



# Alberta Horticultural Association

April 2021  
The official  
quarterly newsletter  
of the AHA

## President's Message

Spring seems to be settling in finally, although I am quite sure that winter will still try and throw another tantrum before checking out again. Since the weather is always variable, I'm sure that I could comment on how wet it is or how dry it is, and it would resonate with some of you.

As a part of my work, I have been trying to stay connected to a number of areas of horticulture in Alberta. With this effort comes some awareness of trends and patterns. One of the trends that seems to be holding strong from last year is the interest in horticulture and all things green. It is a pretty good time to be a horticulturist or to be horticulturally-inclined. I hope that you (as an individual or as an affiliate) are seeing and reaping the benefits of this trend, in terms of connecting with new peers and new members.

If as a group you aren't seeing a swing upward, what are you missing? What needs to change to allow you to draw in those new people? It is possible that this set of years might just be life-changing for our various organizations.

You will notice that there continue to be more and more online events available to you. People are getting really creative in reaching other people with their knowledge and how they share what would normally be delivered in a hands-on, in-person way. There are some tremendous events being hosted by some quality organizations, either due to a need for creativity, or because this year represents a milestone year, and they are celebrating. One example is my alma mater, the University of Saskatchewan. They are celebrating their 100 years of horticultural

programming, by offering series of high quality, but inexpensive workshops online. You should check them out.

You might remember in the last edition that we mentioned that 2021 is the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables, so you can't get more horticultural than that.

As an AHA Executive, we are still out there, doing what we can. For 2021 the membership fees are waived. We hope this helps you out a bit, and more importantly, we hope that you'll stick with AHA and help us move forward and upwards. We invite all of our affiliates' members to participate in our Annual General Meeting May 15<sup>th</sup>.

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

*Robert Spencer*  
AHA President

Register for AHA Annual Meeting	2
Year of the Garden 2022	2
Perennials in Containers	3
Cool Season Crops & Bolting	4
Industry Highlight Landscape Alberta	4

  
[www.ABHortA.ca](http://www.ABHortA.ca)

## Education Fund

Some of the presentations affiliates hosted in 2020:

- ~Feeding birds in winter
- ~Tool sharpening
- ~Succulents
- ~How to store dahlias
- ~Growing medicinal cannabis
- ~Making tufa pots
- ~What's new for 2020
- ~Vermiculture

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Contact your AHA District Representative to request funding for guest speakers.

The Millarville Horticultural Club has a scholarship for local students taking horticultural studies. Their Creative Landscape Grant is open to non-profit organizations operating in Foothills County. [facebook.com/millarvillehortclub](https://www.facebook.com/millarvillehortclub)

## LICA starts new community garden

Early this year Rachel Bates, Education & Outreach Coordinator from the Lakeland Industry and Community Association (LICA), contacted the AHA about a series of online webinars for new gardeners. This group is developing a community garden and was looking to attract interest. Members of the AHA executive stepped up and delivered three webinars in February, March, and April. With the goal of looking at the basics of a gardening season, the topics included what and how to plant, methods for extending the season, plus summer garden care.

As an organization, we aim to support community initiatives. Thanks Rob, Lorna, and Karen. To the community gardeners in Bonnyville- best wishes for a great growing season!



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## AHA 2021 Annual General Meeting & presentations

**Our Annual Meeting is set for Saturday, May 15, 2021.** This will be an online meeting, held via Zoom. While we would rather be meeting in person, we see this as an opportunity to gather many of our affiliate and individual members from across Alberta.

The AGM begins at 9:00am with a brief overview of 2020 activities and plans for 2021, followed by elections for board member positions. Our District Representatives will conclude the meeting with highlights from our Affiliate Members across the province.

Get excited about the gardening season with our guest presenters, starting at 10:00am:

- Sharon Murphy, Gardening with Sharon- Setting Up Your Perennial Garden for Success.
- Michel Gauthier, Canadian Garden Council- Year of the Garden 2022 campaign. Learn how your horticulture society can use this national campaign to promote the work you do.

Registration is free. All individual members and members of AHA affiliate clubs are welcome to participate in the AGM and watch the horticulture presentations. Use this link to register in advance

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMrD-iopjspHtxDvSQiU62SveL4HPxlm4Y0>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information about joining the meeting.

## Year of the Garden 2022– AHA Affiliates part of the “Garden Family”



This year long celebration will commemorate Canada’s rich garden heritage, celebrate today’s vibrant culture, and create important legacies for a sustainable future. Horticultural societies and garden clubs are part of Canada’s “Garden Family” that includes plant growers, garden product manufacturers, retailers, designers, landscape service providers, public gardens, garden communicators and educators, and affiliated businesses.

This is an excellent opportunity for Alberta’s gardening groups to use the Year of the Garden Campaign to promote your organization. Plan a legacy project, promote your events, nominate a Garden Hero.

Learn the latest about the Year of the Garden 2022 campaign at <https://yearofthegarden.ca>

## Using Perennials in Container Plantings

Typically, we plant annuals and tender perennials in outdoor containers. While perennials are not often selected for patio pots, there are some woody and herbaceous perennials that add interesting colour, texture, and structure. Unlike annuals, perennials generally have a short blooming period, failing to meet our expectation for all-summer flowers, but this can bring an intriguing element of change throughout the season.

### Quick tips:

- follow the usual planting principles; use good quality potting mix and ensure pots are well drained
- choose plants with similar growing needs to suit the location- for sun or shade, moist or dry, sheltered or windy conditions
- plan for flower colour all summer, select perennials with different bloom times, or combine with annuals
- to be showy in a container, perennials need to be relatively mature, don't buy small plants to economize

### Follow regular summer maintenance to get the best performance:

- fertilize weekly with something like 20-20-20 or 15-30-15 if the design includes annuals
- use supports for specimens that need it
- pinch back annuals that might overwhelm the perennials
- unless the seedheads are attractive, deadhead flowers as they fade

### Most perennials don't survive the winter if left in a pot.

Gardeners use a few strategies to get perennials through the winter:

- take a chance and leave the hardiest perennials in the pot. Depending on the weather, some years some plants survive.
- use large pots and plant near the centre
- move the pots indoors if you have a heated garage or shop. To bloom again next year they need a dormant period, so keep the temperature cooler than 5°C.
- replant perennials from their summer containers into the garden at the end of the season. Some gardeners leave their perennials in pots and sink those into the big container, making it an easy transition to the garden in September. Next year, these perennials may go back in a container or be used in a flower bed.

**A sampling of perennials to grow in containers-** look for cultivars with outstanding ornamental characteristics:

<i>Actea</i>	<i>Alchemilla</i>	<i>Artemesia</i>	<i>Aster</i>	<i>Astilbe</i>	<i>Bergenia</i>
<i>Brunnera</i>	<i>Dicentra</i> 'Goldheart'	<i>Echinacea</i>	<i>Ferns</i>	<i>Gaillardia</i>	<i>grasses</i>
<i>Heliopsis</i>	<i>Hemerocallis</i> 'Happy Returns' series	<i>Heuchera</i>	<i>Hosta</i>	<i>Iris</i> 'Aurea'	<i>Lamium</i>
<i>Liatris</i>	<i>Nepeta</i>	<i>Pulmonaria</i>	<i>Salvia</i>	<i>Sedum</i>	<i>Stachys</i> 'Hummello'
<i>Tiarella</i>	<i>Trollius</i>	<i>Veronica</i>	<i>Vinca</i>		

Used in combination with annuals or on their own, perennial plants can be used to create beautiful container designs. While typically costing more than annuals, they can be used again next year or become a permanent addition to flower beds. Check out your perennial border, you may already have plants that can be dug, divided, and included in containers.

*From Sharon Murphy's presentation for the Sangudo & District Horticultural Club, February 2021.*

## Promote Your Society

The AHA website has a photo gallery to highlight your organization's work in your community. Do you have a plant sale, town clean-up, flowerbed planting, drive-in movie, garden seed give-away? Include a description and send some photos. We'd like to see what is happening across the province.

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[www.ABHortA.ca](http://www.ABHortA.ca)



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

2021

## Cool Season Crops– Bolting

Many Alberta gardeners have had the experience of growing kohlrabi plants with lots of leaves but no bulbing of the stem, or lettuce that becomes bitter and goes to seed before there is time to eat it. During a recent Master Gardeners Spring Symposium webinar, Natalie Hoidal, Vegetable Production Extension Educator with the University of Minnesota explained the physiology that causes these problems.

Brassicas (which include kohlrabi, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli) and lettuce are biennial flowering plants. This means before they produce seed they generally need a 2-3 month cool period to induce flowering, a phase called vernalization. They also need time to grow the thick stems or leafy heads we like to eat. Sometimes though, our unpredictable cold spring weather mimics vernalization and the plants start getting ready to flower. Then, if we get hot weather that speeds up the flowering process.

### Natalie's tips to prevent bolting:

- ~Choose varieties that are well suited to the season (heat tolerance, fall variety, spring variety)
- ~Transplanting in the spring may reduce bolting
- ~Succession planting to reduce risk
- ~Plant in mid-summer for a late autumn harvest

[extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden](http://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden)

## Industry Highlight-Landscape Alberta

Founded in 1957, Landscape Alberta Nursery Trades Association is a non-profit organization supporting and representing the landscape horticulture industry in Alberta. Landscape Alberta members are involved in all sectors of the ornamental horticulture industry – including Landscape Contractors (design, construction and maintenance), Arborists, Lawn Care Providers, Tree Nurseries, Garden Centres, and Sod Producers, as well as allied businesses such suppliers of equipment, horticulture and landscape products, and business services.


When hiring for landscape services visit the LA website for the member list, searchable by location and sector. These businesses have made a commitment to professionalism in their industry

<https://www.landscape-alberta.com/>

The Canadian Nursery Landscape Association is the national body of the provincial associations.

Landscape Alberta helps members develop business management and technical skills, promotes awareness of beautiful outdoor environments, and is an advocate for the industry.

The annual Landscape Awards acknowledge excellence in the industry and the On-the-Job Training program helps employers train their staff to a consistent standard. Held in November, the Green Industry Conference includes a large trade show and a conference featuring top industry experts from across North America.

NURSERY TRADES ASSOCIATION  
**landscape alberta**  
 *Green for Life!*