



## YREA Spring 2018 News & Views

### Using up excess nitrogen in the home garden

Conscientious gardeners practice **crop rotation**, but if you have a small garden and only one place to plant peas and beans, you will notice over time that you are getting more and more foliage and less of these veggies. That is because legumes fix nitrogen in the soil and there has been too much of a build up. Use up some of that nitrogen by planting early, cold hardy leafy greens like kale and spinach in front of your trellis. By May 24<sup>th</sup> you can plant climbing peas or beans behind your trellis. You will get less foliage and more legumes. Perennial herbs planted in front will also do the trick. Of course, this needs to be done without **pesticides**.

*Photo of hummingbird & scarlet runner bean flowers courtesy of Mike Turk*



### Speaking of herbs...

Many of our culinary herbs also make soothing teas either fresh or dry. Drying for winter use is economical and well worth the effort. Harvest often during the growing season and dry on cookie sheets before storing. Except for Rosemary, herbs below are all perennial. Try some of the following:

**Lavender** - (both leaves & flowers) soothes mind, inducing sleep. Soothes bowel infections.

**Lemon Balm** – concentration, memory, brain function, stress, sleep, pain, thyroid regulation

**Marjoram** – improves appetite, lowers blood pressure, prevents cholesterol build up.

**Mint** – good for nausea, indigestion, flatulence.

**Oregano** – anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, antiseptic, anti-cancer, antioxidant.

**Rosemary** - helps muscles relax and is a digestive aid. Relieves gall bladder and liver complaints, cough and mild asthma symptoms.

**Sage** – sore throat, coughs, rheumatism, candida, nervous system, memory, sharpens senses.

**Tarragon** – parasites, ADD, hyperactivity, insomnia, depression, mood swings, detox.

**Thyme** – stomach, lungs, bronchial asthma, phlegm, pneumonia.

## Community Supported Agriculture





Even if you grow some of your own veggies, you might wish to consider Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) for a variety of produce as well as chicken, pasture raised beef and pork. **Meadow Sweet Farm** has a pick up stand in Gormley and **Joyfully Organic** offers pick up spots in Stouffville and Markham. **Zephyr Organics** does weekly or biweekly deliveries in their service area, right to your door - year round. Check out Ontario **CSA Farm Directory** for a farm near you. Not all are certified organic but CSA farmers use little or no pesticides.

Farmers market season will soon be upon us. **Support one** near you.

## Community Events

YREA will be at Vaughan's **2018 Earth Hour** fete. Come visit!

The following TRCA events are free, but require registration:

- **Earth Day Planting & Clean-up** (April 21)
- **The Magic of Rain Barrels** (April 24)
- **Spring Tree Planting** (May 5)
- **Trillium Trail Walk** (May 12)



Trilliums are bound to be at their best for the mid-May walk.



**URBAN HEAT ISLAND** (UHI) is said to impact climate change by 30%. This happens when urbanization replaces green spaces with paved, dark surface areas such as asphalt, interlock and roofing materials. These areas absorb much more heat than a park, forest or home garden, making them consistently hotter than surrounding natural spaces. Although the UHI lengthens the growing season, it lowers air quality by increasing pollutants and decreases water quality as warmer waters flow into streams, stressing fish habitat and ecosystems.

So instead of getting rid of a lawn or garden to make way for an extra parking space, take the trouble to jockey your cars. If you have already paved over for the convenience of an extra parking space, plant trees close to paving to shade and keep it cooler. Light coloured surfaces & white or green roofs are other ways to temper UHI. It is said that a **green roof** will lower the ambient temperature by 2c.





## ON THE ECO NEWS FRONT

**Food alert** - There is **plastic rice** in our food supply originating from China. Rooster and **Wuchang brand** have been identified as two of many culprits, with other brands cropping up elsewhere in the world. To be on the safe side, buy **Lundberg** organic rice grown in the USA.

**Food packaging** - Good news! Mike & Mike's Organics has some great compostable packaging including cellophane which can be put in your kitchen green bin. To differentiate plastic from cellophane do the rip test. Cellophane tears, plastic doesn't. Cellophane lined paper coffee bags for example, are compostable once the metal closure is removed as are some paper bread bags with cellophane windows.

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