
	<p style="text-align: center;">Ontario Horticultural Association Director District 9 Niagara Haldimand Susan M. Lusted 201 Livingston Ave. Grimsby, On L3M 4X2 d94oha@gmail.com</p>	
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On reviewing the Annual Reports for District 9, there is a recurring thread in each one. All of our societies exhibit a commitment to community involvement. This year, however, there is one more that I see and that is innovation and change. Our societies are adapting to changes in the community and from within. Some have rebranded taking on the Garden Club name. Programmes have changed also. I see more emphasis on such things as the creation of pollinator gardens. More and more, we are looking to involve youth by the creation of junior gardeners, funding school projects. I feel that this is important for the continuation of our groups. Some of our societies have seen astounding increases in membership. We are creating more knowledge in the community also by participating in Garden Ontario Week. I am always pleased when someone mentions that they have seen information on one of our societies in the papers.

Dunnville Horticultural Society: At first glance it looks like a disappointing year. We didn't hold a garden walk or bus tour. The flower show wasn't as enthusiastic as the previous year. But we did participate in the Dunnville Lions Home and Garden Show where we attracted more new members. We had 111 new members this year to reach our goal of over 200. The garden beds looked amazing and we received a lot of thanks and praise from citizens and businesses alike. We started a junior gardener program which looks very promising. And our increased involvement with the other service clubs is always improving. We are working together to make Dunnville a town to be proud of.

Fort Erie, Our plant sale revenues provided enough monies to donate two \$500 awards. These went to two students post-secondary. We worked with special needs students in the greenhouse at Fort Erie SS. Our society website was maintained and improved. A partnership with Gilmore Lodge was formed and their gardens were planted and maintained -the memorial gardens at Douglas Seniors' Centre were replanted and maintained and a new garden was designed, planted and maintained a new garden at the Fort Erie Railroad Museum. Our society was very involved in the Fort Erie Communities in Bloom International Competition with the theme of the Maple Leaf in the Canadian Flag. Fort Erie was place second in the International Competition. In 2015 the Grimsby Garden Club The garden club was actively promoted at the

Grimsby Home & Garden Show, the GGC Annual Plant Sale and the Grimsby Farmers Market (with an educational booth 4 times throughout the summer), resulting in a substantial increase in new members. The trillium Awards were judged and awarded. 2015 was one of change also as we moved our website over to the Garden Ontario site, initiated a blog and created a Facebook presence. Scholarships to both high school

students who enter a horticulturally related post-secondary field. In August, we hosted a volunteer appreciation night. All in all a successful year.

Lincoln began their community volunteer activities designing Garden #2 for Ball's Falls Conservation Park. The 70th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands was celebrated with the planting of Dutch Canadian Friendship Tulip Garden in the Millennium Forest at the Vineland Innovation Centre. The District 9 AGM was successfully hosted by our club and with our combined attendance we won the Eloise Schumacher Award for highest combined attendance. We didn't spend very much money, which is something we will be correcting in 2016 by working on two major garden plantings, one at the Town of Lincoln and the other being the Dutch-Canadian Friendship Garden in the Millennium Forest.

For the Niagara Falls Horticultural Society, 2015 saw them host their 94th Annual Flower & Vegetable Show/62nd Annual Rose & Flower Show and their 4th Annual Summer Potluck Social enjoyed by members. Barb Blythin continues as our most successful Floral Designer in monthly and annual shows. David Blythin, Secretary honoured with City of Niagara Falls Volunteer Award. In an Arbor Day Tree Planting - NF Hort. Society donated \$1000 towards trees to City of Niagara Falls/Armoury Bed. 700 Tulips were planted to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Liberation of Holland with the Dutch/Canadian Friendship Tulip Planting.

For Niagara on the Lake, 2015 has been an interesting and successful year for the co-presidents. The society also gave back to the community with its annual Flowers for Seniors. The annual garden tour was a huge success and featured some splendid gardens for the public to view. This year a change in focus meant that in addition to funding Niagara College, local public schools were asked to submit requests which resulted in trees being planted, bulbs purchased, vines planted to hide fences. We also planted 700 bulbs to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Canada's part in the Liberation of Holland. Moving away from the schools, we also gave donations to the Historical Museum for planters, and a CIB project to re-do the garden in front of Navy Hall. Optional

For Pelham, Community Planting and maintenance of gardens at the Pelham Public Library and the Maple Acres Library garden in Fenwick. Community Planting at The Royal Canadian Legion gardens, Fonthill Ontario. Formal recognition by the library on social media and public notices for work done in the community. Planning to begin for a Community Garden in conjunction with the local Community in Bloom Committee with about 25 individual plots. Garden Magazine subscriptions to the 2 public libraries. Pelham also has embraced change this year by changing their name to the Pelham Garden Club and also revising and passing a new constitution.

In Port Colborne, members volunteering for civic beautification projects created and tended beds at the Royal Canadian Legion, Port Colborne Hospital, and the grounds of the Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum. We had a number of interesting speakers. One of them convinced the city of Port Colborne to delay cutting of grasses to

allow the Monarchs to complete their life cycle. This fall, members were asked to consider changing the society name to attract more members, in light of the Ontario Horticultural Association being in the process of doing the same to become Garden Ontario. Members were also asked for more ideas on growing the membership and to give us their best suggestions for the year forward, for what looks like an interesting ride.

Ridgeway's past year was an interesting and eventful one. The Executive decided it was time for some changes to our program. In April we went to a local greenhouse to make our own hanging baskets. Our Flower Show in May was an Open House for the public with refreshments and demonstrations. After the judging, Lil Haworth gave a critique, answering design and horticulture questions. The end of May brought another successful Plant and Yard Sale. To contribute to our community beautification, we gave donations to support the Stevensville Kinettes, the Ridgeway BIA and the Crystal Beach Community Improvement Group for their summer plantings. Volunteers from our Club help at Maple Park Lodge, a full-care facility in Fort Erie, for garden care and contributions of plants. This year Maple Park was part of the Fort Erie Communities in Bloom International Competition. Fort Erie received a 5 Blooms Silver Rating and Special Mention for Volunteer Involvement. Quite an achievement.

The Smithville Garden Club though one of smallest garden clubs had a busy year. We plan our Annual agenda with an emphasis of educational programs geared toward gardening essentials (ie. starting seeds, etc) and the environment (pollinator crops and sustainability for native pollinators). We have hands on workshops that provide opportunities to learn about different plants and how to create combination planters. We encourage young adults to enter into horticultural and/or agricultural programs by offering a scholarship every year.

In March, the St. Catharines Horticultural Society volunteered at Seedy Sunday held at the Dunlop Seniors Centre. This event was organized by the Master Gardeners, District 9 of OHA, and our society. President Denis Fallat represented us at Earth Day at Parnell School in April. We helped Grace Mennonite Church (where we hold our meetings) plant a new front garden. This summer we were able to enjoy the gardens of four of our members when they opened their gardens to our Members Garden Walk. In October we voted to accept a revised constitution. During 2015, we lost the following members: Stephen Sheldon, Mary Borowsky, Carol Disher and Doris Campbell. A donation has been sent to the OHA to have their names recorded in the OHA Memorial Book. Mary and Doris were both 50+ year members.

The Thorold Horticulture Society enjoyed another successful year, hosting its Annual Flower show on a Saturday instead of a meeting night. This year, a silent auction for a Fairy Garden was incorporated into their plant sale. This year the society was able to provide a small scholarship to Thorold High School. We continued to help with the Library, provide a small Scholarship Award to a Thorold High School student, as well as helping to support the Richmond Parkette, Mel Swart Park and St. John's Outdoor School.

2015 continued to be one of change and innovation for the Welland Horticultural Society. A successful plant sale which is a major fundraiser was held. Welland is known as "The Rose City" and each year, this society celebrates with the city of Welland by hosting their Rose Show. This year, the show was hosted on a regular meeting night as part of Garden Ontario Week. Welland's presence at the Niagara Region Fair was successful and brought in new members.

District 9

In 2015 we donated \$500 to the Niagara Region Science Fair, judged and participated in the awards presentation.

District 9 organized and participated in Niagara Seedy Sunday along with Niagara Master Gardeners. Our spring AGM was organized by the Lincoln Garden Club. In the fall, the Niagara Falls Horticultural Society hosted the Fall Forum at the Heartland Outdoor Education Centre. This included a tour of the facility and a very interesting talk given by Rene Schmidt who is the owner of Palatine Roses in Niagara on the Lake. Each year, we host a Presidents' Meeting to go over the filing of forms and the use of the Garden Ontario Website. Each of our societies has a presence on the web. This year, we networked on membership and the implementation of best practices for such things as our society monthly meetings. Like District 9's societies, District 9 contributed to our greater community and had another successful year!

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Lusted, District 9 Director