

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

AGM – President's Report 2021

Well, 2021 came and we were all in the same position as we were with the closing of 2020 – caught in Covid restrictions and lockdowns. The board came together and worked very hard to come up with a plan to get us up and going, despite the circumstances that we were all in due to the Pandemic. This first item that we needed to address was that of our January renewal of memberships. Dee Fahlman, who had just come on the board just prior to that and was still learning about our website setup, worked tirelessly to set up registration form online so that everyone could renew their memberships from the safety of their homes. This new system worked very well for us and we saw 174 members sign up as members for 2021.

We did not want to go through another season without our having our meetings. So we approached some of the speakers that were not able to present in 2020 and quickly put together a list of ones who were willing and able to do their presentations via zoom. We started our Zoom meetings in March and since we had a later start we also added in a June meeting. Our spring series of presenters included:

March – Catherine McGill – “Out of the Box”

April – Dan Cooper – Exotic Flowers of Southeast Asia

May – Debi Goodwin who spoke on “The Covid Victory Garden”

June – Dugald Cameron – “Everything to Know About Clematis”

Come September, we were once again able to meet in person with limited attendance so that we could be safe and practice social distancing.

September's speaker was Rick Meloen who spoke on “Peonies and Dahlias – Grief and Glory”.

Our October meeting went back to a Zoom presentation because our speaker, Catherine Kavassalis was too far away to attend in person. Her topic was “A Pollinator Patch From The Ground Up”.

A special thanks goes out to Cindy Grant for arranging for the Zoom meetings for us. All speakers had great presentations, were very informative and well received from the members.

We normally have 2 major fundraisers every year – our spring Plant Sale and our Garden Tour that takes place in July. Once again, these events had to be cancelled due to covid restrictions. Big plans for next year are already underway for both the plant sale and the garden tour.

This summer we participated in a Community's In Bloom initiative called “Hope Is Growing”. They were encouraging organizations and people to plant yellow flowers in their gardens as a symbol of hope during these trying times. Since planting our pollinator garden at the William/Nassau park was put on hold until next year to coincide with the garden tour, we used this prepared bed area to plant a variety of yellow flowers. A special thanks to Francyne Chenier and her husband who worked many hours maintaining and watering this garden throughout the summer. Plans are still underway to develop this little park area next summer and to be a feature of the garden tour. More on that in the next couple of months.

In July one of our members, Shelia Hirsch Kalm, opened up her beautiful garden near Queenston, for other members to come and experience what she has created there. Although we were chased out of garden the first day by a thunderstorm, the second visitation day greeted us with sunshine and warmth. Everyone who came, enjoyed strolling around the property and speaking with Shelia about her garden and all the containers that she has on her patio.

Every year, we hand flowers to the residents of the 3 senior homes in the Niagara-on-the-Lake area – Upper Canada Lodge, Pleasant Manor and Niagara Long Term Care Residence. On December 3rd, we will be distributing 250 poinsettia plants to these three homes.

Even though it has been a challenging year for many organizations, as gardeners, we always have our gardens to turn to bring us comfort and contentment.

I would like to thank all the members for your patience during the last 2 years as we worked through the challenges. I would also like to thank the board for all their hard work and dedication to this organization. I have served on many committees over the years, but this board is one of the best to work with. They are a special group of ladies that bring many talents to the table. Each one of them goes above and beyond of what is expected of them. It has been a true joy for me to serve along side of them.

Here's looking forward to 2022, a better year ahead and all that it has in store for us.

Joanne Young
NOTL Horticultural Society
President