

## Garden Wisdom

By Donna McMaster

After the winter we have had, who knows what March might bring, but being an optimist I will be watching for my Daphne mezereum, which normally blooms in March, for my first snowdrops planted on the south side of my house and the very early crocus.

The earliest perennials are always such a wonderful surprise, often blooming through a snow bank. Remember to plant early bloomers close to an area where you will pass them every day on your way to the car or mailbox.

If you would like to try something

early this year, look for hellebores at your favourite garden centre. They bloom very early, in colours from white through pink and into burgundy and purple. Hellebores are very hardy in our climate, keeping their blooms for at least two months. They produce excellent foliage that stays crisp and green until the following spring and you will be rewarded with lots of seedlings.

In spring, once the flower buds begin to lift their heads, prune off last year's foliage and make room for fresh leaves. I hope to have hellebores available for sale at our plant sale in May. Stay tuned for more information.

In March, if we are lucky, we may

have some of those wonderful days that you can actually smell spring in the air. Use a day like that to prowl around and see what damage the bunnies or squirrels have done over the winter.

At our March meeting we welcome Peter Gill to give us a presentation proving anyone can have a water garden, even if you are limited to a deck or porch or balcony. Please join us on March 17 at 7:30 at Latcham Hall to hear Peter and also for an interesting approach to starting seeds.

Donna McMaster is a member of the Stouffville Garden Club



Donna's beautiful hellebore 'Ivory Prince' blooming in her garden in March 2012

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## Gallery Round-up

By Chai Duncan

Toronto artist and RBC painting competition finalist Mark Stebbins' dense acrylic and acrylic ink paintings reference the realms of craft traditions, fine art and digital imaging.

Stebbins is interested in what is often lost in translation, creating in the process a new visual vocabulary by pushing the old analogue world into the world of fast-as-light digital processes. Rendering his representations by hand with fine brushes and fine-tipped dip pens, he paints richly-layered patterns that challenge our ability to process and identify what we see.

Recurring motifs such as brush stroke caricatures, pixilated fields, finely-rendered textiles and floating and fragmented disc-like forms occur throughout his work. Come to the Latcham Gallery on Saturday March 1 from 1 to 3 p.m. for the opening of Mark Stebbins' solo exhibition *Picture Elements*. The artist will be present and everyone is welcome.

Following *Picture Elements* we will begin our jury process for our *Annual Juried Exhibition*. This is a great opportunity to have your work seen by a jury of art professionals including curators, artists and

art educators as well as the hundreds of gallery visitors that attend the exhibition each year. Participating artists will receive a \$50 honorarium this year and are also eligible for one of a number of cash awards.

All artists interested in submitting work to this year's jury should check our website at [latchamgallery.ca](http://latchamgallery.ca) for details and watch this space for more information.

Chai Duncan is curator at The Latcham Gallery



*Give and Take*, by Mark Stebbins, is one of the works featured at The Latcham Gallery's current exhibition *Picture Elements*.

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