



OHA Convention
Dianne and Gary Westlake
Peterborough and Area Master Gardeners

This weekend, we anticipate more than 500 avid gardeners from all over Ontario to gather at Trent University for the Ontario Horticultural Association's 103rd annual convention. They are representatives of the 286 horticultural societies from 19 districts across the province. Our district, which stretches from Brighton to Minden and from Lindsay to Norwood, is hosting the event.

The Government of Ontario established the Ontario Horticultural Association in 1906. It consists of a network of Horticultural Societies. The OHA promotes education about horticulture and greater community involvement in local beautification. We are involved with environmental preservation and restoration. We publish a quarterly association society newsletter; support Ontario Fall Fairs and the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair; support and host horticultural shows and educational exhibits; support the Master Gardener program; and hold an annual convention. OHA also encourages and promotes horticultural youth groups. This is a long-lived organization. Many horticultural societies are over 100 years old including the Peterborough Horticultural Society which was established in 1861.

At each convention, an 'In Memorium' tree is planted in the host city. Last week an Ohio Buckeye was planted in the Ecology Park. Ohio Buckeye, *Aesculus glabra*, is a beautiful tree native to Ontario which grows naturally on Walpole Island in Lake St. Clair. It is usually found here as a planted specimen and valued for their fall colour and flowers. All parts of the tree are poisonous so you have to be careful where you plant it.

Although the convention only lasts from Friday to Sunday, it takes months of preparation and the hard work of many volunteers. This year about 140 volunteers from our district will be making sure the delegates can find their way around and have an enjoyable stay in Peterborough. Prior to the event, speakers are organized, potential sponsors contacted, program and venue planned, decorations arranged and a myriad of details decided.

This year our own Beryl Harris of Young's Point will be receiving the Silver Award, which is the highest award that OHA gives to one of their members. Many of you might be familiar with Beryl from her many years of volunteer work and from her frequent contributions to the Master Gardener articles in the newspaper. Also receiving two awards, is Cathy Dueck of Peterborough Green-Up – the Community Improvement Award and the Environmental Award.

In addition to the business of the association, delegates will be attending seminars, a banquet and tours of gardens. There will be competitions of floral design and cut flowers as well as photography,

publications, poetry, websites and art. There will be a youth camp and competitions for young delegates.

The new facilities of Peter Gzowski College will provide the many seminar speakers with state of the art equipment for lectures on all kinds of gardening topics. The Lift Lock Cruise boat will be picking some of the delegates up on the steps of the Bata Library at the University and taking them down the river for a scenic tour to Little Lake and back.

The convention is supported by a number of corporate and private sponsors. They assist with the funding of speakers, provide items needed at the convention and gifts that are auctioned off as fund raisers to the delegates.

There are a number of horticultural societies in our area and if you have an interest in gardening, you should try them out. Just show up and you will be welcomed. Gardeners tend to be a friendly bunch. You can find out more information on the OHA website www.gardenontario.org

The societies usually meet monthly except for during the summer. They normally have a speaker on an interesting gardening topic so it is a good place to learn about the hobby. There of course is much socializing and exchange of ideas. They put on workshops and organize bus tours of gardens and garden shows.

Lakefield and District Horticultural Society meets at the Lakefield Marshland Centre on the second Tuesday of every month (except June & August) at 7:30 p.m.

Norwood and District Horticultural Society meets on the third Monday of the month except July, August and December at the Norwood Legion, Branch 300, Alma Street. Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. and doors open at 7:00 p.m.

Omeme and District Horticultural Society meets on the third Monday of every month (from February to November) in the lower hall of Trinity United Church. Refreshments and social time from 7 - 7:30. The meeting begins at 7:30.

Peterborough Horticultural Society meets on the third Wednesday of every month except July, August, and December at the Peterborough Library on Aylmer Street. Doors open at 7:00 p.m and meetings start at 7:30 p.m.

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