

Spring Home and Garden

Exploring the 'earthly delights' of Stouffville

Local horticultural consultant and Stouffville Horticultural Society member Denis Flanagan will be contributing a regular column on gardening in the coming weeks. This is the first in the series, *Stouffville Grows*.

Walking or driving along the lanes that interconnect the old and new neighbourhoods of Whitchurch-Stouffville you gain a real sense for the diversity of architectural styles and property sizes.

Adding to the unique flavour of Stouffville is how the owners have planted their properties. Many styles of gardens varying from the wide open rural properties to the smaller town lots and balcony gardens can make for a very interesting horticultural tour. A fitting place to begin such a tour would be right in the heart of our fine town, with a walk along Main Street. The trees planted along the sidewalk starting near the Tribune office are Little Leaf Lindens (*Tilia Cordata*). Some of you may know of this tree from Europe where for centuries it has been used for flavouring Linden Tea and its edible leaves used in salads.

Because of the Linden's hardiness and compact form, little maintenance is required, making it a popular choice as a street tree or for a small to medium size property. When you're walking by these trees



in late spring, enjoy the fragrance from the clusters of creamy yellow flowers.

Continuing your walk along Main Street, notice how the uniform line of Linden trees is interrupted by quite an unusual specimen planted outside the Stouffville Travel office. This is a Maidenhair Tree (*Ginkgo Biloba*) thought to be one of the oldest known species of trees. Fossil remains have been dated back over 200 million years.

Once thought to be extinct, this species of tree now has modern forms which are extremely hardy and withstand pollution well, mak-

ing it a fine choice for street planting or for town lots.

The interesting fan-shaped leaves turn a brilliant yellow in fall, and the branches of this variety keep fairly compact. During its long history the Ginkgo Tree has been noted for many special purposes. For example, in the east it is regarded as a sacred tree and is commonly planted in the vicinity of Buddhist Temples. In Japan, the seeds are highly valued for medicinal purposes to aid diges-

tion and possibly diminish the effects of wine.

This is a truly remarkable species of tree and I hope you will take time to notice it on your next walk along Main Street. As I mentioned at the start of this column, the trees and plants of Whitchurch-Stouffville are quite varied and the stories behind many of them are fascinating. I hope to be sharing some of them with you in future articles.

Gardening Tip: (Courtesy of the

Stouffville Horticultural Society) —

Harden Off Seedlings: If you started seeds indoors this winter, the seedlings need to be hardened off. 2-3 weeks before you plant them out, simply leave the plants out during the daytime only, gradually extending the time seedlings are exposed to the elements. Start with 1-2 hours a day.

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