

## The Gardener's Corner

# The rustic charm of cottage gardens



than a formal structure.

Early gardens were more practical than the ones of today, with an emphasis on growing vegetables, herbs and fruit trees, and often including a beehive and livestock like ducks, chickens and pigs.

Every plant had to earn its keep, as they not only had to have pleasing appeal, but were expected to produce something to eat. Initially, ornamental flowers were used to fill in spaces; or some acted as companion planting to combat insects. Eventually though, they evolved to become the dominant plants in the cottage garden.

Many of the varieties were gathered as seeds and cuttings on the way home after working in the fields, although the traditional hollyhocks, delphiniums, pansies and old fashioned roses remained fundamental.

"What is the secret of the cottage garden's charm? Cottage gardeners are good to their plots, and in the course of years, they make them fertile. But there is something more and it is the absence of any pretentious plan, which lets the flowers tell their story to the heart."

— William Robinson

By Judith Rogers

Cottage gardens are a distinct style of informal design using traditional resources, dense plantings and a mix of ornamental and edible plants. With an English origin, the cottage garden has the image of grace and charm, almost rustic, rather



Photo by Judith Rogers

A country garden.

In the early 1970s, with an interest in natural and organic gardening, ornamental grasses, native plants, self-sowing annuals and spreading perennials gained popularity, as the cottage garden no longer had to be an area to provide self-sufficiency.

Cottage gardens also have a romantic ambiance derived from many of the beautiful flowers grown in them. A white picket fence with an arbour over the gate dripping in fragrant climbing roses is a common picture reflecting

the entrance to an English cottage garden. Daylilies, primroses, the apothecary's rose (*Rosa gallica officinalis*) foxgloves and bellflowers are some old cottage favourites that also grace these gardens. A couple of my favourite annuals to use in a cottage garden are both blue, and may take some searching to find from a seed company. Nigella is easily started from seed indoors, or directly planted in spring. They like a sunny location, although I have had luck growing them in part shade. Other folk names recognized for this plant are love-in-a-mist or devil-in-a-bush; a couple which describe this beautiful flower oddly. The foliage is feathery with dainty flowers of blue, rose, mauve or white, and they reach 45 centimetres in height. 'Gertrude Jekyll' is the

darkest blue to combine with pink roses or to have peeking out between other perennials. Nigella makes a lovely cut flower, and the seed pods add interest to dried arrangements. This annual will self seed but is not bothersome, and is easy to pull out or save pods to share with friends. Although the annual bachelor buttons can be found in various colours, another irresistible blue flower for the cottage garden is 'Blue Boy', which reaches 75 cm tall. These can be sown outdoors in spring, to flower in summer. Successive seeding will provide flowers right into fall. Bachelor buttons are a good cutting flower for a vase too and will often self seed as well. Contact Judith with gardening questions at lavendercottage.rogers@gmail.com.

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# Collingwood Elvis Festival approaches

## CHURCHILL NEWS

by Linda Gerow

The countdown is on; I'm waiting anxiously for the annual Collingwood Elvis Festival to get started.

The lovefest for the 'King' brings upwards of 60,000 people each year, all coming together to pay homage to Elvis Presley. I am never surprised anymore at the age range or the mass appeal Presley generates. There is simply a feeling of camaraderie present that is hard to define. Yes, we get the dissenters, the folks who poke fun at us; but we don't mind. We don't get 'all shook up' either. The fun runs from July 23 to 27, for those few remaining diehards who wish to breakfast with the

champions. This is my 12th year for attending and it won't be my last. Thank you, thank you very much.

Churchill library: The Churchill branch manager is Debra Mann. The library is closed on Sunday, Monday and Friday, but open Tuesday from 1 p.m. to 7, Wednesday from 1 to 8, Thursday from 1 to 7, and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The telephone number is 456-2761, the e-mail address is churchill@innisfil.on.ca.

Summer Reading Club, Agent 009: Ready for summer? We can't wait. Get the super sleuth secret agent skills ready to dig into some

thrilling mysteries with this year's club, themed 'Agent 009'. The Innisfil Public Library is planning all kinds of events for school-aged children, as well as story-times for preschoolers. Be sure to watch for the flyer in early June and check the library's website for details. Registration begins June 23, and programs start July 7th.

Join the detective school at Innisfil Public Library's Churchill branch. If between the ages of six and 12, visit the library to get a secret code name, sharpen detective skills, learn codes, read great books and solve the summer mystery. This will take place Wednesdays from July 8th to Aug. 12th, from 2 to 3 p.m. Admission is \$2. Register in advance at the Churchill branch. A grand celebration to mark the end

of club is planned for Tuesday August 18th.

Movies will run on Tuesdays at 1p.m., throughout the summer: Nancy Drew runs July 21st. Three Stooges and the Law, will play July 28th and Veggie Tales and Sheerluck Holmes runs Aug. 4th.

Euchre: Bid euchre at St. Peter's Anglican Church on Wednesdays at 1 p.m. Everyone is welcome to drop by any Wednesday and join in the fun. Light refreshments are served. Call 458-1801 for details.

A huge garage sale will be held at Churchill United Church, located at 6306 Yonge Street, on Saturday July 18. Free children's painting, a barbecue and sale will be available. No products are over \$5. Toys, tools, electronics, garden, home

and camping equipment will be for sale. The event runs rain or shine. Early birds are welcome to attend.

Ball hockey tournament: Lefroy Arena will be receiving upwards of 200 ball hockey players from across Southern Ontario, and as far away as Pittsburgh, to crown the ultimate champion of the fourth annual Summer Classic, which runs from July 17th to 19th. Hosted by the Innisfil Men's Ball Hockey League (IMBHL), the three day event will feature a round robin format, with each team guaranteed to play a minimum of three games.

In the first year, there were six teams, but it has grown immensely since then. The tournament starts at 7 p.m. Friday night and runs from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on

Sunday. There is no admission fee and everyone is welcome to attend. For more information, call Scrimgeout at 812-2941, e-mail innisfilballhockey@sympatico.ca or visit www.imbhl.com.

Smile: Just before the funeral services, the funeral director came up to the very elderly widow and asked, "How old was your husband?"

"Ninety-eight," she replied. "Two years older than me."

"So you're 96," the undertaker commented.

She responded, "Hardly worth going home, is it?"

If you have any news/items for this column, please submit them by 5 p.m. on the Sunday before publication. Contact me at 436-9769 or e-mail lagerow@rogers.com.

# Annual corn roast taking place next month

## THORNTON NEWS

by Cathie Miller

The Thornton Fire Fighters Association is hosting a golf tournament on Wednesday July 29 at Tangle Creek.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. with a shotgun start at 10. The cost is \$100 per golfer and includes 18 holes, a golf cart, steak dinner, live auction and hole-in-one

prizes. The association is also seeking sponsors. For more information, or to become a sponsor, call Scott Fisher at 721-5287.

The Thornton Area Action Committee will be hosting their annual community corn roast and barbecue on Sunday August 9, from 3 to 6 p.m.

It features delicious all-you-can-eat corn on the cob, supplied by Chappel Farms, and hot dogs and hamburgers will be for sale.

TOPS will be selling drinks and treats and Essa Parks and Recreation will be providing fun activities for the kids.

Everyone is invited to join friends and neighbours at the fire hall/library for this community tradition.

Several fundraisers are being held at the Essa Public

Library. Both branches are selling canvas books bags for \$10 and window clings for \$2. They are also introducing a new fundraiser this year. They are featuring Epicure Selections delicious Sweet or Savory Triple Dip sets, a healthy, easy and unique product. Take home these tasty treats (three complete jars in a gift bag) for \$21. The funds raised from these products stays at the branch they were purchased at.

All Agent 009 book club participants and their friends are invited to a day of fun and laughter. The Essa Public Library is proud to welcome Mr. Chris and the Gassy Bubbles Band to the Thornton Community Centre on Monday August 17, starting at 2 p.m. All children are welcome to attend this free event.

Essa Summer Blast Day Camp still has spaces available for campers. Held at both the Thornton and Angus

arenas, the campers will enjoy a fun-filled week. Every week-long session has different theme and a trip to an Ontario attraction, such as the Toronto Zoo, Rounds Ranch, the Wye March and more.

Visit [www.essatownship.on.ca](http://www.essatownship.on.ca) or call 424-9770 for more information.

If you have any news, announcements, or coming events, e-mail me at [thorntonnews@rogers.com](mailto:thorntonnews@rogers.com) or call 458-0869. Bye for now.