

Our meetings are open to all, whether you are a member or not, but it is always encouraging if people do join. The annual fee is only \$5.00. After our speaker and a brief meeting, we have tea, coffee, and a variety of goodies while we all enjoy socialising.

In addition to our speaker nights, we hold a couple of flower shows each year, one in Colborne and one in Castleton, which are judged by professional judges, and points are awarded to the winners and runners-up. These include both specimen flowers and floral arrangements. This year we are giving packages to all members when they join, which include information sheets warning us of some of the common pitfalls judges look for (such as tiny insects hiding on the backs of leaves) and how to tell if your particular flower is likely to win a prize. For instance, flowers with long stalks, such as gladioli and delphiniums, should have one third of their flowers still in bud. A rose should not be fully out, and so on. Of course, some people just come and have a look at our shows, without participating, but it's always worth having a try. You'd be surprised how often we hear "Oh, I've got a flower better than that one". You can't win a prize if you don't enter. All are welcome, of course, but it is fun to have a go oneself – you never know your luck. In November trophies are awarded to the winners of various categories and also monetary certificates are awarded to those who have won the most points during the year. These certificates are given by local merchants who kindly support our efforts.

Another event which is most popular is our annual Spring sale, which this year is scheduled for Saturday, May 15. We keep the doors firmly closed until 10.00 a.m., the official opening time, but there is always an eager group of people anxious to get in and pick up bargains. Our members provide the plants and they include some which are quite rare in addition to the popular varieties. These plants are for the most part perennials and if you can get a plant or bulb from Jacques Filteau or Irene Osborne, you know you have a bargain.

We also contribute to the community financially. This year we gave a donation to the Northumberland Health Centre for their C.T. scanner, in memory of Jane Borcham, who gave such loyal service as a town councillor, and we also provided funds for the Keeler Centre to put in a border in front of their building. In addition we bought a blue spruce which can be decorated with lights at Christmas.

If you are around at Apple Blossom Tyme you will see our booth there. Last year we had draws every half hour for hanging baskets or plants donated by local nurseries. Don't forget to pay us a visit. Sandra Compton organizes this and various members help her out.

We are always open to new ideas – our latest is the addition of photography at our flower shows – and, as I mentioned, Bill Brooks is coming to speak to us on this subject on March 29. Our next meeting is on February 23, when Sandy will give a demonstration of Tai Chi and all will be able to participate in one or two of the exercises.

Our board is very friendly and new members are most welcome and will soon feel at home. Come to a meeting – for free – and see if you would like to become part of our Garden Club. Remember, our meetings are held on the last Monday of the month in the Prospect Missionary Hall in Colborne at 7:30 p.m.

I have some flyers here which list our activities for the year and if there are any questions, I will do my best to answer them. If I can't, Irene will probably be able to help out. I also have our latest Scrap Book, if anyone is interested which covers Summer 1998 to the present day.