

Dig This!

Summer 2023



Plenty of events to enjoy this summer.
See page 2.

AGM

DIG held its first in-person annual general meeting (AGM) since the pandemic this past March at the Salvation Army Temple in Oshawa. We thank the Temple and garden for their long time membership support.

The keynote speaker (this season's Agri-Hero) delivered an informative talk on beekeeping, and brought along several interactive displays for people to peruse after his presentation. It was a chance for networking with DIG members, who chatted over coffee, tea, and home-made biscotti.

There was a great deal of seed swapping, thanks to generous donations from the Whitby Ajax Garden Project (WAGP) and Care and Share Permaculture Community Garden. There was also a gift basket awarded to an attendee by a random draw.

Each year, DIG sends out invitations to our members and garden co-ordinators to attend the meeting, and we value the chance to connect to our DIG community at-large. Please consider attending our next AGM in 2024, where you will gain valuable information from our keynote, and meet and greet with like-minded gardeners, sharing tips, tricks, and hopefully more seeds!



Agri-Hero

Hamiltons Honeybees

Marc Hamilton is the founder of The Hamiltons Honeybees, and has been beekeeping for over 4 years. Marc's career started at his family's business, Welcome Feeds (www.welcomefeeds.ca), which sells farm supplies, pet food, and beekeeping supplies. What began as 2 hives at the onset of operations has morphed into 17 hives throughout Clarington. Last year alone, the company processed over 850 pounds of honey, all of it pure, and unfiltered.

At DIG's Annual General Meeting in March, Marc spoke to members about his humble beginnings in beekeeping, and how he got into the practice (it was to be a project to do with his kids!). A talented storyteller, Marc provides workshops and educational programming for school-aged children. He was recently at the Visual Arts Centre Clarington (VAC), a public gallery, where he taught kids ages 6 - 12

years how to create permanent habitats for honeybees and pollinators, making use of a hands-on project.

Bees are efficient pollinators, helping to transfer pollen between flowers, which enables fruit and seed production in many agricultural crops, wild plants, and of course in our community gardens. Apiculture, a word derived from the Latin word for bee, "apis", is "the practice of beekeeping", which involves the cultivation and management of honeybees for the production of honey, beeswax, and other bee-related products.

The history of beekeeping is fascinating albeit inaccurate, as is a lot of ancient history. The best estimate is that humans have been harvesting honey in a systematic way for at least 9000 years. The Ancient Egyptians depicted apiculture in their hieroglyphs, and as dated to 2400 BCE, show beekeeping activities like using smoke to calm the bees.



The Hamilton family's goal is to begin a bee breeding operation in Clarington in order to offer healthy local honey bees to new beekeepers. This will contribute to food security by reducing the need to import bees from overseas.

To reach Marc Hamilton, send him a direct message on Instagram or Facebook (@thehamiltonshoneybees) or email hamiltonhoneybeeholdings@gmail.com

More information on bees visit <https://hbrcc.ca/> & <https://www.ontariobee.com/>

Upcoming events

July 8th

Whitby Ajax Garden Project (WAGP) Open House. Gate is on the east side of Lake Ridge Road, about 1 km south of hwy 7.

July 15th, 10am – 4pm

Bomanville Allotment Garden Open House – Celebrating 15 years. 1200 Haines St. south of the crematorium. Park on the street



**Saturday,
July 22,
beginning
at 9:00 am.**
Save the date!

Our 10th annual Garden Tour / Poker Run. *This schedule is tentative and may change.* We will release a tour poster in a couple weeks with firm details.

Our tour kicks off at St John's Port Whitby Community Garden. Next, we make our way to South Oshawa to visit Glen Street CG's official launch. The Salvation Army Church CG has redeveloped their space, and we will visit them next. We head north to the Port Perry Permaculture CG located at the fairgrounds to marvel at the wonderful native plants. We stop for lunch (location to be determined), to rest, chat and connect. While up north, we will check out the Uxbridge Community Share Garden in its second year.

The remaining stops are to be decided. We encourage you to carpool on this event.

Tickets are \$25 and includes lunch. This event helps support our You Grow Durham Fund which provides grants to new gardens.

Congratulations to...

Hebron
Community
Garden ~
celebrating 10
years of growing.



GardenTip

Natural pest control

Not another slug in the garden! If only there was something less disgusting than hand picking them off my cabbage leaves. Oh wait, there is... the garden toad, also known as the American toad (*Anaxyrus americanus*) and the Fowler's toad (*Anaxyrus fowleri*).

These creatures are primarily nocturnal. If you don't see any in your garden, try searching at night or after a heavy rain. Toads also feast on other invertebrates like insects, worms and spiders, and use their sticky tongue to catch their prey. One toad can eat about 100 bugs per night!

The American and Fowler's are Ontario's only two species of toad, and can be distinguished by the number of bumps on their back and

colour of belly. In all likelihood, you've probably spotted the American toad as it is common, whereas the Fowler is endangered, and lives on sandy shores and in and amongst dunes.

Toads love an area with moist soil and vegetation where they can find shelter and food. They might even grace your front lawn, meadows, woodlands, and shores of ponds, lakes, and streams.

If after all of this you want to attract toads to your garden, then build a toad house by using upside down pots, home-made small rock caves, and logs, placed in a quiet area with lots of shade.

For more information, visit www.localgardener.net/toads/



In the news ~

The Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve

Pop Quiz!

- 1 What is the DRAP?
 - a) The French word for “sheet”
 - b) The Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve
 - c) A small quantity of liquid that forms/ falls in a spherical or pear-shaped mass; globule
- 2 What are Class 1 soils?
 - a) Sloped, shallow soil
 - b) Level, shallow soil
 - c) Level, deep soil
- 3 Where in Canada do you find the most Class 1 soils?
 - a) Ontario
 - b) Quebec
 - c) British Columbia

The answers are 1b, 2c, 3a. How did you do?

The Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve (DRAP), found between the Duffins Creek and the Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP), north of Pickering, is home to one of our province's most remarkable remaining ecosystems called the Carolinian Forest. It is sometimes called the “banana belt” of Canada, because it has warm average annual temperatures, the longest frost-free seasons, and the mildest winters in Ontario. Couple this with our best and most productive class 1 soils, and you have the jewel in the crown of our agricultural land, and a buffer to protect the Rouge National Park and all that is contained therein.

How is it possible that this area of 4700 acres still exists amid the Golden Horseshoe's dense



human populations and industry? Back in the 1970s, the federal government expropriated land in north Pickering for a future airport to rival Pearson International. The provincial government followed suit in 1972.

Fast forward 20 years: The province “announced its intent to declare 12,000 acres of the Rouge Valley a natural heritage park and an adjoining 8,000 acres as an agricultural preserve”, while in 1995 “decided to permanently protect the agricultural status of Pickering agricultural preserve lands by not selling any of the development-related property rights” (<https://tinyurl.com/mrx4cnbw>)

By the end of the 90s, the City of Pickering, the Region of Durham and the province signed a Memorandum of Understanding, “with the clear intent of ensuring continued and permanent agricultural and natural use” in perpetuity. In 2005 DRAP was included in the Greenbelt. That same year, the then Mayor of Pickering suddenly “released the easements it was entrusted to hold for the people of Ontario”. As a result, the province used a seldom employed (at the time) Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) and created the Central Pickering Development Plan (CPDP). It then reinstated the easements, passing Bill 16, “The Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act.”

The rest of the story has been unfolding in a nerve-racking fashion with the sudden exclusion of DRAP from the greenbelt, the stripping of all protections from the DRAP,

the rescinding of the Central Pickering Development plan, and the repealing of the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act.

Just like that, all of the protections enshrined in law have vanished. Many dedicated people and organizations have been standing up against all this. Most vocal among them are the Rouge Duffins Greenspace Coalition (RDGC), established in 2000.

DRAP is so much more than “a field of weeds”. As part of the greenbelt, it provides shelter for the some 78 species at risk in Ontario, and plays an obvious role in feeding the province.

If you would like to support them in any way, contact: Rougeduffinscoalition@gmail.com

You can also participate by viewing the draft Terms of Reference and submitting your comments online on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry at <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/84459?culture=en-CA> (reference number 84459). Comments will be accepted in either official language until June 20th, 2023.

More news

Check the web addresses for details.

The Canadian Organic Growers (COG)
www.cog.ca

Canada Announces Voluntary Transparency Initiative for Gene-Edited Seed Products

Ontario Federation of Agriculture
www.ofa.org

Bill 97 – Farmers and farm organizations are speaking up to protect Ontario's farmland for farming.

Bowmanville Farmers' Market



If you are looking for fresh, fun, and local one-stop shopping, farmers' markets are the place to go! In Durham, we have a growing number of these vibrant places, including the brand new Bowmanville Farmers' Market that just opened in May of this year. It has a wide variety of vendors featuring fresh produce, baked goods, honey, meats, beverages,

prepared foods, flowers, body care, arts & crafts, kettle corn and more!

Open Fridays from 9am-3pm until October 13th, this market has plenty of parking as it's located in the Garnet B. Rickard recreation complex parking lot (2240 Regional Hwy 2 just west of Bowmanville Ave.) This is the same site as the Bowmanville Reko network that began during Covid to allow people to order farmers' market items safely with minimal contact.

If Bowmanville is not ultra-local for you, there is likely another farmers' market nearer to you:

- All or Nothing Farmers' Market
- Brooklin Farmers' Market
- Clarington Farmers' Market
- Durham College Farmers' Market
- North Oshawa Farmers' Market
- Oshawa Center Farmers' Market
- Pickering Farmers' Market
- Port Perry Lakefront Farmers' Market
- Uxbridge Farmers' Market
- Whitby Farmers' Market

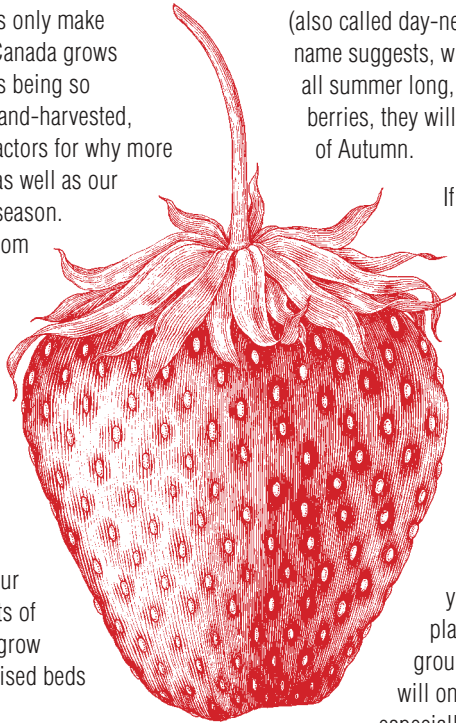
GardenTip

What could be sweeter than a locally grown strawberry in June?

Surprisingly, strawberries only make up 3% of the fruits that Canada grows (by hectare). Strawberries being so perishable, and mostly hand-harvested, seem to be the limiting factors for why more aren't grown in Ontario, as well as our relatively short growing season. The bulk of them come from California, even though Ontario's remaining farmland is perfectly suited to growing strawberries.

Any home gardener can grow their own crop, provided their soil has excellent drainage and high organic matter. If your soil is heavy clay, add lots of compost to amend it, or grow your berries in pots or raised beds if possible.

Once you are ready, it's time to consider what kind of strawberry you want to grow. This year we are trying out Albion Everbearing



(also called day-neutral), which, as the name suggests, will continue producing all summer long, albeit having smaller berries, they will fruit right until the cold of Autumn.

If a big flush of fruit is what you prefer, then seek out the Sable variety for the earliest crop in June, Kent for July, and Valley Sunset for late season ripening.

Order your specialty varieties from a seed catalogue in the winter, and they will ship to you when it's ready for planting, usually when the ground is warm. Light frosts will only slow growth down, especially if your berries have a nice blanket of straw around them.

Here is a recipe for cookies! ▶

Recipe

Strawberry cookies

Ingredients

- 1 large egg
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ½ cup oil
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1¾ cups all purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- 1 cup chopped strawberries

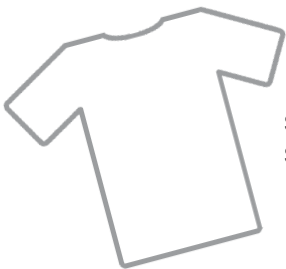
Instructions

- 1 Preheat oven to 350° (c 180°)
- 2 Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.
- 3 In a large bowl, whisk the egg, lemon juice, oil, vanilla and sugar, until well combined.
- 4 Add in the dry ingredients and mix until combined, adding the strawberries last.
- 5 Form the dough into golf-ball sized clumps
- 6 Place on the cookie sheets, and bake for 13 - 15 minutes.
- 7 Bon appetit!

(Adapted from <https://anitalianinmykitchen.com/strawberry-cookies/#Instructions>)

GardenArt

T-Shirt slogans



If you're planning on t-shirt dying/ crafting this summer, here are some nifty garden slogans to adorn your creations.

Cares melt when you kneel in a garden.

Gardening: a Leisure activity of little Leisure and much activity.

Gardeners have the best dirt.

I DIG GARDENING.

May all your weeds be wildflowers.

One planet is all you get.

Time began in a garden.

When I'm tired and can't sleep, I count plants instead of sheep.

When the world wearies, and society no longer satisfies, there is always the garden.

When life gives you onions, it stinks.

Your garden stories, tips and ideas for news articles are always welcome.



DigThis!

A quarterly publication of Durham Integrated Growers

Editor Mary Drummond

Contributors Adrian Hogendoorn
Ruth Latimer
Mary Anne Martin

Layout Latimer Graphics

WEBSITE www.durhamdigs.ca

EMAIL info@durhamdigs.ca

FACEBOOK www.facebook.com/DurhamDIGs

TWITTER twitter.com/durhamdigs

INSTAGRAM [Instagram- @durhamdigs](https://www.instagram.com/durhamdigs)

YOUTUBE www.youtube.com/user/DurhamDigs