

Aurora Garden and Horticultural Society heads into busy slate of spring activities

Every Spring, the Aurora Garden and Horticultural Society busies itself with a series of activities to celebrate the arrival of the growing season.

This Spring is no exception for the venerable 106-year-old organization that has encouraged blooms in Aurora since Robert Borden was our Prime Minister.

Garden Aurora has been rooted in our Town for over 105 years and the organization's Membership Director Heather McFarquhar invited local gardeners to attend the Club's many coming attractions.

The engaging McFarquhar noted that Garden Aurora's Annual Plant Sale—a cash-only event that takes place between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Sunday, May 26 in the Home Hardware parking lot at Mary and Wellington—features plants that work in our zone—they've already been in the soil and it's a mature plant that's being purchased.

They're acclimated to our local conditions—which is a combination of three growing zones: 4, 5, and 6. The Plant Sale is a great place to get ideas for planting in full sun, partial sun, or shade. Experienced gardeners are on-site to help, too. It's also a fundraiser for the Club to support our initiatives.

One of the initiatives funded by the Plant Sale, as well as the Club's Garden Tours, is the Margaret Howard Gunn Memorial Award. According to McFarquhar, this award has been established by Garden Aurora in honour its namesake, who was a woman who valued education and was a flower show enthusiast.

She was knowledgeable and had a passion about horticulture, and was awarded Garden Aurora's life-time membership along with many other awards. Candidates applying for this \$500 award must be pursuing horticultural studies at an accredited Ontario college or university, or any other valid institute of higher learning.

Applications are currently open until July 31st. To find the application, visit our website: www.gardenaurora.ca.

It's evident that the Margaret Howard Gunn Memorial Award is near and dear to the heart of McFarquhar and its members, as are the connections that are created by Garden Aurora.

Having access to so many different people with so many different specialties is one of the most satisfying aspects of belonging to the Club. There is a generosity of spirit among the members and someone is going to have an answer to my questions about gardening.

The five-year member of Garden Aurora also noted the sense of belonging she feels.

Everyone in the club have so many different kinds of gardens. Indoor gardeners share their expertise with house plants. Outdoor gardeners with wild gardens or perfectly-kept gardens share strategies about growing plants in our zone.

McFarquhar also reminded local gardeners that Pollinator Week is coming up June 17-23, 2024 and she disclosed that there will be a Photo Contest with details to follow.

Just four days prior to the Club's Annual Plant Sale is Four Months of Iris Bloom and Beyond—a seminar delivered by local gardeners Terry Laurin and Kate Brewitt.

Laurin and Brewitt are members of Garden Aurora and will deliver the dirt on growing irises, according to McFarquhar.

The irises are grown in their backyard and we're expecting over 50 at our meeting at the Legion on Wednesday, May 22 to pick up gardening tips about these plants that thrive in our zone. Irises will be sold at the event and members and guests are welcome.

Garden Aurora with over 100 members in the Club is in a growth phase itself and meets on the fourth Wednesday of the following months: February, March, April, May, June, July, September, and October at the Aurora Royal Canadian Legion on Industrial Parkway.

McFarquhar observed that a whole new burst of volunteers has enlivened the Club and new members are welcome.

We also welcome guests to our meetings which feature a seminar on some aspect of local gardening. There are two ways to join Garden Aurora: show up to a meeting and join; or, go to our website, fill in an application, and mail it in. It's \$25 for a single membership and \$30 for a family membership. Discounts to local gardening centres are just some of the benefits of membership.

Based on these activities and its expanding membership, it's clear that the Aurora Garden and Horticultural Society is still growing strong in our Town after 106 years.

By Jim Stewart