

# The East York Garden

Bi-monthly newsletter of the East York Garden Club

July, 2004

The East York Garden Club is a member of the Ontario Horticultural Association, District 5.

Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month (except August and December) in the Stan Wadlow Clubhouse, 373 Cedarvale Avenue at 7:30 p.m. The Clubhouse is wheelchair-accessible. Visitors are always welcome.

Yearly membership fees are \$10 for a single, and \$15 for a family. To inquire about membership, contact Denise Alexander at 416-759-5736.

Visit us on the web at [www.eygc.ca](http://www.eygc.ca)

President:  
Malcolm Geast

Vice-Presidents:  
Linda Boyko  
Dawn McEachern

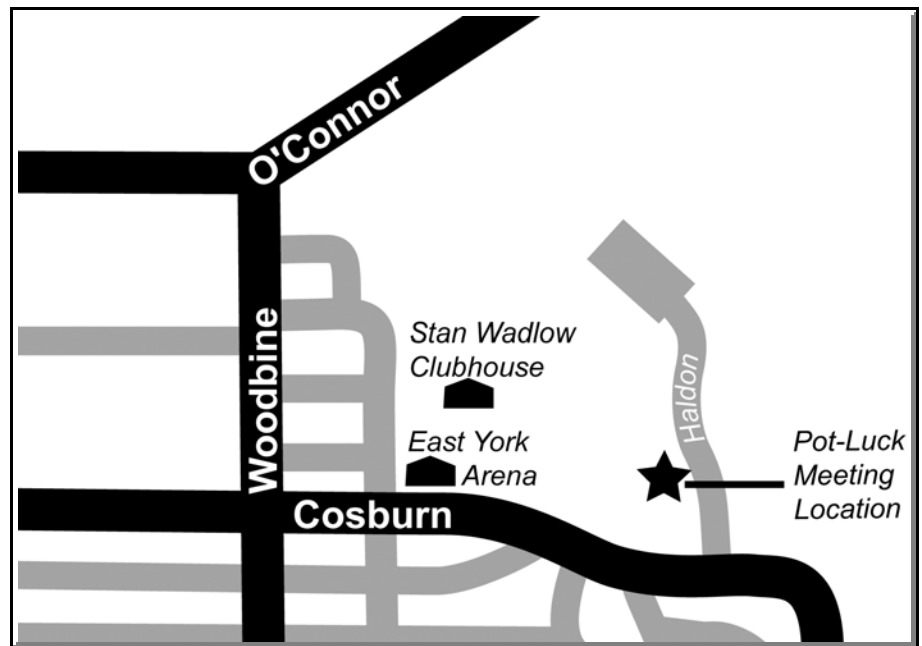
Newsletter Editor:  
Malcolm Geast  
416-429-4719

**Thursday, July 15, 2004**

## **Pot-luck supper, by The Rockery in Stan Wadlow Park**

For the past few years, our July meeting has been a pot-luck supper in a garden setting. Last year we held it in the open area above The Rockery, the public garden that the Club has adopted.. We had such a good time, that we've decided to do it again this year. This will be an opportunity to come out and meet other members, and at the same time take a close look at the recently-planted flower beds. Please bring a dish of food, with at least six portions. We also request that you bring your own plate and cutlery, and a folding chair if possible.

For information about handicapped access, please call Malcolm Geast at 416-429-4719.



## **Upcoming in August & September**

Saturday, August 28 – **Annual Flower Show & Tea**

Thursday, September 23 – **Cacti (and Other Succulents)**  
**Inside and Out**, with David Naylor



## From the President's Desk....

For me, one of the high points of this year came at our April meeting. Our speaker, Mike Maves, had the misfortune to experience a severe allergic reaction to a spider bite, and was unable to attend. However, the meeting still went ahead, as Anna Leggatt, with very little time for preparation, was able to step in with an entertaining and informative presentation on Gardens in England. How fitting then, that unknown to Anna, on this evening we had planned to honour her with a life membership in the Club.

When looking at the activities of the Club over the past three decades, one thing that stands out is Anna's involvement. Spending many of those years as a part of the Club's Executive, she was the treasurer for five years in the early 80s, the yearbook editor in the late 90s, a Vice-President for two years, and has been a part of committees for plant sales, flower shows, and special events. Currently she's also a part of the planning committee for the OHA District 5 AGM in 2005. Since 1993, she has been the Program Coordinator for the Club – it's because of her efforts that we've been able to hear from

some of the best horticultural speakers in southern Ontario. In those years in which she wasn't a part of the Executive, she still figured prominently in the Club's affairs, participating in flower shows, and providing materials for the annual shows and plant sales.

Outside of EYGC, Anna's name pops up seemingly everywhere. She has a regular column in the TBG's magazine *The Trellis*. As well, she's a frequent speaker on a wide variety of subjects at other garden and horticultural clubs, and at gardening shows. She's also a Master Gardener, and a prominent member of the Rock Garden Society and the North American Rock Garden Society.

But above all that, and what this evening demonstrated, and what stands out is that Anna can always be counted on to be there for the Club. I'm sure that all of you will join me in congratulating Anna on becoming a Life Member of the East York Garden Club.

*Malcolm Geast*

---

## May Plant Sale

Thank you to the Group of Six: Dawn, Vera, Janet, Leslie, Colleen, and Glen for their efforts in pricing and selling all the plant and accessories. It's a very stressful event for us, with customers jockeying for the best and rarest plants. It was very successful, as most plants sold, there were great deals on the garden accessories and no fist fights broke out! In all, the Club received \$285.50 from the sale of plants, with the Garden Treasures contributing another \$71.70.

Thank you to all of our generous contributors, especially those people who carefully groomed their plants. We sold some of these for as high as \$19 each.

We look forward to doing it again next year.

## Discounts!

Don't forget that one of the advantages of Club membership is the discount that's available when you're visiting some of the nurseries around the city. By showing your membership card, you'll receive a discount of 5% at Humber Nurseries. Even bigger savings are found at Bill's Garden Centre, Sheridan Nurseries, and Plant World, where the discount is 10%.

---

## Emailed Newsletters

Don't forget that, if you're interested in getting your newsletter emailed to you (instead of, or in addition to the mailed copy), drop me a line at [newsletter@eygc.ca](mailto:newsletter@eygc.ca).

## Canada Day in East York

Once again this year, we'll be participating in the Canada Day festivities at Stan Wadlow Park. We'll have a booth where we'll be selling plants and *Attic Treasures*. If you have any plants that you can donate, they can be dropped off at the booth anytime between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. *Attic Treasures* (second-hand items in good condition) can be dropped off prior to 9:00 a.m. If you're going to be away that day, but would still like to donate, items can be dropped off at Lucie Simons' house (16 Trimontium Crescent) prior to July 1.



This is often the largest fundraiser of the year for the Club. Whether you're selling or buying, we hope to see you there.

---

## RBG Rumblings

There have been numerous reports in the past several weeks that the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington is running out of money, and is about to close down. Although it is true that the RBG is experiencing financial difficulties, it doesn't appear that closure is imminent (or at least, not in the next month or two).

In a letter to the membership, the Gardens' chair noted that many years of declining support from the provincial government, combined with a disastrous year for tourism in 2003, have produced a situation in which expense-trimming cannot continue without seriously affecting the ability of the RBG to function. For example, the Arboretum is already receiving only minimal maintenance. Negotiations with the Province are taking place, with the hope that some medium-term funding will allow it time to become sustainable as a 12-month a year attraction. July 31 has frequently been mentioned as the day the doors will close for good. However, that is only the date that has been set as the deadline for hearing some positive news from the Province. Nevertheless, he notes that "the Board has to make some serious decisions" if that date passes without the assurance of extra funding.

## Community Gardening at East York Acres

As you may be aware, several members of the East York community have, for the past few months, been attempting to develop a community garden at Stan Wadlow Park. Initially it was to be a combination of vegetables and flowers, along with areas for seating and walking. The location was to be the area to the north of The Rockery, and east of the ball diamonds. Unfortunately, part way through the development process, it was discovered that that part of Stan Wadlow was, at one time, a garbage dump. Although the dump has been closed for several decades at least (no one seems to be sure how long), without expensive soil testing, it can't be used to grow vegetables. For awhile it looked like this discovery would derail the entire project. However, a new location has been found: across the street, on the East York Acres property (which is not part of the old dump site). In order to bring this project to fruition, much work needs to be done, particularly with regard to planning and design. If this is something that interests you, the next planning meeting is to be held on Tuesday, June 29 at the Stan Wadlow Clubhouse, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

## Lily Growers Beware

by Malcolm Geast

Summertime...long days, warm temperatures, and another opportunity to fight the bugs. Rapidly moving up to the top spot on the list of battle-worthy creatures is the Lily Leaf Beetle.

We've all seen various unfriendly insects in the garden, and learned to live with them. What is it about this one that results in such fear and panic? One look at a lily that has been attacked will answer that question. Most of the leaves will be completely eaten, and the plant is dotted with gooey black spots. If the infestation has been heavy enough, the stems and even the flowers will also be chewed. One of the best-looking areas in your garden will be turned into a forest of ugly green and black stalks.



Depending on which stage in its life that you see it, the Lily Beetle is either one of the most attractive or one of the most repulsive visitors to your garden. Of course, the place to look for it is on your lilies, but you'll also find it eating your fritillaries, and possibly even your Solomon's Seal. It's also been seen on Hostas and hollyhocks, but apparently it doesn't have much of an appetite for them when it gets there. You won't find them on your daylilies – instead, their taste is for the Asiatic varieties. As an adult, it's one of the better-looking insects, and is hard to miss. About the size of a ladybug, it's brilliant red with a tiny black head. But before it becomes an adult, the beetle passes through a larval stage, which is really quite revolting. It starts out looking a bit like a dark-brown slug, but its distinguishing feature is the slimy, black excrement which it carries around on its back. And just to make sure that your lilies look particularly ugly, it will occasionally leave a glob of it on the plant.

A native of the Mediterranean region, the beetle's turf now covers most of Asia and Europe. It was first identified in Canada in 1945, in Montreal. But it wasn't until the early nineties that it began to spread. Its range now includes

much of Southern Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and the northeastern states. A recent report indicated that it has leap-frogged into Alberta, arriving in mail-order shipments of lilies from Ontario.



So, how do you get rid of them? There are several pesticides that are sometimes suggested, but they are also lethal to other, beneficial, insects. Unfortunately, the only sure way to get rid of them is to pick them off one by one. The adults can be fast-moving (sometimes it seems like they can see you coming), which often makes it a bit of challenge. I haven't tested this myself, but I have heard that if you hold them up to your ear, they make a squeaking sound when squeezed. If you're going to pick off the larvae, you'll definitely need to wear gloves (you may also need a strong stomach). Obviously, if you've got a large crop of lilies, picking off hundreds of beetles can get tiresome pretty quickly. Earlier this year I read about a woman in Ottawa who finally gave up, and dug up all of her 200 lilies. In France, the beetle is kept down to a mere nuisance due to the presence of a parasitic wasp that attacks the larval stage. Attempts to introduce the wasp to North America have so far not proven successful. Another possibility, and perhaps the most promising is Neem oil, an insecticide based on oil from the Neem tree (a native of the Indian subcontinent). However, some studies have shown that for it to be effective, it must be applied every five to seven days after the eggs hatch. It also tends to temporarily hinder the plant's ability to breathe or to photosynthesize.

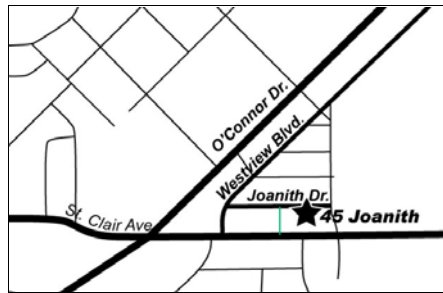
Unfortunately, since this is a black and white publication, you can't see the true colours of the adult and larva in the pictures above. However, if you have Internet access, you can take a look at them in full colour on the EYGC site. You'll find them at [www.eygc.ca/lilybeetle.html](http://www.eygc.ca/lilybeetle.html)

## Members' Garden Tour

Our members' garden tour will be continuing through July, with four more gardens to view. This is an opportunity for you to take a leisurely look at these gardens, and to meet other members of the Club.

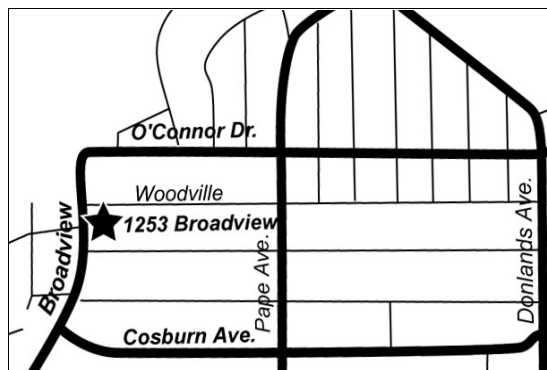
**Tuesday, July 6**  
**4:00 to 8:00 p.m.**

45 Joanith Drive  
 Betty Meyers



**Saturday, July 10**  
**1:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

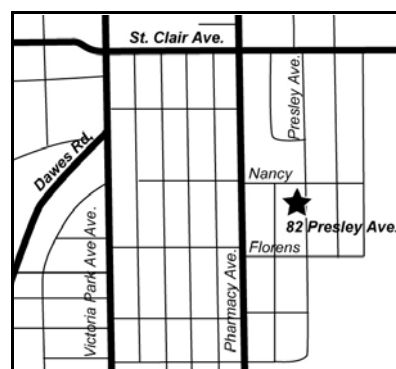
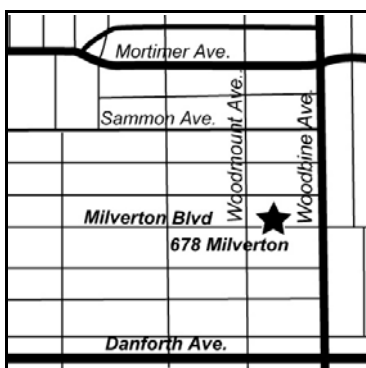
1253 Broadview Avenue  
 Margaret McRae



**Saturday, July 17**  
**1:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

678 Milverton Blvd  
 Thelma Sookman

82 Presley Ave.  
 Rosalind Regnier



At the present time, there are no gardens scheduled for viewing in August, but we hope to have one or two for you in September. If you are interested in including your garden as part of the tour, please contact Roz Regnier, at 416-759-6247.

## Tomatillos "toe-ma-tee-ohs"

by Diane Ronan

I enjoy cooking and I like to grow my own vegetables and herbs. During my Mexican phase, I found recipes that called for tomatillos. I had no idea what they looked like or where to find them.

I did my research and discovered that a tomatillo is a fruit and a close relative of the tomato. A native of Mexico, it is known as tomate verde and was cultivated hundreds of years ago by the Aztec.

I found tomatillo seeds for sale. The description on the seed packet read: "Bushy plants can reach 3 to 4 feet across, and almost as tall. Fruits are borne within golfball sized paper lanterns that split when ripe." Sounded intriguing.

So I followed the instructions; started the seeds indoors and was rewarded with healthy seedlings that I planted near my tomatoes. The plants grew and people kept asking me. "What are those things?" They started flowering and producing what looked like green Chinese lanterns. I checked the lanterns and felt marble-sized fruit growing inside. When I thought that one was big enough (about 1" across), I picked it, peeled off the papery husk and discovered a yellowish-green, smooth sticky tomato-like fruit. I washed it and tasted it. It had a sweet-tart, tangy lemon flavour. The flesh was solid and seedy.

I tried different recipes using the tomatillos and decided that I liked them best in salsa. But I also sliced some and dried them in my dehydrator. The results were delicious sweet-sour fruit chews.

Growing conditions are the same as for tomatoes – sun and adequate water. Harvest when the husk is almost full and still a greenish colour. If the husk is dry and the fruit is a transparent yellow, you lose the tangy flavour. You can store tomatillos in their husks on the counter or in the refrigerator. Do not put in an airtight container. They keep well for over a week. Remove the husks and wash the fruit before using it.

And from me to you, here's a recipe that might encourage you to grow tomatillos.

### Tomatillo Salsa

- 4 cups chopped ripe tomatoes
- 1 1/2 cups chopped tomatillos
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- 1/4 cup sliced green onions
- 3 tbsp vinegar or lemon juice
- 3 fresh jalapeño peppers (seeded and chopped) Handle the hot peppers with care.
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley or coriander
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- 1/2 tsp salt & 1/2 tsp cumin

Combine all ingredients in a large stainless steel or Teflon coated saucepan and bring to a boil. Boil for 15 minutes. Fill sterilized half-pint jars and seal. Process jars in boiling water bath for 15 minutes.



## Gardening with Glen

by Glen Hutzul

Last winter was a real killer! Many of our members lost their roses as well as their vines. I was fortunate in that the die-back in my garden was just to ground level. And, now, the new growth is thick and rapid. One shrub rose, *Boneca*, already has nine new three-foot canes.

I think that my roses' survival is due to their deep planting. Most roses are budded roses. That is, they have buds of the desired variety (e.g., Peace) inserted under the bark of a root stock. These buds form the canes (branches) of the rose. At the union of the root stock and the top variety, a bulbous crook is formed. This union should be planted below the soil surface by at least two inches and as much as four or five inches. The soil will protect the union and some the variety buds from the severe winter temperatures and from the wind. Even if all of the canes above ground freeze, there will still be buds below the soil surface. This plant technique discourages root suckering and encourages the variety to form its own roots.

Although they were frozen to the ground, all of my vines came back because they had well-established root systems. A good garden practice when planting shrubs and vines is to hard prune them (cutting them back by half). This encourages good root development in the first year or two. It's a shame that this practice has fallen out of

favour these past few years, as it might ensure plant survival in a future, harsh winter.

While speaking of roses, some of us heard a rose hybridizer speak at the District 5 Meeting in April. What was especially interesting (and encouraging) is that it is possible to have blooms from seed in one year! He said that the bloom is often large enough to show the rose's characteristics such as colour, type (single, double) and fragrance. Here's how:

Keep everything clean and sterile.

1. Remove hips from bushes in the garden before the hips freeze. Break hips and remove seeds.
2. Test the seeds by putting them in a glass of water, and discarding those that float.
3. Put seeds in damp moss in a sealed, plastic bag. Put the bag in a fridge (not a frost-free one). They will begin germinating between January and March.
4. Plant sprouting seeds individually in pots of soil or soilless mixture and put the pots under grow lights.
5. Many will bud and bloom in four to six weeks, showing their prominent characteristics. However, maturity (and complete bloom detail) will take several years. Good luck!

---

### New Members

These members have joined our club in the past couple of months. Please extend a warm welcome to them:

Sharon Crawford  
Bobbie English  
Susan Ward  
Hilary Reid

### Secretary Needed for Executive Meetings

The Club is still in need of a secretary to take minutes at its executive meetings. If you have a few spare hours, please consider volunteering for this position. We meet once a month, on the Thursday following the regular Club meeting. It's a great way to find out what goes on behind the scenes.

## Upcoming Events

July 3 & 4 (Saturday & Sunday)

**The Canadian National Rose Show** at Scarborough Town Centre Hosted by the Greater Toronto Rose & Garden Society, the Canadian National Rose Show will be held on the Centre's Lower Level.

Sunday, July 4

**Agincourt Garden Tour** A self-guided tour of several gardens in the Agincourt area. Runs from noon to 5:00 p.m. Tickets are \$5. For tickets, contact Bruce Vodden at 416-298-0984 or by email at brucevodden@hotmail.com

July 10 & 11 (Saturday & Sunday)

**Marion Jarvie's Open Garden** at 37 Thornheights Road, Thornhill Every year Marion Jarvie opens her garden up for viewing for two weekends. Runs from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, July 11

**Beaches Garden Tour** This year's tour includes nine lovely but varied gardens. Runs from noon to 5:00 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and are available at Bill's Garden Centre (903 Pape), East of Eliza (1960 Gerrard E), Gardenscape (2010 Queen E), and Moss (2191 Queen E). For further info, contact Susan Martin at 416-463-8205

Sundays, July 11, 18, & 25

**Toronto Island Garden Tours** Ten or more private gardens will be open to the public and the gardeners will answer your questions. Runs from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. Different gardens will be open each Sunday. Tickets are \$6 for adults, \$2 for children, and are on sale at the Island Archives at 5 Ojibway Avenue on Algonquin Island. For further information, call 416-203-0921 or 416-537-5006

Saturday, August 7

**Toronto Iris Society Auction and Sale** at the Toronto Botanical Garden For information, contact Verna Laurin at 416-225-1088

Wednesdays & Sundays in July & August

**Historic Garden Tours at Spadina House** Join knowledgeable gardening staff on guided tours through the glorious gardens of Spadina Museum. Included with regular admission. Tours start at 1:30 and 3:30 p.m.

### 2004 Membership Form

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Postal Code ..... Phone # .....

email: .....

Fees: Single \$10.00 Family \$15.00

Membership fees are due by January of each year. Fees can be paid in person at the next monthly meeting, or by mailing this form and a cheque (payable to "The East York Garden Club") to:

East York Garden Club  
18 Warvet Crescent  
East York, Ontario  
M4B 1P3