

# The Garden Master News

Newsletter of the Atlantic Master Gardeners Association

ISSUE # 8

VOLUME # 1

WINTER 2016



## AMGA Notes



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

AMGA Notes	1&3
President's Message	2-3
International MG Conference	3
Dalhousie Message	4
Tale of a Christmas Pine	5-6
Caribbean Colour	7-8
Name That Plant	9
AMGA Contacts	10

Some dates to remember:

#### 1) 'COME GROW WITH US'

April 8-10, 2016 -**The Canadian Master Gardener Conference** will be held at Deerhurst Resort, Huntsville, Ontario. Take a look at the Programme at the following website. There are some very interesting topics. It might be just what you are looking for to get Spring off to a Gardening start!!

<http://conference.mgoi.ca/>

Follow the links for Registration, Programme, Accomodation, etc.

2) **Halifax Chapter AMGA Meeting** Sunday, **February 21/16** at the **Alderney Gate Library, 2:30pm.**

3) **AMGA Executive Meeting**, Sunday, **February 28/16** at 1:00 pm. If you have anything you would like to have added to the Agenda please contact one of the Executive listed on the last page of this Newsletter

4) The deadline for submissions for the **Spring Newsletter** will be **April 22nd.**

Please send items for **Newsletter** to Sue Stuart (See Contact list ).

Don't forget that gardening articles, reports of AMGA Projects can count toward total Volunteer hours required to renew membership.

5) **Volunteer Hours and Membership Renewal** must be submitted by **June 1st, 2016 .**

See Membership Management Section on the AMGA website:

[http://atlanticmastergardeners.ca/html/members\\_page.html](http://atlanticmastergardeners.ca/html/members_page.html)

6) Start planning to attend the AMGA Conference in July, 2016. There will be some great workshops, plant exchange, information exchange opportunities... and don't forget to claim education hours!



# Presidents Message

## Notes from the Treehouse

-by Lynn Brooks



I always find it odd that the first thing we will say to someone around January 1st, is "Happy New Year". Personally I think it is a greeting that could wait till spring, when there is actually something to be happy about. At the moment I am staring out a window at what is looking to become a fairly substantial snow event. As a gardener I mentally survive our Canadian winters not by weeping into my wine; or googling travel rates for Costa Rico, but by noticing how pretty my hemlocks look in the snow.

Also the seed catalogues have arrived! It is time to decide what to grow for 2016. Call me old fashioned but I love the physical catalogue. The glossy pages filled with pictures of perfect plants and the reviews... Each seed packet promised to be so wonderful. Words like fabulous performer, beautiful, vigorous, easy to grow, etc etc.

Experience enough failures and you do tend to take all the hype with a grain of salt, but they are still fun to read. This year Halifax Seed celebrates 150 years which is quite remarkable, considering how so many other garden catalogues are come and gone. Hopefully the burgeoning interest in growing vegetables will ensure their continuing survival. I have already marked to buy, a new annual salvia 'Summer Jewel Pink', to go with my usual annual salvia 'Victoria', I grow a lot of salvia, mostly perennial, because of deer. They are the reason my few vegetables are in pots on a second story balcony.

Your executive met in early in the new year and planning is well underway for this years conference. Heather Connors-Dunphy briefed us on some of the exciting events planned. There will be as in the past a plant exchange. The Cape Breton gals did a wonderful job organizing it last year and have agreed to do it again. A great suggestion was made for our members to post on Facebook or email what plants they plan to bring, and perhaps ask if anyone has a particular plant that is hard to find in you area. You never know it may be growing gang-busters in a MG's garden and if attending the conference, would be happy to share.

I am so looking forward to the morning when we have 3 of our gardeners talk about their own gardens or gardens they have visited. We live in such a wide variety of climate zones and different growing

# Presidents Message

(Continued from page 2)

conditions, each with its own particular set of difficulties and challenges. I have started many gardens but only one was what could be called problem free. I gardened year round in Victoria, the soil was deep, loamy and rock free. I really didn't think of myself as much of a gardener as in Zone 7 anything I put in the ground grew. To be honest it was all a little boring our winter break makes one ohh so grateful when spring finally does arrive.

As always we on your executive are just a mouse click away.....

- Lynn

## 2017 International Master Gardener Conference

- by Lynne Marie Sullivan

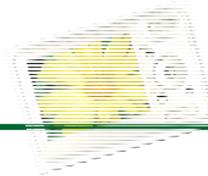
Master Gardeners! The 2017 International Master Gardener Conference will be in the City of Roses: Portland, Oregon! The conference will be held July 10 -14, 2017 and will feature horticultural educators, researchers and Extension staff presenting dozens of topics to engage you. It will also be a phenomenal opportunity to visit Portland's famous gardens (and zoo!), indulge in international cuisine, shop the famous Pearl District, and tour the town via light rail. More info will be posted soon at <http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/2017imgc/about/> Japanese Gardens: <http://japanesegarden.com/> Chinese Gardens: <https://locu.com/places/lan-su-chinese-garden-portland-us/#menu> Botanical Gardens: <http://leachgarden.org/> Oregon Gardens: <http://www.oregongarden.org/> Tulip and Bulb Farm: <http://www.woodenshoe.com/>

Atlantic Canada Master Gardeners Association

## ANNOUNCING:

# AMGA Photo

# Contest



You are invited to take part in an upcoming AMGA Photo Contest!

You might recognize the above Header from our AMGA Website. The Headers on each page have to be replaced! We would like members to help with this project by entering your photos to the Contest.

If you have a great photo of your Garden, the garden next door or a unique garden you visited that represents Atlantic Canada enter it in the Contest!

Complete details will be coming later, so start looking for that special photo!

Photos should be wide Landscape format !



# Message from Dalhousie Agricultural Campus

- by Carol Goodwin

Hello Master Gardeners from the Agricultural Campus of Dalhousie!

Shubenacadie Sam has predicated an early spring, and based on the recent weather and forecasts, it would seem winter will remain gentle with us! Watching the rollercoaster of temperatures we're having, I'm grateful for the snow over my plants. It's the year of the Monkey, and they say *"A lot of global economic growth can be expected in the Year of the Monkey. Expect a lot of life changing inventions to be released. The key to success this year is education. This is not meant as mere college or graduate school but to take up courses that matter for your everyday life not just for your career or status."*

I think the Monkey would see this program as not a mere graduate degree! It certainly has made a difference to the every day life of many.

There have been some changes at Dalhousie University this fall and winter. I retired and moved to Kentville to be with my parents, but because I can manage the Master Gardener program and look after the students' needs from home, I have been retained to do that. Right now I'm revising the Plant ID course, and it will grow to 150 plants. There are still ones I moan about leaving behind!

I am also working on a Garden Design course. It was to start this fall, but will be delayed for a year because we are moving from BlackBoard to BrightSpace and everyone is up to their necks trying to make that all happen seamlessly.

I've been promised this is the last change of the teaching/learning platform for a very long time. In the meantime, my studio is coming together nicely.

Sherry has stepped down from providing student service and support for the web-based part of the Master Gardener program, but she'll still be actively involved in the summer school. I've become the face of the program, really, and Sherry is involved with the new degree in Landscape Architecture that started this past September. A big Thank You to Sherry for all that she has done with me over the years!

The planning is well underway for the 2016 Summer School which will be July 4-8th. Forms and more information will be on the Extended Learning website any time. Keep checking for updates.

The Master Gardener Association has planned an exciting summer conference program, and we'll be celebrating new program grads and certified MGs all together. I would love to see everyone there!

Make yourself a mug of something warm (while I just make myself a mug) and look through the catalogues one more time. I posted my orders on the fridge to remind myself that I have ordered way too many plants already!

Respectfully,  
Carol Goodwin  
Faculty of Agriculture – Dalhousie University

# Tale of a Christmas Pine



By - Sue Stuart



This is my 2015 Christmas tree - a Scotch Pine!  
I love Scotch Pine as a Christmas tree. They seem to be pretty hard to find, but I was lucky and got the last one on the tree lot this year!

Christmas is now over. Decorations have been put away. Time to move on to other things! My Christmas tree had to leave the house. It was pretty dry by January 6<sup>th</sup>, and it had been well watered throughout it's confinement as that "special tree"!

What a fate for such a noble tree!



This is Scottie just before leaving the house! –  
A "Charlie Brown Christmas tree"! Other years my tree has been stripped outside and the needles compacted through my leaf vacuum/blower. This year tarps were laid and the needles removed inside. It worked very well.

Of course Scottie might have had a long and healthy life, had he not been chopped down in his prime and made to grace my living room.

But Scottie/Charlie has a whole new occupation –  
His life has not been in vain

# Tale of a Christmas Pine

(Continued from page 4)



Pine needles and twigs for mulch

Those lovely Christmas tree branches were transformed right in the middle of my living room to a mulch for my acid-loving blueberry plants and, possibly enough for my rhodos and hollies. They will provide a nutrient-rich, weed inhibiting cover enabling the blueberry plants to continue to produce antioxidant-rich blueberries for my grandchildren and the rest of us to pick and enjoy!

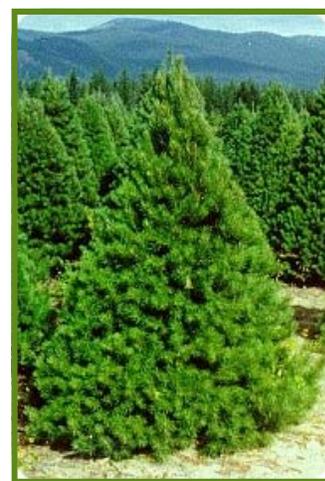


Snow & Pine needle mulch on blueberry plants

This noble tree has assisted a Christmas tree grower to sustain a living for his family, seasonal Christmas pleasure for another family, life - sustaining cover and nutrients for other living plants and may even provide growth – promoting nutrients for it's offspring seeds to germinate amid a healthy plant community!

What tree could ask for any greater honour!

Many Christmas trees end up on the side of the road to be carted away for – hopefully - mulch or compost somewhere else—or maybe just as waste. However like much of our own yard waste it can have useful purposes in our own yards with just a little thought and exercise – the making of your own Ecosystem!



Scotch Pine Tree Natural Setting



# Caribbean Colour

- by Heather Connors-Dunphy

During the holidays my husband and I went on an Eastern Caribbean cruise. One of the places we visited was Saint Kitts. Saint Kitts, also known more formally as Saint Christopher Island, is one of the Leeward Islands in the Lesser Antilles. The west side of the island borders the Caribbean Sea, and the eastern coast faces the Atlantic Ocean. Saint Kitts and the neighbouring island of Nevis form the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis. Saint Kitts is volcanic in origin.

We took a scenic tour from the ship. One of the places we visited was Romney Manor. It has quite a storied history, having belonged initially to the three times great grandfather of Thomas Jefferson. Romney Manor was a sugar plantation. (Sugar is no longer produced in Saint Kitts; the industry was closed by the government in the 1990's.) Some of the structures at the Manor remain including an old bell tower and a sugar mill.

The property is visited mostly for its beautiful grounds and a batik "factory". I want to share a few pictures of the grounds. The warmth and colour is a nice salve for a winter gardener's soul.



Foliage and statuary at Romney Manor



350 year old Saman /Rain Tree

# Caribbean Colour

(Continued from page 6)

One of the interesting plants here is a Saman or Rain tree, *Albizia saman* that is about 350 years old. The tree is native from the Yucatan Peninsula and Guatemala to Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil. This specimen is thought to have originated from seed planted by the Arawak Indians.

Another bright flowering plant was Red Ginger, *Alpinia purpurata*. Red Ginger is widely cultivated and naturalized in the tropics. It is a favourite with florists.



*Alpinia purpurata*, Red Ginger



*Datura candida*, Angel's Trumpet

Angel's trumpet, *Datura candida*, was just beginning to bloom at Romney Manor, and Crape Myrtle, *Lagerstroemia indica* was in full flower.

During the cruise we saw bright coloured flowers and foliage everywhere and more palms and ferns than I can remember, let alone identify. I hope you enjoy the pics.

# NAME THAT PLANT - CHALLENGE

Anita's tree has been successfully identified!  
Carol Loncarevic identified the tree as Japanese Katsura! – Carol will receive a cutting from Anita's tree. Congratulations Carol !



Japanese Katsura, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*  
This amazing tree from Asia has an interesting history. Fossil records show it once grew in Europe as well as North America but vanished 1.8 million years ago during the Pleistocene epoch of glaciation. The good news is we can grow it again as an ornamental in our gardens.

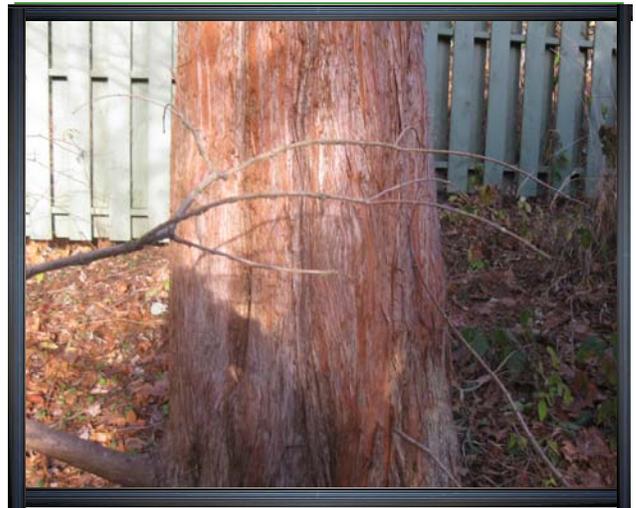
The tree is fast growing when immature and suited for moist soil in full sun or part sun. It does well in acid to neutral soil. It takes a long time to reach its full height of 45 feet.

The leaves are multi-hued with heavy veins and tones of pink and green. In fall the heart-shaped leaves take on autumnal tones of gold, orange and red before they fall from the tree. It is hardy in zones 4b to 8.

Carol has selected a tree for you to identify!  
Here is a photo:

Send your guess to:

[suestuart@bellaliant.net](mailto:suestuart@bellaliant.net)



Carol's Mystery Tree



# AMGA EXECUTIVE

## 2015 - 2016

**PRESIDENT:** Lynn Brooks - [lynbrook@bellaliant.net](mailto:lynbrook@bellaliant.net)

**VICE-PRESIDENT:** Janet Elsie - [janetelsie@yahoo.ca](mailto:janetelsie@yahoo.ca)

**PAST PRESIDENT:** Heather Connors-Dunphy - [hmcd53@gmail.com](mailto:hmcd53@gmail.com)

**SECRETARY:** Aileen Reid - [aileen.reid@apreid.com](mailto:aileen.reid@apreid.com)

**TREASURER:** Johanne Robertson - [jorobertson1632@gmail.com](mailto:jorobertson1632@gmail.com)

**VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR :**

Anita Sulley - [anitasulley@gmail.com](mailto:anitasulley@gmail.com)

**MEMBER AT LARGE(1):** Carol Goodwin - [goodwin.carol56@gmail.com](mailto:goodwin.carol56@gmail.com)

**MEMBER AT LARGE (2):** Jane Plant - [cotaras@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:cotaras@ns.sympatico.ca)

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR :** Sue Stuart - [suestuart@bellaliant.net](mailto:suestuart@bellaliant.net)