

BATH GARDENING  
CLUB NEWSLETTER  
-SPRING 2023

INSIDE  
THIS  
ISSUE

PG. 2-3

Welcome New Members!  
Spring Colours Coming to Town!

PG. 3-7

The Great Tuber Experiment; Grow  
Your Garden Using Hydroponics

PG. 7-8

Partnering with the Township and  
Local Businesses to Create a Better  
Bath

PG. 8-9

Nurturing Your Christmas Cactus

PG. 9-10

Spring Meetings: Come Join Us!

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## THINK SPRING! NEW MEMBERS; NEW COLOURS

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We are beginning to think about spring!

After a wonderful fall and a Christmas celebratory lunch at the O'Connor Tea Room in December, we now turn our thoughts to a new year, gardens, growth, and partnerships with the greater community.

A warm welcome to our new Club members:

Kim Bonner  
Marjory Brunsdon  
Linda Dishy  
Judith Gould  
Margaret Maciver  
Donna Mills  
Keith McIlvanie  
Irene Oudyk-Suk  
Anna Salmon  
Esther Quirt

We look forward to getting to know and work with our new members on a variety of Club and community projects. Our Club membership now stands at 93 with 10 new members. Last year Club members volunteered a total of 1325 hours. This works out to approximately \$20,000 of paid work at a minimum wage. In all of Ontario, clubs contributed over \$4,500,000 of value last year. This is how we justify our requests for grants to the provincial government. We need your continued participation in order to flourish as a Club and to help our village move forward. No job is too little. Every job is important.



The village flowers have been ordered! They are currently being nurtured in the Sun Harvest greenhouses ([sunharvest.ca](http://sunharvest.ca)) and they will be ready for planting at the end of May. Our selection of flowers for 2023 was based on previous successes and the need to continually look for more drought resistant species. We also are aware that we need to nourish the soil in our barrels, planters, and gardens with moisture retention materials. This will require the inclusion of compost, coconut coir, clay marbles and topping with new soil in our garden areas where needed. We felt that more time needs to be spent understanding and acting on the needs of specific plants in terms of weeding and watering for our flowers to thrive.

As in the past, the village will be awash with colour. Flowers and plants will include Cannas, Supertunias, Geraniums, Scavola, Cleomes, Vinca (the official flower of Bath), Impatiens, Begonias, Sweet Potato Vine, and Portulaca. The bridge will include more perennials, rocks and perhaps hostas in the shadier areas. 347 plants have been ordered and will be planted in 42 large barrels, 10 small barrels, 5 planters, the gardens at the north and south bridges, Museum, Post Office and at Schell’s Market. We thank everyone who has already volunteered to work on our village gardens.



## THE GREAT TUBER EXPERIMENT BY SUSAN, DAVE, VAL, SYLVIA AND JANICE



In the last newsletter it was reported that many of the canna tubers were harvested from the barrels during our fall clean-up. The tubers were distributed to the above gardeners, who we know have taken great care to pamper them over the winter before planting them in the early spring. Stay tuned for an update and perhaps a picture or two of the results of their labour.



## HYDROPONICS: HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Our January Meeting was attended by 28 members and 8 guests.



During this meeting the Gardening Club was very pleased to welcome Pierre Spenard and Brian McLeod of Limestone City Hydroponics for a very informative presentation and discussion about hydroponics. We learned that even though the word 'hydroponics' suggests that the growing medium is limited to water, it is not so! Brian and Pierre spoke about using coconut coir, sphagnum moss and soil along with a variety of fertilizers that could be used in conjunction with water to grow healthy, robust plants in a relatively short time. Our guests introduced

us to The Kratky Method, a quick and easy method for growing kale, lettuce, spinach, and a variety of herbs in a relatively small growing area... on a deck, in an apartment for example. This is a great method if we do not have or want to have a huge garden, yet we want to enjoy eating the fruits of our labour. Here are a few details of the process.

The Kratky method involves water, but not a pump, so the material required is easily obtainable. Seeds are not used in this method. Leaves that have begun to root are ideal.

Materials needed:

- **A container/reservoir.** The size of container that you choose will depend on how large the plants are and how big you want your Kratky system to be. A milk jar works if the plants grown are small. A seed tray, storage bin or a bucket are also viable options.
- **A lid.** The lid is very important. It helps to prevent pests and disease from getting into the water and prevents water in the container from evaporating. The lid supports the 'net pots' so that most of the roots are submerged in the water but the leafy part of the plant remains dry. If your container already has a lid, no need to get another. If the container has no lid, a piece of Styrofoam that covers the lid securely is an option.



- **Net pots.** These vary in size depending on the size of the plant you are growing. A 3-inch diameter net pot is sufficient for lettuce for example.

For more information on net pots, check out the following: <https://www.greeneryretail.com/post/how-to-choose-the-best-net-pots-for-your-hydroponics-system>

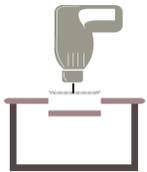
- **pH measurement tools.** A pH meter checks the acidity and alkaline level of your water. A correct pH level is important because **it affects the nutrient assimilation of your growing plants.** A pH level that is too high or alkaline can prevent nutrient uptake and lead to deficiencies in the plant. On a pH measurement tool, the number "seven" is considered neutral or balanced between acidic and alkaline. If water is below 7 on the pH scale, it is "acidic." If the pH level is **higher than 7**, it is described as being "alkaline." Products are available to help balance the pH level of the water so that the most advantageous balance is achieved for the particular plants that you are growing.
- **Growing medium.** Clay marbles are a good medium as they provide aeration and have a neutral pH.
- **Hydroponic nutrient.** All plants need nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium to grow. However, to achieve the best results, plants need these three main nutrients supplied in specific ratios suited to their individual needs. The importance of these three macronutrients cannot be overstated, and you will often see references to the NPK ratio, which stands for nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K) using their symbols from the periodic table of elements. When deciding on a fertilizer or plant feed for your hydroponic lettuce for example, you will want to find one with a reasonably balanced NPK

ratio, one where the three numbers representing the nutrients are roughly the same, such as 5-5-5, or 3-3-4. Check out the label on the container. You might also consider a ratio that is higher in nitrogen. Nitrogen is the main nutrient responsible for leaf growth and is therefore important to the development of lettuce plants. The best hydroponic nutrients for lettuce will also include micronutrients in trace amounts. Some of the most important micronutrients for growing lettuce are boron, copper, iron, and manganese. Nutrients in liquid form which dissolve easily are best used in hydroponics.

For more information on the “NPK” ratio check out the following site:

<https://www.bacfertilizers.com/mineral-fertilizer/nutrients-for-hydroponics/best-hydroponic-nutrients-for-lettuce>

## 6 Steps to setting up your Kratky System:



**Step 1:** After you have chosen a tight-fitting lid for your container (plastic or Styrofoam), drill holes in the top large enough to hold the net pots.



**Step 2:** Fill your container with water.



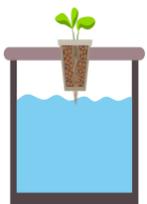
**Step 3:** Add the nutrients that are suggested for the particular plant that you will be growing.



**Step 4:** Check the pH level of your solution with the pH meter. If it is within 5.5 to 6.5, the nutrient solution is acceptable.



**Step 5:** Adjust the pH level with the pH kit if it drifts out of the recommended range.



**Step 6:** Place the net pot with growing media (clay marbles), and plants onto the drilled lid. Keep parts of the roots hung freely in the air, and the other parts sunk into the nutrient solution. Plants roots are partly submerged into the water and partly exposed to the air. This ensures that plants are exposed to water as well as oxygen.

For fast-growing plants, like lettuce, kale, spinach and herbs, the time to harvest is often reached when most of the water is gone. The time period could be as short as 30 days. If you want to let the plants continue growing, you can add more water and nutrient solution, and recheck the pH level. To harvest the plants, simply cut off the greens and enjoy!

For more information, the following site explains the process in detail:

<https://www.trees.com/gardening-and-landscaping/the-gratky-method>



The following YouTube presentations might also be useful:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zONaYpVHM8>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hf0lj4\\_Z1hQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hf0lj4_Z1hQ)

For more information about Limestone City Hydroponics, check out their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/LimestoneCityHydroponics/>

## **BATH GARDENING CLUB BEGINS TO PARTNER WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES, THE TOWNSHIP AND COUNCIL. WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE A BETTER BATH.**



In November 2022, Bath Gardening Club met with representatives of Loyalist Township to investigate ways that we could more productively work together to achieve a more beautiful and appealing village. The meeting was a brainstorming session, but also the beginning of a discussion about the needs that the Gardening Club has identified that could be supported in a concrete way by the Township.

We are fortunate that the Township already provides us with the manpower to place and remove barrels in the spring and fall; placing and removing wreaths at the beginning and end of the festive season; water for our village flowers. A follow-up meeting with Township personnel to outline a list of expectations and actions needed by both groups will take place in March.

The Gardening Club has since received a request to partner with the local businesses of Bath. The businesses are currently discussing preparations for a “Bath in Bloom” event the last weekend in May to highlight business and Bath to people who live locally and to people living outside Bath. We welcome opportunities to work in partnership with other community groups as well as to create a more appealing and welcoming Bath.

Stay tuned!



## DO YOU HAVE A CHRISTMAS CACTUS IN YOUR HOME?

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Some of us enjoy nurturing a Christmas cactus that has perhaps been in the family for years. Others might have received one of these magnificent plants for Christmas. Here are some fun facts that may help to keep our cacti healthy throughout the year.

1. Christmas cacti thrive in temperatures around 20 degrees Celsius. They do not like to be placed near heaters, fireplaces, and doors that are opened frequently.
2. Christmas cacti need light to bloom, indirect light indoors and a partly shaded area outside are ideal locations for your plant. Too much sun will result in burned leaves.
3. Christmas cacti that are readily available to us are native to Brazil. They grow among the trees in the Brazilian rain-forest and prefer a humid environment. They do not like to be over-watered so water only when the soil is dry. Misting the cactus on a regular basis is preferred. Over-watering is one of the biggest culprits leading to a diseased cactus.
4. They love a darkened room, at least 14 hours a night for their buds to set. Once the buds are established, cacti can tolerate light at night. Cacti can be forced to bloom for the holiday if placed in a dark, cool room in early October.
5. Unlike the poinsettia plant, Christmas cacti are not poisonous to dogs or cats.
6. The Christmas cactus that we are often purchasing is not really a “true” Christmas cactus at all! According to the University of Massachusetts Extension Service, "Holiday cactus is sometimes marketed as Christmas cactus, Thanksgiving cactus, or Zygocactus. The "true" Christmas cactus is an interspecific hybrid of *Schlumbergera truncate* and *Schlumbergera russelliana* that originated about 150 years ago in England. It is a common houseplant but is not often grown commercially. These plants have segments with rounded margins, ribbed ovaries, and purplish-brown anthers. The Latin name for Christmas cactus is *Schlumbergera X buckleyi*; the “X” indicates that it is an interspecific hybrid\*. Most commercial cultivars of holiday cactus are actually *Schlumbergera truncate*, commonly known as Thanksgiving cactus or Zygocactus."



\*An interspecific hybrid results by crossing plants belonging to two different species that are not normally sexually compatible.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com>

For more information on Christmas cacti check out the following:

Henry H & Mackey J, Christmas Cacti. Halton Master Gardeners, December 9, 2021.

<https://haltonmastergardeners.com/2021/12/09/christmas-cactus/>

[Empress of Dirt – Christmas Cactus](#)

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/news/what-are-short-day-long-day-plants>

[The UConn Home & Garden Education Centre](#)

[North Carolina Extension Gardener – Plant Toolbox](#)

[Missouri Botanical Gardening – Home Gardening Blog](#)



## SPRING MEETINGS: COME JOIN US!

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**March 20** at 2:30 St. John’s Hall - Joyce Hostyn of the 1000 Islands Master Gardeners will make a return visit to our Club to speak about “The Ins and Outs of Pruning Garden Shrubs & Trees”.



**April Meeting:** We are fortunate to have Carson Arthur of Wellington, Prince Edward County join us for an evening meeting that will be open to other Gardening Clubs in the area. Carson is a landscape designer, television personality and author of the books: “Garden Designs for Outdoor Living” and, “Vegetables, Chickens and Bees”. He is the editor of Outdoor Lifestyle magazine, spokesperson for Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate and has a syndicated radio show, “Take it Outside”. He is active in Wellington with his Garden Market but still has time to host many gardening and home renovating shows for HGTV, Discovery and Hallmark Channels and Global.

Stay tuned for the date and time of Carson’s presentation.

<https://www.carsonsgardenandmarket.com>

**Future meetings:** Later in the spring we welcome the return of Dan Chen, physiotherapist who will speak to us about “Body Mechanics & Gardening” and we are arranging for the staff of Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington (KFL&A) to address the topic, “All About Ticks”.

A final word... Don't forget to check out our website: [bathgardeningclub.ca](http://bathgardeningclub.ca) On the website you will find our history, newsletters, gardening tips and articles, growing zones and pictures of who we are and what we do. Enjoy!

