

Lifestyles

Gardening season — time to get down to earth

By **FANNIE SUNSHINE**

The Champion

Once again, it's time to dig out the old pants and shirt and get planting.

"The official date to plant annuals is the May 24 weekend, but if it's going to be a frost weekend you can plant a few weeks after," said Sean James, former president of the Milton Horticultural Society. "You can plant perennials or shrubs anytime of the year if they're pot-grown."

Flowers such as junipers, spieras and euonymus may be popular, but planting others may be a better choice.

"There are so many others you can draw on that do more interesting things," he said. "Virburnum are fragrant flowers that bloom in the spring and grow berries in the fall. You get more bang for your buck if you step away from the more popular flowers."

Five years ago pastel colours were popular for flowers but the bright colours are coming back into style, Mr. James said.

"We're really falling in love with the yellow and black leaves. Butterfly plants are popular; they have the flower with nectar in it."

If you think beautiful gardens just happen to grow that way, think again.

"A lot of design process goes into the garden," he said. "Some people like formal squares and geometrical shapes or rocks in their gardens. Others prefer English Cottage gardens, which is a natural garden with a mix of perennials that bloom all season long. A formal garden has straight hedges and paths."

To begin the planning stages of a garden, planters should add organic matter and compost into the soil, Mr. James said.

"Focus on the layout features. Do you want a gazebo? A vegetable garden? Do you need a patio or deck? If you have a wheel barrel and shovel, you're off to the races."

Most people figure out what they want to do with their gardens and the type of equipment needed as they go along, he added.

"For novice gardeners, I wouldn't start with seeds. Start with potted plants and find out which ones

are good for direct sunlight. For the more advance planter, try more exotic types of plants. Garden centres will help to map out a garden plan free of charge, but I suggest to research and do it yourself."

As for the physical labour that comes along with caring for your garden, the amount of time spent depends on the type of garden you have.

"If you have a formal garden (a lot of space between the flowers) then weeds will move into the unused soil," Mr. James said. "As for watering, as a general rule if you stick your finger into the soil and it's cool and moist it doesn't need water. Perennials generally don't need a lot of work, they're fairly low maintenance."

Kids can help mom or dad in the garden by helping to rid the soil of weeds, Mr. James suggested.

"If they have to weed the whole garden they'll lose interest, but doing it a little bit is fine. If they grow sunflowers in cups they'll enjoy planting more. The more they help you in the garden, the more they'll grow to love it and love nature."



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Kay Bounsall of the Milton Horticultural Society tends to some Leopard Bane flowers in her King Street garden.

Should I wear boxers or briefs?

Boxers or briefs?

All I wanted was underwear unlike the ones I had, meaning not worn through and without holes. When I saw that the package said briefs and came in colours other than white, I was all set.

Or so I thought.

When I got them home they turned out to be boxer briefs. I thought about taking them back, but then figured I'd give them a shot. I'd never worn boxer-type



On the loose

with **MURRAY TOWNSEND**

underwear before.

I didn't like them. How should I put this — they don't hold every-

thing together.

A lot of people remember an earlier column in which I said I'd walk down Main Street in my underwear on New Year's Day if I didn't lose a certain number of pounds. Apparently, they didn't know I was kidding. Apparently, nobody knew I was kidding. Apparently, I could be in big trouble.

That's why underwear has

• see **I THINK** on page 22



THIS SPRING'S HOTTEST TRIACTOR:

*Live Harness Racing
Exciting Gaming
Spring Buffet Special*

Spring Buffet Special only \$19.95* per person. Includes Shrimp and Prime Rib Buffet, Free Program and a \$5 Betting Voucher.

Offer available Mondays and Tuesdays until May 29.

Call 1-888-675-RACE for reservations.



Hwy 401 at Guelph Line.

*Program and betting voucher only available with reservations. Price does not include beverages, taxes or gratuity.