

# Schoolhouse Gardens wins award for best hybrid peony

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By Sue Dickens

**News - Warkworth** - Passionate about peonies, the owners of Schoolhouse Gardens have won dozens and dozens of ribbons, but bringing home the Michael Denny trophy for the best hybrid peony in Canada is very special.

"It's about sharing a legacy," said Dennis Gebhardt, who with his partner Tom Harris, have com-

peted for years with their peonies at the regional Peony Festival held in Oshawa.

This was the first time they submitted an entry to the Canadian Peony Society's annual show and it was the first time the award has been presented.

Lindsay D'Aoust an avid collector of peonies and hybridizer in Quebec asked the Society to create

the award in memory of Denny, who lost his battle with cancer last Christmas.

"Before I retired I took an estate garden course and that is where I met Judi Denny, his wife," said Harris, as he explained the saga of how the Early Bird peony they took to the show is connected to the Denny family and to a man, Wally Gilbert, of Elora, whose pas-



Using their own expansive gardens as a backdrop for this photo, Tom Harris, left, and Dennis Gebhardt of Schoolhouse Gardens, display their winnings with an Early Bird peony for best in class at the regional peony show in Oshawa and best hybrid peony at the Canadian Peony Society show in Winnipeg. Photo: Sue Dickens

As part of the legacy of the much-loved peony Denny helped preserve a collection owned by Wally Gilbert of Elora.

"When Wally Gilbert died in 2000 Michael went and dug up the collection, with permission, and brought it to his farm with the promise that he would spread it across Canada," Harris explained.

"He also agreed to distribute the plants to public gardens."

One year later with a donation from the Denny estate peonies from the "Gilbert collection" were planted at the Oshawa Valley Botanical Gardens, where a peony festival is held annually.

The Oshawa Valley Botanical Gardens Peony Garden has since been renamed the Michael and Judi Denny Peony Garden.

"We've sent collections of peonies across Canada, in public gardens everywhere," said Harris.

Continuing the legacy Harris and Gebhardt also participate in the annual root sale held by the Society.

"We donate roots and that's how we help fund raise for the Society," he explained.

And the Gilbert collection lives on in their expansive gardens where they have more than 250 varieties of peonies.

The Canadian Peony Society will continue to honour the memory and contributions of Michael Denny for years to come.

The Denny Trophy will be displayed at Schoolhouse Gardens until next year's show when "we hope to bring it home again," said Harris.

## Warkworth to officially welcome couple from sister town in New Zealand

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By Sue Dickens

**News - Warkworth** - The flag of New Zealand will be flying at the War Memorial in Warkworth, as the community celebrates a visit by a couple from the village's sister town of Warkworth, New Zealand. Jim and Jenni McGlashan, who will be touring the area from July 28th to July 31st, will be welcomed officially by Trent Hills Mayor Hector MacMillan and local councillors at 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, July 29 in downtown Warkworth.

The McGlashans operated a marina in picturesque Bay Of Islands on the North Island of New Zealand and recently moved to Warkworth, New Zealand. They have been touring North America for the past three months.

Bill Osmond was made aware of the couple's trip here by Dave Parker, their counterpart and contact in Warkworth, New Zealand.

"We are an unofficial group of people who helped to arrange the twinning of Warkworth, Ontario and Warkworth, New Zealand about 10 years ago," said Bill Osmond.

"Dave is a keen proponent of bringing together the four known Warkworths in UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada," he added.

"The public is invited to welcome Jim and Jenni to our village."

Obituaries

Obituaries



**COVERT, George William** - George W. Covert in his 83rd year passed peacefully at home on July 26th, 2014 with his long time companion Barb Davis and other family members at his side. Husband of the late Margaret (nee Duffield). Loving father to sons Bruce (Danice), Scott (Peggy), Lee, and daughter Melanie (Paul). Pre-deceased by sons Brian and Barry (Sheila). "Poppa" will be sadly missed by grandchildren Ryan, Jordan, Megan, Stewart, Mackenzie and great grandchild Madison. Born and raised in Cramahe Township, George spent his entire life in Castleton and Colborne. For many years George was a real estate and general insurance broker. He then took a position at General Foods in Cobourg from which he retired after many years of service. He was most proud of his time there as Union President of Local 1230. Friends are invited to call at the **MacCOUBREY FUNERAL HOME**, 11 King St., W., Colborne on Thursday, July 31st from 7-9 pm. A memorial service will be held in MacCoubrey Funeral Home on Friday, August 1st, 2014 at 11 am. Interment in Castleton Cemetery. If desired donations, may be made to the Alzheimer Society or Castleton Cemetery. George's family would like to thank all the doctors, nurses and staff at the Northumberland Hills Hospital for all their care and compassion over the years. Condolences received at

www.MacCoubrey.com.

sion for peonies is being continued by others.

"Judi started talking about peonies and that's how I got introduced to the Canadian Peony Society," Harris explained.

Michael Denny was instrumental in starting the Society about 20 years ago.

Until that time "everyone used to go to the one in the U.S.," noted Harris.

Before Denny died he told his wife to give his Early Bird peonies to Harris to cultivate.

"The Early Bird was one of Michael's favourites. We planted it and it bloomed on May 14," he said.

Cutting two blooms and keeping them in the fridge and later on ice until it was time to go to the show, Harris took one to the

national competition while Gebhardt took one to the regional show, because both were being held at the same time.

Gebhardt's bloom won best in class and Harris's won the Denny Trophy.

In fact Gebhardt brought home a total of 19 ribbons from Oshawa and Harris won 18 at the national show in Winnipeg.



This is the Early Bird peony which won the Denny Trophy for the best hybrid peony in the country, which was presented to Tom Harris of Schoolhouse Gardens, Warkworth. Photo: Sue Dickens