



Garden Show Gary Westlake

How do you keep an annual event like the Peterborough Garden Show that starts today fresh and new every year? There is a danger that visitors will tire of the same old show year after year so we wrack our brains trying to do something different. I have no idea what we will do next year but this year we have added a number of new things.

In the United Kingdom it is common to find walls, bridges, and other structures made from native stones, stacked with out the use of concrete or mortar. Here in Canada such structures are much less common. We have invited the “Johnny Apple Seed” of dry stone walls for Canada, John Shaw-Rimmington and his crew to give us a demonstration. John promotes, teaches, and demonstrates this technique that has a history going back for centuries. Building without mortar allows the water to pass through between the rocks and the frost to wedge the stones tighter together rather than pulling them apart.

Dry stone looks great in the garden and if built properly can last hundreds of years with very little repair. We have a friend that has several dry stone structures in her garden that were build by John Shaw-Rimmington including a bridge across a small stream. She drives her lawn tractor over the bridge without any fear and it is an amazing focal point for her garden. One thing we have here in abundance in Canada is rocks. It is a shame that more of it is not turned into these beautiful objects. This is your chance to find out how we can make it happen. Stones have been stacked to appear like all kinds of shapes like Christmas trees, swiss cheese, and garden follies.

We are going to dump a truck load of stone at the Evinrude and the Dry Stone Wall Association guys will build something wonderful for us throughout the show so people can watch and ask the experts how they do it. It is your chance to see how they build with stone and how to learn more about it.

At 6:30 on Friday evening, we are going to have a keynote speaker. Denis Flanagan is a very knowledgeable gardener and television personality. Currently Denis hosts two shows on HGTV “ The indoor Gardener “ and “ One Garden Two looks “. He was trained in horticulture in Surrey, England and was part of a team that won a gold metal at the Chelsea Flower show. He has worked in landscape design for many years and taught at several colleges. Denis is also a very entertaining speaker and you will not want to miss him.

In the past few years, it has been difficult for some people to decide whether to attend our workshops or our speakers because they were held at the same time. This year, we are going to alternate them in the same room so no one will have worry about missing a thing. There are great demonstrations by some of our local talent including Rowena Burns on water gardening, Peter Keeping on propagating Clematis, Dawn Tack on low maintenance perennials and Victoria Whitney on container gardening.

There are also entertaining and informative speakers including Martin Galloway, Sonia Day, Dugald Cameron, Paul Zammit and Diana Beresford-Kroeger. If you have come to our show in the past and just thought of it as a place to buy great stuff for your garden you would be right, but it is also a great place to learn about gardening. This year try also popping in to the speakers area and seeing what the the talks and demonstrations have to offer.

Also this year at the show there is going to be a floral competition, organized by the Omeme Horticultural Society. By the time you arrive at the show the designs will be set up for you to enjoy. You also will have a chance to vote for your favourite. There are categories for houseplants and for design. Our organizers have come up with categories like “Spring is Here” which is to be a design using spring flowers; “April Showers” which is a design with a visible use of water; and “One for the Show” which is to be a design using one flower. You should come and have a look at what the contributors come up with. If you have not entered, think about trying your hand at it next year.

Even though we have all these new features in the show, we cannot stop doing the things that made it so successful in the first place. There are approximately 130 vendors and exhibitors this year all with garden related wares and services. Many of these are small local businesses that can help you all year. Because the show had over 7000 visitors last year, we have also attracted other vendors and exhibitors from quite a distance. Many local charities with garden related activities are offered free booths as well.

The Peterborough Garden Show, for the Love of Gardening is organized by the Peterborough Horticultural Society and the Master Gardeners. The proceeds of the will go to various beautification projects in Peterborough and the surrounding community as well as to scholarships for students.

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