

Gardening With Native Plants

By Lorraine Johnson

My first native plant garden, planted decades ago, was a small native plant meadow (16 by 10 feet/4.8 by 3 m) in the backyard of my

Water? A total of 30 liters (about 8 gallons) directed exclusively at four seedlings I put in in the spring and needed to water until they got established. Other than that, the rain did my watering work – even during a very dry summer. Gas? No

woodland ground-cover beside a hosta, which is non-native, and see which plant the slugs devour. The exotic hosta, guaranteed. Actually, my then neighbor and I enacted this experiment every summer. He poured on the slug poison and I poured on the native seeds, five feet (1.5 m) away. The slugs in my garden were more than happy to ignore my natives and instead spend their lives in the compost bin (where they're useful); my neighbor's slugs, on the other hand, were happily munching their way through a third expensive hosta planting.

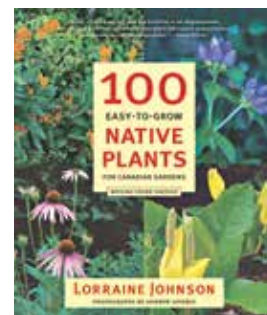
others referred to in various sections throughout) represent just a fraction of the native plants appropriate for the garden setting. It was next to impossible (and more than a little heartbreaking) to limit my choices to a hundred. I was guided, however, by the principle that, along with being easy to grow, all should be relatively easy to find in the nursery trade and most should be ones I'd actually grown. My own experiences in cultivating these plants have been supplemented by many fruitful exchanges with hundreds of other native plant gardeners across North America who have so generously shared their adventures with me.

Diversity

In case this is starting to sound like unseemly gardener-one-upmanship, I should note that my neighbor had a lovely garden, and that my meadow was not to everyone's taste. No single garden ever is. Anyone with claustrophobia would have found my towering plants dizzying, and even in such a small plot, one could have gotten lost in foliage on the trip to the compost bin. But the look of my garden was dictated by my particular choices of native plants, not the fact that I chose to garden with natives. If I had wanted a more restrained style, I could have easily chosen from the dazzling array of natives with more compact growth. And that, essentially, is one of the beauties of native plant gardening: the incredible diversity from which to choose. Whatever your conditions – shady, sunny, or somewhere in between – and whatever your desired style – formal, informal, or a mix of the two – you can find many natives to suit your needs and achieve your goals.

The hundred easy-to-grow native plants detailed in this book (and the dozens of

Lorraine Johnson was the president of the North American Native Plant Society and is the author of numerous books on gardening and environmental issues, including The New Ontario Naturalized Garden, The Gardener's Manifesto, and City Farmer: Adventures in Urban Food Growing. Lorraine is much-in-demand throughout North America as a garden speaker on native plants. She currently lives in Toronto.



From 100 Easy-to-Grow Native Plants for Canadian Gardens, Lorraine Johnson. Photographs by Andrew Leyerle. ©2017. Published by Douglas & McIntyre. Excerpted with permission of the publisher.



▲ One of the splashiest spring combinations for the northeastern woodland garden includes Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) and wood poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*). PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW LEYERLE.

first house. In the late 1990s, I was asked to be part of a study to assess the amount of time and inputs (water, fertilizers, etc.) various types of gardens require. In addition to my native plant meadow, the survey looked at a typical lawn and a conventional flower garden, among other landscape styles...

Nature – a loaded and problematic term, I admit – is pretty much in control of things. Sure, the gardener can tinker away, as temperament and the need for soothing work-time in the garden demand, or the gardener can take low maintenance to the extreme outer reaches (as I seem to have done that summer), but at the end of the day the native plant garden continues ... on its own steam.

Which explains my survey results in the “input” categories.

lawn, so no endless mowing and no fossil fuel or electrical energy use. Fertilizers? The meadow plants don't need any.

Organic

Chemicals? Zilch. My gardening approach is organic on principle and organic in practice, and the majority of pest problems I encountered could be dealt with using soap and water, or muscle. Most other native plant gardeners I've talked with across North America report the same thing. It's the adapt or die principle in action – native plants have evolved over thousands of years to the conditions found in their home range, so in a biodiverse native plant garden they don't succumb to pest attack with the same regularity as exotic plants. Anyone who doubts this should plant a native

The Future of the Bruce Peninsula: Learning from Seven Generations Thinking

Visitors to the tip of the Bruce Peninsula over the past several years have been struck by one big challenge – people are everywhere. On peak summer weekends, thousands of people are turned away from such popular attractions as the Grotto and Singing Sands beach, and traffic on the highway into Tobermory moves at a crawl. Less visible to visitors are some troubling changes in natural systems, including the subtle impacts of climate change and the shifting biodiversity of the lake waters brought on by invasive species and other factors.

Tobermory, the picturesque little community at the tip of the Bruce, struggles with social and economic changes as well. The population is aging as young people leave to find jobs and retirees arrive to enjoy the tranquility and natural beauty. The stark seasonality of the economy is a factor that must be reckoned with by developers, entrepreneurs and residents alike.

This area has amazing attributes based around large contiguous forests and pristine shorelines that have real potential for improving the environment and creating economic opportunities. But these current challenges to the physical and natural systems suggest that recent approaches to managing our natural and human systems are not working as effectively as they might. Perhaps it is time to reconsider how we view the future of the Niagara Escarpment and the Bruce Peninsula.

Sources of Knowledge

One organization is attempting to start a conversation about the future and how we might



◀ Canada Day weekend visitors at Indian Head Cove in Bruce Peninsula National Park. Photo courtesy of Bruce Peninsula Press/ Doug Sweiger

view it differently. Sources of Knowledge is hosting their ninth annual forum May 5-7, 2017 in Tobermory. The forum's theme is "Accounting for the Past, Envisioning the Future: A Seven Generations Framework for the Bruce Peninsula." All the speakers, workshops, field trips, videos and displays during this event will help participants to see the future through the lens of the First Nations' Seven Generations way of thinking.

The Seven Generations perspective is grounded in traditional ecological knowledge and long-term thinking. This approach recognizes that individuals will be influenced by great-grandparents, grandparents and parents and will in turn, help to shape children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. While these generations may not all be present at the same time, there is a connection that runs through those who are here now to those recently gone and to those soon to come. These connections amount to seven generations of accumulated experience and wisdom about who we are,

where we live, and what we do.

For First Nations, this Seven Generations perspective applies to decision making about the natural environment, society, political relationships and family connections. The Seven Generations approach intensifies community bonds, promotes cultural and natural stability, and provides real values for which all people can judge their own actions. The approach contrasts sharply to decision making that we often see in the broader Canadian society that focuses on the shorter term, such as the next fiscal year or the next term in political office.

Annual Forum

The Sources of Knowledge annual forum has become an important social and intellectual event in Tobermory's calendar. Over the years, experts and interesting speakers have shared their ideas on topics such as the Peninsula's coastal heritage, the need for a strong dark skies policy and threats to subsurface ecosystems. This May's event is the third in a series about the Great Arc – the Niagara Escarpment as it

crosses Ontario, Michigan and Wisconsin. Last year's forum focused on the interactions between this physical feature and the indigenous peoples who occupied the land after the retreat of the last glaciers.

This year, the keynote speaker is John Borrows of the University of Victoria. Professor Borrows is currently the Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Law and an international authority on the legal traditions and legal reasoning of Aboriginal peoples. As an Anishinaabe person, it is his contention that these legal traditions can be applied more broadly to the whole of Canadian society.

Forum 2016 sold out and we expect the same level of enthusiasm for this year's event. Check regularly at sourcesofknowledge.ca for details about the program and registration.

Sources of Knowledge is a community-based, non-profit organization with a mandate to share ideas and information about the people and places on the Bruce Peninsula.

Graham Draper, Board of Directors, Sources of Knowledge

Niagara Escarpment Authors' New Works

***How We Danced*, 2016, Cactus Rain Publishing**

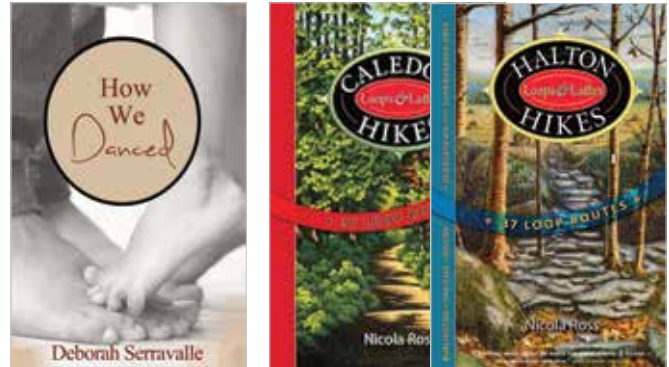
Aging, homosexuality, adultery and death are themes in *How We Danced* but Deborah Serravalle portrays them with nostalgia, sweetness and understanding. Set in Hamilton, the story unfolds in two time frames, the contemporary present and in memories from 40 or 50 years ago, when morals were different. People familiar with the city's history will enjoy having treasured parts of it recalled to life.

This is the first novel published by Deborah, who for Autumn 2008 contributed the feature article "Around the Bay Race: Older than Boston's" for this magazine. She is already working on another book.

***Caledon Hikes: Loops & Lattes*, 2015 and *Halton Hikes: Loops & Lattes*, 2016, Woodrising Consulting**

Nicola Ross's two hiking books are collections of circle walks that end back at your car, eliminating the need to park vehicles at both ends of a trail or to return the whole way you went in. A lot of work by several people went into these books. There is a map for each of the 37 hikes in each book, with detailed directions to follow, plus descriptions of what you can see, as well as some photographs. An information box for each walk gives the length, level of difficulty, length of time to complete, the number of steps (!) and more.

This is a highly personal selection of walks, with some



▲ Two Escarpment-area authors present new books: Deborah Serravalle has the novel *How We Danced* and Nicola Ross has *Caledon Hikes: Loops & Lattes* and *Halton Hikes: Loops & Lattes*.

choices that may surprise local residents who prefer other options. The routes were tested by people before publication. Exact locations of parking space for each hike are particularly useful, and the notes about where to buy refreshments make

for highly civilized outings.

Note that *Halton Hikes* is not to be confused with Conservation Halton's 2007 book of that name, by Gary Hutton, for which Gloria Hildebrandt, publisher of this magazine, was copy editor.