

NIAGARA's D9 in the Year of the Garden 2022

A traditional Seneca story of the Maid of the Mist reveals Niagara and its 'falls' as a special place "capable of restoring mental and physical balance to a distraught young woman."

Integral in this passed down story is the expression of a range of human and community dynamics, including everything from jealousy and maliciousness to empathy, compassion, honour, wisdom, loyalty, health and healing.

"The story is every bit as rich and evocative as the majestic geography of Niagara Falls and its environs might suggest."

So, we are District 9.

From Dunnville to Fort Erie, Grimsby, Lincoln, Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Pelham, Port Colborne, Ridgeway & District, Smithville, St. Catharines, Thorold and Welland . . .

And this year 2022 is when we all celebrate our love of gardens and gardening.

Most of our Societies have been spreading the word about the Year of the Garden in Canada by urging all gardeners to '**GROW RED**' to show our civic pride

Below are just some of the highlights of 2022 that helped us all to celebrate the **Year of the Garden** with special events and old standbys. As soon as some of the COVID restrictions were lifted some needed venues opened once again allowing many of our meetings to be both as in-person or as video communications.

DUNNVILLE Horticultural Society: Have created a 'feature bed' with native red perennials, annuals and shrubs and co-purchased a YOTG Flag to be flown at City Hall during Garden Week;

FORT ERIE Horticultural Society: Took part in a town of Fort Erie's 600 FREE tree giveaway. And talk about 'plant sales' this one lasted 6 days and started off with over 2, 500 plants. Some of the funds raised will go to support Fort Erie area students who are studying horticulture at post-secondary institutions.

GRIMSBY Garden Club: 2022 is Canada's Year of the Garden and Grimsby's 100th anniversary. Their Garden Tour took place in July 16 – A great turn out helped to celebrate and enjoy these 10 wonderful gardens. This was a Rain or Shine event. And open to the public.

LINCOLN Garden Club: Have partnered with the municipality to conduct a Garden Contest in June. Winners will be announced during the July 1st celebration.

NIAGARA FALLS Horticultural Society: After holding their Plant Sale (at the end of May) they followed with resurrecting their popular 'Garden Walk' and resumed their speaker programs.

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE Horticultural Society: This was the 30th anniversary of their Garden Tour on July 9 2022 from 0 a.m. to 5 p.m. It was an Open Tour (FREE) with over 25 gardens to visit.

PELHAM Garden Club: June 11 their sponsored Tami Proctor, Horticultural Therapist – as a FREE event with pre-registration required. They also organized a successful GardenWalk Garden Tour. In late summer they held their annual Flower & Vegetable Show.

PORT COLBORNE Garden Club: Are once again organizing their fall programs including a Fall Plant Sale at the Guild Hall and hosting a Christmas dinner prepared by the Port Colborne high school culinary students.

RIDGEWAY & DISTRICT Garden Club: They have organized a Picnic & Garden Tour (July 21) at Niagara Falls Botanical Gardens; Also they are partnering with Bloom Canada to help run and participate in a Garden Tour for the area.

ST. CATHARINES – Garden City Gardeners: are in the process of organizing and developing a Native Pollinator Garden location to celebrate the YOTG 2022. They held their first AGM as GCG's and have set up a management structure to continue on as an OHA Society.

SMITHVILLE Garden Club: has been working with the United Way and Township to build accessible raised allotment garden beds at Hank McDonald Park;

THOROLD Garden Club: They launch the first annual Thorold Garden Contest (YOTG 2022), on National Garden Day in Canada.

WELLAND Horticultural Society: created a 'feature bed' to be planted with native red perennials, annuals and shrubs:

They also held their popular Plant Sale and it was a great success as always.

This being my first year as Director 2022 was an exciting and challenging year.

I found myself asking the question:

“What is most the most exciting part of this first year?”

Many answers came to mind such as the glorious spring and a summer where we can finally feel some normality entering our lives after the two previous COVID years. Sun, warm and blooming gardens seemed to glory in the weather throughout the growing months.

Then came the first day of Autumn, the beginning of the Grape & Wine Festival, the 40th year of the Terry Fox Run for a Cure, and just getting back to work and/or school friends and associates. This year was made even more special with it being the YEAR OF THE GARDEN across Canada.

And in my little corner of the world, it has to be the first in-person event, in the last 31 months. Everyone can tell you when they felt life normalizing again. Let us hope and pray that life will once again allow us to share our love of gardening with each other instead of on zoom in isolation.