

A New Gardening Season Begins Gary Westlake



Peterborough and Area Master Gardeners
<http://peterboroughgardens.ca/articles.html>

Last Saturday we had a great day in the warm sun, cleaning up part of our garden. We even sat outside on the porch and read for a while. Yes, we have survived yet another Peterborough winter. As dog poo gets lifted off lawns all over the city, a new gardening season begins.

A common time to prune trees is late winter or early spring although it can be done most any time. We attended a great lecture last week put on by Peterborough GreenUp and the Urban Forestry Project. Bruce McGauley explained trees and how to care for them better than anyone I have ever seen. A retired arborist and urban forester, he described how trees grow and how they respond to injury. He also showed us how they rot, get hollow in the centre and how arborists recommend that they be trimmed. Bruce McGauley was backed up by a number of local arborists.

Any wound that goes through the bark or the main roots of a tree causes it stress so never put screws, nails etc. into the bark. If you cut off large limbs or roots late in the life of a tree, you may lose it because the rot from a large cut end can cause structural damage. It is much better to decide what limbs you want to keep and prune when the tree is young.

Please never take the top off a tree because you probably will kill it. Trees cannot grow over such a cut and will eventually rot down the centre of the trunk. When you need to take a branch off, you first need to take the weight of the limb off by undercutting part way through away from the trunk and then cutting down from the top. The third cut is the trickiest. You never cut flush with the trunk but you also never leave a long piece sticking out. The cut should be from just outside the top of the crotch, to outside the slight bulge at the bottom of the branch. This will speed the closing over of the wound by the growth of the trunk. Never paint the wound.

I have always told people to avoid cutting maples and birches when the sap is running. The arborists claimed that this does not matter much to the tree. Live and learn!

The Urban Forestry Project is looking for volunteers to help with their tree inventory in the city. You do not have to know anything about trees to participate, but I will guarantee you that you will know a lot about them after working on the project. Contact Chris Gooderham

at Peterborough GreenUp.

I know that spring has finally arrived when we are running around trying to get the last details organized for the Peterborough Garden Show. This year the show comes next week on Thursday evening, Friday and Saturday of Easter weekend at the Evinrude Centre and is a bargain at \$5 per day.

The Peterborough Garden Show, sponsored by the Peterborough Horticultural Society, the Peterborough and Area Master Gardeners and the Northumberland Master Gardeners, generates funds for scholarships and community beautification projects in Peterborough and the surrounding communities. This year, we were able to gather enough together to create an endowment at Trent University which along with matching Provincial support will offer a student award of approximately \$1000 each year in perpetuity. There will be additional \$1000 scholarships for post secondary students and two \$100 awards for high school students each year as funds are available. Over the years that we have organized the show, the Horticultural Society has provided over \$43,000 for beautification projects. The Master Gardeners have also funded educational projects including Peterborough's Urban Forestry Project and Ecology Park.

Greeting you outside the entrance to the show will be Patrick Vandenberg, a local artist who will be demonstrating chain saw carving.

Both ice pads of the Evinrude will be full of vendors selling products and services, all related to gardening. There will be plants, garden services, garden tchotchkes and much much more. We also have given booth space to a number of not for profit organizations that have garden-related information to share.

This year, I am determined to get to hear some of the speakers. Every year, things get so busy, I never seem to get the time. There are some great speakers this year including Ed Lawrence, Marjorie Mason, Marion Jarvie, Martin Quinn and Sonia Day. In addition there are demonstrations by Paula Anderson, Walter Cracknell, Cathy Dueck and Kathy Pimmett.

Because of the size and complexity of the show we have been bringing in partners to assist with the organization. Several years ago, the Peterborough and Area Master Gardeners split into two groups and the Northumberland Master Gardeners was formed. The Northumberland Master Gardeners continues to sponsor the show, organizing the speakers. Last year we asked Omeme Horticultural Society to organize the Floral Competition. Omeme did a wonderful job and will be doing it again this year.

The floral competition is open to any non-professional arranger. Check the competition out this year and next year you could enter and maybe win a prize.

Last year there were over 8000 visitors to the show so try to car pool or come early. We expect that Friday will be the busiest day. More detail can be found on our website www.peterboroughgardens.ca

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