



Trowel Talk!

March, 2014

Branching out

When I think of trees, I first think of those that grew naturally on the prairies. They were mostly poplars, relatives of aspens. They provided shade, wind protection, firewood, fence poles and "recreation". Recreation included swings, tree climbing and viewing birds' nests and their contents. Occasionally our poplars provided a good hideout from household duties and vengeful siblings.



Photo Mary Ann Van Berlo

Malus hybrids (crab apples) at the Central Experimental Farm provide flowers, fruit, shade, and for the winter landscape, an interesting branch structure.

Today we usually get to choose our trees, and with proper care, they last a long time. We can still climb them, sit under them, build tree houses in them, and attach swings to them. At the same time they continue to provide us with cleaner air, privacy, and

lofty backdrops for our houses, yards and gardens.

In exchange for these generous benefits they ask only that we guard against bugs and diseases, create a good planting environment, water them during droughts, and provide a little fertilizer. This is not a lot to ask in such a long-term relationship.

If you are looking for a tree, here are a few tips to help you choose.

Find out about zone hardiness for whatever tree you are thinking of purchasing. Trees that are marginally hardy may survive a series of mild winters or do well in a specially prepared microclimate. Otherwise they will have a struggle and may not perform the way you want them to.

Some trees are more vulnerable to insect and disease problems than are others. If you have your heart set on some of these you will need to be vigilant and deal with such problems quickly. That means more work and sometimes heartbreak if you eventually lose a tree. However, you may be able to find cultivars of a given tree that are resistant to such attacks.

Sometimes trees are just plain messy, managing to drop something throughout the growing season. This, too, means more work. This is okay if you have the time and the inclination for lots of raking and tidying, and - if you like birds, well, birds will appreciate all the fruits and berries that are left for them.

Those nice little trees that your friends give you, or that you purchase on a whim at the local nursery, may grow like Jack's beanstalk. A little research can save you a lot of trouble later on. Planted too close to your house, in no time at all, they may block a window and the view that goes with it. And tree roots are not always compatible with foundations or septic installations.

Finally, ask yourself why you want trees? Are they to provide shade during the summer? Will they act as a wind-break? Do you want brilliant colour in the fall? Do you want all year round greenery? Do you want

them to produce blooms and fruit? Do you need an ornamental stand-alone tree? Answering these questions will help you to make successful choices.

"A little research" may take a while but then you won't have to live with costly mistakes in years to come. Your local library, bookstores, web sites, garden experts, and the experience of neighbours and friends can all be of help. Besides catalogues, I use four main sources to help me make my tree choices: Reader's Digest Illustrated Guide to Gardening in Canada; Trees in Canada, John Laird Farrar; Gardening with Trees and Shrubs, Trevor Cole; and Favourite Trees and Shrubs, Lois Hole.



Photo Roy Falconer

Shade is welcome in any backyard.

A quick romp through these references will tell you which trees are salt-resistant, which are drought tolerant and which require a lot of moisture. In addition they will indicate which trees are comfortable in acidic soil, and sun and shade conditions. Happy tree hunting!

Edythe Falconer
Master Gardener

Trowel Talk!

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- Editor: Mary Ann Van Berlo
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Event of note!

Garden Design Workshop (beginner level)

Hosted by Master Gardeners of
Ottawa-Carleton

April 26, 2014

Ottawa, Ontario

Space is limited.

Registration is required.

For more info, click [here](#).



Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton

Where to find us this month for free gardening advice!

ONGOING:

Telephone Help Line: 613-236-0034

- Wednesday and Thursday 1-3 pm (all year)

E-mail Help Line: mgoc_helpline@yahoo.ca

- monitored daily

- send photos of garden pests, diseases or plants for ID

CLINICS:

March 20-23, 2014 – Ottawa Home & Garden Show – Ernst & Young Centre, 4899 Uplands Drive, Ottawa – Visit us at our booth. We'll be there all weekend at this annual spring show, to answer your gardening questions.

Rare & Unusual Plant Sale: Sunday, May 11 9am-1pm, Parking lot beside the Neatby Building, Carling at Maple Drive, Central Experimental Farm

Red Trillium Studio & Garden Tour, May 10-11, 10am-5pm
MGOC advice clinic & plant sale at 112 Terraview Drive, Kinburn.

Byward Market: Saturdays, May through June (10 am – 2 pm)

Parkdale Market: Saturdays, May through June (10 am – 2 pm)

Carp Market: Saturdays, May through June (9 am – 1 pm)

SPEAKING EVENTS & WORKSHOPS:

FRIENDS OF THE FARM LECTURE SERIES:

Individual Lectures: FCEF members \$12, non-members \$15

Lecture series (5 lectures) FCEF members \$50, non-members \$60

Building 72, Arboretum, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa

Register at: 613-230-3276 or by e-mail info@friendsofthefarm.ca

Vegetable growing possibilities in the Urban Landscape – April 8 – 7:00 pm
Judith Cox, Master Gardener

Practical Pruning Techniques – April 29 – 7:00 pm

Lee Boltwood, Master Gardener

Trouble in Paradise: Common garden pests and diseases – May 13 – 7:00 pm
Caroline Dabrus, Master Gardener

Water Gardening – the Final Touch to your Landscape – May 27 – 7:00 pm
Diane McClymont Peace, Master Gardener

Spring Bulbs – an Essential for every Garden – September 9
Mary Ann Van Berlo, Master Gardener

10 Metre Diet, Intro to Backyard Organic Food Production – March 17 – 6:30pm
Carliingwood Branch, Ottawa Public Library, 281 Woodroffe Ave, Ottawa
Tom Marcantonio, Master Gardener
Hosted by Ottawa Public Library (no registration required)

10 Metre Diet, Intro to Backyard Organic Food Production – March 24 – 6:30pm
Carliingwood Branch, Ottawa Public Library, 281 Woodroffe Ave, Ottawa
Tom Marcantonio, Master Gardener
Hosted by Ottawa Public Library (No registration required)

10 Metre Diet, Intro to Backyard Organic Food Production – April 2 – 7:00pm
Centrepointe Public Library, 101 Centrepointe Dr, Ottawa
Tom Marcantonio, Master Gardener
Hosted by Ottawa Public Library ([Registration required](#))

Tips for Pruning Shrubs – April 10 – 7:00pm
Greely Branch, Ottawa Public Library, 1448 Meadow Drive, Greely
Diane McClymont Peace, Master Gardener
Hosted by Ottawa Public Library ([Registration required](#))

Lessons from My Big Fat Garden Reno – April 12 – 2:00pm
Sunnyside Branch, Ottawa Public Library, 1049 Bank St, Ottawa
Rebecca Last, Master Gardener
Hosted by Ottawa Public Library ([Registration Required](#))

March TO DO List

- Check bulbs & tubers that are in cold storage for signs of rot OR if you've used peat moss to store them, check the moisture level of the peat moss and if it is too dry, add a bit of water to moisten it slightly. If they've started to show signs of growth, and if you have space, pot them up for an early start.
- Sow vegetable seeds such as peppers, tomatoes or eggplant indoors and grow under lights
- As the snow starts to melt, start the spring clean-up of branches and any trash that might have blown in. This assumes the ground is still frozen. Avoid walking on the soil as it defrosts and is water saturated; this can cause soil compaction.
- Fruit trees and grape vines can be pruned now.
- If you have a gardening or plant identification question, ask a Master Gardener (contact information to the right).

Tip of the Month

Further to our cover article, here are some trees that are worth considering for your yard:

SS = small space

MSI = multiple season interest

BRD = source of food for birds

POL = pollution tolerant

SHL = prefers a sheltered location



Abies koreana (Korean fir) [photo above](#) – SS, MSI

Acer tataricum subs. ginnala (amur maple) – SS, MSI

Acer palmatum 'Bloodgood' or *Acer palmatum* 'Emperor I' (Japanese maple cultivars) – SS, MSI, SHL

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Acer pseudosieboldianum (Korean maple) – SS, MSI

Acer x freemanii 'Jeffersred' (autumn blaze maple) – MSI

Amelanchier arborea (downy serviceberry) & *Amelanchier canadensis* (Canadian serviceberry) – SS, MSI, BRD, POL

Betula nigra (river birch) & *Betula alleghaniensis* (yellow birch) – MSI

Carya ovata (shagbark hickory) – MSI

Cercidiphyllum japonicum (katsura) – SS, MSI

Cercis canadensis (eastern redbud) – SS, MSI, SHL

Cladrastis kentukea (American yellow-wood) – SS, MSI

Cornus alternifolia (pagoda dogwood) – SS, MSI, BRD

Corylus americana (American hazel nut) – SS, MSI, BRD (requires two cultivars to cross pollinate/produce nuts)

Cotinus coggygria (smoke bush) & *Cotinus coggygria* 'Royal Purple' (purple smoke bush) – SS, MSI, SHL

Crataegus laevigata 'Crimson Cloud' (crimson cloud hawthorn) – SS, MSI, BRD

Fagus sylvatica 'Purpurea pendula' (purple fountain beech) – SS, MSI, SHL



Ginkgo biloba 'Princeton Sentry' (maidenhair tree) **photo above** – SS, POL

Hamamelis virginiana (American witchhazel) – SS, MSI

Heptacodium miconioides (seven-son flower) – SS, MSI, BRD

Larix kaempferi (Diana larch) – SS, MSI

Malus 'Dolgo' (Dolgo crab apple) – SS, MSI, BRD

Ostrya virginiana (ironwood, hop-hornbeam) – SS, POL, BRD

Pinus flexilis 'Vanderwolf's Pyramid' (limber pine) – SS, MSI



Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton

Continued

Thugs, Bullies and Sneaks (Plants to be wary of) – April 14 – 7:00pm
Rosemount Branch, Ottawa Public Library, 18 Rosemount, Ottawa
Rebecca Last, Master Gardener
Hosted by Ottawa Public Library ([Registration Required](#))

All from a Little Seed (Starting seeds) – April 15 – 7:30pm
Pretty Street Community Centre, corner of Pretty St & Orville St, Stittsville
Rebecca Last, Master Gardener
Hosted by the Stittsville Goulbourn Horticultural Society – Guest fee \$4

Tips for Keeping Indoor Orchids Healthy – April 15 – 7:00pm
Osgoode Branch, Ottawa Public Library, 5630 Osgoode Main St, Osgoode
Diane McClymont Peace, Master Gardener
Hosted by Ottawa Public Library ([Registration required](#))

Planters for Colour, Enjoyment & Food – April 17 – 7:00pm
Manotick Branch, Ottawa Public Library, 5499 South River Rd, Manotick
Diane McClymont Peace, Master Gardener
Hosted by Ottawa Public Library ([Registration required](#))

Insects in the Garden! Positive and Negative – April 28 – 7:30pm
Meredith Centre, 23 chemin Cecil, Chelsea
Mary Shearman Reid, Master Gardener
Hosted by the Gatineau Valley Gardeners – Guest fee \$5

All from a Little Seed (Starting seeds) – April 28 – 7:00pm
Carlingwood Branch, City of Ottawa Public Library, 281 Woodroffe Ave, Ottawa
Rebecca Last, Master Gardener
Hosted by Ottawa Public Library – ([Registration required](#))

Renovating an Older Garden – May 6 – 7:30pm
Old Town Hall, 821 March Road, Kanata
Mary Shearman Reid, Master Gardener
Hosted by the Kanata March Horticultural Society – Guest fee \$5



For information on arranging a lecture for your group: speakers@mgottawa.mgoi.ca
For more information on Master Gardeners, visit us at: <http://mgottawa.mgoi.ca>



Ptelea trifoliata (common hop tree) – SS, MSI



Picea omorika (Serbian spruce) **photo above** – SS, MSI, POL

Quercus macrocarpa (Bur oak) – MSI

Prunus virginiana 'Shubert' (Shubert chokecherry) – SS, MSI, BRD

Quercus robur 'Fastigiata' (columnar English Oak) & *Q. robur* 'Crimson Spire' (crimson spire columnar oak) – SS, MSI

Sambucus canadensis (American elderberry) SS, MSI, BRD

Sorbus americana (American mountain ash) & *Sorbus decora* (showy mountain ash) – SS, MSI, BRD

Syringa reticulata (Japanese lilac) – MSI, POL

Thuja occidentalis (northern white cedar) – SS, MSI

Ulmus americana (American or white elm) – MSI