President's Message

Greetings from the Fredericton Botanic Garden Association. The following is a brief update on what's happening as we move into late fall:

• Things are slowing down at the Botanic Garden as winter approaches. Hurricane Arthur set us behind in our gardening plans, as was the case for most Frederictonians, I'm sure. Plants are still being situated in the propagations beds in the hopes of having lots of divisions for our Spring Festival and Plant Sale in May of 2015.

• We did not move forward on the Pond feature as we had planned, but hopefully we will be more successful with this project in the coming year.

• In partnership with the City of Fredericton’s Cultural Development Officer, Angela Watson, the Botanic Garden Association secured a grant from the Sheila Hugh MacKay Foundation for the placement of a permanent piece of art to be situated in the garden. The City of Fredericton has committed to matching the grant. You will hear more about this in the future.

• The Fredericton Botanic Garden Association has purchased an event tent for use in fund raising initiatives. We had a very well attended Spring Festival and Plant Sale where we used the tent very effectively and look forward to holding more fund raising events right on site in our Garden.

• We have developed a partnership with a local Headstart program which will be running two days a week during the winter months. This is a trial project and we are happy to increase our profile through the participants in the program.

Here's hoping for a plant friendly winter and an early spring!
Sincerely
Wendy Bourque.
President, Fredericton Botanic Garden Association

Talks in the Garden

Thursday Nov. 20, 2014
Establishing a vineyard in New Brunswick: Successes, joys and challenges.
Wine tasting opportunity for participants
Talk by Sonia Carpenter,
Motts Landing Vineyard and Winery Resource Center on Cameron Court
7:00 pm

Thursday Dec. 4, 2014
Fresh Greens and Creative Ideas using imported and local greens to decorate for the holiday season.
Talk by Andrew Lawson,
Scott’s Nursery
Location: Scott’s Nursery, Lincoln Rd
7:00 pm

• The Talks in the Garden committee continue to supply us with interesting topics and knowledgeable speakers. Please show the organizers support by attending some of the talks, you won’t be disappointed.
The Germination of a Dream: the Birth of the Fredericton Botanic Garden

This fall the Fredericton Botanic Garden Association is 25 years old. In the following articles members recall the events of that time. Richard Tarn records some of what he found browsing the old minutes, Jane Seabrook and Garth Nickerson recollect their memories, and David Urquhart, at that time the Superintendent of Parks and Trees for the City, discusses his contributions.

From the record by Richard Tarn

Twenty-five years ago, September 19, 1989, The Fredericton Botanic Garden Association held its first general meeting. Bernard Jackson, Director of the Memorial University Oxen Pond Botanic Garden in St. John’s was the speaker. Loring Bailey Hall, the home of the UNB Biology Department was the location. This was the culmination of almost two years of preparation by a small and enthusiastic group led by Hal Hinds, a botanist at the UNB Biology Department in Fredericton.

In response to a request from Fredericton City Council, the Fredericton Tree Commission met in October 1987 in reference to botanical gardens proposed for St. Jacques, near Edmundston. They heard of an earlier effort to establish a garden in Fredericton, as described in the next article by Jane Seabrook, and the 1986 announcement of a botanic garden for St. Jacques, near Edmundston. Hal Hinds was present at the meeting and suggested that a coalition of Fredericton foresters, botanists, horticulturalists, agriculturalists and nurserymen work towards establishing a botanic garden in Fredericton. The Tree Commission concluded its meeting with a motion to advise the City that it “support and urge the development of a provincial botanical garden” in the City.

Following this Hal Hinds gathered a group to make such a garden a reality. Hal inspired a core group that included Garth Nickerson, Brian Dykeman and Serge Michaud of the NB Agriculture Department, Jane Seabrook and Richard Tarn from Agriculture Canada, David Urquhart and Don Murray from the Parks and Trees Department of the City, and Geoff Ritchie a consultant forester. Many others contributed to assist with specific tasks. By laws were prepared, a bank account opened, the first Newsletter published. The documentation to obtain incorporation and charitable status was prepared by Bill Walker of Freeze, Walker Lourensse and Jansssens. On August 21, 1989, the Fredericton Botanic Garden Association held its inaugural meeting at the Agriculture Canada Research Station and approved bylaws and elected its first board of eleven directors. Hal Hinds was the founding president.

In October 1989 the new board picked what was then known as Odell Park Fields as the preferred site for Fredericton’s Botanic Garden and set in motion the negotiations with the City that led to a formal agreement to recognize the site as the site of the Botanic Garden, and to establish a structure, a Local Improvement Association, to link the City and the FBGA for the purpose of developing the Garden.

Hal Hinds retired from the Biology Department in 1997, ending his retirement letter with a Chinese proverb: life begins when you start a garden. Hal passed away on May 9, 2001 after a lengthy illness.

Recollections from Jane Seabrook

During the “Trudeau Era” in the 1970’s, University of New Brunswick biology professor, Leo Dionne, was a member of a national committee interested in establishing a network of botanic gardens across Canada. This wonderful idea never came to fruition, but the germ of the idea stayed with a number of botanists and naturalists, and a decade later another UNB botany teacher, the late Hal Hinds, initiated a widely advertised meeting to test the feasibility of building a botanic garden in Fredericton. We met in the auditorium (Room 146) of the Biology building on the Fredericton UNB campus and what an interesting group of botanists Hal Hinds gathered. I remember an exited Elspeth Bradbury (author, with Judy Maddox) of Garden Letters and The Real Garden Road Trip, talking about this wonderful idea.

The early organizing committee held most of its meetings at the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, on the Agriculture Canada campus on the Lincoln Road. Our first tasks were to find a suitable site for the garden and also build a solid administrative foundation, including a constitution. We recognized that a volunteer-run organization needed administrative continuity and so early on hired a part-time administrative assistant.

Finding an interesting site with changes in topography and hopefully good site lines with views was important to us. The site needed to be as near to the centre of Fredericton as we could find, and be on a public bus route if possible. Several sites were discussed, but soon it became obvious that some old
farmland on the Western side of Odell Park (but not part of the original Odell grant) was best suited. We wanted a public garden with free access, if possible. Although academic pursuits would be welcome, we principally wanted a tranquil, quiet setting where people could enjoy fresh air, beautiful plants and trees, and learn about plants. Museums are all very well but are not suited to the enjoyment and observation of living creatures and plants.

One of the many tasks during the early years was the removal of garbage and trash from the site. Every time we walked the site we carried large garbage bags which we filled by the time we returned to our cars. The City of Fredericton Parks and Trees Department was very cooperative and initially hauled old washing machines, rusty car engines and unknown heavy objects off the site. Now you can walk the site without seeing any garbage...what a difference!

Hal Hinds, the driving force and early leader of this founding group passed away in his sixties in 2001, but I never walk in the Fredericton Botanic Garden without the memory of Hal’s enthusiasm and vision. On recent Garden walks, I often see something interesting and turn to remark on it to Hal, only to find I am talking to the wind, or maybe it was Hal.

Recollections from Garth Nickerson

The original directors and instigators of the FBGA, led by Hal Hinds from the UNB Biology Department, launched the idea of a botanic garden for Fredericton perhaps around a few coffees and dreams of having a stellar botanic garden for the city of Fredericton. My contribution at the time was as a technician/horticultural specialist with the NB Dept. of Agriculture with a general knowledge of ornamental plants and plant production. We all contributed our enthusiasm and passion for gardening and horticulture. In general we wanted to develop a special place in the heart of the city for all the citizens of Fredericton and the province to enjoy and become more enthusiastic about the beauty, importance and value of plants.

Ideas circulated for a while but Hal Hinds was the biggest spark plug to get things moving. David Urquhart found the piece of property next to Odell park and also found a building (the Resource Centre was formerly a tourist building on the Trans-Canada) that was looking for a piece of land. Meetings were held, ideas shared and the FBGA was born. My fondest memories were of the times spent with my wife Dianne and our toddlers staking out, grooming and mulching some of the woodland trails that were cut through the forest. It was a time of learning, sharing good times and looking forward to the future; of building a horticultural garden that would provide similar happy moments for other young parents and families to get in touch and learn more about plants.

As the ideas turned into project proposals the financial and time realities of what would be required to build a new horticultural/botanic garden began to take hold. Many have contributed plants for collections over the years and still do. A huge amount of volunteer effort is an on-going requirement to provide the support for the garden development with the finances and resources necessary to keep the dream alive. The annual plant sales and numerous fundraisers attest to this huge effort. I admire and congratulate all those who have stuck with the FBGA over the years and continue to support the development of the Fredericton Botanic Garden.

Recollections from David Urquhart

David Urquhart, Superintendent of Parks and Trees for the City of Fredericton at the time the Botanic Garden was established, recently sat down with us to talk about the establishment of the Garden. What follows is a condensed and edited version of our conversation.

Q. How did you first learn of the proposal for a botanic garden in Fredericton?

DU. Late in 1987 the Tree Commission met to hear a submission on a botanic garden for Fredericton. The proposal was referred to the Commission by City Council, and I was a member of the Commission. The Tree Commission asked me to look at the proposal and to advise them. I then met the botanic garden group and attended many of their early meetings in 1989.

Q. You were instrumental in the selection of the Odell Park site; will you speak to how that came about?

DU. A number of sites were being discussed. I put forward what was then known as Odell Park Fields. It was not protected as parkland at that time and there was a fear it might be developed. I preferred to see it have a public use. Bill Barrett, former City Engineer, considered it expensive to develop, it was a rocky site, and was very supportive of a public use. (At a later date John Bliss, then City Engineer, had the site protected as parkland along with Odell Park.)

I remember visiting the site with the botanic garden group. I was impressed with the views. We walked
down the old woods road adjacent to Odell Park. The site was overgrown but had great potential; the ball diamond parking lot was available, and there was access from Odell Park. It was a win-win situation for the City and the botanic garden group. I liked the idea of volunteer involvement since they could do things the City could not. I was pleased to recommend the site and the proposal.

Q. What do you recall of the negotiations between the City and the botanic garden group?
DU. I was not directly involved in the preparation of the legal agreements but I recall everything with the City went smoothly.

Q. And what was the reaction of the neighbours?
DU. Some property owners were afraid they would loose something; a concern was fencing since they had access to the Park. We had meetings with the neighbours and I believe satisfied their concerns.

Q. Do you have any final comments?
DU. The botanic garden is a wonderful asset for the City. The Botanic Garden Association group has lots of expertise; it’s the right group of people to take on the project. Today the site is protected and is part of the City’s heritage. It takes some of the pressure off Odell Park. It’s a nice fit.

**Science in the Garden**

*Why goldenrods don’t make you sneeze: the biology of pollination*

This is the first in a new series by board member Steve Heard (Professor, Biology, UNB).

One of my favourite autumn sights is a field of goldenrods, blazing yellow and alive with insects flitting and buzzing from bloom to bloom. I’ve learned, though, that not everyone agrees with me – especially sufferers of seasonal allergies, who tend to recoil from goldenrods rather than rejoice in them. But if you’re sneezing, goldenrods aren’t the culprit – and there’s some interesting biology behind understanding why.

Plants have an interesting problem: mating without moving. Imagine yourself as an apple tree, say, rooted to the ground, and yet unable to reproduce unless you can exchange pollen with another apple tree metres or even kilometres away. It’s a lonely thought!

Some plants overcome their immobility simply by mating with themselves (self-pollination). Most, though, have co-opted partners to take care of moving their pollen. For some plants, pollen is carried by insects; for others, by birds or bats; and for still others, by wind. Most of the biology of flowers can be understood with the realization that they have evolved to be good at getting their partners to transfer pollen. To start with, insect-, bird-, or bat-pollinated flowers need to signal their availability to pollinators – which explains their colourful displays and beautiful fragrances. (It also explains the quite revolting fragrances of a few flowers that have evolved pollination via carrion-feeding flies!) Most such flowers also reward pollinators for responding to their signals, which explains the production of sweet nectar (although a few disreputable orchids offer no reward, instead mimicking female wasps to draw visits from naive and perhaps desperate males). Plants using wind to carry pollen are quite different: they don’t need to signal the wind, so their flowers are often tiny and inconspicuous. But they do need to release pollen so that it can be carried aloft and, with time and a lot of luck, find its way to a receptive flower on another plant of the same species. This is, for instance, why corn tassels (male flowers) are at the top of the stalk.

So what does all this have to do with allergies? Pollen, too, has evolved to enhance its own transport. In
insect-, bird- and bat-pollinated plants, pollen grains are large and sticky so they adhere to the pollinator’s body long enough to be carried from flower to flower. In wind-pollinated plants, in contrast, pollen grains are small and light so they can be carried long distances in even a gentle breeze. So which kind of pollen might find its way up your nose? Exactly! When you sneeze, it’s wind-borne pollen you’re reacting to: birch in spring, for instance, or grass in summer. (And yes, both have flowers.) What about autumn? Those beautiful goldenrods are insect-pollinated, and their pollen is heavy, sticky, and won’t find its way to your nose unless you unwisely inhale a bee. But lurking unnoticed beside the goldenrods is ragweed, an annual whose tiny greenish flowers release copious amounts of wind-borne pollen. Goldenrods and their flamboyant floral displays end up taking the blame for allergies that are really due to its understated cousin.

The good news? Feel free to enjoy goldenrods in nature (there are many in the Botanic Garden); and feel free to add them to your own garden. We have about 20 native species in New Brunswick, and some are really gorgeous: the lush rough-stemmed goldenrod (Solidago rugosa), the delicate downy goldenrod (S. puberula), or my favourite, the elegant and (surprisingly) white-flowered silverrod (S. bicolor). No sneezing required!

**Talks and Workshops in the Garden – 2014—2015**

All talks will be 7:00 p.m. at the Resource Centre, 10 Cameron Crt.
Locations and times of other events are provided below.

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<td>Establishing a Vineyard in New Brunswick: Successes, Joys and Challenges. Wine tasting opportunity for participants. Talk by Sonia Carpenter, Motts Landing Vineyard and Winery</td>
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<td>Thurs. Jan. 15</td>
<td>Garden Allies: How spiders, toads, frogs and snakes help protect your garden. Talk by Don Vail</td>
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Membership privileges include:

Newsletters; advance notice by email of all events; 10 % discount at
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Membership renewals are due on the anniversary of your joining month and email reminders are sent out. We’d like to invite you to renew and gain from the many advantages of membership, including discounts to many local supporting garden centres. Also, we have made it easier for you to renew, by providing the option of doing so online - now you don’t even need to buy a stamp!

On our webpage, http://frederictonbotanicgarden.com/index.php go to our Online Store and from the drop-down menu select "Buy Membership Online", or you can find access to it from our Membership information page. You will fill out a form online to make sure our records are up to date, and then will be directed to a second page to choose your membership type and duration. On this page you may also purchase Fredericton Botanic Garden merchandise and make a donation. A button at the bottom of this page leads to the “Check Out”. All payments are processed by PayPal: the “Check Out” button provides credit card options and the PayPal button is there for those with a PayPal account. Simple!

The regular paper renewal form is still available on the website for those who prefer the tried and tested method! Go to “Support”, then “Membership Information”.

Thank-you to Jane Tarn for her expertise in editing the Newsletters.