

GROWING



TOGETHER

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A member of the Ontario Horticultural Association

The theme of this season's newsletter is Thinking Ahead. So, it's not too soon to begin looking ahead to 2009's plant sale. Wait until you read how a Keene woman singlehandedly annually raises upwards of \$10,000 at her plant sale, for The Hospital for Sick Children.

FALL 2008

Amazing Janet

We all know someone who is a Type A personality, but have you ever met anyone who is a Type AAA? That's the best way I can describe Janet Nelson of Keene. After her son's bout with cancer in infancy, [he's now a healthy young adult] Janet came up with a way of giving back to "Sick Kids". What began as a small plant sale grew over the years into a huge event which nets correspondingly huge amounts of money. After reading about her in *Birds and Blooms* magazine I decided to interview her, hoping she would share her successful methods with our club. Here is her recipe for success:

She saves square pots from year-to-year in uniform sizes. In April people begin bringing her bags of plants dug from their gardens. With a load of good soil nearby she works inside her garage potting plants. As soon as she has a full tray of potted plants she puts them on her driveway and front lawn, where the sale is held. The plants continue to arrive throughout the month, with the potted plants soon filling the driveway, then every bit of her front yard until there is no more room and the place looks like a garden centre. Janet says she spends a whole month potting all day every day. She prefers to do all the potting herself so that the plants have a uniform, garden centre appearance. She has never calculated the number of plants she pots every year but only describes it as MANY!!!

All her plants are conveniently priced at either two, four or six dollars. She lines her plants up in sections, with large, easy to read signs describing the plant and its care. She does not label plants individually, but provides popsicle sticks for people to write down information. Janet also knows the importance of chatting with people at her sale to make sure they know what they are buying and how to care for their purchases.

For a few days before and on the day of her sale, always held on Mother's Day, she receives assistance from friends and family. Although Mother's Day is her *big* day, her plants are available throughout the month of May. Her family is very understanding about sacrificing their driveway and front lawn every year. Over the years she has also built birdhouses, trellises, obelisks and patio stones imprinted with rhubarb, to offer for sale. Local newspapers and radio stations provide free advertising.

Janet is a dynamic, amazingly talented and generous person, a one-woman show, who has found the secret to having a very profitable plant sale. Her best advice for us is to challenge every member to provide a minimum of 20 plants for our sale. So, if 100 members would each provide 20 plants, even at \$2.00 each, we would net a cool \$4000. Janet makes it sound so easy. JG

CHS meeting September 3
7:30 Columbus Centre
to meet friends &
hear well-known artist/gardener
Kathryn McHolm speak on
Seeds : Gathering, Self-Sown
and Attracting Birds

President: Dilys Robertson
Treasurer: Judy Harris

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Editorial: Judith Goulin

Secretary: Sue Speirs
Newsletter Layout: Vikki McEachran

Thinking Ahead

You probably wonder why the autumn issue of *Growing Together* is devoted to next spring's plant sale... Here is where the **Thinking Ahead** part comes in. There's a lot we can do **right now** to prepare for CHC's Annual Plant Sale 2009:

The four main reasons for dividing perennials are to control the size of the plants, to help rejuvenate them, to increase their number **and to support our plant sale!** Dividing and replanting keeps rapidly spreading perennials under control. Dividing will rejuvenate old plants, keeping them vigorous and blooming freely. Dividing perennials is an easy and inexpensive way to gain additional plants for your garden or to share.

In general, it is best to divide spring and summer blooming perennials in the fall, and fall bloomers in spring. By dividing the plant when it is not flowering, all the plant's energy can go to root and leaf growth.

Never divide perennials on hot, sunny days. Wait until a cloudy day, ideally with several days of light rain in the forecast.

Most perennials should be divided every three to five years. Some perennials such as chrysanthemums and asters may need to be divided every one or two years or they will crowd themselves into non-flowering clumps of leaves and roots. Bleeding hearts and peonies may never need to be divided unless you want to increase your stock.

Signs that perennials need dividing are flowers that are smaller than normal, centers of the clumps that are hollow and dead, or when the bottom foliage is sparse and poor. Plants that are growing and blooming well should be left alone unless more plants are wanted.

A BIG THANKS to Suzanne Anderson for her time and energy in convening both of our shows this year and her assistants: **Rita Tennant, Irene Flood, Carol Evans, Lorrain Prawecki** [advance apologies if anyone has been forgotten] and a **BIG THANKS to Ann Hancock** for preparing delightful refreshments.

- Divide your perennials now. Plant the divisions in pots and sink these in your garden at ground level. If you don't have space in your garden, another club member can give you some space.
- If you don't have plants to divide, offer to help other members divide their plants, either now or in the spring. It is a fact that many gardeners get tired of dividing and potting long before they run out of plants.
- Find someone whose garden needs thinning out and offer to help them divide. Pot the divisions for the sale.
- Plant perennial seeds in pots.
- Offer to help divide plants at the Victoria Park Rose Garden and the Five Corners Garden.



CHS members showcase their talents at the August Flower and Vegetable Show

The following chart on when and how to divide some common perennials should be helpful.

Astilbe (<i>Astilbe</i>)	Every 2 to 3 years as plants become crowded. Early spring or fall.	Spreading root division. Needs division for best bloom.
<u>(Bearded Iris)</u> (<i>Iris</i>)	Every 3 to 4 years. After flowering up to September.	Rhizome root division.
Beebalm (<i>Monarda</i>)	Every 3 years to control rampant growth. Spring or fall.	Spreading root division.
Bellflower (<i>Campanula</i>)	Every 2 to 3 years or as the plant becomes crowded. Spring or early fall.	Spreading root division.
Black-eyed Susan (<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i>)	Every 3 to 4 years. Early spring or fall.	Spreading root division.
Blanket Flower (<i>Gaillardia grandiflora</i>)	Every 1 or 2 years to maintain vigor. Early spring.	Spreading root division.
<u>Chrysanthemum</u> (<i>Chrysanthemum</i>)	Every year or two. Spring.	Spreading root division.
<u>Daylily</u> (<i>Hemerocallis</i>)	Every 3 to 6 years or as desired to increase stock. Spring, summer or fall. Ideal time is after bloom is finished.	Divide fleshy roots into segments with roots. Divisions with three or more shoots will bloom sooner.
<u>Garden Peony</u> (<i>Paeonia</i>)	For plant increase, rarely needs division. Divisions may wait up to 3 years before blooming. September or October.	Divisions should have three to five well-developed eyes (buds for next year's growth). Plant peonies with the eyes no deeper than 1 inch below the surface.
Garden Phlox (<i>Phlox paniculata</i>)	Every 3 to 4 years. Early spring or fall.	Spreading root division.
<u>Hosta</u> (<i>Hosta</i>)	Rarely need division and will reach their best form if not divided too often. They can be divided as needed for plant increase. Early spring or early fall.	Fleshy root division. Divide into clumps with one to three eyes. A wedge can be taken from an established plant, which will soon fill back in.

Lambs-ear <i>(Stachys byzantina)</i>	Every 2 to 3 years. Spring or early fall.	Spreading divisions. Discard weak centers.
Purple cone-flower <i>(Echinacea)</i>	Every 4 years. Spring or fall.	Spreading root division.
Yarrow	Every 2 or 3 years or when center dies out. Spring or fall.	Spreading root division.

What to Do in the Garden This Fall

SEPTEMBER

- Divide perennials
- Plant spring bulbs
- Plant evergreens
- Bring in houseplants and tender perennials
- Keep evergreens and shrubs adequately watered

OCTOBER

- Continue planting spring bulbs
- Plant garlic when the temperature cools
- Dig, dry and store summer bulbs
- Spread compost on beds and dig in
- Rake leaves and place in compost
- Prepare and dig new beds

NOVEMBER

- Start winterization procedures for plants requiring protection
- put away hoses and garden equipment
- Continue watering evergreens and shrubs
- Protect young trees and shrubs from rodents and other animals
- Turn off outside water taps for winter

Discovery

Everyone knows that nothing delights a gardener more than discovering a new plant species. My latest find is a night-blooming Evening Primrose [*Oenothera*] which unfolds before my eyes at dusk. As if watching a beautiful four inch yellow flower open in the space of a minute isn't delightful enough, soon thereafter a large white moth may come along to pollinate it.

Because there are about 125 flowers in the *Oenothera* family, it is hard to identify the less common ones. My Evening Primrose, which may be *Oenothera erythrosepalia*, does not even hint that it might open on a given evening until at dusk a yellow tip suddenly appears on the bud. This is the signal that the flower is about to begin unfolding its delicate petals in slow motion.

The Sphinx Moth, more commonly known as the Hummingbird Moth, looks so much like a nocturnal hummingbird that it is easy to be fooled, except that hummingbirds don't fly at night. The moth sips nectar using his long feeding tube, feeding mid-air on whirring wings just like a hummingbird.

I first learned of the existence of the night-blooming Evening Primrose while vacationing in Arizona, but I was unable to find either its botanical name or seeds. Imagine my delight when I found it at a plant sale in Grafton last year. The foliage of this plant is narrow and lance-shaped, reminiscent of a thin dandelion leaf

At the end of the season this annual develops a seed capsule which, I suspect, bursts and propels seed, judging by the number new plants which appeared in my garden this year. **Thinking Ahead**, look for this exquisite and interesting Evening Primrose in our club's plant sale next year.