

Dig This!

Spring 2023



AGM ~ March 30th, in-person

It's time to come out and connect with other Durham Region garden projects at our DIG Annual General Meeting. To be held on Thursday, March 30th, 7pm, at the Salvation Army Oshawa Temple, 570 Thornton Road North.

RSVP info@durhamdigs.ca

Questions - call Mary 905-666-1497

Our speaker is Marc Hamilton of Hamilton Honeybee Holdings. He is part of a 4th year beekeeping family. Starting with 2 hives, they have grown to 17 throughout Clarington, producing over 850 lbs of

honey last year. Marc's family business has supported agriculture in Clarington for over 25 years. This has allowed him to partner with local farmers and landowners to help create permanent habitats for honeybees and pollinators. Marc also provides education to youth about pollination and the role it plays in Southern Ontario. The



Hamilton family's goal is to begin a breeding operation offering healthy honeybees to new beekeepers, as well as producing pure unfiltered honey to local residents.

Another important date

DIG Garden/Project Tour ~ July 22nd

Watch for details on DIG's social media sites.



Agri-Hero

Yellowlees Family Farm

Located in Nestleton, this farm has been operating in their current location since 1988. Delicious lamb, pork and beef can be on your dinner plate, and is available in various cuts. If you want to stray away from conventional offerings, Yellowlees also has such products as lamb buns, meat pies, pork sausage rolls, pulled pork, and lamb & feta strudel. Yum!

As we approach Earth Day on April 22, it is worth noting that the Yellowlees Family Farm is doing its part for our planet. A decade ago, the Farm developed a relationship with a local brewery to pick up the brewer's spent grain. They divert this so-called 'waste' product from the brewing process and incorporate it into their feeding program for sheep and pigs. The cows get some as a treat, too. The Yellowlees Farm has expanded this reclamation project to include other Durham-based breweries to expand impact in waste-reduction/composting!

Most of their sales are through their farm gate/online order form, but Yellowlees Family Farm also sells their products through the Bowmanville and Millbrook REKO Networks. (See last year's Spring 2022



newsletter for more on REKO, <https://tinyurl.com/367wmmp3>.)

Lamb, pork and beef is available at Linton's Farm Market in Raglan when they are open for the season (May-October). Their lamb is also available for purchase from Lunar Rhythm Garden in Janetville. Yellowlees occasionally attends markets at All or Nothing Brewery in Oshawa as well as a Craft Market at the Nestleton Community Centre, several times a year. These pop-up dates vary, so following the

Yellowlees Family Farm Facebook page is your best source of information.

To see a full list of their products sold year-round, visit their social media pages:

www.facebook.com/yellowleesfarm

www.instagram.com/yellowleesfarm

Further contact information: (905) 986-0657, yellowleesfarm@gmail.com

Farm address: 4441 Malcolm Rd, Nestleton Station, ON L0B 1L0



Alexandra's Bounty Garden has new care-givers

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Charter Community Council – Oshawa and Durham Métis Council (ODRMC) – recently assumed control of the Alexandra's Bounty Garden, located at 364 Simcoe Street North, Oshawa, just north of Lakeridge Health Centre.

This ODRMC serves Durham Region Métis and Indigenous people of all ages, leading programs year-round, and celebrating Métis history, values, culture, and languages which form their proud heritage. Alexandra's Bounty has become a part of the Métis council's mission to provide community programs, outreach and cultural development.

The Garden is a 60 foot by 200 foot space, boasting 30 plots, including herb and pollinator spaces. There are 2 neighbouring beehives helping with the heavy lifting, alongside the approximately 30 volunteers.

The goal of the Garden is to grow and donate its fruit and vegetable products to Métis and Indigenous people in the community. This will bolster food security by providing nutritious, local, fresh food. Post-pandemic, and during our time of inflated prices, access to healthy food is more important than ever.

During the summer months, food is harvested weekly on Sundays. An email is sent to the community, and people take what they need. Harvest excess is donated to a local food bank.

This vibrant garden even hosts a summer camp that teaches youth about the plant

kingdom, thanks to ample seating serving as a communal meeting place.

To become involved, send an email to oshawadurhammetiscouncil@gmail.com

DIG is so excited to see how this project evolves!

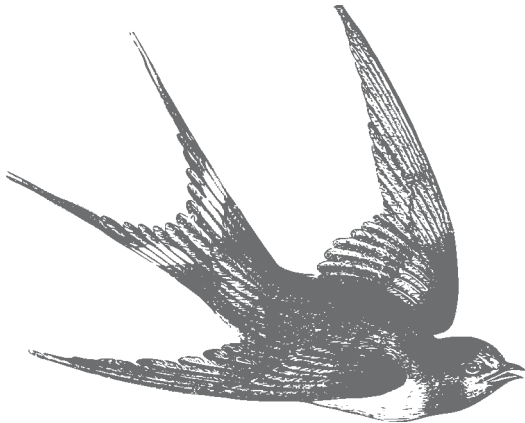
Alexandra's Bounty Garden in winter.



Barn Swallows

Acrobatically swooping here, there, everywhere! Look up in the skies because soon, our feathered friends, the swallows will be returning from their winter nesting ground.

After a perilous journey from Central & South America (as far away as Argentina!), flying across the Gulf of Mexico, and cruising north along the eastern seaboard of the United States, the charming barn swallow, *Hirundo rustica*, has long been a harbinger of spring.



Settling into past nests high up on barn rafters, wharf nooks and crannies, caves, rock ledges, and specially-built boxes, barn swallows can rear 2 broods of chicks by Mid-August. These red-faced, blue-backed, forked-tail songbirds weigh just 20 grams as adults.

Why should you care about one little avian species you might ask? If you spend time outdoors in the summer, and don't fancy yourself becoming lunch to ravenous mosquitoes, thank a hard-working swallow, often flying as many as 1000 kilometres a day to devour insects in your neighbourhood.

As a species at risk under Ontario's Endangered Species Act, barn swallows' habitat must be protected. Dr. David Suzuki once said, "Unless we are willing to encourage [people] to reconnect with and appreciate the natural world, we can't expect them to help protect and care for it."

Did you know?...

Alexandra's Bounty Garden name is a respectful nod to a neighbouring park – Alexandra Park.

And, Alexandra Park was named after Alexandra Luke (1901-1967), a McLaughlin relative and famous artist.

She was a member of the Painters Eleven, a group of Canadian painters active in the 1950s. Her work is featured at Oshawa's Robert McLaughlin Gallery.

GardenTip

New and improved!

How many times have you heard that?

Well, seed suppliers eagerly do test new varieties every year and if results are good, offer them up for sale. Some newbies are more resistant to disease, some may produce

West Coast Seeds

www.westcoastseeds.com

Asters	Cucumbers
Arugula	Jalapeño
Basil	Kalettes
Beans	Poppies
Carrots	Zinnias



Veseys

www.veseys.com

Carrots	Pumpkin
Cauliflower	Soybeans
Foxglove	Radishes
Lobelia	Squash
Marigolds	Tomatoes
Milkweed	Zinnias
Peppers	



OSC (Ontario Seed Company)

www.oscseeds.com

Carrots	Impatiens
Chard	Lettuce
Chicory	Okra
Corn	Sage
Grasses	



more, others have improved flavour, some are different colours or sizes. 'New and improved' is for real! Here is a brief list of new, for the 2023 season, veggies, herbs and flowers from a few well-known companies. Check their websites or catalogues for details on specific types.

William Dam

www.damseeds.com

Bachelor button	Onion
Basil	Pole beans
Cabbage	Strawberries
Corn	Sunflower
Fennel	Tomato
Kalette	Zinnia
Lettuce	



Stokes

www.stokeseeds.com

Cucumbers	Pumpkin
Dianthus	Radicchio
Gazania	Sage
Impatiens	Sweet Pea
Lemon Balm	Watermelon
Lettuce	Zinnia



Richters

www.richters.com

Aster	Mitsuba
Ironweed	New Jersey Tea
Hyssop	Spinach



GardenTip

In your garden, remember to include plants that will attract pollinators.

Bees have excellent color vision. They flock to yellow, purple, blue, and white flowers. It's best to avoid eucalyptus, ferns, and lemongrass, and skip toxic pesticides and herbicides that can be harmful to bees.



Try these plants:

alyssum	cosmos
bee balm	echinacea
borage	evening primrose
calendula	lavender
California poppies	marigold
chamomile	nasturtium
cilantro	sweet peas
	snap dragon

GardenTip

Get those garden tools ready

If you've cleaned your garden tools at the end of last season, great! If you're like most of us, ... Well, better get busy.

Tools need to be clean and sterile, so they don't accidentally spread disease or viruses to other plants or soil. Clean tools will last longer as well.

Start by scrubbing your tools with a wire brush. This is the fastest and best way to remove dirt.

Use vinegar to remove rust. Let the tools soak for 24 hours to absorb the vinegar. Scrub with a stiff-bristle brush or wipe with a microfibre cloth. Then sterilize, using one of the methods below.

You don't need to spend big money on sterilizing solutions. Some common household items will work nicely.

Isopropyl Alcohol – Tools can simply be wiped, sprayed or dipped in isopropyl alcohol for immediate effectiveness against most pathogens. Most experts recommend alcohol for sterilizing garden tools.

Bleach – mixed at a ratio of 1 part bleach to 9 parts water. Soak the tool's blades in the bleach water for thirty minutes, then rinse and dry. The problem with bleach is that it gives off harmful fumes and may damage the metal, rubber and plastic of some tools in time.

Household Cleaners – Lysol, Pine Sol and Listerine are sometimes used. However, the effectiveness of these products on plant pathogens has not been scientifically determined.

Wipe the metal parts of pruners, shears, and loppers with an oily rag to improve lubrication and guard against rust.

During gardening season, even when you know you'll be using your tools the next day, do not leave them out in the elements. Brush dirt off and wipe tools with an alcohol-soaked cloth. After cleaning, return them to the shed, where they will be kept dry and are more likely to remain rust-free.

Maple Syrup Time - Ooboy!



We are in the midst of the sugaring season. 2023 has been an abnormal year, with perfect conditions as early as mid-February in some parts of Ontario. A neighbour of ours tapped 800 of his trees, and has already bottled the syrupy brown goodness.

Most maple syrup farmers and hobbyists set their sights on tapping trees mid-March. This coincides with the festival season, such as at Purple Woods Conservation Area, and in Elmira, Ontario's largest maple-based event, held April 1st. A simultaneous event in Sunderland boasts free admission, pancake breakfast and even iron forging demonstrations.

First Nations knew the value of maple syrup, and the harvest was a tradition passed down through the generations. Canada's first peoples shared the nourishing gift of maple syrup with European settlers, teaching them how to tap the sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), and thus helped them survive our harsh winters.

Not for the faint of heart, rendering sap to syrup takes time and energy. You need 35 to 40 litres of the pure stuff just to eke out 1 litre of the finished product. For traditionalists using an open fire, it takes a cord's worth of wood (4' x 4' x 8') to end up with 68 litres. Then there is the canning and bottling process to make sure the syrup lasts for up to a year.

We are starting out our new sugaring hobby with 6 spiles & buckets this year, because no one likes to bite off more than they can chew! See recipe below.

For more on the process of sugaring: harlainemaple.ca/syrup/

For event info: www.durham.ca/en/tourism/news/maple-syrup-festivals-and-events-in-durham-region.aspx

For a great song about maple syrup: www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-61-F3uDYk

Recipe

Pork tenderloin with maple cream sauce

Ingredients

- Unsalted butter
- 1.35 kg of pork tenderloin from Yellowlees Family Farm (See Agri-Hero, page 1)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3 Tbsp flour
- ½ cup white wine

- 1 ½ cups chicken broth
- ½ cup 35% whipping cream
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbsp Brandy
- 3 Tbsp maple syrup

Steps

Prepare the tenderloin:

- Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.
- Heat up an ovenproof sauté pan and add some butter. When hot, add the pork. Season with salt and pepper, and sear the meat on all sides for 4 minutes/side.
- Place pork in the oven, and cook for 12-15 minutes, turning once.
- Let the pork rest for 10 minutes then slice.

While the pork is in the oven, prepare the sauce:

- Add butter to a different pan.
- Once hot, add in the onion, and sauté until soft.
- Slowly add the flour, and stir until everything is coated.
- Next, add the wine until incorporated.
- A bit at a time, pour in the broth, stirring to thicken.
- Finally, add the whipping cream and cook until thick.
- Remove the pan from heat, and stir in the remaining ingredients.
- Spoon sauce onto pork slices and serve hot.

Bon appétit! (Serves six)

Adapted from Harrowsmith Country Life 2004

GardenArt

Paint a birdhouse

Unpainted, wooden birdhouses are available at most dollar stores and craft retailers. They come in all shapes and sizes. You may need to sand rough edges first. Give it a base coat of primer, then get out those acrylics and be creative. Finish with a couple coats of water-based, exterior varnish.

Unfortunately, no self-respecting bird will ever live in your painted house. They prefer dull, unfinished wood which won't attract predators. Nevermind. Go have some fun anyway.



DigThis!

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DigThis supplement

In light of recent provincial political developments, DIG would like to share some findings. The following is a slightly abridged version of Parks Canada's Technical response to the proposed development of Greenbelt lands adjacent to Rouge National Urban Park. The original document was written by Omar McDadi, Field Unit Superintendent, Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP).

Your feedback is welcome.

Nov. 29, 2022

Parks Canada herein presents considerations for the Government of Ontario in regards to the proposal to remove 7,400 acres of protected lands from the Greenbelt in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), particularly lands in and around Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP) (see next page). Should these lands be removed from the Greenbelt and developed as proposed, Parks Canada's analysis suggests that there is a probable risk of irreversible harm to wildlife, natural ecosystems and agricultural landscapes within RNUP thereby reducing the viability and functionality of the park's ecosystems and farmland.

The provincially-protected Greenbelt lands immediately adjacent to RNUP provide important habitat (nesting areas, breeding grounds, overwintering locations) and ecological connectivity to critical habitat for dozens of species at risk, as well as vital ecosystem services for nature, water and agriculture. They are also critical to the health and function of RNUP, which has a mandate to protect natural, cultural and agricultural heritage landscapes. As the Provincial Government is well aware, the Greenbelt lands, along with RNUP, together contribute to the ecological connection between the Oak Ridges Moraine and Lake Ontario – the only intact, contiguous connection between the two in the entire Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The importance of these lands was underscored in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between Ontario and Parks Canada Respecting the Establishment of RNUP, a document which continues to be in force. Ontario committed in this agreement, particularly section 2.09, to consult with Parks Canada if any changes are proposed to any applicable provincial policies, including the Greenbelt Plan. Additionally, some of the "Other Lands" identified in the MOA in which Parks Canada has an interest are part of the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve in the Greenbelt. Ontario has verbally committed to

transferring some of these "Other Lands" to Parks Canada in years past. It is our opinion that, to date, the province has not met the consultation requirement of this MOA as the Province has not yet reached out to discuss these matters with Parks Canada.

Of specific concern to Parks Canada are Greenbelt lands immediately adjacent to RNUP, also known as the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve, which border the Townline Swamp Wetland Complex (henceforth "the Complex"), located in the Pickering area of RNUP. The Complex is arguably the most ecologically-sensitive area of the national urban park and is home to dozens of federally and provincially endangered and threatened species, including Bank Swallow, Eastern Meadowlark, Wood Thrush, Red-headed Woodpecker, Monarch Butterfly and several species of bats, as well as other rare species.

As in the opinion of Parks Canada the consultation requirement surrounding these changes has not yet been met by Ontario, Parks Canada would like to highlight for discussion the following as risks we have identified, and requests an opportunity to meet and discuss these items at the earliest opportunity:

1. The ecological integrity of the Complex near the park's boundary is very sensitive to human disturbance and is identified as "critical habitat" for the Blanding's turtle, a threatened species under the federal Species at Risk Act. Since 2014 and in collaboration with First Nations partners, the Toronto Zoo and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Parks Canada has reintroduced more than 500 threatened Blanding's turtles into this general area of the park. While turtles are released in RNUP, these species move in an unrestricted fashion between the park and the adjacent Greenbelt lands. The Greenbelt changes as proposed appear to create additional barriers to suitable critical habitats within the Park hence negatively impacting these species at risk.

2. The land use and cover changes that would accompany the proposed development could result in habitat fragmentation that would be expected to have a cascading effect on the quality of habitat in RNUP. For example, hydrologic changes caused by habitat fragmentation generally reduce species richness and abundance of plants, macroinvertebrates, amphibians, and birds with greater numbers of invasive and exotic species. Possible reduction in soil saturation and lowered water tables may result in greater nitrogen mineralization and nitrification in urban wetlands with higher probability of nitrate export from the watershed. The land use changes to these complementary landscapes noted above may also increase the likelihood of flooding in this part of the GTA, and may also impact the salinity of the surrounding watershed. All of these potential impacts to RNUP are of concern to Parks Canada as they have the potential to significantly compromise the viability of park ecosystems and farmland, and the Wetland in particular.

3. RNUP is the only Parks Canada site in the country with a mandate to protect agricultural landscapes. The park includes large tracts of Class 1 farmland, which is the rarest, richest and most fertile in the country. The proposed development may negatively impact the maintenance of a vibrant and viable agricultural community within the RNUP and in this part of the Greenbelt. Along with the local farming community, the government of Ontario was one of the most significant contributors to the agricultural vision for RNUP and identified that a vibrant farming community requires dedicated agricultural land inside and outside of the park in order to be economically viable.

4. As a foundational practice in the administration of RNUP, Parks Canada works closely with 10 First Nations communities – via the RNUP First Nations Advisory Circle – with a historic, cultural and present day connection to the Rouge Valley on all aspects of park planning and development. The First Nations Advisory Circle consists of: the seven

Williams Treaties First Nations (Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation; Hiawatha First Nation; Alderville First Nation; Curve Lake First Nation; Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation; Chippewas of Rama First Nation; Beausoleil First Nation) as well as the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Six Nations of the Grand River, and the Huron-Wendat Nation. We wish to support this

Advisory Circle in outlining Parks Canada's understanding that the adjacent Greenbelt lands are of strong interest to many Indigenous Peoples, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, who have submitted a land claim for unextinguished title (the Rouge River Valley Tract Claim) on lands that overlap the boundaries of RNUP and the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Greenbelt lands.

In closing, we request a meeting with the province, in line with section 2.09 in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between Ontario and Parks Canada Respecting the Establishment of RNUP, to discuss the Greenbelt land removal and development proposal at your earliest convenience.

Lands proposed to be removed from the Greenbelt (in red). The large area in red are Greenbelt lands known as the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Greenbelt, a protected area that is complimentary to Rouge National Urban Park.

