



We hope that you had a wonderful, happy, peaceful holiday season. Now we are ready for another year of Mother Nature's changing moods. Can we ever stop talking about the weather? After the deep freeze of a year ago, we seem to have a complete reversal with temperatures straying not too far in either direction from the zero mark. So far, so good, although a little more of a cozy, snowy blanket for our plants would be appreciated.

January 12th Meeting

We were very happy to welcome 32 members on this snowy evening. We would like to give a special welcome to new member Sherlene Fernando. Sherlene represents the Pickering Islamic Centre, one of the 2015 Garden of Distinction winners.

Announcements

- Susan informed us that the 2016 yearbooks are ready and explained some of the changes that have been made
- Sign-up sheets for clerking and refreshments were circulated
- Susan reminded us that we will have our 'culinary arts' show at our next meeting and expressed the hope that more people will be willing to exhibit their cooking/baking skills.
- The Pickering 'Seedy Saturday' will not be held this year. Instead, a visit to the Toronto Botanical Gardens 'Get a Jump on Spring' show would be a lovely alternative.

Feature Speaker, Tammy Miller – Country Cheese Company

Did you know that the craft of cheesemaking dates back at least 5,000 years? Archeological evidence exists of cheese being made in the ancient Egyptian civilizations. Tammy gave us a brief tour of the history of cheesemaking, then proceeded to explain the very complex and time consuming process of creating magnificent cheeses. Cheese can be made from a variety of milk; most common is the use of cow, goat, sheep or buffalo milk. The process is the same for all types of milk and involves culturing, coagulation, draining, scalding, ripening (aging). Specific characteristics are the result of different bacterial cultures added during this process. It is easy to see why artisanal cheese can give you a bit of price-sticker shock. What about the supermarket block of 'extra old' cheddar at a very reasonable price? Well, it's not really extra old; it has been 'aged' artificially by being doused with an aging solution. It's very good for mac & cheese but should not be confused with a cheese that has actually gone through a process that takes years.

After having our taste buds tantalized by Tammy's talk, we could hardly wait to sample the selection she had set up for us. Wonderful! Thank you, Tammy.

Refreshments

We would like to thank Jane Hiley, Ruby Jewer and Joanne Miatello for providing sweet treats for us to enjoy. As usual, Mary Dawson made sure we had liquid refreshments as well. Thank you, Mary.

Photography and Flower Show

Once again we were thrilled by the enthusiastic participation in the photography show. We had 226 wonderful photos to admire which made it difficult for the judge to choose the best. Could you come up with suggestions for our show committee to create more “Best Photograph...” categories? Don’t be shy, all suggestions will be considered. The ‘Best in Show’ award for this show was won by *Lori Kneschewitsch* for her amazing photo of a still life. Congratulations, Lori.



We also had 5 design entries. The ‘Best in Show’ went to *Karen Bardeau* for her lovely design with dried material. Congratulations, Karen.

We say thank you to *Jan Garvey* and *Marion Thomas* for recording the results for this show. With more than 200 entries, you were kept very busy. I hope that there was some cheese left for you when you finished.

Another thank you goes to our judge, Bill Conway, who donated his judging fee to the Daily Bread Foodbank. Thank you for your thoughtfulness, Bill.

It seems that every year when the cheques for points awards are handed out, some people are surprised that they get a monetary award for their accumulated points. Yes, you get paid 10 cents for each point you earn. Points are recorded during our fiscal year, (September 1st to August 31st), then paid out at our Annual General Meeting or shortly after. Please see page 17 of your yearbook for more details about points and awards.

Next Meeting – February 9th

Our speaker will be Jan Noonan. Jan will give us tips and hints about taking good photographs and what to avoid. This should help us through the year to shoot the best photos for next year.

And once again, we get to show off our culinary skills. Tasting someone else’s creations is so much fun; therefore, we sincerely hope that everybody will participate this year.

This and That

Attention Face Book Users

Did you know that the Pickering Horticultural Society has a Facebook page? Like other Horticultural Societies and Community Organizations we can use the page to expand our community and help support one another. You can search for Pickering Horticultural Society in the search box at the top of your Face book page.

Once you are on the page please click the " LIKE" button that contains a # at the top of the page. Once you do that any updates on the page will show in your newsfeed. Please feel free to "like" or comment on any of the individual posts or pictures you see on the page.

And to spread news about our Society or any events we announce on our page, feel free to hit the SHARE button as this will share with your friends and let them know about upcoming meetings, guest speakers etc.

It is great way to post pictures of plant problems you are having in the garden, help with plant id or to share the beauty in your garden as well.

If you have any specific questions I can help answer them at the next meeting.

Thank you
Joanne Shaw

What Joanne does not mention is the fun you can have browsing pages from other interesting groups and being part of the larger horticultural community. Sigrid

Website

Have you checked out our new and improved website yet? Are you interested in helping to keep it lively and a good representation of our society? Joanne S. and Mary D. would like to extend a cordial invitation to you to join them on a creative journey as a member of the website committee. If this appeals to you, please talk to Joanne at the next meeting or contact her at joanne.shaw2@gmail.com

Toronto Botanical Garden

On Saturday, February 20th, **Get the Jump on Spring**, the first garden show of 2016, will be taking place at the TBG. This event is organized in partnership with District 5 of the Ontario Horticultural Association. It is a nice introduction to the growing season and it's great to see the effort made by all the volunteers in the horticultural field. For the shop-a-holics amongst us – it's an event not to be missed.

Also at the TBG, **Seedy Saturday** is alive and well. It will be held on Saturday, February 27th from 10:00 till 4:00.

For more information about these events, please visit www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca