

GARDENER'S GATE

Gardening for a Better World

In Praise of Berries!

Why you should plant fruiting
trees & shrubs

Living Walls

Beautifying corporate &
domestic spaces

Top 5 Picks:

Best Gardening Non-Fiction

The next best thing to
gardening is *reading* about
gardening

Spring 2020

Edmonton Horticultural Society



Editor's Letter

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new editor of Gardeners Gate and the new Communications Director at the Edmonton Horticultural Society. Growing up on a homestead in rural Alberta near the hamlet of Tawatinaw, I spent springtime poking around my parents gardens as a child, waiting for the first green daffodil spikes to poke through last year's growth. As a university student, I satisfied my green thumb through container gardening on my small balcony in Garneau, combining brilliant mixes of cerulean lobelia, chartreuse potato vine and yellow petunia once the last frost date had passed.

Now as a new homeowner, I turn to stories, lessons learned and advice from fellow Society members in preparation for planning and designing my own gardens; much to my delight, my yard is not yet landscaped and so I have my very own earthy *tabula rasa*. Fortunately, I planted some daffodils last autumn in the weeks before the ground froze. Now I wait for them to signal the coming of the Spring.

According to *A Victorian Flower Dictionary*, daffodils represent 'new beginnings.' Like many of you, I am impatiently waiting for the coming of Spring: the smells of damp earth & old rot of autumn, signs of new growth, and the return of robins. In Spring, the possibilities of new beginnings are endless.

Lindsay Jarvis

EHS Communications Director
communications@edmontonhort.com



Calling for Volunteers

Established in 1909, the **Edmonton Horticultural Society** has played a major part of Edmonton's community for over 110 years.

EHS has three pillars of focus for all our gardening programs:
Urban Beautification, Food gardening & Sustainability.

The EHS has more members than ever before, an active Facebook group, grant-funded staff and a strong board. Recruitment activities have been successful with exciting new program ideas from the recruits and current board members.

We still need capable volunteers to champion the **Garden Tour 2020 & Open Gardens.**

Please contact us at
president@edmontonhort.com
if you're interested.

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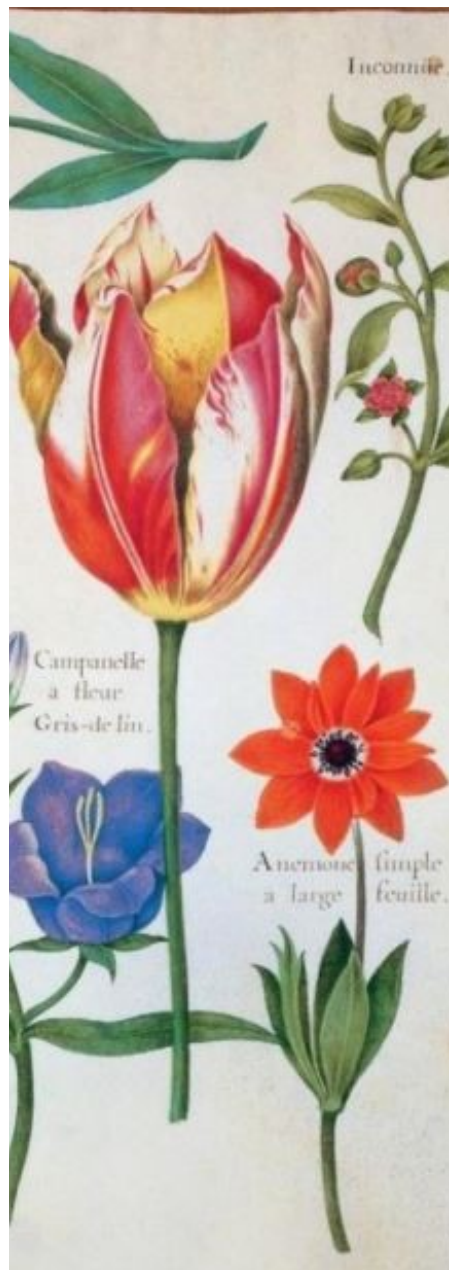
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AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Alberta Horticultural Association
www.icangarden.com/clubs/AHA

Alberta Invasive Species Council
www.invasiveplants.ab.ca

Alberta Native Plant Council
www.anpc.ab.ca

Alberta Regional Lily Society
www.arls-lilies.org

Cactus & Succulent Society of Alberta
www.albertacactusandsucculent.org

Calgary Horticultural Society
www.calhort.org

Colouring the Canadian Landscape Foundation
www.cclf.info

Edmonton and Area Land Trust
www.ealt.ca

Edmonton Native Plant Group
www.edmontonnativeplantgroup.org

Edmonton Permaculture Guild
www.edmontonpermacultureguild.ca

Evergreen Garden Club
Josanne Thiessen at prairielily1@gmail.com

Friends of the Devonian Botanic Garden
<https://friendsofuabg.org/>

Glenora Gardening Club
Sheila Taschuk at shefaz77@gmail.com

Master Gardeners Association of Alberta
www.mgaab.org

Operation Fruit Rescue Edmonton
www.operationfruitrescue.org

Orchid Society of Alberta
www.orchidsalberta.com

Orchid Species Preservation Foundation
www.orchidspecies.ca

Sangudo & District Horticultural Club
Marlene Petersen at hpt1960@telus.net

St. Albert & District Garden Club
www.stalbertgardenclub.info

St. Albert Botanic Park
www.stalbertbotanicpark.com

Stony Plain Horticultural Society
www.sphsociety.ca

Strathcona Garden Club
Brenda Brooke at Brook_eb@yahoo.ca

Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village
www.history.alberta.ca/ukrainianvillage

Wetaskiwin Horticultural Society
Barb Lucas at bmilucas@telus.net

Interested in becoming a discount or Speaker Series vendor?
Email us officeadmin@edmontonhort.com

CORPORATE MEMBERS

Arch Greenhouses
archgreenhouses.com

Cheyenne Tree Farms
cheyennetree.ca

City of Edmonton Building & Parks
edmonton.ca

Classic Landscapes
classiclandscapes.com

Ellerslie Gift and Garden
ellersliegift.com

Greenland Garden Centre
greenlandgarden.com

Kuhlmann's Market Garden
kuhlmanns.com

Lee Valley Tools
leevalley.com

Manderley Turf Products
manderley.com

Millcreek Nursery
millcreeknursery.ca

Pegasus Publications
(Alberta Gardener)
localgardener.net

Salisbury Greenhouse
salisburygreenhouse.com

Sunstar Nurseries
sunstarnurseries.com

Timbertrim Treeworks Ltd.
timbertrim.ca

University of Alberta Botanic Garden
botanicgarden.ualberta.ca

The Wildbird General Store
wildbirdgeneralstore.com

MEMBERS DISCOUNTS

*EHS Members receive special pricing on non-sale purchases at these fine vendors.**

All Seasons Garden Centre	780-448-2385
Apache Seeds Ltd	780-489-4245
Arch Greenhouses	780-438-4349
Arrowhead Nurseries	780-472-6260
Aspen Grove Nurseries	780-962-3148
Aspen Ridge Greenhouse	780-464-5527
Best Curb	780-945-6787
BMR Greenhouses & Water Gardens	780-986-0787
Canar Rock Products	780-466-6650
Cannor Nurseries	780-987-9133
Cheyenne Tree Farms	780-929-8102
Ellerslie Gift & Garden	780-988-6622
Flowers on 50th	780-463-7673
Friends of the Devonian Botanic Garden	780-221-6467
Jils Landscape Supply	780-456-4848
Kuhlmann's Market	780-475-7500
LaRue Tree Certified Arborists	780-603-5317
Lawnmower Hospital	780-437-1851
Millcreek Nursery Ltd.	780-469-8733
Organic Green	780-444-5931
Prairie Gardens & Greenhouses Salisbury Greenhouse	780-981-2272
South Cooking Lake Greenhouses	780-467-5743
Sunstar Nurseries	780-922-6765
The Wildbird General Store Timbertrim Treeworks	780-472-6103
University of Alberta Botanic Garden	780-439-7333
Wild Birds Unlimited	780-449-8733
	780-987-3054
	587-521-2473

*A valid membership card and photo ID required. Offers subject to change without notice.

CONTRIBUTORS

Lyndon Penner is a prairie boy who has been gardening his entire life. He has written several best-selling books about gardening in short season areas and has lectured at the University of Saskatchewan, University of British Columbia, Olds College, and the Calgary Zoo. He has also been a botanical interpreter in Waterton Lakes National Park and a tour guide at the Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden in Lethbridge. Lyndon works as an independent garden designer and consultant and cares about birds, good coffee, and literacy in addition to gardening.



Elizabeth Reid loves a garden bursting with beauty. Vegetables are okay, but what she really goes for are big brassy flowers that fill her eyes with pleasure. Elizabeth wants to be charmed by trees and shrubs and interesting little nooks that make her smile every time she walks by them (even if it was just five minute ago!).

Lindsay Jarvis grew up gardening on her family's homestead in rural Alberta. Her fondest memories as a child include picking raspberries with her Baba (although she ate most of her pickings!). Now she enjoys hearing stories of pioneer gardening from her Baba and Papa over a bowl of raspberries & cream. In addition to gardening, Lindsay dedicates her time to hiking in mountainous regions of the world, birding, baking & watching reruns of *The Great British Baking Show*.



Share your interesting stories & ideas—become a Contributor!

Edmonton Horticultural Society needs to hear from you! *Gardener's Gate* is looking for new stories to share about the world of gardening.

Contact us at communications@edmontonhort.com to share your story.

SPRING CALENDAR

MARCH

Dear Members,

EHS cares about our membership. It is clear that in the best interest of our community and members we need to postpone or cancel all upcoming in person events until further notice.

Although the Public Health Agency of Canada considers the public health risk posed by the COVID-19 to be low, at this time, things are changing quickly. This precautionary step to protect our most venerable members, is a decision that we feel is necessary.

Currently our EHS board is investigating new ways to engage and support our gardening community, including hosting Speaker Series online—watch for updates via eNews & Facebook.

Please join us for our inaugural *ONLINE* Speakers Series featuring—*Garden Renovations: Ideas that Transform*, by Kevin Napora, a landscape designer, master gardener and horticulturist.

March 30 @ 7:30 PM

[Facebook Live Event](#)

EHS encourage you to call or reach out friends or family who may need support during this difficult time. While following recommendations for Physical Distancing is important Maintaining Social Connections is more important than ever.

Find joy in your garden this spring.

Sincerely,



**Edmonton
Horticultural
Society**

APRIL

Alberta Regional Lily Society Annual General Meeting

10:00 am—3:30 pm | \$10 non-members | Woodvale Hall, 4540 50 St NW

APR
18

Join the AGM from 10—12 with a review of 2019 and election of officers. A special speaker will deliver a presentation after lunch. We invite you to bid on various plants & garden items at the silent auction. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Speaker's Series: Birds, Bees, & Butterflies for Edmonton Gardeners

APR
27

6:45 pm – 9:00 pm | \$10 non-members | Central Lions Seniors Rec Centre 11113 113 St

Is it good to feed birds? Do bee hotels really work? Can you attract beautiful butterflies? [Join us](#) to meet our guest speaker, John Acorn—aka “The Nature Nut” — for answers to these & other questions, or at the very least, get some food for thought.

Speaker's Series: Gardening for the Environment

6:45 pm – 9:00 pm | \$10 non-members | Central Lions Seniors Rec Centre 11113 113 St

MAY
30

[Join us](#) in a discussion with guest speaker, Jocelyn Crocker, about how to garden for the environment and how you can create ecological benefits in Edmonton

MAY

SOCIETY UPDATE

The 2020 AGM delivered new slated officers of the board, followed by the first Speaker Series of the year.

The EHS Annual General Meeting, held on February 24 at the Central Lions Recreation Centre, yielded a great turn out of members. Outgoing president, Debbi Dickson, reviewed the 2019 year via the Annual Report, thanked volunteers, and confirmed the new officers of

Executive Team

President—Megan Andre
Vice President—Tamie Perryment
Secretary—Karmin Hovde
Treasurer—Brittany Sapiuk
Past President—Debbi Dickson

Board Directors

Website—Jane Starr
Communications—Lindsay Jarvis
Outreach—Susan Parker

EHS by the Numbers

473 members
177 volunteers
4,500 volunteer hours
10 Speaker Series presenters
4 Niche Talks
3 Learning Event Tours

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Edmonton Horticultural Society

February 24, 2020



EHS

Directors at Large

Lovena Satdeo
Jolene Courtney
Barb Laidlaw

Program Leads

Muttart Beds—Britta Johnson & Judy Rybaczk
Valley Zoo—Susan Parker
Speaker Series—Christine Werk
Niche Talks—Susan Padget
Front Yards In Bloom—Susan Schofield
Tours—Shirley Martin
Casino Funding & Raffles—Linda & Duncan Campbell
Perennial Exchange—Cheryl Lewis
Open Gardens—*vacant*
Garden Tour—*vacant*
eNews—Katrina Bradford
Facebook—Erin Beraskin

At the close of the AGM, Christine Werk, Speaker Series Program Lead, introduced Lyndon Penner as the first speaker of the year for an educational & entertaining presentation about ***Cannas, Bananas & Birds of Paradise***.

Growing tropical as showy ‘thriller’ annuals and unusual houseplants has been on the upward trend. As a result, many Edmonton-area greenhouses have been stocking up on various canna cultivars, specially selected for thriving in our dry, short prairie summers as a container plant or garden feature. In the last decade, cannas have experienced a surge in popularity throughout the Edmonton gardening scene and have even been featured in the grand container gardens decorating the Legislature grounds.

According to Penner, bananas—particularly the dwarf *musa* variety—has become increasingly popular as a garden feature in recent years. Keep your eyes *peeled* on the 2020 Garden Tour—you never know where it might pop up!

Lastly, Penner discussed the marvelous varieties of *Strelitzia*—otherwise known as bird of paradise, one of the most exotic-looking items at many well-stocked florists’ shops. Even the seeds of these plants appear exotic, covered in tufts of orange fluff. The ‘bird’ aspect of this tropical flower is in the eye of the beholder, as Penner made evident by sharing the googly-eyed creation (below).

Did you know?

Banana flowers are edible!

Many cuisines of southeast Asia feature delicate banana flowers in their staple dishes. *Paad Thai*, for example, is often garnished with banana flowers, much like bean spouts. They have a mild grassy flavor & astringent—mouth drying—finish.

In fact, banana flowers are often stocked in the produce section of select Superstores & T&T markets across Edmonton.



Members chortled, unable to stifle laughter, as Penner recounted a conversation between friends, describing how a mysterious person—unknown to this day—was rampaging the parks of Los Angeles, affixing googly eyes to any bird of paradise in their path.

IN PRAISE OF BERRIES

By Lyndon Penner

"I don't want anything with berries!" the woman all but spat at me. "They make such a mess! I'm not having it!" She sounded like a pouty five year old in a Kindergarten class. I was an employee in a well respected Calgary garden center at the time and she was a prospective tree buyer. I had just recommended that she plant a mountain ash in her very large front yard. She was all but offended I would suggest something to her that was not rapid growing and was not zero maintenance. A tree that produced fruit or berries she wouldn't even consider as an option, not for a minute.



I have noticed, with increasing sadness, that over the last few years getting people to plant any kind of (non-edible) fruit tree is getting harder and harder. When people plant trees in their front yard, they will plant a mediocre or inferior tree that grows quickly well before they will plant a very beautiful tree that grows more slowly. We want instant gratification; we don't want to wait for anything to grow. We don't want to pay top dollar for anything either- ask garden center employees how many times in the course of a season someone asks "can I get a deal on this one?"



Instead of planting columnar Swedish aspens, 'Schubert' chokecherries, and any number of other boring and totally forgettable trees, can we all take a moment and please consider the birds in our neighbourhood? Songbird populations are plummeting across the continent. Cats, loss of habitat and habitat fragmentation, climate change, widespread use of pesticides (which kill the insects songbirds such as warblers rely on) are all causing songbird numbers

to drop every year. Hardly anyone seems to be sounding the alarm about this. When I suggest to people that we need to do everything possible to save our birds, they look at me with perplexed expressions. "Save them from what?", they want to know. Many people think house sparrows are the only birds we have here.

If you looked at prairie neighbourhoods in the 1960's, 70's, and 80's they were full of fruits that we didn't eat. Cranberries, mountain ash, mayday trees, hawthorn, sea buckthorn and ornamental crabapples provided a winter buffet for Bohemian waxwings and other fruit eating birds. They also made our neighbourhoods significantly more beautiful during the winter months. Unfortunately, many of these trees were planted in inconvenient places. Crabapples and mountain ash were placed next to driveways and sidewalks and decks and pathways. Fruit fall created a mess, and very few people seemed to clue in that the location of the tree was the problem and not the problem itself. Now there is a widespread myth that these trees are "messy" and many folks don't want to plant one. As many of these fruiting trees that were planted decades ago are now coming to the end of their lifespans, they are not being replaced. Songbirds are suffering for it, and frankly, so are our neighbourhoods. So many residential places in Edmonton, Saskatoon, Calgary, and Regina are at best, colourless, and at worst, entirely devoid of beauty. Every new subdivision has ranks and ranks of columnar aspens standing in rows like soldiers. They are absolutely depressing to look at in winter. Where is the beauty? Where is the diversity? Where are the birds we once prized on late winter days?

The fact is, fruit producing trees and shrubs offer food for pollinators in the spring, food for birds in winter, and food for our souls all year round. There



are many new cultivars of both flowering crab and mountain ash that are much less "messy" than their predecessors and many also offer outstanding fall colour. 'Blackhawk' and 'Cardinal Royal' are two superb mountain ashes that people should be planting. They are available at any garden center. Many of the old flowering crabapples and hawthorns that were superb for birds have been replaced with cultivars that are sterile and do not produce any fruit at all. While homeowners love this, birds do not.

We have to start thinking of our neighbourhoods and towns in terms of “how will this area look in 50 years?” “What are we planting to feed birds?” “Are we teaching our children about how to leave things better than we found them?” I don’t know about you, but I find winter very LONG in the prairie provinces. I want something beautiful to look at in the cold months. I want to pour myself some coffee on a frigid day and look outside and see blue jays and waxwings and grosbeaks and chickadees in my trees. I want my home and my neighbourhood to be beautiful, and I want to take pride in where I live. I want to hear birds. I hope you do too. When you go to the garden center this spring to choose a tree for your yard, I would urge you to please consider planting something that will feed all the smaller creatures that also call this place home.



LIVING WALLS

By Elizabeth Reid

Not so long ago, I thought a living wall was something a gardener more clever than myself would make to hang in his or her garden during the summer. There would be a framed shallow box filled with soil, covered with chicken wire and then filled with plants. The box would be hung on a fence and lifted down frequently to be watered.

Living walls have come a long way!

Recently I visited the Federal Building in Edmonton, an eleven story Art Deco building, built in the 1950's and renovated in 2014. A beautiful glass lobby entrance was added with an immense vertical living wall and water feature. It's a happy place with abundant light, walls of green plants and the kind of air my skin and lungs adore.

This living wall was designed and built by Nedlaw Living Walls, a company based in Ontario.



Architecture made beautiful by living walls.



Living walls in the Federal Building at Edmonton's Legislature grounds.

The plants were installed and are maintained by an Edmonton Company, Terra Landscaping Ltd. This wall is not there just for its beauty. It is a biofilter system that cleans the air and reduces energy costs. The wall is 2400 sq. ft and is the largest in Alberta and one of the largest in the world!

I assumed the leaves of the plants were cleaning the air but that is not how it works.

A biofilter draws air through the vertical wall of plants which are planted in a growth medium. Biological agents that occur naturally on the roots of the plants consume the pollutants and the clean air is returned to a mixing room in the basement. From there this beautiful naturally filtered air is distributed throughout the whole building. The plants create the environment for the microbes to do their work. It is the microbes on the roots of the plants that do the work, not the leaves.

This is a hydroponic system with a tank and pumps in the basement where the staff can do such things as add fertilizer or test the water ph. and electrical conductivity. Sensors installed throughout the wall inform a computer, or the maintenance people's phones, if the plants are short of water or otherwise stressed.

What this means is the living wall is a working element of the Building's HVAC system (Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning). It makes the air more humid in the winter and cooler in the summer. This living wall reduces energy costs by taking less cold air from the outside in the winter months and less warm air that would have to be cooled in the summer months. If the wall is scaled correctly with the HVAC system, the building's operating costs can be reduced by 30 percent.



What plants are used

Gardeners will find the plants used to create the wall familiar. There are many kinds of *dracaena*: limelight, lemon lime, jade jewel, and Janet Craig. Other plants are *schefflera*, *pothos*, *antherium*, *ficus* starlight, *ficus* tineke, *ficus* burgundy, and ivies. The plants vary from time to time. Each plant area is serviced every two weeks by means of a spider crane fitted with a bucket for the maintenance person to ride in.



Small projects

Living walls are becoming popular on a smaller scale too. On their website, Terra Landscaping Ltd. has pictures of many local installations in homes as well as offices. If you want a close look at how living walls are created and how they function, Terra has teamed up with Creekside Home and Garden southwest of

Edmonton. At Creekside, you'll see three different living wall systems: the Nedlaw bio filter wall; a passive living wall system; and a low maintenance preserved wall system.

A GARDENER'S LIBRARY:

Top 5 Non-Fiction Pics

By Lindsay Jarvis

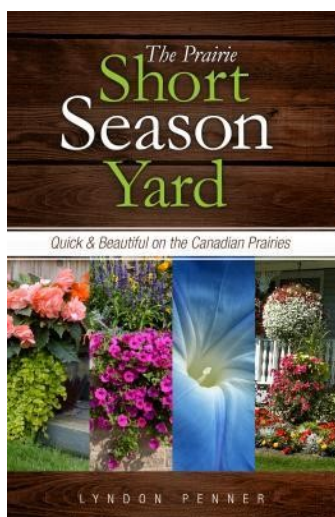
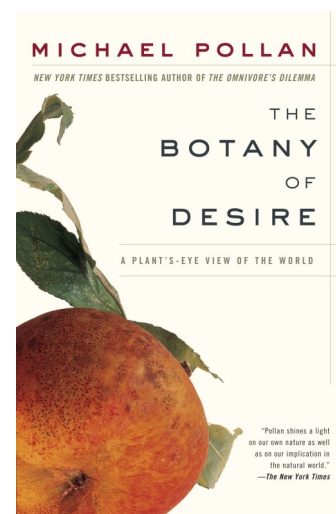
Over the winter months, I've been cultivating my book list through handy apps like [GoodReads](#) and have been scanning the shelves of our Edmonton Public Libraries for my ever-growing reading list. The Edmonton Public Library is an amazing resource for gardeners & green thumbs alike. Not only can you browse their extensive catalogue, you can also search for & request less-common books from other parts of Alberta and Canada through Interlibrary Loan (ILL). To request these books, visit the Interlibrary Loan webpage of the EPL website at epl.ca/interlibrary-loans/.

From discourses on human-plant relationships to longitudinal histories of tulips, here are my top five non-fiction reads for the coming months.

[The Botany of Desire: A Plant-Eye View of the World](#)

by Michael Pollan

From the author who brought us the critically acclaimed *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*, Pollan delivers a whimsical take on the interconnectedness and mutually beneficial relationship between plants and humankind via domestication. Through 4 case studies - apples, tulips, marijuana, and potatoes - Pollan delves into the history and transformation of these plants in parallel with the evolution of human civilization. Pollan's witticisms and scientific insight are well blended for this brilliant read.



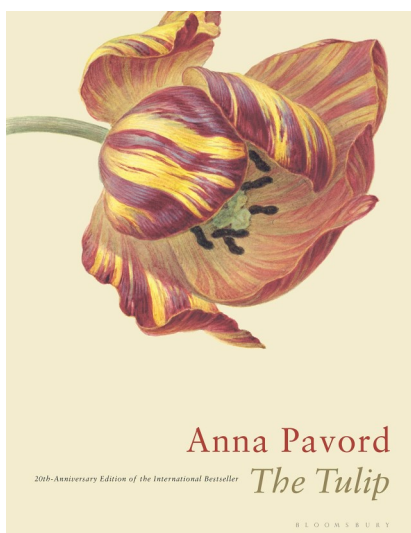
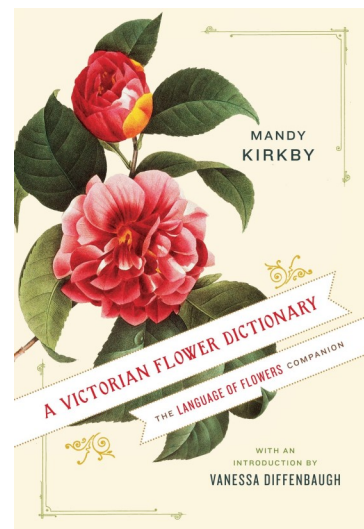
[The Prairie Short Season Yard: Quick and Beautiful on the Canadian Prairies](#)

by Lyndon Penner

This excellent resource for plants & gardening on the prairies is a must-read for all prairie-dwellers. Learn how to take advantage of our distinct climate, zones, and soils in order to maximize the potential of your garden. Penner shares his expertise and lived experience on mitigating damage from pesky insects & animals, while factoring in ecological & budgetary considerations. Full of lovely colour photos, as well as lessons learned from horticultural experimentation plus humour and style.

[A Victorian Flower Dictionary](#) by Mandy Kirkby (*available through ILL)

“A flower is not a flower alone; a thousand thoughts invest it.” Kirkby’s illustrated dictionary explores the Victorian tradition of ascribing meaning to flowers through semiosis, the culture-specific process of innately associating meaning with symbols, in this case, flowers. Delving into the British cultural traditions, literary use, and historical reference, Kirkby shares the meaning of common flowers, including my spring-time favourite, the daffodil.



[The Tulip](#) by Anna Pavord (*available through ILL)

Another spring favourite, the tulip, is the main feature in Pavord’s in-depth study of this beloved flower. If you suffer from acute tulipmania, this is the book for you. Although commonly associated with the Netherlands, the tulip originated from ancient Mesopotamia and became popularized by royalty in Europe by way of the Ottomans sultans. This book reveals the development of the tulip and its cultivars, it’s journey across the globe and its impact on economic, social and religious changes. Bonus: this book features spectacular botanical prints.

[The Plant Messiah: Adventures in Search of the World’s Rarest Species](#) by Carlos Magdalena



Carlos Magdalena, aka the Plant Messiah, is the Tropical Botanical Horticulturist at the famed [Royal Botanic Kew Gardens](#) in London, United Kingdom. As the son of a florist hailing from northern Spain, Magdalena travelled to London and trained as a horticulturist at Kew to satisfy his passion for vegetation & to save the world's rarest plants through propagation. In his



journey around the globe to some of the most remote and unique ecosystems, Magdalena has collected many rare specimens, successfully propagated them at Kew, and distributed seeds back to the endemic region of origin to propel the specimens into the future in their wild habitat.



Since 1909, the Edmonton Horticultural Society has been promoting gardening in Edmonton. We welcome gardeners of all ages and skill levels to learn, share, and grow with us.

We champion **sustainable practices**, promote **urban beautification**, and encourage **food gardening** within our communities and city.



Our member benefits include:

Admission to Speaker Series

Local discounts

Informative newsletters

Workshops

Garden tours

Plant exchanges

And much more...

Join us today!



Visit our website: <https://edmontonhort.com/>

Join us on Facebook: [Gardening—Edmonton Horticultural Society](#)