



**Ontario Horticultural Association District 9
Annual General Meeting
Saturday, Nov. 6th, 2021
ZOOM Meeting**



The meeting was called to order by District Director, Margaret Tanaszi, who welcomed everyone present and Charles Freeman, President, Ontario Horticultural Association.

Charles reported that the OHA Convention in 2022 will be held virtually on the weekend of July 15th, 2022. The convention will be held in Ottawa in 2023 and Guelph in 2024.

There is a new Code of Conduct, one for Directors and one for Societies.

In 2022 the OHA would like gardens to be planted with red plants, with plenty of photographs taken and sent to the Garden Ontario website. This is an initiative, called Year of the Garden 2022, associated with Gardens Canada, and Year of the Garden is associated with the colour red.

If a society is having vendors, there is a vendor insurance form to be completed on-line. The insurance is \$22 for two days and if the event is cancelled, the funds will be refunded.

Minutes of the Spring Annual General Meeting, April 27th, 2019

MOTION: that the minutes from the Annual General Meeting of April 27th, 2019 be approved.
Moved by Debbie Eggleton and seconded by Amber Cuthbertson. The motion passed.

Roll Call of District Societies

Recording Secretary, Maggie Corner took the roll call

Dunnville	2
Fort Erie	0
Grimsby	1
Lincoln	0
Niagara Falls	1
Niagara-on-the-Lake	0
Pelham	2
Port Colborne	6
Ridgeway & District	1
St. Catharines	2
Smithville	3
Thorold	3
Welland	4
TOTAL	25

Treasurer's Report

Alan Daniels, Treasurer, gave the financial report.

The financial report from September 27th, 2019 balance was \$5,230.32.

This balance was transferred to the District 9 general account.

The financial report from September 28th, 2020 balance was \$10,439.28.

The financial report from September 28th, 2021 balance is \$10,340.03.

A copy of the three reports are attached.

An audit will take place prior to years end.

MOTION: That the unaudited Treasurer's reports be accepted as presented.

Moved by Maggie Corner, seconded by Jan Harte. The motion passed.

Old/New Business

Margaret read highlights from all District 9 Society's Annual Reports. Margaret noted that Annual Reports are your Society's official history. The OHA keeps track of, and assembles the reports for the OHA. The more information provided by each Society is appreciated.

The OMAFRA reports, by each society, are due by December 6th. There is a new system for forwarding this information: Transfer Payment Ontario, or TPON, is meant to consolidate all financial transactions with the province.

The contact at OMAFRA for general issues is Liz Brydges.

The contact at OMAFRA for TPON is Arkin Nag Chowdhury.

The General Grants are distributed on a first come, first served basis. Applications can be received after midnight on December 31st.

There is a one year grant of \$500.00 for the Year of the Garden. There are two grants, one for the east and one for west. District 9 is in the west.

If your Society is applying for a district award, the information must be submitted to Margaret Tanaszi., district director. These include the District Service Award, available each year to any District society, submitted to the Director with a letter about the nominee's qualifications, and the Director then forwards these to the Awards Coordinator; the District Appreciation Award, a certificate awarded at the discretion of the District Director. The awards booklet is online at gardenontario.org, and the contact at the OHA is Sharlene Desjardins, Awards Coordinator. The District Service Award must be submitted by January 20th, 2022.

There will be a workshop in 2022 for the District Treasurer and Secretary.

A new Ontario Not For Profit Act was approved in October. The OHA will be working on this to see how our organization will be affected. There is a three year implementation period.

There will be a Spring AGM in 2022 for District 9. This AGM will be virtual.

Election and Installation of Executive

Susan Lusted, Nominations Chair, introduced and presented the slate of nominees for election to District 9, to Charles Freeman.

Linda Olsson had to stand down and the District thanks her for her amazing contribution.
Leslie Daniels stood to be nominated as an Assistant Director.
The remaining officers all stood for re-election.
Charles highlighted the roles.

District 9 Director	Margaret Tanaszi
Assistant Director	Leslie Daniels
Assistant Director and Corresponding Secretary	Susan Lusted
Assistant Director	Amber Cuthbertson
Treasurer	Alan Daniels
Recording Secretary	Maggie Corner
Past District Director	Susan Lusted (this position is not appointed or elected but acts as a resource to the Committee).

All members were elected and installed.

Speaker: Robert Pavlis

Robert is the owner and developer of Aspen Grove Gardens, a 6-acre botanical garden that features 3000 varieties of plants. Robert specializes in soil science, has been an instructor for Landscape Ontario, is a garden blogger, writer and chemist.

Topic: Understanding Soil

Plants need sun, rain and air, over which gardeners have little to no control.
Plants also need soil and this is where gardeners have some control.

What is soil: 45% minerals, incl. clay, sand, silt and organic matter
25% water
25% air – this is critical for plant growth
5% organic matter.

The secret to good soil is microbes; there are billions of microbes in our gardens. Earthworms eat microbes and are therefore a very good indicator of the number of microbes in our gardens. Earthworms and microbes help to aggregate the soil, creating lumpy soil and passages for air and water. You can change the amount of air and organic matter through aggregation. If your soil clumps, this is good soil. Microbes will increase as they move into good soil where they can find food and can help decompose organic matter, which gardeners can add.

The root tip of the plant is surrounded by organic matter. The plant is making its own compost pile and microbes show up and eat. Mycorrhizal fungi have a symbiotic relationship with roots. The fungi attach themselves to the roots either externally or internally. The fungi eat the sugar/carbohydrates produced by the plant through photosynthesis, and the plant gets nutrients brought back by the fungi from further away in the soil. There are some bad microbes, but generally plants attract the good microbes who then eat the bad ones.

Robert noted that plant-specific fertilizers do not work, e.g., roses, vegetables. If you want to fertilize, there is no difference chemically between organic and commercial fertilizers. Use organic matter to feed the soil which will then feed the plants.

Robert then opened up the presentation to questions:

Clean Up in the Fall and/or Spring?

Do not clean up too much in the fall. Try and leave the stems, deadheading and leaves in the garden over winter to provide a mulch and habitat for insects. Do not leave a thick mat of leaves on the lawn, or it will be smothered. Robert recommends clean-up in the spring, and leaving what you have cut on the garden as organic matter to be decomposed over months.

What about using Peat vs. Coconut Coir?

Peat, in Canada, is abundant, and it is increasing faster than it can be used. Robert noted that in other countries, i.e., England, they are losing their peat bogs to housing.

Coconut coir is the ground up shells of coconuts, which are full of salt and need lots of washing; the coir is then shipped worldwide with environmental costs. Not a good alternative for us.

Problems with mildew – should diseased plants be composted. What about maple leaves with black spots.

Robert noted that there are thousands of kinds of mildew. If you remove the diseased portions, these are compostable. However, you will still get mildew the next year; spores are in the ground or travel through the air. The same is true of maple and rose leaves with black spot. Robert suggests gardeners should get a mildew- or black spot-resistant plant instead.

Can you promote microbes in house plants?

Containers and house plants are different to outside plants. They do not support microbes and pots do not contain soil. If you want to fertilize them, use a synthetic fertilizer.

Using tea in plants can be harmful, but coffee is okay.

What about determining the health of your soil using cotton - the Tidy Whitey Soil Test?

It works. The item being added to the compost/soil must be cotton, and cotton is a plant. The more microbes in the soil, the faster the cotton will decompose.

Margaret Tanaszi thanked Robert for an excellent and informative talk.

The meeting was then adjourned,.

Respectfully submitted by Maggie Corner