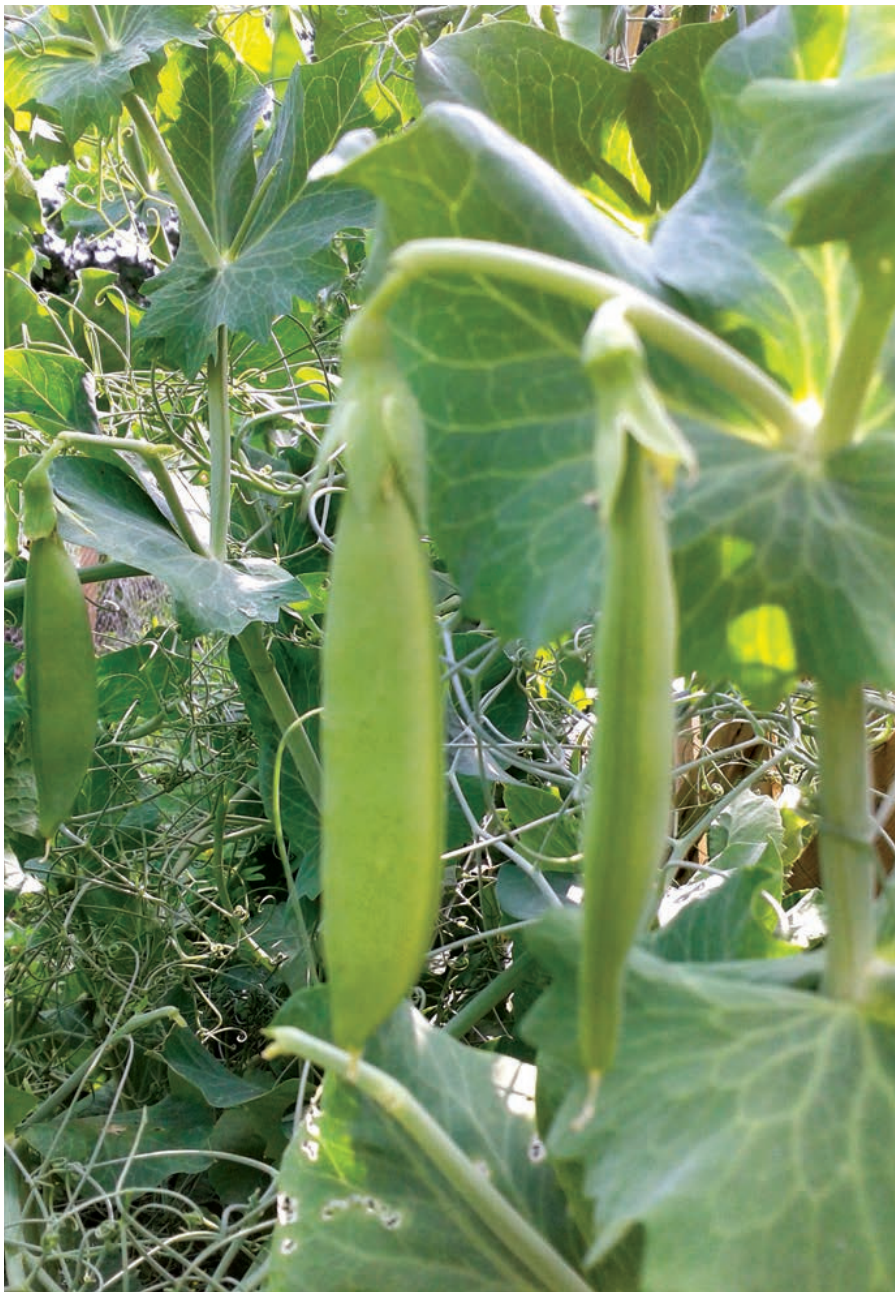


# PLANT PEAS in MARCH

By Brenda Visser

“Gardening in March?” you say. “Yes”, says Donna White of Green Things Gardening Centre, east of Brockville on Highway #2.



If you've spent January and February poring over seed catalogues and placing orders, itching to get into the green outdoors, you are the perfect candidate to begin gardening preparations this month that will encourage a good crop for this summer and fall.

While you are probably still spending more time indoors than out, you can prepare trays of seeds, for little seedlings to be transplanted when it's warmer. Tomatoes might be a good pick. You can start your summer flowering bulbs indoors- those colourful Dahlias, Canna Lilies, and Calla Lilies, for example. Indoor seed trays and pots should have warmth and light during the day and perhaps some shelter during the night if it is too cool. Many planting trays come with clear lids, which are perfect for helping seeds germinate, retain moisture, and have a strong start.

Moving outside, you can pay attention to those larger plants that took a beating with all the snow and ice this winter. Shrubs and evergreens can be pruned and tidied up. Donna White says to be careful to prune only your summer or fall flowering shrubs such as Hydrangea or Burning Bush. You do not want to prune your Lilac Bush! If you do, you will likely have no lovely blooms and scents to enjoy come late May. Those little flower buds are like you- waiting for a bit of warmth to come out of their shelter as soon as conditions are right! Spring flowering shrubs can be pruned after their bloom is over.

There is the obvious cleaning up of leaves, dead stalks, and general debris that can be done, but did you know that the soil can also be prepared now, even in March? If the ground is no longer frozen solid, you can plow it up, snow and all, and enrich it with compost and lime, especially vegetable gardens. You should apply an early spring fertilizer, which is high in nitrogen, to promote top growth.

Jean Brassington, founding member of the Athens Garden Club, suggests direct seeding annual “fillers” on top of the melting snow. This would include Poppy seeds, or Love-in-a-Mist. I can imagine the bright colours already!

And this is where the Peas come in. Once you have prepared the soil of your vegetable garden, you can plant your cold crop vegetables, particularly Peas and Onions. They actually like to grow in these cooler temperatures.

Early spring is also an excellent time to plant your plant trees, shrubs, and roses. “Cool temperatures lend themselves to a better

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Continued from pg.7

transplant success rate and selection of plants is better than at any other time of year", Brassington said.

For more inspiration, you might also consider attending a meeting of a local garden club. The Athens Garden Club meets year-round, on the third Tuesday of the month at 7pm, at the Athens District High School.

The Brockville Horticultural Society meets The 3rd Monday of each month (Excluding July, August and December) in the lower hall at: Brockville Wesleyan Church 33 Central Avenue West, Brockville, ON. On the Corner of Central Ave. and Ferguson Dr. Contact: Donelda Shackles 613-667-1265 email: doneldashackles@sympatico.ca for more information or membership.

The Gananoque Horticultural Society meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm- except July and August @ the Community Room (Herbert St entrance) of Carveth Care Corner of North St. and Herbert St. Please contact Joan MacKinnon 613 463-9406 email: gan.hort.soc@gmail.com for more information about the club or membership.



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Better yet, if you are looking for some deals on bedding plants next month, buying membership to the Athens club gives you an automatic discount to various suppliers (such as Ritchie's Feed & Seed) when you show your card. This club is as lively as the plants they work with; they became well known for the Athens Plant Sale that ran for 10 years. You will find inspiration, cures for garden pests, and best of all, new friends at this Club. Other Clubs may have discounts given to members with various gardening retailers. It is best to check with your local club/society on discounts.

With your new friends, you can talk "garden"- maybe even early spring gardening! Won't those peas taste good? **LH**

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