

BATH GARDENING
CLUB NEWSLETTER
-SPRING 2026

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2026 SPRING NEWSLETTER: INTRODUCTION TO KIM BONNER

I'm pleased to introduce myself as the new Garden Club Newsletter Lead. I'm looking forward to helping share our stories, projects, and seasonal highlights. The newsletter keeps you informed about member achievements, team news, and upcoming events—making it easy to stay connected and celebrate our club's activities.

I would also like to sincerely thank our outgoing newsletter lead Pat Chown for her time, dedication, and thoughtful work. Her efforts kept us informed, engaged, and inspired, and she leaves the newsletter in excellent shape, but also big shoes to fill! I'm grateful for the strong foundation she's built and hope to continue providing a newsletter that reflects the spirit and enthusiasm of our club.

Behind the scenes of the newsletter: Contributors may use AI tools to assist with drafting articles and creating illustrations, helping our volunteer team save time and explore creative ideas. However, every piece is reviewed and refined by our newsletter team to ensure it reflects our values, local knowledge, and community spirit.

I'm pleased to share that Laurie Minorgan will continue the job of organizing the articles and images into a clear, consistent layout and preparing it for digital distribution. We're also delighted that Don Taylor will continue to document our events, gardens, pollinators and special moments throughout the season. As always, our President Sylvia Whalen provides final review and approval of newsletter content to ensure it aligns with our club's mission and values.



On behalf of the newsletter team, we're looking forward to a wonderful year of growing together.



The Bath Gardening Club is delighted to introduce the newest member of our leadership team, Marilyn Martin, who has kindly stepped into the role of Treasurer. While much of the treasurer's work happens quietly behind the scenes, it plays a vital role in keeping our club thriving, growing, and blooming year after year.

A Little About Marilyn

Marilyn learned about our club while out walking with an enthusiastic neighbour, who was already a member. She joined up soon after, in late 2025. When asked what she enjoys most about being part of a garden club, she shared that it's the friendships, shared knowledge, and the joy of watching things grow together.

In her own garden, you'd find what you might expect from someone who started life as a farmer's daughter – flowers and vegetables growing together in easy harmony. She says that the plants that make her happiest are roses, because of their unparalleled beauty. Her favourite time of year to garden in is the spring, when temperatures are cooler and more comfortable, and gardens are filled with new life.

Stepping Into the Treasurer Role

When asked why she agreed to take on the Treasurer role, Marilyn said she wanted to give back to a club that means a lot to her. She looks forward to doing her part to keep things running smoothly.

Her approach to managing club finances is simple: careful, organized, and transparent. She wants members to feel confident that the club's resources are being handled thoughtfully to support activities, gardens, and future projects.

Beyond the Garden

Outside of gardening, Marilyn enjoys knitting and being out in nature. She has fond memories of the many years she spent gliding across dance floors as a ballroom dancer.

Please join us in giving a warm welcome to our new Treasurer!



A DELIGHTFUL AFTERNOON: TEA TASTING WITH KAORU MILLER, CHA CHA TEA

At the February monthly meeting, our garden club enjoyed a truly special gathering — a guided tea tasting hosted by a professional tea sommelier named Kaoru Miller from Cha Cha Tea in Kingston. What a wonderful journey it was for the senses. Surrounded by the comforting aroma of steeping leaves, we discovered that tea is every bit as complex, storied, and garden-connected as the plants we grow.



So... what exactly is a Tea Sommelier?

Much like a wine sommelier, Kaoru explained that a tea sommelier is a trained expert in all things tea. They study tea cultivation, harvesting, processing, flavour profiles, brewing techniques, and proper tasting methods. A tea sommelier can identify subtle notes (floral, grassy, nutty, fruity, smoky), explain where and how a tea was grown, and guide participants in preparing tea to bring out its best character. In short, they help us truly experience tea rather than simply drink it. However, Kaoru pointed out, unlike wine sommeliers, she's not expected to have to swirl, sniff, and solemnly recite the tea's harvest year like it's a vintage Bordeaux!

During our tasting, we sampled a curated selection of three teas, each with its own personality and story:

- A light and refreshing green tea that's best brewed at 75-80C
- A fragrant oolong that's smooth with floral notes
- A bold and aromatic black tea called Buckingham Palace Garden Party Tea that Kaoru chose especially for us, because really, what else would a gathering of gardeners sip?



Tea vs. Tisane – What’s the Difference?

One of our favourite discoveries of the afternoon was learning that not everything we casually call “tea” is technically tea. True tea comes only from the plant *Camellia sinensis* – this includes white, green, oolong, and black teas. A tisane, on the other hand, is an herbal infusion made from other plants such as flowers, leaves, seeds, roots, or fruits. Examples of tisanes are the hot drinks made with peppermint or chamomile plucked from our home gardens.



We learned how water temperature, steeping time, and leaf quality influence flavour – and how slowing down to observe aroma, colour, and taste transforms a simple cup into a mindful ritual. For example, if you blast green tea with boiling water and/or abandon it to steep for more than 3 minutes you’ll chase away all its delicate flavour notes.

“Proper Tea-Tasting Etiquette (Garden Club Edition)”

1. Sip politely
2. Slurp ever so slightly
3. Breathe out contentedly
4. Pause and reflect
5. Repeat as necessary

Of course, being gardeners, the conversation soon turned to plants. We discovered how tea itself comes from various varieties of *Camellia sinensis*, and how soil, climate, and elevation shape flavour.... Kaoru noted however, that growing *Camellia sinensis* in our outdoor gardens would be a daring but probably unsuccessful attempt, since it’s not hardy enough to survive our winters.

A heartfelt thank-you to our tea sommelier Kaoru for opening our eyes (and taste buds) to the world of tea. Who knew that in a simple leaf could live so much history, science, and beauty? Thanks too to Janice our Programme and Special Events Lead for organizing this delightful event.

Kaoru welcomed us to visit her at the Cha Cha Tea Shop at 506 Days Rd in Kington where she has over 100 teas available. With 20+ years of tea wisdom, she’ll happily guide you to the right cup.



“Communities in Bloom is a Canadian non-profit organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility and beautification through community involvement and the challenge of a national program, with focus on enhancing green spaces in communities.” From Greater Napanee’s website.



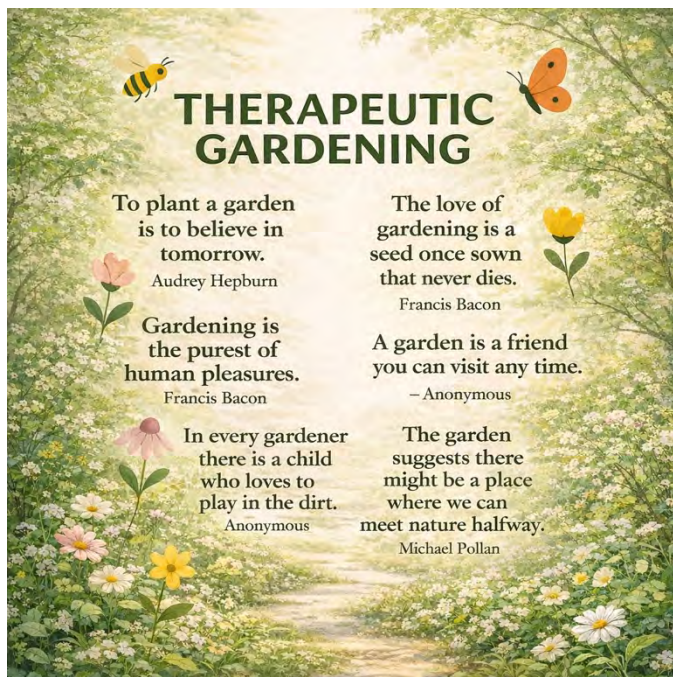
This year’s local Communities in Bloom event will take place in Greater Napanee on April 11th, 2026, from 9am – 3pm at the Best & Bash Arena.

Cost of admission is \$4.

This event features local growers, garden art, educational speakers, local garden clubs, and more. For more information, consult the FB page called “Communities in Bloom – Town of Greater Napanee.”

The theme for the 2026 is **Therapeutic Gardening**, focusing on the restorative power of green spaces. Maybe you’ll come home with an Always Together Rose, a beautiful new variety that symbolizes community, compassion, and hope.

If you’d like to volunteer for a timeslot at our club’s table, please drop a line to Carol Cartier via info@bathgardeningclub.ca and let us know your availability. We’d love to have you join us!





Every spring, we return to our gardens with a mix of hope and curiosity, hoping that everything survived winter's grip.

The good news is that this past winter's deep blanket of snow acted as insulation, shielding roots from harsh temperature swings and cutting winter winds. And underground? Life never stopped. Now, as the weather warms, earthworms begin rising to the surface, loosening the soil as they go. Meanwhile, fungi and microbes rebuild the vast underground network that feeds our plants.

Maintaining Soil Health



- Broadcast 2.5–5 CMs of compost on soil surface and water in.
- Avoid stepping on soggy beds. Wet soil compacts easily, squeezing out vital air pockets, limiting oxygen, and making it harder for roots to grow and spread. Give your garden a little more time to dry out if soil sticks to your garden boots.
- Apply fertilizer in moderation to prevent an overabundance of tender green shoots that attract aphids and “rascally rabbits”.

Avoid tilling healthy soil, as it upsets beneficial earthworms and hibernating pollinators, breaks soil structure, and brings weed seeds to the surface.

Don't “Clean-up” too much or too soon.

Think of it as Spring Maintenance...not Clean-up.

Helpful Hints

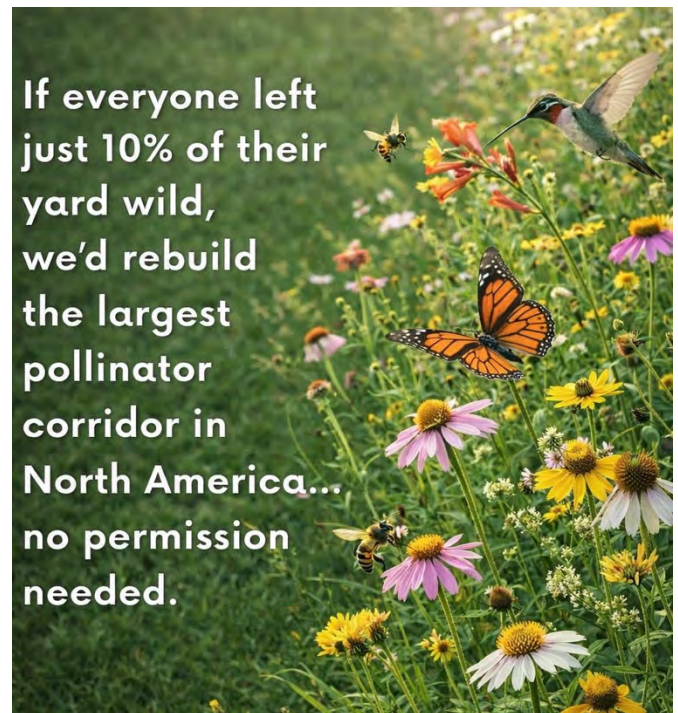
- Wait until daytime temperatures are consistently above between 10-15 C before starting your spring maintenance to give hibernating insects a chance to safely emerge from their winter shelters.

- Leave hollow and pithy stems standing for cavity-nesting bees. For more information on how to “Save the Stems”, check out the PG and MG/Pollinator Garden Maintenance section on our club’s website.
- Set aside a small corner of your garden and let it go wild by “leaving the leaves”, adding a small brush pile, filling it with native wildflowers, or all three.
- Avoid pesticides — they can harm pollinators by contaminating nectar and pollen, disrupting navigation, and reducing reproduction. Consider integrated pest management to keep pests under control. Refer to the PG & MG/DIY Insect Shelter section of our club’s website for fun ideas on how to attract the pest control team to your garden with ladybug lodges, lacewing homes, hoverfly lagoons and bug snugs.

Is My Plant Alive, Dormant, or Fashionably Late?

Before replacing a plant, apologizing to it, or holding a small memorial, try scratching the stem lightly with your fingernail. If it’s green underneath, then it’s alive. If it’s brown, repeat the test in a few days.

Consider letting three weeks of warm weather pass before waving the white flag. Some plants wake up late, such as butterfly weed and rose mallow, which love to make dramatic entrances.



If everyone left just 10% of their yard wild, we’d rebuild the largest pollinator corridor in North America... no permission needed.

Other Things You Might Want to do in Spring

- Consider planting cover crops to suppress weeds, reduce watering, support soil life, and boost biodiversity.
- Sow seeds in the garden when the danger of frost has passed, between mid and late May.
- Label new plants, sowed seeds and seedlings to avoid a “botanical mystery tour” later.
- Divide and replant perennials every few years to maintain vigour... and get more free plants!

- To enjoy indoor plants outside, wait until nighttime temperatures are consistently above 10 to 12C, then place them in an area of bright shade or dappled light, with protection from strong winds. Gradually increase the amount of light received over a 7-day period until they're fully acclimatized.
- When you spot early emerging pollinators like bumblebee queens, who single-handedly rebuild their colony from scratch each spring, celebrate them!



Final Thoughts from the Garden

Your soil is waking. Your plants are thinking about waking. Your pollinators are already awake and looking for food. Go gently, feed the soil, leave some wildness, and enjoy the feel of warm sunshine on your face.

Reminder: Garden Club Discounts

When you're out buying plants in spring, don't forget to bring your BGC membership card with you to qualify for discounts. Under the Join Us/Membership Benefits section on our club's website you'll find a section on the participating nurseries.

In many gardens, success comes down to good soil, steady care, and — if you ask around Loyalist Township — a little help from our club's own "Fritz Fertilizer".



FRITZ FERTILIZER SALE – COMING SOON!

Known for producing sturdy plants, healthy leaves, and impressively enthusiastic blooms, this much-admired mix has earned a reputation among local gardeners for quietly working wonders. Last year we sold close to 700 bags!

During his lifetime, Paul Fritz developed the recipe and kept its finer points largely to himself, inviting only a few long-time BGC members to assist with the mixing. For everyone else, he was content to let the results speak for themselves — encouraging them to enjoy the blooms without worrying too much about how it all came together. Today, his legacy lives on through the annual "Fritz Mix Fertilizer" fundraiser, a tradition that continues to support the club and celebrate his enduring contribution.

How to apply Fritz Fertilizer:

- add a small handful to the bottom of a planting hole, then cover it with a bit of soil to prevent root burn
- broadcast it over the soil and then mix it into the top few inches
- apply it in a ring about 2" out from plant stems
- water it in
- optional - gently pat the soil and whisper "I believe in you. Also, I fertilized."



Diane Nolting is overseeing this annual event. Order-taking for Fritz Fertilizer will begin soon. Bags of fertilizer will be available for pick up on the afternoon of Saturday, May 9th at St John's Hall in Bath.

Volunteers to participate in mixing, bagging or order pick-up/payment are always appreciated. Diane reluctantly revealed that we're in short supply of wood ash, one of the now 'not-so-secret' ingredients. Got some to spare? She'd love a sprinkle.

As for the exact recipe, Fritz remains politely mysterious to all, but long-time BGC members who are deemed trustworthy enough to help with the mixing. To others he says: "admire the results, enjoy the blooms, and don't ask too many questions."

Please reach out to Diane at info@bathgardeningclub.ca if you'd like to volunteer your time or can provide wood ash.



VILLAGE PLANTING

When the club was founded in 1990, its mission was simple: to beautify our village. More than three decades later that tradition continues with Val Behm and Elaine Nicholson carrying the torch.

How many flowers are we talking about? Along Main St you'll find 14 iron planters, 18 wooden barrels that add colour and beauty to our village. Plus, there are four gardens to explore. Swing by all of them: the bridge (Denys Mailhiot Memorial), Bath Museum, Schell's Market and Canada Post.

For this year, Val says they've designed bright, hardy combinations that promise welcoming displays to residents and visitors to our village. Yellow cannas and red begonias will be featured; the dark, richer red next to the lighter, more vibrant yellow really makes the planters pop with depth and contrast.

When asked about her favourite planting or spot in the village she mentioned the large, mostly perennial, garden outside Schell's Market. With our hot, dry summers, keeping plants hydrated can be tough. Perennials, with their deep roots, are very successful at weathering dry spells because the roots can access moisture far below the soil surface. There are annuals too to add pops of colour, like our club's favourite flower, the annual vinca.



When asked about her favourite flower in the planters, Val immediately said "Lantana." This annual grows slowly at first but produces vibrant blooms that last until frost without deadheading. This plant is fantastic at keeping its moisture levels steady between waterings, thanks to its leaves being covered in a thin resin that helps reduce water loss. Plus, it doesn't droop when the summer heat really kicks in. (And the Pollinator Garden Team would like to mention that bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds are all big fans of its nectar!)

As for the planting date, it depends on when the nursery sends the plants over. Right now, it's tentatively set for Thursday, May 28th. Just a heads-up, it's a rain or shine event, so the weather won't stop us!

Val and Elaine are happy to have volunteers who are ready to get their hands dirty on planting day! They also invite individuals to consider contributing to weeding and deadheading throughout the growing season. The commitment is about an hour, once a month, for each of 4 months.

To volunteer please reach out to Val at info@bathgardeningclub.ca.



SPEND YOUR SUNDAYS WHERE COMMUNITY GATHERS:

SUNDAY MARKET IN BATH

We welcome one and all from our club, the community and beyond to come to our club's Market on Sundays from May through October, from 10:00am – 2:00pm.

Wander, discover, listen, laugh – shop the market, meet the vendors, enjoy live performances, grab a tasty treat, join special events. Bring your friends and family along for a wonderful Sunday.

This year we're aiming to have the market come alive with live music every single Sunday!

We invite you to mark your calendars and come join the fun on Opening Day on May 10th, 2026. Located at Bath Centennial Park, 336 Main Street in Bath. Parking available.

Do you know someone who would be a great fit for our Market? Linda and Tarra are always happy to connect with potential vendors. Vendor inquiries can be sent to market@sundaymarketinbath.com

The club would like to extend our thanks to Linda Cohen (Market Coordinator) and Tarra Williamson (Market Manager) for the tremendous care, organization, and energy they bring to the Sunday Market!



<https://sundaymarketinbath.com/home>



BATH COMES ALIVE FOR JUNE RECREATION AND PARKS MONTH

Every spring, the Village of Bath joins communities across Ontario in celebrating **June is Recreation and Parks Month (JRPM)** – a time to get outside, get active, and connect with neighbours. Festivities at Bath Park feature family-friendly fun like games, pickleball drop-in, inflatables, community challenges, and interactive activities for all ages. Local groups, like ours, add a touch of nature with pollinator education and hands-on gardening fun. It's a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the parks and programs that keep our community vibrant all summer long.

This year the event will be held on the evening of Friday, May 29th at Bath Park, 217 Church St. Yes, it's *June* Recreation and Parks Month... just arriving a little ahead of schedule.

Last year's theme was **"Community Thrives Here."** We're currently awaiting details about this year's theme—stay tuned for updates! Once it's announced, we'd love to hear your ideas and/or welcome your participation at our club's display. Drop us a line at info@bathgardeningclub.ca.



POLLINATOR GARDEN NEWS: SMALL WINGS, BIG HAPPENINGS

Even as the gardens lie dormant, Kim Bonner and Carol Cartier, our Pollinator Team Leads, have been quietly at work—still very much buzzing, you might say.

OHA Tree Grant

We'll be expanding upward and outward by planting two Eastern Redbuds in the Memorial Grove, thanks to a grant application submitted by Marjory Brunson, and the resulting generous donation from the OHA. This tree's gorgeous pink flowers are not only breathtaking but provide valuable pollen and nectar to early emerging pollinators and birds migrating through the area.

World Bee Day

Carol is delighted to announce that on World Bee Day (May 20th) our club will be partnering with the local Bath library to celebrate bees and other pollinators – and to invite the whole community to join in. This friendly collaboration brings together gardening know-how, creative learning and accessible resources, turning the library into a welcoming hub for pollinator awareness.

Through displays, take-home tips, and bee-themed activities, visitors of all ages can discover why pollinators matter and how small actions at home can make a big difference.

Our Own Bug Inventory

Our season-long bug inventory will start in early spring and continue until fall to help us determine the health of the PG, MG and Bugtel. We're hoping to top last year's count of 100 species. Search for our projects on inaturalist.com—you'll be amazed by Don Taylor's stunning photography.

Mason Bee Spring Send-Off

We'll be placing 10 mason bee cocoons in the Bugtel structure when one of their favourite sources of pollen and nectar – serviceberries – are about to blossom. Emergence begins within a few days to a week, males followed by females. Hopefully we'll get to see one chewing out of its cocoon! Nearby, we'll hang the mason bee house made by Carol's husband Peter, along with some moist mud for sealing the chambers in her nest.

If you'd like to try your hand at raising mason bees, Carol and I can provide you with a mason bee house, 10 mason bee cocoons, some water-wicking material (to keep mud moist), and guidance. We have one kit available. A requirement is that you have Serviceberry, Willow, Eastern Redbud, fruit trees, dandelions, or early blooming bulbs to supply food sources. A small donation to the club would be appreciated.



PG, MG & Bugtel Postcard

To help more people discover our little oasis, we've created a postcard for the PG, MG and Bugtel, with a cheerful invitation to visit, learn, and maybe linger awhile among the blooms and buzzing life. We'll be handing them out at the Bath Market and other events.

Adding Finishing Touches to the Garden Beds

Last year, we successfully eradicated the invasive woundwort that had overrun the PG, restoring the bed to its full diversity of plant species. This year, our focus will be on enriching and strengthening the garden by dividing and replanting existing perennials, ensuring we have at least three specimens of each species, as such groupings are much more attractive to pollinators.

We'll also introduce additional shrubs and grasses – plant material we're currently lacking - to add structural variety and provide sources of nectar, as well as improved shelter, nesting sites, and safe overwintering habitat. Volunteers are warmly invited to lend a hand. Date TBD.

Volunteers Welcome

As the dates of the events approach, and after consulting the local forecast, we'll share the meet-up dates and times for the events.

If you'd like to participate in any of these events, please drop Kim and Carol a line at info@bathgardeningclub.ca.

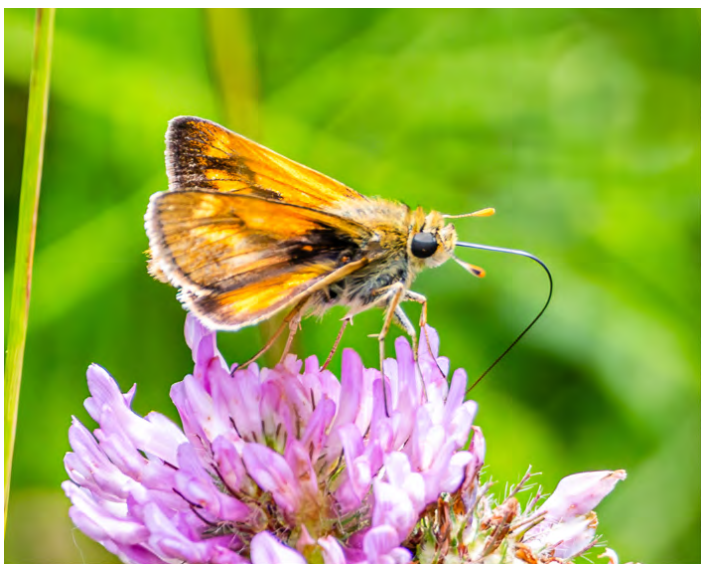


A Bossy European Wool Carder Bee

A Pair of Playful Margined Hoverflies



*A Banded Grass Skipper Butterfly
Demonstrating How It Collects Nectar*





EARTH DAY IN APRIL

Once a year, on Earth Day, residents of Bath emerge from their homes armed with gloves, garbage bags, and an alarming determination to scoop up runaway coffee cups, migrating chip bags, and mysterious single gloves... Our involvement makes us part of the largest participatory environment movement on the planet!

Fast Freddy's and Free Flow Petroleum, located in the beautiful village of Bath, proudly host the annual Spring Community Clean-up Day as part of Earth Day celebrations. An exact date has not yet been confirmed, but it will most likely take place on a weekend morning in the latter half of April.



With only a few hours of your time, volunteers can have a meaningful impact by stopping plastic and other pollutants from reaching Lake Ontario, shielding wildlife from swallowing debris or getting caught in it, and ultimately enhancing the charm and beauty of the Village of Bath.

More details coming your way soon from Pat Chown, who coordinates our club's participation in the event.



BAAAAATH GARDENING CLUB CANADA DAY FLOAT BY SUE NILSSON

Believe it or not, Spring is just around the corner. And that means we have begun planning for a float in the Bath Canada Day Parade.



At the wrap-up meeting held last year to discuss what worked well and what didn't, a suggestion was made for a proposed 2026 float. It was inspired by a picture of a delightful group of flowered sheep.

The concept was welcomed by everyone and tabled for a future meeting. Budget approval was received in the Fall and collection of items began. It is amazing what one can do with recycled ice cream buckets, winter socks, and Christmas mesh. The float will be decorated with buckets of flowers and sheep, surrounded by a colourful grass skirt.

Now that we have construction of the sheep underway, we will be looking for volunteers to help with assembly of bows, the use of a trailer, some bales of hay and, of course, it won't be complete without a few walkers pulling wagons and dressed in Bo Peep outfits or overalls. This promises to be a cute entry guaranteed to put smiles on many faces.

If this sounds like something you might like to be involved in, either with preparation or participation in the parade, please contact Diane Nolting, Laurie Minorgan or Sue Nilsson.



PROGRAMME & SPECIAL EVENTS:

INSPIRATION, IDEAS & A LITTLE GARDEN MAGIC

Janice has been busy behind the scenes curating a lively and varied lineup of spring events for us!

Theory of Colour and Design

We're truly fortunate to count a Master Gardener among our members! Our own Heather Campbell will be presenting "Garden Design 101" to us on Thursday March 26th, at the Loyalist Golf & Country club, 1 Loyalist Blvd in Bath.

Food Insecurity and Community Solutions

Food sustainability means eating in a way that supports personal health, protects the planet, and ensures fair food production. It also strengthens our local food systems to reduce reliance on imports, lower emissions, and improve access to affordable, nutritious food.

Carson Arthur, well-known Canadian landscape designer, gardening expert, television personality and owner of Carson's Garden + Market in Bloomfield will be presenting to us on Thursday April 16th, at St John's Hall, 212 Church St in Bath.



We're pleased to offer these wonderful events to our members free of charge. Members are welcome to invite friends to join us; donations to the club are warmly appreciated.

Thanks to Janice for arranging such an outstanding lineup of speakers for our club! She is looking for a volunteer to work alongside her in sourcing and coordinating future events. If this sounds like something you might enjoy, please reach out Janice via info@bathgardeningclub.ca.



THE TROWEL AND THE ERROR COLUMN

Introducing a new corner of the newsletter devoted to garden humour – because if you can't laugh when you've carefully nurtured a weed for three months, when can you? Here we celebrate garden quotes, muddy boots, mysterious volunteer plants, misplaced trowels, and the eternal optimism of gardeners everywhere. Send your submissions to Kim at info@bathgardeningclub.ca.

And so the humour begins!

Little Bluestem... or Big Mistake?

Carol and I have a confession to make. All last summer, the Pollinator Garden volunteers watered, weeded around, and whispered encouragement to what we were certain was a promising Little Bluestem.

We had great hopes for this native grass. We'd carefully chosen this little beauty from dozens of other varieties, as it promised to provide shelter for nesting and overwintering habitat, as well as host foliage for skipper butterfly caterpillars.

By late summer, oh, it was establishing beautifully!

Just not as a little bluestem. Yes, it was a weed.

Our apologies to the hardworking volunteers, and especially to the skipper butterflies, who arrived expecting a proper host plant and instead found a very well-loved imposter

I just want to
drink tea and
buy unnecessary
garden tools.

Gardening:
50% weeding,
50% wondering
what I planted.

