



Alberta Horticultural Association

December 2020
The official
quarterly newsletter
of the AHA

President's Message

2020 is almost done. Some of the things I am hearing from others remind me of late 2019. They sounded a bit like this "I can't wait to see the back of 2019", "I hope that 2020 is better than 2019...well, it couldn't be much worse than this year...", All told, I'm sure that 2020 was NOT anything like what anyone could have predicted. It has been hard on everyone, while it is easy to focus on what we didn't get and can't have (yet), why not focus on some of the positives?

For myself, I feel very blessed to have settled into my new rut. Everyday, I have new opportunities to work with different people than I would have previously. I have many new and creative outlets.

A couple of weeks ago, I participated in Landscape Alberta's Green Industry Conference to stay current on issues and

opportunities in the horticulture industries. While in-person is the preferred option for many, for me, this year's virtual conference had some benefits. I was able to attend a conference and interact with many people, all from the comfort of my home, for a very affordable price. I plan on participating in other conferences that normally would not be affordable.

During this conference, I listened to Katie Dubow from the [Garden Media Group](#). Each year they predict trends in horticulture for the coming year in their US-based Garden Trends Report. While not all the trends are relevant to us, you can see the opportunities for local garden clubs and horticulture societies shining through. A stunning revelation that framed out one of the six main trends (which they

call the Backyard Aficionado) is the estimate that there were 16 to 24 million NEW gardeners in 2020. Many of them are under 35 years of age. Translate those numbers for Alberta and it means we as individual gardeners and horticultural groups have a massive opportunity to be a part of retaining these new gardeners. Need new members and enthusiasm in your club? They are out there— be sure they can find you.

If you follow Garden Media Group's trends to attract the new gardener, focus on houseplants, tiny plants, edibles, and returning landscapes to more natural and native states.

On behalf of the AHA Executive, I wish you all the best.

Robert Spencer
AHA President

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Education Fund

All affiliate members may use the AHA Education fund to hire a guest speaker— presenting in person or online. Some clubs work together to increase the impact.

Think creatively about how you might connect as a group, as well as how you might lock in the new gardeners. It is a time of opportunity for us all.

Contact your AHA District Representative to request funding.

"Gardening is the slowest of performing arts."

Mac Griswold, acclaimed cultural landscape historian and writer

Connecting with the gardening public and potential new members

With the surge in interest in horticultural pursuits such as gardening, there is a tremendous opportunity for Alberta horticulture clubs and societies to connect with new gardeners, despite the restrictions that COVID-19 places upon our traditional methods.

If you are willing to embrace the reach of technology, you can provide interesting and useful connections for new gardeners. Many new gardeners are likely to turn to the internet for information. They might not consider if that online advice is applicable to their area. But if they could find local information, it is much more valuable.

Does your club or society have a **website or a Facebook** page? Posting useful and practical content will be sure to draw new people. There are many examples of quality content you can draw from. Linking people to that content is quick and easy, without the challenge of writing new material.

With no travelling needed, **virtual meeting** technology like Zoom gives you the opportunity to connect with club members (new and old), in a different way. This may be an opportunity to feature a speaker who is too distant to present in person. Another bonus is the possibility of recording presentations for sharing later on.

These suggestions take time, new resources may be needed, and in rural communities online connectivity is often a challenge, but you may find one of these new strategies works for your group.

Rob Spencer

Productive Partnerships

Like horticultural societies, many businesses, community groups, and agencies have been scrambling to find new ways to reach their audiences. Which ones in your community would be open to partnering with you? Horticulture groups bring to that partnership an engaged membership, capable volunteers, and years worth of experience in topics that are currently high profile.

Submit articles or provide information to reporters for local **newspapers**.

Since March many **libraries** have taken the lead on providing virtual content for their patrons. They have the knowledge to help you connect with your members online.

Across the province more than 280 **Agricultural Societies** are led by volunteers. Many ag societies are very active and some have a long history of hosting horticultural bench shows. With similar mandates in your community, they can be valued partners. Check out the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies to find one near you.

There may be several ways to collaborate with your **municipality**, they may provide publicity, in-kind assistance with community projects, or funding for events.

If your group does not have the expertise to host a Zoom session, maybe a **neighbouring horticultural club** can. Share the cost of a guest speaker and double your advertising efforts to draw an audience.

2021 will likely be another crazy busy season for **greenhouses and garden centres**. Is there an opportunity now to connect with these innovative entrepreneurs for some collaborative initiatives?

LILY BEETLE SUMMER CYCLE	APRIL			MAY			JUNE			JULY			AUGUST			SEPTEMBER			OCTOBER		
	Adult Beetle Dormant			Emerge and Mate			Egg Incubation			Larvae Hatching and Feeding			Larvae Pupate (under ground)			New Adults Emerge and Continue to Feed			Return to Soil		

The chart is an approximate summer cycle of the lily beetle for the western Canadian prairies. Cycle times may overlap. Visit the Olds College [Lily Beetle web page](#) for more details and photos.

image copyright Olds College

Lily Beetle Update- December 2020



While gardeners in northern parts of Alberta have yet to meet a lily beetle, many gardeners in Edmonton, Red Deer, and south are very familiar with this voracious scarlet insect. With the help of lily growers, for more than 10 years Olds College has been tracking the spread of the lily beetle and investigating control measures. In 2010 Ken Fry, head of Olds College's entomology department, began looking at a parasitoid wasp to control the beetle. In 2013 Dr. Fry released some of the wasps at the College campus. Since then, the wasps have also been released in Airdrie and Calgary.

Passionate cut flower growers Clara (president of the Lobstick Garden Club) and Heather host [The Sustainable Flower Growers Podcast](#). Their December 13, 2020 podcast features a fascinating interview with Dr. Fry, taking a deep dive into the problem of the lily beetle and how gardeners can help track their spread.

Dr. Fry calls the beetles "worthy adversaries". Both adults and larvae feed on lilies. The adult beetles use compounds from the lilies to make themselves distasteful to predators. Their bright red colour reminds those predators to stay away. When disturbed, the beetle falls to the ground and hides in the soil with its black underside facing up. The larvae coat themselves in their own excrement, a multi-purpose strategy. The excrement keeps their skin moist, allowing the insects to feed during the heat of the day and climb high into the plant, it deters predators, and makes a barrier that reduces the effectiveness of pesticides- including diatomaceous earth.



First instar larvae & eggs



Lily Beetle larva



Lily Beetle

Photos copyright Olds College

An equally cunning adversary, the parasitoid wasp uses the beetle larvae to shelter and feed its young. The adult wasps lay eggs inside the larvae. The eggs remain there until the larvae drop to the ground, dig into the soil, and turn into pupae. When the time is right, the eggs hatch and the immature wasps eat their way out of the larvae.

Early trials with the parasitoid wasp determined it can overwinter here. As the beetle population at Olds College has disappeared, thanks to the wasp, Dr. Fry continues his work by releasing more wasps in Airdrie and Calgary. His next step is to look at second species of wasp that may be able to track the beetle and move with it as it spreads to new areas.

So how can gardeners help? All this work began with Dr. Naomi Cappucino at Carleton University. She set up the [Lily Leaf Beetle Tracker](#) in 2016 to see how the beetle is spreading across North America. Dr. Fry said this Citizen Science effort has been "hugely important".

Report the Beetle

If you have found this invasive pest on your lilies, please provide a picture and report your findings to confirm the identity and map out the spreading range of this pest. Please Contact:

Alberta Regional Lily Society

lilybeetle@arls-lilies.org

Olds College Ken Fry Ph.D

KFry@oldscollege.ca

Lorraine Taylor, newsletter editor

Promote Your Society

Affiliate Profiles on AHA Website

Across the province there is a wonderful variety of horticulture clubs and societies, engaging gardening communities in many ways.

Contact your District Representative to have your profile posted on ABHortA.ca



www.ABHortA.ca



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

2021

2021 International Year of Fruits and Vegetables

We are what we eat. We are constantly being encouraged to add more fruits and vegetables to our plates. And why not?!? The consumption of fruits and vegetables contributes to a healthier lifestyle. The production of fruits and vegetables can bring a great deal of satisfaction.

The IYFV 2021 is a unique opportunity to raise awareness on the important role of fruits and vegetables in human nutrition, food security and health, and as well in achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Visit the [IYFV](https://www.iyfv.org/) website for more information.

Affiliate Annual Membership Waived for 2021

At the December 1, 2020 meeting of the AHA board members a motion was passed to waive the 2021 membership fees for all Affiliate and Individual members. A letter will be sent with more details.

The Alberta Regional Lily Society (ARLS)

Almost 40 years ago the Alberta Regional Lily Society was set up with the mandate of "promoting interest in growing the genus *Lilium* and providing information for our members and the gardening public in Alberta".



The ARLS website is worth a visit.

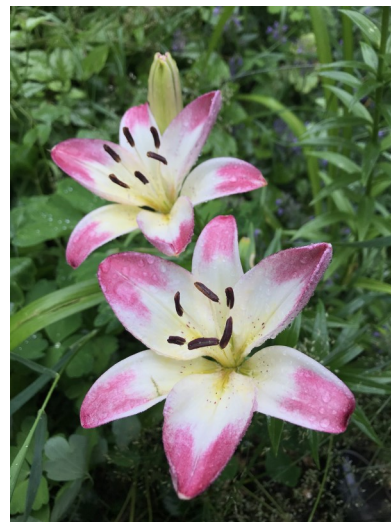
Resources on the site include a well illustrated five-part series on lily basics covering topics such as planting & culture,

descriptions & divisions, pests & diseases, all courtesy of Olds College. The website photo galleries are a real treat.

Thanks to ARLS members, gardeners have an opportunity to see lilies at their best at the Annual Martagon Show at the University of Alberta Botanic Garden and at the Annual Lily Show at Greenland Garden Centre, both in July. Gardeners enchanted by these beautiful plants can choose from a wide selection at the ARLS bulb sales in September.

"Lilies are one of the true garden stars offering tremendous value with little effort. Lilies are hardy in our climate (with a few exceptions) and easy to grow. They take up a small amount of real-estate in the garden, but provide fabulous colour and create a strong impact."

From the ARLS website– Lily Basics, Part 1: Taxonomy, June 2017



'Lollipop' Photo by Emily Fyfe

Visit the ARLS website for beautiful photos and to learn about the Society

<https://www.arls-lilies.org/>