

# SCOTIA GARDENER

Newsletter of the Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs

## Summer 2021



### Message from the NSAGC Chair

As the summer season is winding down and daylight hours are shortening, vegetable gardeners are picking up the pace. Our gardens are starting to show off as we work at a feverish pace to keep up. There's a myriad of ways to preserve the harvest and we try to complete it all while the produce is at its peak of freshness. Maybe we can rest in November.

Nova Scotia is preparing to move into Phase Five of reopening. This is exhilarating after eighteen months of pandemic restrictions! Garden clubs should be able to resume regular meetings and activities.

It is my hope that everyone enjoys this new freedom while still maintaining some degree of safety, being mindful that restrictions may be imposed once more if we are not vigilant.

The NSAGC Board is preparing to meet in person in early October. Although Zoom has served us well, I will be so pleased to sit at the same table with all the hardworking members that make up our Board. This enthusiastic team is working on some exciting projects intended to better serve you, the NSAGC membership. Stay tuned!

Committees in District Three are moving forward with plans to host the 2022 NSAGC AGM and Convention in Truro next spring, our first since the pandemic struck eighteen months ago. Watch for registration forms to be released and sign up early. I predict this will be a sold out event.

In the meantime, enjoy our glorious autumn weather.

Kathy d'Entremont

NSAGC Chair



## A Garden for Dino

by Suzanne Gauthier, Project Manager

It's been a year at least since I sent a report on the Parrsboro Garden Club activities. We haven't met as a group but have had a project keeping some of us busy.

In July 2020 a few of us posted that we would have plants for sale at the end of our driveways. There would be no contact and we provided a can to receive the money. This was a way to replace our usual fundraiser held the first Saturday in June when we would be selling plants at the Band Hall in Parrsboro. It was also a handy way to thin our clumping plants that are becoming overgrown and to give them new life in another garden with room for them to thrive.

In recognition of the Fundy Geological Museum's gracious loan of their boardroom for our club to meet once a month, the Parrsboro Garden Club maintains two raised planters. These planters have perennials such as hostas, day lilies and a barberry shrub. Annuals are added every spring and evergreen boughs and red dogwood stems are used in the late fall to decorate the planters.

Then, in late August, we undertook to transform the space around Dino, a gift to the Fundy Geological Museum by Eldon George several years ago. The area was mainly weeds growing in gravel so our first task was to pull out the weeds, put in good soil and transplant drought-loving plants. Silver leaved plants such as pearly everlasting, lambs' ears, snow-in-summer and dusty miller were put in groupings. Low growing woolly thyme and creeping thyme, as well as golden oregano, bordered the Dino platform. Variegated grass, some hostas and Solomon's seal,

a bit of heather and some chives were dug in. Four red dogwoods formed a row parallel to the fence.

In the centre we made a "river" of gravel to carry the eye from one end to the other in a curve. We left a lot of native/introduced weeds, such as toadflax, bird's foot trefoil, red clover, mallows and pussyfoot clover.

This year we've added more variegated grass since it does so well, more snow-in-summer, some fox-gloves and moth mullein. Three of the four dogwoods survived, as did the sage, oregano and other herbs. Two blueberries now can bloom and fruit in this garden, as well as a Japanese willow, and three golden mound spirea. We obtained the latter free from an end-of-season giveaway at a major grocery store. No plants have been purchased so far, although it's very tempting to buy silver mound *Artemisia* for their lovely round shape.

A *Sedum* rock garden "curl" was added recently. It can be built on over time, expanding as need be.

The cement Dino has had epoxy teeth and claws sculpted back on, and is now waiting for a new coat of paint! The Parrsboro Garden Club sees this as a work in progress, which will take another year or two to complete. Or is a garden ever completed?

Club members at work in the new garden for Dino





Dino stands watch outside the Fundy Geological Museum.



Sunflowers and *Calendula*, butterfly bush, grass tussocks (which are intentional) are planted in the new garden.



A rock garden curl provides a home for *Sedum*.



Dino shows off his new teeth!

Photos submitted by Suzanne Gauthier

## Dartmouth Aces It with a Covid Careful Plant Sale

by Linda Mosher, Dartmouth Horticultural Society

May finally arrived and, with it, the agonizingly long-awaited hope of blooms galore beginning in our gardens. We all needed this burst of colour and fragrance so badly with Covid 19 so long in our midst. Hopefully, with vaccinations and our continued attention to following all the guidelines, it may be possible to visit one another's gardens.

The members of Dartmouth Horticultural Society (DHS), like every other garden club in the province, have been hanging in there, waiting for the first signs of spring so they could get out into their gardens and dig into the soil to relieve the dreariness of the past winter.

We have been busy with virtual meetings since Covid began. Although our programme director, Caroline, is with the military and has been deployed, she still managed to provide us with a virtual array of interesting speakers via the Goto Meeting platform. We've had Gigi Pelletier and Ann Buck speak on the joy of raising your own chickens and Chris Sanford from Yonder Hill Farm advising us how to save seed from start to finish. Samuel Jean of Acadia University introduced us to gardening with native plants and spoke at length about the importance of biodiversity and invasive species. We enjoyed a beautiful slide show of colourful shrubs when Jim Sharpe spoke about using flowering shrubs in the landscape, were wowed when Phil Hatcher of Very Local Greens Farm gave us a virtual tour of his amazing unique hydroponic urban farm and yearned for a plate of pancakes and syrup when Matt Miller from Sugar Moon Farm walked us through his maple operation!

Our executive has continued to meet via Zoom and sort through the limitations imposed by Covid 19. Since most of our normal activities would be non-events again this year, we reduced our membership fees for the year for both singles and couples. We continue to have requests for membership and our numbers are back up to 98, so far! Via email we were able to have our members review and approve both the 2020 financials and our 2021 budget. This allowed us to once again provide a scholarship to a student in the Faculty of Agriculture at Dalhousie.

Our dedicated community garden volunteers have been challenged in 2020 and 2021 when the allowed numbers for groups were reduced, but they persevered nonetheless. Jacquie Jordan and her crew have been trying to get the Moir Garden spiffed up between lockdowns. Once things opened up again, they were ready with new shrubs and perennials to bring more colour to an already beautiful garden. At the Cole Harbour Museum Garden, Karen Rutherford and her team operated under the same constraints. Hopefully some new tools and plants to help them out this year have made the catching up easier.

On a sad note, we lost our oldest active member this summer, Audrey Moir, just shy of 94 years young! Audrey and her husband were the creators of the Moir Garden and she worked there almost every day, weeding and pruning. It was her pride and joy. Audrey never missed an opportunity to volunteer for every event at DHS, always with a smile. She will be sorely missed.

One thing that all members have missed is our annual plant sale. It is something on which all members work, getting to know each other better and having lots of fun. We hoped to have this event again in 2021 and set two dates, in case of a cancellation. The first date was scrapped because of Covid lockdown plus it poured rain! That left us with June 12, which dawned hot and sunny.

Members had been potting up plants for the sale so we needed to make this happen. Covid guidelines nixed an in-person sale with limited access, so we went to our next scenario—our first last minute on-line plant sale at a new outdoor venue—St. Vincent de Paul Church. Members who had plants for the sale each provided lists of their plants, along with pot sizes. These lists with details and prices were spreadsheeted and uploaded to the DHS Facebook page with instructions on how to order. DHS already had an email address, so orders flowed there. Invoices were written and priced, and inventories tracked. Payments via e-transfer went directly into the DHS bank account and customers were provided an order number. On Saturday morning, pickup day, members dropped off their

plants (staying in their cars). Ten masked volunteer members organized them and then packed each order according to number. In the afternoon we had buyers drive one way to the marked pickup point, remain in their cars and wear masks, while ten more members loaded their orders into the trunk. We had many extra plants, so a “drive-by sale” was organized just past the pickup table, which enabled buyers to actually drive by, chat with members,

look at plants from their cars and purchase more. That was a lot of fun!

This sale was more about mental health, keeping members involved in the club, keeping our club name out there and doing something garden-oriented despite Covid. We sold about 700 plants, made a nice profit and also found a wonderful new venue in the process! We look forward to a real in-person sale again in 2022.



Dartmouth Horticultural Society holds a unique and very successful plant sale.

Photos submitted by Linda Mosher





The spring garden is rich with golden tones.

Photos provided by Linda Mosher



## Mount Denson Enjoys an Active Summer

by Carla Scholten, Secretary, Mount Denson Garden Club.

Like many groups, the Mount Denson Garden Club had a prolonged hiatus from March 2020 to June 2021. We were happy to be able to see one another at an outdoor plant sale on June 21 and then for a picnic on July 25, 2021, at Victoria Park, Windsor. Beautiful weather, good food and a social time was enjoyed, followed by a brief meeting for election of the executive council.

July 28 was a busy day working together for an afternoon, tending to gardens at Riverview Cemetery. Later that night, we cleaned up for a lovely evening garden tour at the home of Bruce Bowdridge. Some highlights were the unique flower garden design, the outstanding hot papaya Echinacea and the three sisters grouping in the veggie garden.

You might be familiar with the Dragonfly Haven Therapeutic Farm, owned and operated by fellow member, Charlotte Paul. This petting farm is provided to people struggling with mental health, offering animal snuggles and experience for interns. A visit on August 26 provided members with a further appreciation of her important mission.

Our Club is ramping up for an exciting year, with featured speakers and workshops. We are especially motivated to grow our membership and encourage involvement in the community.

A group of happy Mount Denson Garden Club members at the Dragonfly Haven Therapeutic Farm

Photos provided by  
Carla Scholten



Club members meander through a beautiful garden.



## Bedford Beautification

by Marlene Grigg, Secretary, Bedford Horticultural Society

In spite of COVID limitations, the Bedford Horticultural Society remained active this past spring and summer. Our annual plant sale was cancelled so our members took it upon themselves to individually sell plants and seedlings from their driveways or directly from their gardens. Sales were organized on-line to make it possible to schedule pickups, and payments were no contact. How quickly we adjust! The money raised will go towards the annual bursary awarded to a student of horticulture in 2022.

Another of our annual activities is the planting of the Cenotaph Garden at Fish Hatchery Park in Bedford. Several members worked together this year to make it happen, all practicing social distancing of course. We had one garden tour in the summer. Thanks to Alison DiLiberatore for inviting the members of the BHS into her beautiful garden.

We all look forward to a lessening of restrictions in the autumn so that we can meet in person and have some social time. In September we are planning a workshop where participants will learn how to start perennials from seed in containers that can be left outdoors over the winter.

Bedford club members bring the Cenotaph Garden to life. (top and right)  
A few weeks later the garden is thriving. (below)

Photos: Donna Burris and Pamela MacLean



## Fall River Nails It with "Priceless" Plant Sale

by Lawrence Spencer, Fall River Garden Club

We have not had a "physical" meeting so far this year but we are planning one for the end of September. We have a guest speaker lined up to talk about composting and waste reduction. Some of our members looked after our three community gardens this summer, with weeding, new plantings, mulching and a couple of men brought in to clear another area of the wooded section and add a new path.

We held our Annual Plant Sale in June and had both a large number of plants that were from members' gardens or started from seed. It was a great success, topping last year's sale. Masks were required, we had six foot markings on the sidewalk and only three to four people at a time going through—in one door and out the other. Only odd plants were named and a few members were on hand to assist buyers and there was no pricing. We simply asked for donations and people were overly generous! Be-

sides the sale at the Hall, a couple of us sold plants, mainly hostas and rhubarb as well as cut rhubarb by the street in front of our houses. This too was a great success.

In July we held a garden tour each week for members only, consisting of four of our members' gardens and another elsewhere in HRM. Some even had refreshments available and it was a great treat for the 12-16 people we had at each one.

We also gained a lot of new members this year and from our 35 or so at the beginning of the year we now stand at nearly 65 (including couples).

We will be initiating yearly dues again starting this month (\$10 per person). And we have arranged for e-transfers to our account at the Credit Union, with auto-deposit, so that should make things a lot easier for collection and recording.

## Eastern Shore Garden Club Honours Member of the Year

by Darlene Hart, Eastern Shore Garden Club

The Eastern Shore Garden club is pleased to be meeting after Covid shutdowns and is finally able to announce that their Member of the Year for 2019/20 is Mary Louise Creelman who joined the club in its infancy. Our District Director, Kathy Harvie, was at the meeting to present Mary Louise with a certificate. Mary Louise has been a dedicated volunteer, active on many committees including our Christmas Potluck, and active as the Hospitality Coordinator for our monthly meetings. Freely sharing her time and talents, from plant donations, assisting at the annual plant sale and sharing her vast gardening knowledge and more, Mary Louise is always ready and happy to lend a hand. Congratulations once again, on behalf of the Eastern Shore Garden Club.

Eastern Shore Garden Club Member of the Year  
Mary Louise Creelman cuts into a garden-themed cake.

Photo by Darlene Hart





A harvest of plums ripe for the picking

Photo by Susan Donkervoort

## A Wonderful Visit to Bear River First Nation

by Susan Donkervoort, Digby Neck and Islands Garden Club

The Digby Neck and Islands Garden Club is happy to say that all things are growing, including our club—six new members since June!

We have enjoyed many hands-on projects this summer. Club members spent a lovely evening at the Bear River First Nation and had a guided tour of the beautiful community gardens. Phyllis Harlow was our guide and shared with us what worked and what did not work. We saw everything from a pond with turtles, who have laid eggs, to bee keeping. Yes, we got to sample the wonderful honey! There were vegetables too numerous to mention and a flower garden to encourage bees to visit the area. All these activities are volunteer driven. We enjoyed coffee and snacks in the cook house and shared ideas. Everyone who attended had a wonderful evening.

Life is a garden...dig in!



Exploring the community gardens at the Bear River First Nation

Photos by Susan Donkervoort

## Book Review: Shrubs and Vines for Atlantic Canada

by Emily Walker

Todd Boland presents an interesting idea in his latest book. He says that shrubs and vines form the skeleton of a garden. So choosing the right ones is critical to achieving a garden that is both beautiful and hardy. He points out that we often plant too many shrubs too close together and not in the best locations and environments for them to thrive.

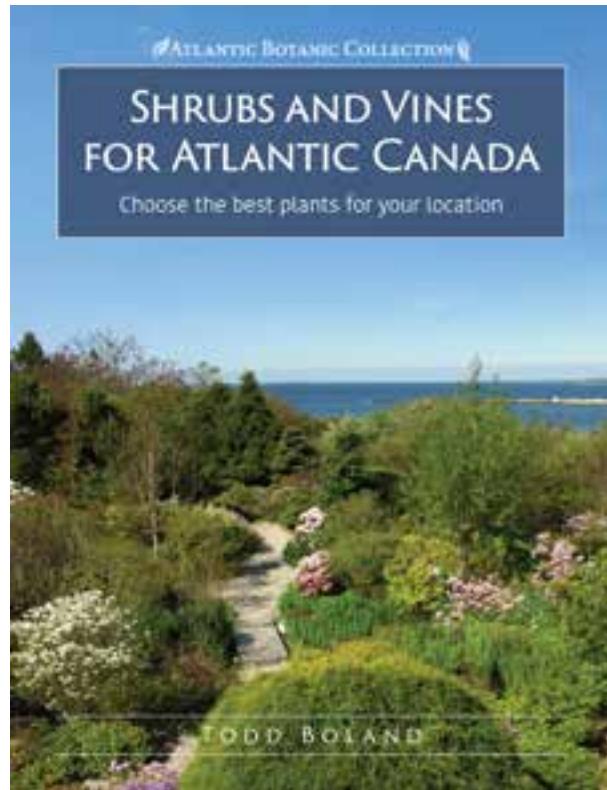
*Shrubs and Vines for Atlantic Canada* provides an easy-to-understand primer on selecting, planting and caring for shrubs and vines. The introduction to the book covers the basics such as hardiness zones (for Nova Scotia it is 5b, 6a or 6b), wind exposure, soil moisture, plant size and spread and seasonal features of the plants. He also tackles complex topics like soil types, fertilizers, mulches, winter protection, pruning and propagation.

There are several pages devoted to Boland's recommendations for shrubs and vines that are ideal for specific situations such as seaside gardens, damp sites and acidic soil; those to grow for decorative winter bark and even those that are deer resistant (very helpful for most Nova Scotians!).

The main part of *Shrubs and Vines for Atlantic Canada* is a compendium of shrubs and vines, arranged by their scientific names. In his introduction Boland examines the advantages of using scientific names and explains as clearly as any reader could wish the components of scientific naming conventions.

Each entry in the compendium contains the botanical name, common name and a description of size, characteristic shape, foliage and blooms (if any). Boland identifies the zone rating, optimum locations and conditions for planting, light and soil requirements, pests and diseases and propagation methods. (They are easier than you think!)

Todd Boland is a skilful nature photographer and has generously enhanced his book with captioned photographs that help the reader identify each type of shrub and vine. Readers will enjoy window shopping for some have-to-have additions to their gardens. They will also read with interest the profiles of plants from their own gardens. Here are



just a couple examples of fun facts:

- ♦ The corkscrew hazel, *Corylus avellana*, with its "distinct twisted stems and contorted leaves", is also known as Harry Lauder's walking stick.
- ♦ The "best deciduous shrub to grow for autumn foliage" is the *Euonymus alatus* which the reader will recognize by its common name burning bush.
- ♦ That harbinger of spring in Nova Scotia, the *Forsythia*, is named for the Scottish botanist William Forsyth, a founding member of the Royal Horticultural Society.
- ♦ Although the world contains over 400 species of holly, the most popular one in Atlantic Canada is the *Ilex X meservae*. This blue holly has both male and female gender plants with fun names like "Blue Maid" and "Blue Stallion."

*Shrubs and Vines for Atlantic Canada* is a handy addition to a gardener's reference library and a useful gift for the new homeowner who has the opportunity to make wise choices for a garden with good bones.

*Shrubs and Vines for Atlantic Canada: Choose the best plants for your location.* Todd Boland, Boulder Books, 2021, 210 pages, \$29.95

Outstanding Natural Beauty



## Chester Hosts a Winning Event: The Annual Flower Show

by Jayne Campbell, Chester Garden Club

Garden Clubs throughout the province have had to reinvent themselves during COVID-19. Meetings were cancelled and many fundraisers put on hold for at least a year. In 2021 the Chester Garden Club improvised in order to stay functional and active.

We coordinated with the Chester Farmers' Market and sold plants every Friday for the month of June. This replaced our annual plant sale. Last year we cancelled the Plant Sale and the Annual Flower Show and Tea but this year we designed the show around increasing community participation and cancelled the tea. The show was well received and attendance was beyond our expectations. Members also opened their gardens in early July for viewing to show support for the club.

Many club members were eager to try and provide support and fellowship to other members while continuing to work on their mutual garden spaces in the village each week, as well as their own gardens. Our gardens continued to give us refuge as well as rewarding experiences. A social time was incorporated again this season after our work sessions so we could chat and catch up with the news.

We encouraged members to support one another and to share with others their yard projects, flower arrangements, vegetable gardening and harvests, bird watching and garden concerns on our Facebook page. Many members are also learning a great deal from the posts by other garden clubs shared on social media. We might hate it at times but the technology certainly has gotten us through a great deal in 2020 and 2021.

The challenge will be how we move forward with enthusiasm, developing new approaches to staying viable if larger groups are discouraged. On the brighter side, more people are appreciating the beauty around them; they are growing and eating more of what they grow. Local has become more important; our gardens have been one of the safest places to be and we have had much more time to

actually smell the roses!

We have also had visits to senior members' gardens and enjoyed social time in the gardens during work sessions.



Photos provided by Jayne Campbell



The Chester Garden Club held an impressive flower show (above and left) and members collaborated to produce jars of delicious homemade jelly! (below)

Photos provided by Jayne Campbell



## The Healing Power of Gardening: the story of Philip and Hazel Lee

from Helen Cook, Yarmouth Garden Club

Few rural garden clubs can claim an international membership, but two of Yarmouth Garden Club's most active and cherished members—Hazel and Philip Lee—live in Cornwall, England, with just a "little" Atlantic Ocean between us. While the pandemic ended their annual six-month sojourn in Gardener's Mill, Yarmouth County, they are still as close as Facebook, Face Time and Zoom. Here is their story as Philip tells it:

Hazel and I met whilst serving in the Royal Navy, me as a stores assistant and she as a weather observer, and married after a whirlwind romance of seven months just before I went seagoing for 18 months. Must have been the right thing to do as we recently celebrated our 57th anniversary!

After 34 years keeping sea lanes open and not wanting to be a "office-waller", I retired at 50 and persuaded Hazel to buy a place in sunny southern France, where we spent 18 years, first in Les Montagnes Noires, where we bought a barn and converted it into *une grande maison* with an English country garden, a not infrequent attraction for the local villagers, who came to admire the flowers as if it were a country park, telling us to *ne derange pas*. When the "barn", being 40 minutes from town and ten hours from England, became a bit too much, we moved north to Valennes, where we bought a *Longere* (single-storey farmhouse with piggery and stables) on five acres, which, of course, needed complete renovation, so we set to work. We named it *La Voisinierie*. With two ponds, outbuildings, an orchard, a vegetable patch and lots and lots of flowers, we had an ideal life.

Then, tragedy. In 2007, during a swimming lesson in preparation for a scuba diving vacation with her husband and son, our 40-year-old daughter, Lynda, dropped dead in the pool from a brain aneurysm.

Compounding our devastation, everywhere we went in our garden was a rose or other plant Lynda had bought for us. Needing a distraction, we saw, by the greatest good fortune, a *Visit Nova Scotia* ad. Having read that New Scotland was both very Scottish and very French, and having grown up

with Captain Pugwash and his ship the Black Pig on children's TV, we couldn't wait to visit the real Pugwash and spend time with the Scots. Hazel's father was Scottish, and she had spent her first 15 years in Aberdeen.

I can honestly tell you that Canada is one of the greatest secrets in the universe. We came for a month, hiring a car and doing all the obligatory scenes—Peggy's Cove, Lunenburg—and our own thing, driving around the coast. We loved Yarmouth with its village feel and, after completing the circuit, including going "foreign" into New Brunswick and PEI, spent our final week back in Yarmouth, where we found people the nicest.

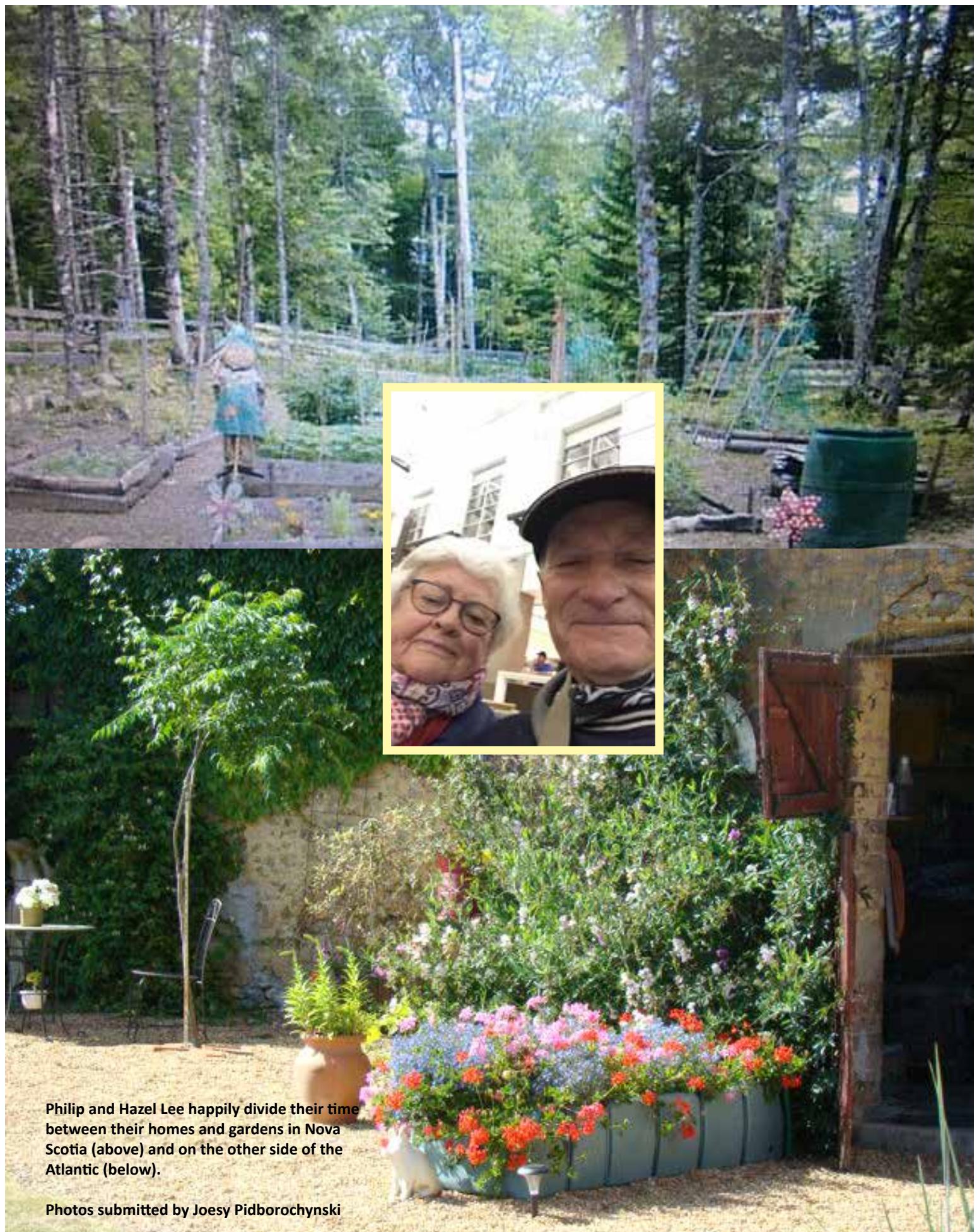
Despite our being restricted to a six-month visit and being past the age to emigrate, the next year we returned to house hunt, searching from Canso to Milton and finally back to Yarmouth, where we met realtor Mike Randall...and the rest is history!

While looking for a three-bedroom, two-bathroom house NOT in the woods NOT on a dirt road, we found our *petit coin du paradis* IN the woods ON a dirt road in Gardener's Mill. We wouldn't have had it any other way.

Janice Bowman introduced us to the garden tours, and our first happened to be in Wellington during the annual Seafest, where I talked *Clematis* with owner Liana Hood and then talked some more! Time and the kindness of garden club members have had a healing effect on us and, of course, gardening is very good for the soul.

Philip and Hazel spent ten years transforming their Gardener's Mill property with rope decorations and footpaths, several varieties of *Heuchera* framing the house and a colourful array of plants and flowers sloping down to Sisters Lake. Their charming home was always accompanied by laughter and aromas from Hazel's delicious cuisine.

As the photograph shows, it was—as one garden club member summarizes it—a nice "sampler" garden and definitely a labour of love.



**Philip and Hazel Lee happily divide their time between their homes and gardens in Nova Scotia (above) and on the other side of the Atlantic (below).**

Photos submitted by Joesy Pidborochynski

## Working Around Covid to Offer a Variety of Activities

by Jennie Sandison, President, Mahone Bay Garden Society

The Mahone Bay Garden Society presently has 72 active members. We usually meet on the second Tuesday of the month in the Mahone Bay Centre.

Our Annual Plant Sale is our only fund raiser and was held on June 19, later than we usually held it due to the Covid situation. We implemented some changes this year to keep people safe. We had a one-way system and cash payments at the individual tables to limit contact. We managed the access to the site to keep people spread out. We were very pleased with the way it all worked out and, though our take was down from previous years, it was certainly worth the effort.

The program for the year was very disrupted. We managed our Plant Swap in September 2020 at the home of Jenny Sandison but after that, as Covid cases began to rise, meetings were cancelled as was the Christmas Party which was a great disappointment.

In the new year we managed two meetings. The AGM was held in March and Jenny Sandison gave a talk on her trip to Switzerland to see the alpine wildflowers around the resort of Wengen. In April Connie Jefferson gave a wonderful flower arranging demonstration which was a real boost to everyone's spirits watching her skills at work and the glorious array of colours.

In the summer Kathy Gregoire arranged two evening tours of local gardens which, again, were a welcome activity and a time to gather.

In the spring we partnered with the town of Mahone Bay to create two new plantings at the entrance to the Aquatic Gardens. These have been successful. Over the summer members looked after the Peace Garden, the Town Hall flower bed and the flagpole plantings. Deer are a real problem nowadays—even in the heart of the town—and we are having to change some of the plants.

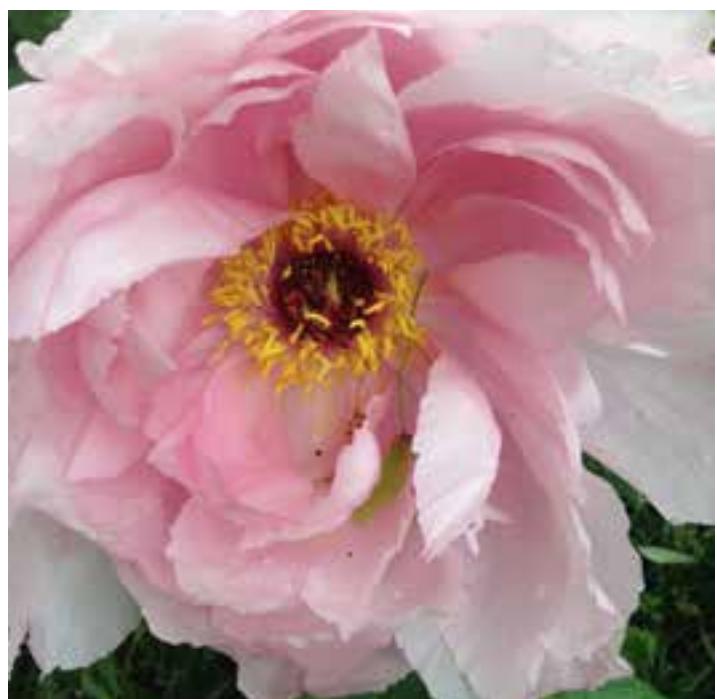
## Sackville Club Highlights

by Brenda Lapierre, Sackville Garden Club

We had a plant sale in June at my sister's place. We were able to have a meeting last Wednesday evening with guest speaker Clarence Stevens who gave a presentation about medicinal plants. We had 12 people attending. There are still a lot of folks unwilling to come to the meeting due to Covid.

In October Clarence Stevens has agreed to come once again to do a presentation on mushrooms.

Take care!



## Petunia Exserta: New kid on the block

by Emily Walker



Photo: Donna Evers

favourite colour, and the flower has a long tube that the bird can dip its bill into to reach the nectar below. The bird then carries pollen on its body as it flits from one flower to another. It is the only petunia that hummingbirds pollinate!

Planters come in all shapes and sizes. This sturdy cement frog provides an ideal home for some beautiful scarlet *Petunia exserta*. This frog makes its home in Donna Evers' garden. She grew the *P. exserta* it contains from seed she obtained from a friend. If you are interested in growing this lovely plant, search online to find sources to buy seeds.

The *P. exserta* is new to most of us. It was first identified growing in the wild in Brazil in 1987. More recent investigations have shown it is at risk for survival there as it is being crowded out by more aggressive plants and faces climate challenges.

The most interesting fact about the *P. exserta* is that hummingbirds love it! It is red, their

## Meet an NSAGC Director: Bibiane Lessard

by Bibiane Lessard, Director, District One, Cape Breton

I have lived at the same home on O'Neils Lane in North West Arm, Cape Breton, for the past 30 years. I belong to the Westmount Garden Club of which I have been president several times and am now the treasurer. I love the garden club as a place for the sharing of ideas, tricks and tips to improve our gardening skills, the exchange of plants and the joy of spending time with like-minded people.

I have developed a greater awareness and appreciation for all the time and effort that is devoted by our executive to continue to serve its members to the best of their ability. As a director, I feel I have learned that I need to keep in touch with the four clubs in District One and to provide info and encouragement, especially during this difficult time when clubs could not meet on a regular basis.

In Cape Breton, our gardening challenges are those of many—weather related and a short growing season. A plant that is highly successful in our area is the Himalayan balsam. It grows five to seven feet tall! It has profuse pink to fuchsia blooms from mid August to the first frost. It is very popular with bees and reseeds itself. Unwanted seedlings are very easily removed in the spring.

My first gardening experiences were with my mom



Bibiane tending her garden in North West Arm, Cape Breton

All photos: Bibiane Lessard

who always had a vegetable garden as well as flower beds. When I moved to Cape Breton in 1976 my husband and I purchased five acres and I started my own gardens. The joy of spending time outdoors, starting flowers and vegetables from seed and watching them germinate and flourish, gives me a sense of awe at the beauty of nature and its diversity. I do grow a bit of everything. I have an extensive perennial garden, an annual garden, a hosta garden, a bush garden and a vegetable garden. My favourite flower is *Astrantia* or masterwort which has pincushion flowers that come in a variety of colours from pink, fuchsia to green. It stands on its own, has a bush-like shape and removing spent flowers encourages rebloom. (What more could you ask for?)

I love to go to the Public Gardens in Halifax as well as the Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens. (It is just good for the soul!)

To a new gardener I would say, start small, with a few pots—flowers or vegetables. Choose plants carefully, make sure they are healthy. Water regularly and don't forget to fertilize. See how you get along. If all goes well, go bigger the following year.



*Astrantia* or masterwort



Himalayan balsam

## Meet Our NSAGC Executive: Kathy d'Entremont



Kathy and friend enjoying a sunny day in her lovely garden

### Kathy d'Entremont, NSAGC Chair 2021–2023

I live and garden near Yarmouth and have been a member of the Yarmouth Garden Club since 2014. Being totally self-taught, I initially joined the club for the educational opportunity, but it soon became a rewarding social experience. I have made lots of gardening friends over the years and have gleaned so many wonderful ideas and much pleasure from visiting their uniquely different gardens. I can only aspire to have gardens as lovely as those of Donna and Duff Evers in Hammonds Plains!

I began gardening about thirty years ago and my first endeavors were dismal failures. Before the internet was a common resource, I purchased lots of books and magazines and learned

from my mistakes. I must be a true-blue gardener because I didn't give up!

My advice for first-time gardeners is to do your homework before you turn over one shovelful of soil. Assess your space, learning where the sun rises and sets and where the shadows fall. Visit gardens in your neighbourhood and see what you like and what grows best. Analyze your soil's structure and add enrichments, if needed. Above all, don't get discouraged by setbacks—that happens to the best.

Over time, the most valuable lesson I've learned has been how to compost and feed clay soil to make it a more hospitable environment for gardening. Although I have vegetable and berry gardens, my true passion lies in ornamental gardening. More recently, my focus has shifted to native plants and providing habitat for the birds and pollinators.

In 2017, I signed on with the NSAGC as Director for Western District Seven. Then, in 2019, after serving only half of my first term, I was approached to fill the position of the Vice Chairperson that had become unexpectedly vacant. In June of 2021, I moved into the role of NSAGC Chair.

My time with the NSAGC Board has been a whirlwind experience thus far, but thoroughly enjoyable. Once again, it is the amazing people I have met and will meet that is the highlight of my volunteer experience with Nova Scotia's gardening community.

## Help Us Help You

by Pamela MacLean, Bedford Horticultural Society

**Volunteer:** *A person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task* (Oxford Dictionary)

Volunteers are essential to our communities. Volunteers play a key role in running organizations. Without them, we would not have many of the organizations that we have today, including the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, and Feed Nova Scotia. Often, as in the case of the Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs (NSAGC), volunteers are the heart and soul of the organization and are the ones who keep the organization alive. Our NSAGC Board and our individual garden clubs are completely run by volunteers. People have different reasons for offering up their time to help others or organizations but the benefits are well worth the time commitment.

When you take part in a group or organization, volunteering for a position gives you a sense of belonging. You are not just an idle bystander but you play an active role in the group. For many, volunteering also adds purpose to your life. You feel like you are accomplishing something; you have a place to go and something to do.

When you help others, you have a sense of satisfaction. You feel better about yourself. Some folks really enjoy the accolades that come along with certain tasks. It makes them feel good.

Volunteering for an organization gives you an opportunity to learn something new. When you take on a position, generally there is someone there to help you learn what is involved

in that particular position. It's life long learning at your fingertips and you don't need to go to school to do it! While you are learning, you likely will make new friends. People you know from the organization who also volunteer quickly become your friends as you navigate the organization together. If you need to look for work, volunteering provides an avenue to include a position on your resume that looks very attractive. Employers know those who volunteer make excellent employees.

We invite you, in your own community, in your group or your garden club, to join the world of volunteers. The benefits far outweigh the time spent and the friendships you make continue on throughout your life. Each person should have the opportunity to volunteer and enjoy the benefits at least one time and there is no time like the present. Your presence is required in your garden club and in other groups you have an interest in and in various areas in your community. Be a volunteer!



# Save the date!

**Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs  
2022 Convention**

✿ **Date:** Friday/Saturday  
June 10/11, 2022

✿ **Location:** Inn on Prince  
Truro, NS

✿ **Theme:** 2022 Year of the Garden

## This and That

submitted by club members



From Bernice Hartnett:

"I have been growing tree peonies for ten years. I have four: one yellow, two deep pink and one light pink. When I first bought and planted the large, light pink tree peony, one of our neighbours came over to see what it was! It really stands out in the garden!"

Tree peonies are fairly straightforward to grow. I bought mine at a local nursery. I find they grow best planted in dappled shade, receiving about four to five hours of sun each day. After they bloom, I deadhead the flowers. Each spring I add manure to enrich the soil around them.

Unlike regular peonies, with time, tree peonies develop woody stems like a shrub. Don't cut these woody stems back but allow them to remain intact.

Apparently tree peonies can live for fifty years or more!"



My tree peonies

Photos: Bernice Hartnett



Bonie Conrad writes:

"A messy garden greets me as I walk out the back door. Winds have taken down numerous small twigs and dry leaves are dropping constantly. My first temptation is to clean it up to look tidy, but gardening is not like house-keeping where sweeping can improve things. It is important to think like a forest when you garden. There are no little elves rushing about tidying up the forest floor. The fallen leaves lie and slowly break down into the magnificent compost that feeds the trees, providing both a mulch for protection and food for the thriving life in the soil below. Worms do all the real work in restoring soil, they are our very best friends. So I will blow the leaves onto the beds and leave the worms to do their work. Perhaps today I will just deadhead the roses and fill up the bird feeders."

## This and That

submitted by club members

Jocelyn Cameron, a member of the Chester Garden Club, has written the following for gardeners everywhere:

### *Gardeners' Musings*

*Gardeners, let's remember those satisfying feelings when . . .*

- . . . you pull out a weed by its roots*
- . . . you get the grass cut just before it rains*
- . . . your favorite flowers bloom just in time for a flower show*
- . . . you remember to feed those annuals in your containers*
- . . . your flower beds are all trimmed up to greet unexpected guests*
- . . . you are able to divide a plant to share with another gardener*
- . . . you finish dead-heading all the spent blooms in your garden*
- . . . the plant that looked dead bursts forth with new growth*
- . . . you get that first bloom from a transplant*
- . . . people comment on how much they enjoy visiting your garden*

### *Gardeners, never let it be said . . .*

- . . . that you neglected the care of vulnerable seedlings*
- . . . that you failed to nurture through to maturity*
- . . . that you didn't keep weeds from threatening other plants*
- . . . that you allowed the strong to overcome the weak*
- . . . that you pruned prematurely*
- . . . that you were not diligent to discard spent blooms*
- . . . that you allowed predators through the gate*
- . . . that you didn't act in a timely manner*
- . . . that you refused to remember your successes and learn from the rest*
- . . . that you failed to share your bounty*



From Emily Walker:

### How Sweet It Is Hand Scrub

Add enough lemon juice to white sugar to make a loose paste and use it to clean hands soiled from working in the garden. The sugar acts as an abrasive to remove the dirt and the lemon juice is a gentle bleach to take care of stubborn stains.

## NSAGC 2022 Photo Contest

A popular event for NSAGC garden club members is the photo contest. The new chair of the Photo Contest Committee is Lawrence Spencer. He has been working out the details of this year's contest and will present them at the October NSAGC Board meeting for approval. In the meantime, he has provided us with a glimpse of what he is planning. This list of classes is a draft only. Remember that it will still need Board approval. Here is a preview:

### Photo Contest Classes (pending Board approval)

Class 1 Life in the Garden

Class 2 Close-ups

Class 3 Colour

Class 4 Water in the Garden

Class 5 Vegetables or Fruit

Class 6 Garden Art

Class 7 Flowering Trees or Shrubs

Class 8 Fall Scene

Class 9 Landscape

Class 10 Nature in Winter

Keep an eye out for further details in the next newsletter. In the meantime, grab those cameras and phones and head outside!



# A Note from the Editor

While much of Canada endured a hot, dry summer, Nova Scotia was fortunate to receive ample rain. Our gardens loved the combination of moisture, warm nights and sunny days. Even the sides of the highways were lush with wildflowers, all blooming in a sequence of beautiful colours to lift our spirits.

It is exciting to announce the date of our upcoming convention in June 2022. Mark your calendars and look for more details in the next issue.

A big thank you goes to Kathy d'Entremont and Bibiane Lessard for their profiles—a great way to get to know them! Thanks also to Pamela MacLean for her article on volunteerism. Thank you, Helen Cook, for sending along the Lees' story. We all wish them many happy summers at their home in aptly named Gardener's Mill. And, finally, I hope you

enjoyed Jocelyn Cameron's musings as much as I did!

Were you aware that the Scotia Gardener has advertising space available for anyone who offers garden-related services or products? (See below.)

Please continue to send your suggestions, gardening tips, club information/announcements and photos to: [newsletter@nsagc.com](mailto:newsletter@nsagc.com) It is a pleasure to share them with all our club members.

Enjoy this beautiful time of the year when we put our gardens to bed for the winter.

Your Scotia Gardener friend,  
Emily Walker

**Advertise your service or product in the Scotia Gardener**

### **Fees:**

**\$25—3.5 inches by 2 inches (business card size) per issue; \$50 for four issues**

**\$50—7 inches by 4 inches per issue; \$100 for four issues**



Please contact the newsletter editor at [newsletter@nsagc.com](mailto:newsletter@nsagc.com) if you have questions about ad sizes and content options.

## 2021-2022 NSAGC Executive

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## Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs Board Current Openings

Members of the executive and the directors of the NSAGC enjoy the experience of expanding their horizons through meeting and working with gardeners throughout Nova Scotia. They also have an interest in encouraging and supporting the gardening community in their area.

The following position is open:

**Director, District 3, Central North**

More details on positions may be obtained by contacting any Board member. If you are interested in filling one of these positions or know of someone who is, please contact Pamela MacLean at: [pastchair@nsagc.com](mailto:pastchair@nsagc.com)

## Scotia Gardener: Summer 2021 Issue (Volume 21, Number 3)

Please note that the editor of the Scotia Gardener has exclusive control over the content and format of the newsletter. All information submitted for publication will be thoroughly reviewed by the editor and will be included or excluded in the newsletter at the sole discretion of the editor.

The preference is that all photographs in the newsletter are originals. Photos will be credited on the page where the photo appears or listed below.

Additional photo credits: Kathy d'Entremont's husband—page 21; Bernice Hartnett—page 18; Emily Walker—pages 1, 13, 22, 23, 25, 26

The Meadow Garden at Sime Court  
in Kingswood, Hammonds Plains  
Photos by Donna Evers

