part
- \*colour
- \*soil conditions
- \*drought tolerant
- \*perennial
- \*annual
- \*biennial

\*noteworthy characteristics

Let's hope for some sunny, spring weather for our event!

We will be following COVID protocols for the sale and encourage everyone to wear a mask and stay 6 ft apart.

## GHS Quebec Bus Trip Information

Please see the attached information about the fantastic Quebec bus trip we have planned in August! It is recommended to register early to reserve your ticket. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Nancy Smith at [nancy@galthort.com](mailto:nancy@galthort.com).



## GHS Receives OHA Technical Advancement Recognition Certificate

Our Society was thrilled to receive recognition for using technology to keep our members engaged and informed! In the photo from left to right are Nancy Smith-Past President, Liz Stacey, President & Lynne Goulet-Smith, 1<sup>st</sup> VP & Chair of Membership Committee.



## OHA Service Award for District 19

It was announced at the recent OHA District 19 AGM that our very own **Liz Stacey** was awarded the District 19 Service Award in recognition for her years of outstanding service to The Galt Horticultural Society. Liz has been a member for over 30 years and has been president 5 times over the course of her tenure. This award is well deserved and we are very happy for her and proud of Liz's accomplishments. **Congrats Liz!**

## GHS Membership Favourite Plant Profiles

And now for something new! The GHS would like to showcase our memberships favourite, weird or unusual plants!

Or in **PJ' Gagne's** case, maybe not so favourite! PJ started growing this plant, Amorphophallus konjac, five years ago in her basement.



1st pic is March 23 from a box in the basement where it was stored

It grew to 59 inches in about 3 weeks. PJ's plant was featured in The Record. Click the link to read more...

<https://www.therecord.com./news/waterloo-region/2022/04/14/it-smells-like-old-blood-and-guts-kitchener-womans-corpse-flower-blooms-on-fifth-attempt.html>





Send in photos of your favourite, weird or unusual plants with a bit of blurb about why you love your plant, what's so unusual about it and we will feature it in our newsletter for all our members to read and enjoy. Email your photo and info to [lynne@galthort.com](mailto:lynne@galthort.com).

## Membership Has Its Benefits!!



The Galt Horticultural Society's membership is continuing to grow!

Encourage fellow gardeners, family and friends to become a part of a historical society.

Membership gives everyone the opportunity to make new friends, learn about horticulture/gardening and remain engaged with other gardeners.

**The cost is only \$15 (single) & \$25 (couple).**

Please visit our website at [www.galthort.com](http://www.galthort.com) to join and like us on our FB page!

Click here to see the current list of retailers offering GHS members a discount on their purchases! <https://galthort.com/aboutmembership/>

## For Your Interest...



Here are some links to interesting articles, webinars and activities...



Canadians, whether you already enjoy gardening, recently discovered the pleasure of spending time in a garden because of the pandemic or want to learn more about how gardens impact so much of life, there is something for everyone to commemorate our country's rich garden heritage and create important legacies for a sustainable future.

Discover the many ways you can celebrate today's vibrant garden culture at home, at work, in school, in your community, and at public gardens across the country from the Planter's Moon in the spring of 2022, to the Frost Moon in the fall.

Click here for more information <https://livethegardenlife.gardenscanada.ca/> and

<https://mailchi.mp/ec2315300854/2022-march-newsletter-english?e=bc14a2c619>



Brought to you by Canada's Local Gardener

## 10 Neat Things: About Crocus



### 1. Plural.

You can say “crocuses”, “croci” or “crocus” when you have more than one. Personally, I think “crocuses” is the clearest.



### 2. Fall-blooming crocuses.

Although the plant commonly called autumn crocus — *Colchicum* — is not actually one, there are some true crocuses that bloom in fall, but many of them are better suited to a Mediterranean climate. You might have some luck with *Crocus banaticus*, native to the Balkans; it is hardy to Zone 4.



### 3. Cursed squirrels!

Squirrels adore crocus bulbs. As do chipmunks. I’ve almost given up on planting them because so many get devoured before the snow falls — and the few that don’t get their heads chewed off in spring! You can keep the corms in the ground by fixing chicken wire over them; mulch will keep the chicken wire in place and hide it. The best way I’ve heard of to discourage the blooms getting eaten is to provide another source of easy food, like peanuts, for the darling little rodents.





#### 4. Prairie crocus.

The provincial emblem of Manitoba is not a true crocus but a type of Pasque flower (*Pulsatilla patens*). It does look just like a delicate little crocus though, a magical sight after the long Manitoba winter (and into summer), should you ever be lucky enough to find any in the wild. Growing up in Manitoba, I had the pleasure just once.



#### 5. Saffron.

Saffron comes from *Crocus sativus*, an autumn-blooming variety that is reputedly hardy to Zone 4. The stamens of the bloom are what is harvested for saffron. There are only three per plant, which helps explain why saffron is so expensive. The word crocus comes from the word for saffron in several Semitic languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic).



#### 6. Corms and bulbs.

Crocuses grow from corms, which look much like bulbs and are treated the same but are physiologically different structures. A corm is a modified underground stem, swollen to store energy in the form of starch. If you cut open a bulb you find layers, even the formed flower that will emerge, but a corm is solid starch.



### **7. Snow on crocuses.**

If a crocus has been in bloom fully for several days, sudden snow or a heavy rainfall will probably do in the blossom, though the rest of the plant will likely survive. They have survived their early blooming through the centuries because they close up, protecting the inner flower, when there is no sun.



### **8. Naturalizing crocuses.**

“Naturalizing” refers to getting a flower to reproduce itself and spread without much help. Crocuses are nice for naturalizing in lawns because they come up early, while the grass is still dormant and does not need mowing. They tend to reproduce well, increasing your count from year to year. The foliage also blends in nicely with the grass — which is important because you need to leave the foliage until it dies back. There is one spring-blooming bulb I prefer for naturalizing in lawns, though: scilla, which has tiny star-like blue flowers. It has the advantage of spreading readily both through seeds and through formation of bulblets.



### **9. Leave the leaves.**

Plants take energy from the sun through their leaves. Crocus leaves need the sun to store energy for the following year’s blooms. Don’t braid them and don’t cut them back. It’s the same for all the perennial bulbs. If you’re a fussbudget in the garden, take comfort in knowing that crocuses have grass-like foliage that isn’t so unattractive after the blooms fade.



## **10. Watering corms.**

Whoa, Nellie! Crocuses like it dry. When you plant them in the fall, tamp down the earth and give them a good watering, then forget about it. In the spring, there will be enough moisture in the ground from snowmelt. Water your evergreens instead — they need to head into winter well moisturized and will appreciate a drink in the spring.

## **10 Neat Things About Soil**



### **1. You have to eat a peck of dirt before you die.**

Fortunately, that old saying does not apply to plants, which in fact, do not themselves eat "dirt". Plants need four things to live: light, air, water and minerals, the last three found below the surface of the earth. To make the minerals available in a form plant root can utilize, soil needs the teeming life of billions of microscopic animals and fungi which digest, through decay and other mechanisms, organic material. In the process, minerals are released in forms that plants can use.



## **2. Just a pile of rock, dead stuff and bugs.**

The four components of soil are minerals (particles of broken rock), organic material (the dead stuff, both animal and plant) and living organisms, air (which exists between the particles of rock and organics) and water.



## **3. What about those living organisms?**

Animal life is a complicated, inter-dependent thing and the same is true of plants. They depend on the actions of microorganisms, such as mycorrhizae, to break down minerals so plant roots can absorb them; in return, the plant provides mycorrhizae with carbohydrates. There are billions of living things in soil that work with plants in a symbiotic relationship. Just one gram of soil contains about 600 million microorganisms that play a part in recycling, releasing and storing food for plants and other microorganisms.



#### **4. Nothing but the best for your plants.**

Is there a perfect soil? No. By volume, soil that is composed of 45 percent minerals, 25 percent water, 25 percent air and 5 percent organics -- plus those 600 million microorganisms per gram -- would come close to the "ideal", but the "ideal" will change with the needs of the plant. The best soil allows water and air, in the above proportions, to support the underground activity that is necessary for plant life.



#### **5. What's in bagged potting mixes?**

Usually, potting mixes do not contain any soil as we know it in the earth. Instead, they consist of things such as peat moss, sphagnum moss, leaf mold, pine bark, Perlite, Styrofoam, charcoal, rice hulls, coconut hulls, saw dust, and maybe sand or lava rock and in a few cases clay. Occasionally, they will contain topsoil. These mixes are often sold as special blends for certain plants, and they try to mimic the natural conditions suited to the intended plant. Peat moss is the most common base of all the potting mixtures, although in Britain where peat bogs are being depleted, there is now some attempt to replace this with other organics such as



coco-husk (coir).



## 6. Overworking the soil.

Pulverizing the soil was an idea expounded by Jethro Tull, the inventor of the seed drill in 1701. For over 300 years, that's just what farmers did, but his theory was based on the mistaken idea that the harder the soil was worked, the more nutrients would be available, while really what tilling does is help control weeds and create a more permeable medium for plant roots, air and water. The practice of overworking the soil helped exacerbate the dust bowl of the thirties in North America. Don't overwork your soil.



## 7. What was in that primordial soup?

Over the years, there have been many theories about how plants utilize the medium their roots are anchored in. Some thought that the key constituent for growth was that pulverized mixture of the material in the earth. Others believed it was the ash left behind by combusted plant and animal material. Then one scientist, named Jan Baptist van Helmont, grew a willow in 200 pounds of oven-dried soil for five years, adding nothing but rainwater. At the end

of that time, he weighed the soil and found a difference of two ounces, which he assumed was an error in his measurements. Since only rainwater had been added, he concluded that water must be the key constituent. In fact, the two-ounce difference in the weight of the soil was probably accounted for by the minerals the tree dissolved and took up during its growth in that five-year period.



#### **8. Can soil be depleted?**

This is an interesting question. There is no doubt that mineral constituents existing near the surface, where most plant roots feed, can be leached of readily available macronutrients such as phosphorous, potassium and nitrogen as well as a long list of micronutrients. But as long as there is enough organic material to feed microorganisms in the soil, the mineral content will ultimately be converted into forms available to plants – with a little help from the sky, in the form of thunderstorms to help release nitrogen, and from leguminous plants (peas, caragana, alfalfa) that do the same thing in the soil. Not only that, but taproot plants, earthworms, insects and other plant and animal interactions continually bring mineral nutrient to the surface of the earth. There is an endless supply of rock down there. Topsoil, however, can be depleted by poor soil conservation methods such as clear cutting and over-tilling, causing the soil to dry out and blow away.



### **9. How does soil die?**

Dead soil would be soil entirely devoid of life, meaning no microorganisms. Dead soil would be completely dry (although, even here, tiny microorganisms lay dormant, waiting for the first hint of water to begin the rebirth.) And since we have lately learned that rain and snow deliver microorganisms to the earth, it would be hard to keep the soil dead, even if it were possible in the first place. As long as there is life, there will be life in the soil.



### **10. Feeding the soil.**

Perhaps we should rethink how we treat soil and work to feed the microorganisms, worms, fungi, snails and others that keep the soil healthy and alive. Come to think of that, this is exactly what good gardeners do by adding organic material from peat moss, leaf mold and compost. You are all so smart!



## Brantford Master Gardeners Tips From The Watering Can

Join our Brantford Master Gardeners. We are experienced gardeners who started out as Master Gardeners in Training and had the opportunity to study horticulture through Guelph University courses and once we received our MG status continued to upgrade our skills through technical training. Our ongoing mandate is to provide horticultural advice to the general public through garden tours, community events, on-line and talks. We would love to have you join our group. Contact Lynne Goulet-Smith, Coordinator – [lgs.granderie.mg@rogers.com](mailto:lgs.granderie.mg@rogers.com)

### Benefits of Earthworms in the Garden

- Earthworms burrow through the soil creating space for air and water to reach plant roots
- Earthworm burrows open up the soil improving aeration and drainage thereby allowing rain and irrigation water to penetrate the soil
- Earthworms break up hardpan soil that is inhospitable to plant roots; earthworms can burrow to as deep as 6 feet in the soil
- Earthworms leave behind excrement or castings containing from 5 to 11 times the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium they have ingested; these are key minerals needed for plant growth
- Earthworm castings also help bind calcium, iron and sulfur to soil particles; minerals that also help plants thrive
- When earthworms die their protein-rich bodies return nitrogen fertilizer to the soil
- Earthworms in grass leave casting hills, or mounds, that are visually unappealing and may pose a trip hazard; the benefits of worms far outweigh this minor inconvenience; consider that if there are 5,000 worms in an acre of soil; they can produce 50 tons of beneficial castings

### **What Earthworms Do**

- Earthworms eat dead leaves and grass, rotting plants, animal manure, semi-rotted compost and bits of soil; organic matter is ground in their gizzards, mixed with digestive juices and enzymes in the stomach then returned to the soil

- Earthworms remove surface debris and fungal spores from the garden; they clean the garden of unwanted organic materials
- Earthworms eat their own weight in organic matter and soil each day; a pound of earthworms eat a pound of organic matter and soil each day
- Earthworms turn soil into humus, a dark brown-black type of soil which holds important nutrients in place for plant growth and use
- Earthworm's coil-like castings are stable when both wet and dry thus improving soil structure
- Earthworms reproduce quickly and increase their population exponentially; one breeding earthworm can produce 96 new baby worms in six months



### **How to Encourage Earthworms in Your Garden**

- Avoid deep tilling to prevent damage to permanent earthworm burrows
- Adding chopped leaves, grass clippings, semi-rotted compost and animal manure to your garden will encourage earthworms to take up residence in your garden, be active and thrive.
- The best way to transfer worms into your garden is to dig up large chunks of soil or turves (section of matted grass) rich in worms and worm burrows and set them whole in your garden, so that new earthworm colonies can get started
- You can also transplant a couple of shovels full of soil laden with worms to an area with few; they will soon populate the area
- Worm eggs are also available for purchase at some nurseries and online
- Do not use pesticides which can kill entire populations of worms in gardens and lawns





*The lowly earthworm is not so lowly after all!!!*

References:

University of Guelph, Introduction to Soils and Plant Growth (W15), Module #5 literature

<http://www.harvesttotable.com/2013/05/benefits-of-earthworms-in-the-garden/>

<http://www.gardeningknowhow.com/composting/vermicomposting/benefits-of-garden-worms.htm>

Suggested Reading Articles:

<http://www.harvesttotable.com/2013/05/benefits-of-earthworms-in-the-garden/>

by Lynne Goulet-Smith. MG

## Hort Humour!!!



## Wear Your Galt Horticultural Society Logo Wear With Pride!



GHS Logo Wear

Get your own Galt Horticultural Society T-Shirt and/or Hoodie. This is a sample of the embroidered crest included on the item.

T-shirts: \$20.50 + tax.

Unisex Hoodies: \$36.00 + tax.

For more information or to place an order, follow this link:

[GHS Logo Wear](#)



GHS Website: <https://galthort.com/>

Year of the Garden

Année du jardin

