

Great gardening advice from the experts

From the greenest thumbs to the rank beginners, gardening can be a joy and challenge for all who try to make their patch a little prettier. Looking for advice, The New Tanner questioned local experts – owners of garden centres and plant lovers – asking them to share their expertise, and to name their favourite growing thing.

**Julie Speck
Owner/operator
The Flower Shed, Acton**

1: For the rookie gardener:

“If they’ve already made a garden then I’d ask if it was sun or shade, and then find out what would grow well in that spot, I’d stick with something simple at first – like say some Geraniums or Porchalackas, if it were a full-sun bed because neither one of those things need a lot of moisture, so that would be good for a rookie gardener who didn’t know how to water properly.”

2: For the greener thumb:

“For the shade, I suggest Streptocarpella – it’s a small plant with a nice blue flower that has a lot of the same habitats as an African Violet and it really thrives in the shade. It provides a nice bit of colour and it’s a nice

trailing plant as well.”

3: Favourite Flower/plant:

“My favourite is going to be an annual because I’m an annual person. I would say Dahlias because they are so beautiful and they are a great cut flower.”

**James Wegenast
Owner/operator
Reds Garden Centre,
Acton**

1: For the rookie gardener:

“Plant what you love. It sounds so like a cliché, but so many times people are told they should start with seeds, or vegetables, or roses or herbs, or whatever their grandma planted, but I think at the end of the day, it’s your garden – you’re the one that has to look at everyday and you want to plant something that you like and that you’ll be proud of.”

2: For the greener thumb:

“Try something new. There are all sorts of neat gardening magazines out there...stop in at your local garden centre or nurseries and talk to the staff to find out what is new and interesting, and give it a try.”

3: Favourite Flower/plant:

“As far as a tree goes, I like an English Oak, a

deciduous tree that doesn’t totally lose its leaves or take up to much space. My favourite flower is Hydrangeas because there are so many varieties and colours and they are so easy to grow.”

**Audrey Lee,
Past-president
Acton Horticultural
Society**

1: For the rookie gardener:

“You’re best to always talk to an existing gardener. So joining a horticultural society is a great move, and there are some great books at the library, as long as you make sure they are relevant to your growing area.”

2: For the greener thumb:

“When I’m looking for something new, I go to the smaller nurseries because they are usually growing more exclusive things.”

3: Favourite Flower/plant:

“That’s not easy. I’d probably have to say Hostas because there are so many different ones and they are hardy.”

**Daphne Dendrijver-Hawkes
Manager
Greenscape Garden Centre
and Nursery, Rockwood**

1: For the rookie gardener:

“First of all, you want to

go to a reputable garden centre and you need to have in hand your light and soil conditions, the type of gardening you want to do, and how much time you have to garden.”

2: For the greener thumb:

“The Turf Grass Institute in Guelph has fantastic trial beds and from July on, they have an open house, so that’s a place to go and investigate some of the newer products.”

3: Favourite Flower/plant:

“If I could only have one, I’d have to say Itoh Peonies. They are a cross between a Tree Peony and a Garden Peony. They are sturdy and upright and the blooms are probably eight-inches [across].”

**Joanne Saliba
Owner
Meadowville Garden
Centre, Eramosa**

1: For the rookie gardener:

“Decide what you want to grow and then make sure you have good soil

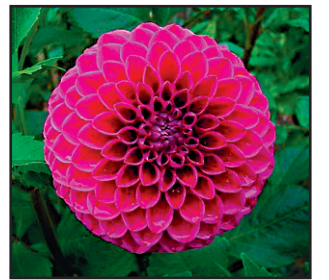
and fertilizer. That’s the best start.”

2: For the greener thumb:

“There are all kinds of new plants and flowers on-line from exotics to annuals. There are also a lot of good gardening books.”

3: Favourite Flower/plant:

“I like Hibiscus – it’s really a rose of Sharon – because it flowers late and is a beautiful shrub.”



Dahlia



Hibiscus



Itoh Peonies



Hosta



Hydrangea



Geranium



Porchalackas



Streptocarpella

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