



Art Gallery Tour Gary Westlake

If you missed the Art Gallery of Peterborough Garden Tour last Sunday, too bad for you because it was wonderful.

Each year about a half a dozen generous gardeners open their gardens to us to have a look at what they been doing. As a fund raiser for the gallery, many volunteers man the gardens taking tickets. The Master Gardeners also volunteer, answering questions for many of the hundreds of people seeing the gardens. I don't have the official counts but I heard there were around 400 visitors.

Three cheers for the hosts that put themselves out there for us. I know it is a lot of work for them before the tour to get the garden looking as good as it can be. And it is a worry whether it will be good enough for such a prestigious tour. Are the plants interesting enough? Is the design acceptable? Will they like the garden? Did we get all the weeds?

But once the day comes and there was nothing more they can do but share their gardens, I suspect that they much enjoyed the event. Gardeners were coming to them all day complimenting them on their gardens and asking them questions about how they did the work, where they got their plants, and what the name of that plants is. The day goes amazingly fast for the hosts and it is very satisfying to know that all the hard work is appreciated and admired.

I would guess most people don't think about the committee of volunteers that performs the very difficult task every year of finding new gardens for next year. They are probably starting now, looking for interesting gardens because you cannot do this work in the winter. They patrol the city looking for likely candidates. They talk to gardeners about gardens they have seen and they visit many gardens. It is a challenge every year to come up with a new list, so if you know of a garden that should be seen, please contact the art gallery. Talk to the gardeners and convince them to volunteer their garden. They will not regret the experience. We all owe thanks to the art gallery volunteers that find gardens for us to see.

Without all you folks that come out every year to see the gardens, the tour would fail. So thanks to you as well for being there and supporting the Art Gallery.

This year there were six great gardens to visit:

Kathryn and Peter Ferguson have a wonderful formal garden in their back yard. As you walk, in you are greeted by a long vista across their pool to a small shed that has two window boxes. The pool sits on a higher level with gardens on either side. A row of grasses on one side must be even more spectacular later in the summer. Many shrubs and perennials, have been carefully chosen and placed at just the perfect spots to create a garden that is harmonious and a joy to the eyes.

One side of Ivan and Martin Elbl back yard has been sectioned off into gardens that both produce food for them and food for the eye. Square blocks of garden separated by rows of bricks, highlight their roses. There are pear and apple trees loaded with fruit and a catalpa that was in flower. In the front yard was a large ginkgo tree.

Anne Heffernan's front garden is in the sun with a sitting area overlooking a bed of ornamental grasses waving in the breeze. When you walk around to the back you are greeted by huge trees and dense shade where she has build wonderful paths where you can see shade-loving perennials of all kinds.

Jo and Bob Heather clearly love nature. Their large garden is full of plants that attract butterflies and all kinds of wildlife. They have bird boxes occupied by nesting birds and even have a bed of sand that they hope will be a nesting place for turtles. The turtles come from a large pond at the foot of their property. They have built a dock where you can walk out and better view the pond lilies. In one corner is a wooded area a great variety of trees.

Myrna and Bill Thurston build a garden in the remains of an old barn. The stone walls and the large beams remain but the top of the barn is gone. This is a great place for a garden and they have used it to maximum advantage. You look through the old doors and windows to the countryside. They have placed hanging pots and interesting objects, mostly things that probably came from the barn or one like it. Every where you look was a wonderful display garden. It was like a living room outdoors but with ponds, shrubs and flowers.

A tropical-looking gazebo with a grass roof is the first thing you notice about Cathy and Brian Sheehey's garden. A stream lined with rocks winds its way beside it and many perennials grace the beds nearby. A wrap around porch on the house is surrounded by gardens and it must be a challenge to decide where to sit to enjoy this beautiful garden.

Thanks to all the volunteers that worked in the gardens, set up the tour and helped make it all work. Don't miss next year's event. If you would like to see some of the photos that I took of the gardens you can have a look at:

<http://picasaweb.google.ca/gary.westlake/ArtGalleryTour2008>

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