

EDITORIAL

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Potentially messy revamping

The clock is ticking. Only a few days remain before Canada marks a ballot that will make history and shape, one way or another, the future of our nation as it attempts to change our constitution.

Let's stop right there.

Constitution. It's an ominous sounding word, big and murky. Chances are you may not have thought too much about it before this fall, when you got constitution-ed to death.

Canada's constitution is a mere ten years old. So how did we get this fractured and fatalistic this fast?

The dictionary describes "constitution" as the basic laws and principles of a nation, state, or organized body. Hmm...the basic laws. Kind of like the foundations of a building, a mighty structure, let's imagine. The cornerstones that hold the place together.

Visualize this vast building (it's got a gold name plate by the front door that says Canada). Step back and view it from afar, if you will.

It's a strong building, attractive and diverse and powerful in a myriad of ways.

What does your building look like? Is it a gothic castle with turrets and drawbridges? A modern infrastructure that towers importantly? (There's a point to this.)

When you see your building in your mind, look a little closer. It's not quite as indomitable as you first thought. There's cracks everywhere, indicating internal dissension and conflicting factions, like the Canadian people. You know you have to fix it, and you're afraid if you leave it to fester too long the roof might cave in and leave the whole structure to topple into an unknown future.

So what are you going to fix? Are you going to start working on the cracks and individual problems to make the building stronger as a whole, or are you going to bulldoze the entire thing to fix the original foundations out of the rubble and dust, with little thought to cost?

Okay, we'll leave this analogy aside for now.

But the Charlottetown agreement we will be voting on on Oct. 26 (Monday) contains the elements of our faulty building.

We want to fix it, but is this agreement the best way?

The consensus report has encouraged every minority group from St. John to Whitehorse and beyond to crawl out and wave an individual flag that seems to scream, "What about us?"

Is this any way to promote a unified nation that's ready for battle in the global economy?

Do certain issues, social issues, actually need to be written into our constitution?

For example, the Canada Clause contains a provision that reads, "Canadians are committed to a respect for individual and collective human rights and freedoms of all people."

This is exactly what Canada has stood for since its early pioneer days as we carved into the North American wilderness. As the United States tore themselves into civil and racial war, we stood apart. Other countries tore themselves away from the British Empire with bloodshed, we did it as diplomats. And so on.

Let's not forget that we already have a constitution.

It may not be a perfect document, but it is already a decent foundation that has held us together — although not always easily — for the last decade.

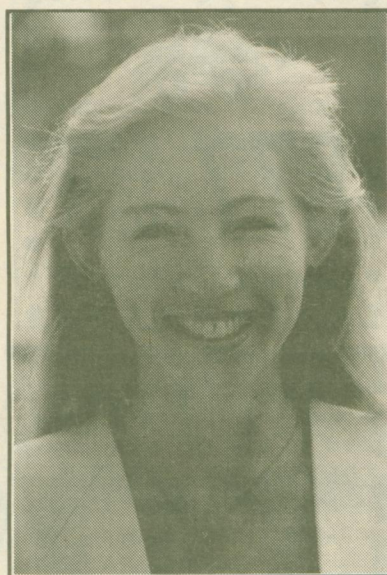
The Charlottetown accord, supposed to be an amendment, is more of a revamping. A potentially messy and ambiguous revamping.

Straight from the horses'....mouth???



These horses presented their, er, other side for judging at the Georgetown Fall Fair last month.

Garden Graces



by Grace C. Lockwood

Well, last week Old Man Winter condescended to show us a sneak preview of what's to come and as usual he caught me with my gloves off. As I shook the wet stuff from my roses and sadly viewed the frozen blooms, I realized that it is time to prepare the garden for winter once again.

As with ourselves, a clean garden is a healthy garden. Keeping the garden clean is the best way to prevent new infestations of pests and diseases next year. Remove any badly diseased material from both flower and vegetable gardens and burn it or throw it away; do not compost it. Fungal and bacterial diseases and insect pests and eggs can overwinter in plant debris to cause more headaches for you next year.

Bearded irises should be cut down, leaving a 2"-3" fan of leaves and all debris cleaned up meticulously around the rhizomes. This is to prevent any iris borer infestation next spring as eggs overwinter on the leaves and hatch early in the spring. The larvae then bore their way through the leaf and into the rhizome to eat it from the inside out. The adult is a dark purple moth. Again do not compost any suspect leaves.

Tall perennials can be cut down after the first killer frost and a layer of compost put down to provide nutrients for next spring's growth. With the wet summer we had, many plants and vegetables, especially tomatoes, have succumbed to various blights and funguses. Be sure to remove the plants and fallen leaves.

After the ground has frozen solidly, usually in December, a layer of mulch, a few inches thick, should be spread around, not on top, of the plants. This can be straw, leaves, and pine boughs from your Christmas tree. Maple leaves should be mulched or chopped up first as they can become a sodden mass and smother the plants beneath them. Mulch is put down to keep the ground solidly frozen until spring is well underway. With our freeze and thaw cycles and sometime unpredictable snow cover, the ground can heave and toss the plants right out to die in the next cold snap. Some plants are also fooled into growing too early during

ing a mild spell then get caught out in the cold.

Broadleaf and needle leaved evergreens can be sprayed with an antitranspirant like Safers "ForEverGreen" to protect against water loss and windburn. This should be done after September 1 but before the temperatures fall regularly below 5° C. They can then be wrapped with plastic netting to keep the branches from bending over and breaking under the weight of snow and ice.

Rhododendrons and azaleas are at their northern limit in this area and should be protected by covering them with evergreen boughs or by placing a wire cage around them filled with oak leaves. Burlap can also be used but it should be wrapped around poles placed around the bush and not touching the plant.

Larger bushes can be protected by erecting a windbreak such as a snow fence or slatted fencing along the upwind side, usually west and north of the bushes. It should be placed at a distance away from the plants equal to the fence height and should be at least as tall as the bushes. They can also be wrapped with netting to protect the branches from snow and ice.

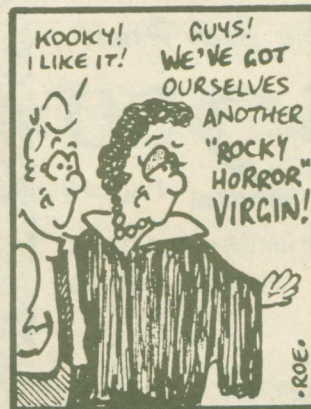
The best protection is planting them in sheltered areas, out of low lying frost-prone and windy parts of the garden. A good position is against the east of a house or where they are sheltered by larger trees.

With care and preparation, your garden can sail through the winter with a minimum of damage.

Next time: Planting roses in the fall and preparing them for the winter.

Grace Lockwood is a Georgetown resident who has been an avid gardener for as long as she can remember. She has both vegetable and flower gardens but has a soft spot for roses — especially modern hybrid tea roses and antique roses. Grace is a hydrogeologist by training and is currently taking correspondence courses for landscape design from the University of Guelph.

For Pete's Sake



by Roe