President’s Report

First of all I would like to take this opportunity to wish all members a very happy and pleasant New Year, and to wish our Garden every possible success.

The new Entrance Garden was virtually completed before freeze up this fall. The lawns are completed and the elegant new benches are in place. The sugar maples around the oval will be planted in the spring as will the perennial beds. By the time of our Treasured Garden Tour the new entry garden should be complete and open for use. Once again I would like to express our thanks to The Fredericton Foundation for their financial support. This support will be recognized at the official opening through the memorialization of a bench in the Foundation’s honour. I would also like to thank the City of Fredericton for their contributions and Brian Parker for the great personal effort he put into this project.

Our Resource Centre building is getting rather aged (you may recall it had a previous existence as a tourist centre on the old TCH. As a result of its age it was necessary to re-roof the building late this past fall. This, along with the new doors which were installed this year, puts our building in good shape for the foreseeable future. The building’s only shortcoming is the size which limits its use for our larger events.

I would suggest that you take a look at our updated website. We are indebted to Bill Hall who has taken over management of the site.

The Site Development Committee has reported to the Board that this year will see the upgrading of the Hal Hinds Memorial Garden, the completion of the White Garden and landscaping of the pond.

I would like to remind everyone of the Annual General Meeting to be held at the Marysville Heritage Centre on the afternoon of Saturday, 10th of February. Our special guest speaker this year will be Beth Powning one of New Brunswick’s outstanding photographers and writers. We will also be holding our annual Silent Auction in conjunction with the meeting which is great fun and a significant fundraiser for the Garden. Please look around your personal treasures and consider a donation to the auction. You will receive further information on the AGM later in January.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the AGM... Bill Seabrook

Plan to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Fredericton Botanic Garden and Silent Auction on February 10, 2007 at 12:30pm.

The event is being held at the Marysville Heritage Center.

The business meeting will be the first item on the agenda followed by the Silent Auction with viewing and bidding.

Our guest speaker, Beth Powning, is a writer and photographer whose work has been published in a variety of books, journals and magazines.

Light refreshments will be offered.

An invitation with details will be forthcoming.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Talks in the Garden

Thursday January 18
Roger Smith (Photographer)

Talks in the Garden

Tuesday January 23,
Resource Center 7:00 pm
First Meeting of the 2007 Plant Sale Committee

Seedy Saturday
February 3, 1-4 pm
St Andrews Presbyterian Church

Annual General Meeting
February 10, 2007, 12:30 pm
Marysville Heritage Center

Thursday February 15
Debbie Russell is an organic farmer from Keswick Ridge

Thursday March 15
Brian Pike is a design consultant in landscape design

Thursday April 19
John Argall P. Ag. will talk about the early planting and growing of vegetables.

Plant Sale
Sunday May 27
Boyce Farmers’ Market
The 2007 Plant Sale and Raffle will take place on Sunday, 27th of May at the Boyce Farmers’ Market. This year’s sale will be chaired by Richard Tarn with Ruth Muldrew and Regan Smith as associate chairs. The Plant Sale is the Garden’s fundraiser and a major source of public exposure.

The Plant Sale committee will hold its first meeting on Tuesday, January 23 at 7 pm at the Resource Center. We need volunteers to help organize the sale. We also need new volunteers to bring new ideas and insights to the table. We know that many of you work at setting up the sale and servicing customers on the day of the sale, and for this we are grateful. Many of you have concerns about the way the sale is run. We need those opinions, both positive and negative. Please join the committee and make your voice heard. Your concerns will be appreciated.

If you are willing to join the Plant Sale Committee, please call the Botanic Garden office (452 9269) and leave a message on the answering machine, or send an email to fbga@nb.aibn.com

We’d love to see you at the meeting!

**Canada’s First Apple Breeder**

**Francis Peabody Sharp**

1823 – 1903

by Jane Seabrook

Francis Peabody Sharp was born in Northampton, New Brunswick. His great grandfather was Captain Francis Peabody, a Massachusetts planter who founded the Village of Gagetown and Maugerville, New Brunswick. At age 21 Francis Peabody Sharp started his first apple orchard and nursery on the family farm he had purchased from his father. Francis concluded that the varieties of apples currently grown in New Brunswick and the rest of Canada were not sufficiently cold hardy nor of commercial quality.

Although not trained as a scientist, Francis Peabody Sharp’s experiments on cross pollination were very astute. In fact he was the first person in North America to use scientifically controlled methods of hybridizing apples, many years before there was a Department of Agriculture or a horticulturist in New Brunswick. He published papers on his methods and he caught the interest of people like Professor Joseph Lancaster Budd of the Agricultural College of Iowa, at Ames, Iowa, and Canadian horticulturist, Prof. Charles Gibbs of the Dominion Government. He also tested Russian stock, both seeds and scions (twigs used for grafting), brought back from Russia by North American Scientists, varieties such as ‘Alexander’, ‘Yellow Transparent’ and ‘Red Astrachan’. These old varieties can be seen at Kings Landing Historical Settlement today. Some of these Russian varieties are still found in old orchards in New Brunswick. I purchased 'Alexander' apples at the Boyce Farmers’ Market last summer, and great cooking apples they are.

In 1854 Francis Peabody Sharp introduced the ‘New Brunswicker’, to his orchard, an apple well adapted to the New Brunswick climate, and my personal favorite! It originated from some of his Russian seeds. This hardy, precocious variety was also used in his subsequent experimentations and was one of the parents of the ‘Crimson Beauty’, one of his most successful commercial introductions. ‘Crimson Beauty’ is grown in the Brogdale Horticultural Trust’s collection in England and it has been used in breeding programs in the United States and Canada to produce such varieties as Caravel (1942), Ranger (1944), Quinte (1954) and Wellington (1955).

New tree planting, pruning and training techniques were also pioneered by Francis Peabody Sharp. The closely planted, dense orchards of dwarf trees we see today in the St. John River Valley are the result of some of his experiments. He shipped apples, plums, cherries and pears to the United States, and was a very successful businessman. Sadly, a dreadful fire destroyed his farm buildings and home in 1881, and he had no insurance. This was the beginning of family financial woes. In 1887 he turned his nursery business over to his son, Franklin, and his producing orchards over to his son Humboldt. In 1890 U.S.A. trade tariffs were introduced that hurt the apple export business considerably, and in 1892 Franklin died of tuberculosis and the nursery business was closed. In 1887 Franklin had planted a very large experimental orchard that consisted of mostly Crimson Beauty apples (20,000 trees) plus over a thousand experimental hybrids, and it was to be used as a model for demonstrating Sharp’s innovative cultivation techniques. Because of financial problems in the family, that orchard was cut down before it came into bearing fruit by the new owner who bought the property in a mortgage sale in 1904, the year after Sharp’s death.

**The “New Brunswicker”**

Credit Daryl Hunter

Shortly after Francis Peabody Sharp’s death the New Brunswick Fruit Growers Association was formed, a testament to his pioneering experimental work on fruit growing. His legacy continues to enrich the New Brunswick landscape and we all enjoy the wonderful apples grown in the St. John River Valley.

Thanks to Daryl Hunter for editing this story, introducing me to the ‘New Brunswicker’ apple and for providing the wonderful brochure on Francis Peabody Sharp produced by Kings Landing Historical Settlement.

For old apple varieties, contact Corn Hill Nursery, Corn Hill, NB. Tel: (506) 756-3636
Saturday, February 10, 2007 12:30
Fredericton Botanic Garden Association's
9th Annual Silent Auction
Marysville Heritage Centre, McGloin Street

This is a request to the membership for donations to this event.

We look forward to the wonderful goods, services and refreshments you may donate to the auction as you have in other years. Please bring friends, so we have more competition in our bidding.
We will be serving our well-known refreshments and there will be live entertainment. We are especially delighted to have Beth Powning, the renowned photographer and author, as our special speaker this year.

Auction items may be dropped off until February 8
At Jim and Betty Nicholson’s, 10 Woodfield Crescent.
Please call 455-5376 first.

A description of Services to be auctioned should be sent to Nancy Beltrandi at beltrand@nbnet.nb.ca or 459-8004

If you can provide small sandwiches or sweets (finger food), please notify Wayne Beckett at 459-1494 or beckett@nbnet.nb.ca

Seedy Saturday, February 3, 2007

Fredericton’s Seedy Saturday is to be sponsored by Seeds of Diversity Canada and the Fredericton Botanic Garden Association and will be held at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian church hall on Charlotte Street in Fredericton from 1 to 4 pm Please bring your seeds to swap.
If you do not have seeds saved, come anyway, there will be plenty of seeds.
We have some pre-chilled Magnolia stellata (Star Magnolia) seeds for those who would like to try something different.
Fredericton Backyard Composters will be there to give advice on composting.

Refreshments will be served.
Contact: Jane Seabrook Tel: 506 459-7862
E-mail: Seabrook@nb.sympatico.ca
Talks in the Garden
Series 2006 –2007

Thursday January 18, 7:30 pm
Roger Smith (photographer) “Dead and Dying Gardens”. This will be a dramatic slide show of the stark beauty that can be found in dead and dying gardens.

Thursday February 15, 7:30 pm
Debbie Russell is an organic farmer from Keswick Ridge. She also is the proprietor of True Food Organics on Charlotte Street in Fredericton. The topic of her talk will be announced soon.

Thursday March 15, 7:30 pm
Brian Pike is a design consultant in landscape design from Wetmore Nursery. The presentation “The Top 10 How to Do It” to help you in designing your own garden.

Thursday April 19, 7:30 pm
John Argall P. Ag. will talk about the early planting and growing of vegetables.

Sunday May 27, 12 noon – 4 pm — Plant Sale
Boyce Farmers’ Market

The Fredericton Botanic Garden Newsletter is published four times a year by the Fredericton Botanic Garden Association, Inc. The FBGA is a registered charitable organization for tax purposes.

The objectives of the FBGA are to guide the establishment of the Fredericton Botanic Garden and to foster an awareness and appreciation of plants.

To obtain information on membership and to become involved in FBGA activities please contact us:
506-452-9269
PO Box 57, Sta. A, Fredericton, NB E3B 4Y2
or fbga@nb.aibn.com
Web: www.frederictonbotanicgarden.com

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