

FRIENDS *of the* Central Experimental Farm

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Peonies at the Farm A TIME CAPSULE

by Blaine Marchand

The winter of 1999/2000 was a brutal one in Ottawa. An August 2002 memo to the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Farm from George Vorauer, team leader for the Thursday Green Thumb Team, stated that of the 253 cultivars of peonies in the collection at the Farm, 56 had died and another 28 were so weak that they would most likely not survive the next winter. The Board, in consultation with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), decided that something had to be done to preserve and continue to grow the peony collection.

Peonies have had a long association with the Central Experimental Farm (CEF). Its first director, William Saunders, had astutely collected 150 different cultivars and species peonies to be tested at the Ottawa site. These were planted in beds in front of his residence on the Farm, where the current Saunders building is located. The collection was certainly one of note and most likely held new English and French introductions that are now considered classic peonies – ‘Sarah Bernhardt’ (large, dark rose-pink); ‘Le Cygne’ (white, tinged ivory, becoming

pure white); ‘Primevèra’ (creamy white, centre of short, narrow petals of canary-yellow); and ‘Baroness Schroder’ (pale flesh-white, tinted cream and outer petals shaded with faint pink).

In light of the historic place of honour that had been accorded to the peony, both the Friends and AAFC staff believed it was important to keep this tradition going into the 21st century. Working with AAFC was a group of Friends volunteers, who were also members of the Canadian Peony Society (CPS) – George Vorauer, Mary Pratte, Freda Godby, Lynne Zeitouni, and Bill Wegman.

A NEW PEONY GARDEN

The decision was made to relocate the peony garden to a new more prominent location – close to the traffic circle of Prince of Wales Drive and the Driveway. Sharon Saunders (no relation to William Saunders), then the AAFC Lead Hand, created a design that referenced the Victorian gardens popular when the Farm was established. The new peony garden consisted of eight arching beds, a double circle, around the large

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PHOTOS ABOVE:

Top two photos: ‘George Vorauer’ and ‘Mary Pratte’, named in honour of Friends volunteers who were instrumental in developing the Farm’s peony collection. Bottom Photo: The classic peony ‘Rosea plena’.



UPDATE ON THE HISTORIC PLACES OF CANADA ACT

MISE À JOUR – LOI SUR LES LIEUX HISTORIQUES DU CANADA



ERIC JONES

President, Friends of the Farm | Président, Les Amis de la Ferme

We reported in the Fall 2022 Newsletter on the initiative by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to protect

Canada's federally-owned historic sites, and included comments by Heritage Ottawa on how the proposed act needed to be strengthened to provide teeth for protection.

Canada is the only G7 country to lack legislative protection for its national significant places.

As this is being written, Bill C-23 is in its 2nd reading at Parliament. The normal process for expressing support as well as recommendations for change, should you care to do so, is by writing to your member of Parliament.

Some key points have been raised in submissions by the National Trust for Canada, Heritage Ottawa, and others. These points include the need to address the following omissions:

- **Oversight of the conservation of heritage properties, such as through a body like the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. This would ensure that a consistent process is applied to protect all federally-owned heritage properties.**
- **Protection upon divestment to ensure accountability under the Act even though a property has been divided and sold or made available to another agency.**

There is no guarantee that this legislation will result in the desired protection of the Central Experimental Farm but since this opportunity to provide input is one that doesn't come often, we are bringing it to your attention. The mission of the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm is to preserve, protect, maintain, and enhance the Dominion Arboretum, the Ornamental Gardens, and other public

areas of the Farm, in partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, for the educational benefit and enjoyment of the public; and promote the Farm's historical significance.

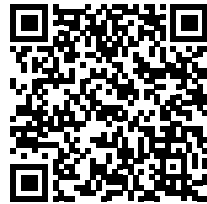
BILL C-23

For further info, see: <https://www.heritageottawa.org/news/bill-c-23-good-start-needs-strengthening>.



LOI C-23

Voir d'autres informations au lien suivant : <https://www.heritageottawa.org/fr/news/loi-c-23-un-bon-debut-mais-doit-etre-renforce>.



Dans le bulletin d'automne 2022, nous avons signalé l'initiative du ministère de l'Environnement et du Changement climatique destiné à la protection des lieux historiques de propriété fédérale. Nous avons aussi fait part de commentaires de Patrimoine Ottawa désireux de voir la législation proposée renforcée et assurée d'une protection solide ayant du mordant.

Le Canada est le seul pays du G7 ne se prévalant pas actuellement d'une protection législative à l'égard de ses lieux historiques de marque.

Lors de la rédaction du présent article, le projet de loi C-23 en est à sa deuxième lecture au parlement. Pour y exprimer votre appui ou proposer des changements, si telle est votre intention, vous devez adopter le processus habituel, soit écrire une lettre à votre député.

La Fiducie nationale du Canada, Patrimoine Ottawa et d'autres organismes ont relevé des points saillants qu'ils ont présentés récemment. Ces points accentuent l'importance de remédier aux omissions suivantes :

- **Surveillance de la conservation des biens du patrimoine, par exemple sous l'égide de la Commission des lieux et monuments historiques du Canada. Cela garantirait la mise en place d'un processus cohérent dédié à la protection de tous les biens patrimoniaux appartenant au gouvernement fédéral.**
- **Protection lors du dessaisissement afin d'établir la responsabilité en vertu de la Loi dans le cas d'un bien ayant fait l'objet d'une division et d'une vente ou mis à la disposition d'un autre organisme.**

Cette législation n'offre, en fin de compte, aucune garantie envers la protection de la Ferme expérimentale centrale. Cependant, il est rare que nous ayons l'occasion de donner notre avis, et nous la saisissons d'emblée pour porter ce projet de loi à votre attention. La mission des Amis de la Ferme repose sur la conservation, la protection, l'entretien et l'amélioration de l'Arboretum du Dominion, des jardins

ornementaux et d'autres secteurs publics de la Ferme, en partenariat avec Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada, pour le plus grand bienfait éducatif et la satisfaction du public, et ultimement, la promotion de l'importance de la Ferme sur le plan historique.

UPCOMING EVENTS 2023

Don't Miss the Remaining Spring Lectures

The very popular spring lectures by the Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton, hosted by the Friends of the Farm, have returned this year. They are virtual, on Tuesdays from March 7th through to May 16th.

A theme that links the six lectures is "Creating your Garden with Nature." They cover everything from taking stock to needs and dreams, and from fostering biodiversity to creating your own garden design.

DATES AND MASTER GARDENERS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- **April 4**, with *Rebecca Last*
- **April 18th**, with *Candace Dressler*
- **May 2**, with *Agnieszka Keough and Claire McCaughey*
- **May 16**, with *Josie Pazdzior and Adair Heuchan*

All lectures start at 7pm and will be held on zoom. The zoom link will be forwarded by noon on the day of each lecture. Please note that the lectures are being recorded for future viewing by those registered.

The price for individual lectures is \$10 for FCEF members and Master Gardeners of Ottawa Carleton, and \$12 for non-members.

Watch for more details at ...

www.friendsofthefarm.ca/fcef-annual-events/master-gardener-lectures/



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (virtual)
Wednesday, May 10, 7:00 p.m.

PLANT SALE

K. W. Neatby Building, Maple Drive
Sunday, May 14, 8:00 to 1 p.m.

USED BOOK SALE

To be announced.

USED BOOK DROP-OFF

To be announced.

Peak Blooms Garden Tours are Back for 2023!

by *Robert Stuart*

The Friends of the Farm are delighted to announce that tours are again being organized for the upcoming growing season, and they will be timed to coincide with the peak blooming period of the flowers in our various gardens. This will allow visitors to see splendid arrays of flowers such as lilacs, peonies, and roses when they are at their best.

Keep an eye on our website so you can be notified, approximately two weeks in advance, of the opportunity to register for garden tours. These tours will be offered during the week and will be led by guides familiar with the Ornamental Gardens. When registering you will be asked to provide your name and email address so that we can contact you a few days prior to the scheduled date of your tour and confirm your reservation. Keep in mind that all tours are "weather permitting", so cancellations can occur.

Throughout the summer months, groups of at least ten people can contact the Friends of the Farm office and schedule their very own guided tour. Tours may be limited based on the number of Tour Guides available.

SUGGESTED PEAK BLOOMS TOUR TIMES:

ROCK GARDEN – early May
CRAB APPLES – 3rd week of May
Peony Gardens – last week of May to 3rd week of June
PERENNIAL BORDERS – early June through September
PRESTON LILACS – 1st week of June
PERENNIAL BORDER – early June through September
MACOUN MEMORIAL GARDEN – June through September
HERITAGE ROSE GARDEN – June; repeat blooms through September
IRISES – mid-June to early July
EXPLORER ROSES – 3rd week June; repeat blooms through 3rd week of September
DAYLILIES – mid-July to August
LYCETT-LORRAIN DAYLILIES – mid-July through August
ANNUAL BEDS – mid-summer through autumn



Alex Henderson. CBC

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All are welcome to the 2023 Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Farm. We are thrilled to welcome Alex Henderson as guest speaker.

Alex has studied horticulture, curatorial practices for botanic gardens, plant sciences and museums in the United Kingdom, Sweden, and the United States. He worked at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in the U.K. before becoming curator of living collections at Royal Botanical Gardens, Burlington, Ontario. He is chair of the plant collections professional section for the American Public Gardens Association. Like Isabella Preston, he originally hails from northern England—she from Lancashire, he from Yorkshire.

STAY TUNED!

For more details on our events, use the QR codes on the right:

2023 Events



Facebook



This virtual event will be held Wednesday, May 10, 7:00 p.m. Registration is required, at the Friends' website.



Continued from page 1...

'Smith Family Yellow' is an Itoh peony. *R. Hinchcliff.*

oak tree plus three rectangular ones. These beds would hold the classic peonies that had been developed in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is among these beds that visitors to the Farm experience the beautiful and fragrant peonies that they are most familiar with – the flowers they remember from the gardens of their parents or their grandparents.

In addition to the timeless European peonies within the collection, the Farm began to expand its collection of peonies to include those bred by American nursery owners. Many of them were striving to create peonies with a wider range in both flower form and plant characteristics. These would give peonies a more diverse use in the garden and the landscape. These newer cultivars demonstrate the six forms of peony blooms. Among them are 'Pico' (*single*, large, pure white petals, centre of yellow stamens); 'Florence Nicholls' (*double*, bluish white, very fragrant); 'Coral Charm' (*semi-double*, coral bowl-shaped flower, centre of golden stamens); 'Gay Paree' (*Japanese*, cerise outer petals, centre tuft of white petaloids); 'White Sands' (*anemone*, white petals, centre of narrower white petals); and 'Red Charm' (*bomb shaped*, rich red).



ADDING CANADIAN BREEDERS

Canadian breeders also began to be well represented in the collection, thanks to the Friends and the then AAFC Lead Hand, Jean-Pascal Gratton. As a National Historic Site and with a nod to its mandate over the years to introduce plants that survive the Canadian climate, it is important and appropriate that the Farm include hybridizers who have introduced spectacular Canadian peonies.

So, the peony garden is a veritable who's who of Canadian hybridizers, some of whom were not nursery owners but who simply toiled away in their private gardens searching for peony perfection. These are William Brown, Walter Gilbert, Dr. Frederick Brethour, Louise Lossing, Jean Ericson, Lyman Cousins, Maurice Ménard, Serge Farfard, and Lindsay D'Aoust. Among their cultivars to be found at the Farm are two commemorated by stamps issued by Canada Post – Brown's 'Elgin' (*double*, pink with touch of lavender) and Cousins' 'Coral N' Gold' (*single*,

coral cup-shaped blooms, thick, highly golden stamens). The peony on the 'Elgin' stamp was photographed at the Farm! And I would be remiss not to mention three peonies developed by D'Aoust, using plant stock created by Ménard. These are 'Adrienne Clarkson' (*single* pale yellow fading to cream with raspberry-pink flare) named for the former Governor General, and two that honour the two Friends volunteers who were instrumental in developing the Farm's peony collection - 'George Vorauer' (*single*, dark red slightly ruffled petals) and 'Mary Pratte' (*single*, pink cupped flowers).

THE IMPRESSIVE SAUNDERS COLLECTION

In 2005, it was decided to build rectangular beds perpendicular to the gardens and parallel to Prince of Wales Drive. These were created to hold the CEF's impressive collection of 105 peonies which had been developed by the son of William Saunders, Arthur Percy (1869-1953), considered the pre-eminent peony breeder of the

20th century. The Farm's collection is the largest collection of Saunders' peonies in Canada, possibly in the world. Differing from the classic double peonies of other hybridizers, Saunders worked with species peonies. He had been told that the crossing of species peonies would not work. But he was a patient man and eventually succeeded. His introductions, as a result of the species parentage, are early blooming. Many of his peonies, again due to their species parentage, are single peonies.

Although his early years were spent in London, Ontario, when his father became director of the Farm in 1887, he often came to the Farm during holidays. During this time, he learned from his father, who himself experimented with plant breeding. In fact, the connection to the Farm in A.P. Saunders' work lies in pollen he took from a species, *P. coriacea*, at the Farm and then used it on the lactiflora peony, 'James Kelway'. The result was a lavender-coloured peony, which bears that name 'Lavender' (*single*, lavender,

gold yellow stamens). Saunders, who was a chemistry professor in Clinton, NY, but who had training in art, brought both these skills to introduce new colour palettes into the peony world – salmon, coral, flamingo, and cherry – and to push the blooming period for peonies two weeks earlier.

BEDS FOR ITOHS

A few years later, two long rectangular beds were dug on the west side of the peony garden, next to the northern lilac walk. In 2009, a Canadian micro-propagation company, Plantek, contacted Mary Pratte, an advisor to the peony team and Past President of the Canadian Peony Society, to donate to the Farm 24 Itoh peonies they had produced. Since then, as the price for Itohs dropped, many more of these peonies have been added to the Farm's collection.

Itoh peonies have an interesting history. They are a cross between tree peonies and lactiflora peonies. Their creation is the work of Toichi Itoh, a Japanese hybridizer, who like AP Saunders was most patient. He apparently had attempted over 2,000 crosses before he succeeded with a cross between a lactiflora peony and a tree peony. This produced seven seedlings, all with the dominant characteristic of the tree peony in their parentage. Sadly, Dr. Itoh passed away before any of his seedlings bloomed.

In the 1970s, American breeder Louis Smirnow introduced four of Dr. Itoh's peonies to North America – 'Yellow Crown', 'Yellow Dream', 'Yellow Emperor', and 'Yellow Heaven' – all *semi-double* yellows with red blotches. As these first introductions were scarce, they were costly. Over the years, other hybridizers in the United States continued Dr. Itoh's work and have created some truly sensational peonies. Among these are two classics – Roger Anderson's 'Bartzella' (*double*, yellow ball with red flares) semi-double; and Don Hollingsworth's 'Garden Treasure' (*double*, yellow petals with red highlights). In Canada, Serge Fafard of Les Jardins Osiris, also breeds intersectional, as have some private individuals such as John Simkins and Reiner Jakubowski, both past presidents of the CPS.

Itoh peonies have lush paper-like blooms of the tree peony, but their

foliage is similar to an herbaceous peony. For the most part they are winter hardy, a bonus given Ottawa's climate. These peonies now come in a range of colours – yellow, pink, maroon, fuchsia and even multi-coloured. Visitors to the peony gardens repeatedly stop and gasp when they see the blooms and ask peony team volunteers what they are.

A SOURCE OF DELIGHT

Two additional long beds for peonies were built across the Driveway by the traffic circle. These hold both Itohs and herbaceous peonies.

Today, the Farm's time-capsule collection consists of 600 peonies, with 400 named varieties. The blooming season runs from mid-May to the third week of June. The first peony to bloom is Saunders' 'Starlight' (*single*, creamy ivory petals, faintly flushed in centre),

closely followed by his 'Firelight' (*single*, bright pink with brilliant darker flares). His colourful and vibrant peonies are certainly view worthy. For those who prefer to stroll and see the classic large and fragrant doubles, these flower in the second and third weeks of June.

Luckily, the support and collaboration between Friends' volunteers and the AAFC garden staff, under the current Acting Supervisor, Arboretum and Ornamental Gardens, Jeremy DiZazzo, ensures that the peony gardens will continue to be a source of delight and will amaze visitors with their vibrant display for six weeks in May and June.

Blaine Marchand, a volunteer on the peony team, is a former president of the Canadian Peony Society and tends to a personal collection of over 500 peonies.



PHOTOS ABOVE:

Top Left: 'Sprite' peony by A.P. Saunders. Top Right: 'Red Charm' is a *bomb* shaped peony. Photos by R. Hinchcliff. Bottom Photo: Peonies on the Main Lawn at the Farm, circa 1905. Western University Archives.

Japanese peony 'Surugu'. R. Hinchcliff



Fleeting Moments with Kathy McDougall

by *Julianne Labreche*

If beauty is a fleeting moment, then Kathy McDougall likes nothing more than to seize those moments and embrace them. That's why she decided to join the Peony Team at the Central Experimental Farm (CEF). When it comes to plants, peonies are about fleeting as fireworks – big bangs of explosive, showy colour and then, poof, the blooms are gone for another year.

Kathy is a big fan of peonies, despite their short bloom time. "That just makes us appreciate them even more," she says. Besides, for amateur gardeners, peonies are simple to grow. They're also easy to identify when the first shoots emerge in early spring. "It's very easy to tell a peony from a weed," she says, laughing.

Her love of peonies goes back a long way. As a child, her family often moved because her father was in the military. Her mom always dug up her prized peonies to take with them. That was when Kathy realized the hardy perennials were worth growing and nurturing.

GARDENING WITH THE FRIENDS

It was another fleeting moment that prompted Kathy to join the Friends of the Farm Peony Team. Just before she retired in 2015, her husband showed her a small ad posted in the local newspaper. The Friends were looking for volunteers to join their gardening teams. Kathy had no immediate plans to volunteer so soon after retiring but she always loved gardening. "It turned out to be a fantastic way to do

something that I like to do and give back to the community," she says.

Every Thursday morning during gardening season, Kathy joins the other Peony Team volunteers. She looks forward to these mornings with her new friends. The team's weekly work involves weeding, putting up the peony hoops to support the big blooms, deadheading, and cutting back the plants in the fall.

In spring, they prepare the peony beds for garden tours held at the CEF every year. The collection of peonies at the Farm includes those bred by A. P. (Percy) Saunders (1869-1953), a son of CEF founder William Saunders. These days, the peony gardens contain more than 100 Saunders hybrids, one of the largest collections in North America.

AT HOME AT THE FARM

Kathy feels at home at the Farm. She also feels lucky to have a farm in the middle of the city. She sent her children to summer camp there. In winter, when her children were young, they went sledding there. She even remembers going there herself as a

little girl, recollecting the day that she and her friend made the bad mistake of jumping into the pool at the Macoun Memorial Garden. "We got caught by our mothers," she says. "That was way worse than getting caught by a Farm worker."

In retirement, Kathy is happy to both volunteer at the Farm and tend her own home garden. Naturally, she grows peonies there too. She grows other plants as well with big bursts of colour – hydrangea, hibiscus, and crabapple trees, for example. These, and other favorite plants, encircle a large portion of her backyard.

As well as enjoying their fleeting beauty, plants have been her therapy over the years. It's a good escape from the challenges of the workaday world. "When you garden, you can leave a stressful desk job behind you for a while. Plants don't talk back. It's very rewarding."

IN PRAISE OF BILL

[NOTE: The above was written by Master Gardener Julianne Labreche for our website's Volunteer Spotlight in 2019. We are reprinting it in the newsletter to mark Kathy's new role as leader of the peony volunteer team. She has taken over from Bill Wegman, who remains a vital member of the team and an inspiration to Kathy as she writes below ...]

I would like to note that Bill Wegman has been a fantastic leader for our group. When I began working with the peony group in 2015, I immediately felt like a part of the team, thanks to Bill. He welcomes everyone, no matter what level of experience or knowledge they bring. We have had high school students looking to add to their volunteer hours, and retirees who enjoy gardening and the weekly social interaction. Bill shares his extensive knowledge willingly, and his love of peonies is evident in how he cares for our gardens. Bill has generously donated a few of his own peonies - ones that he has created at home over the past years. How fortunate we are to be able to carry on his legacy in our gardens!

As for myself, I am lucky to have a great team to work with, and I hope we will continue to work together to care for the peony gardens for many years. I would like to see the Canadian species highlighted in the gardens. It is a real

privilege to be able to contribute to the beauty of the ornamental gardens which give so much pleasure to its visitors. I love being in the gardens when they are in bloom and seeing all the visitors, young and old, enjoying the beautiful flowers.



PHOTOS ON RIGHT:

Left: Kathy McDougall. *Polly McColl*. Right: Peony team members Kathy McDougall (left) and Bill Wegman with visitors to the peonies, June 2017. *Mary Ann Smythe*



Peony Teamwork

by *Blaine Marchand*

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Canadian Peony Society (CPS), founded in 1998 by John Simkins. The Central Experimental Farm (CEF) is linked to the CPS in a number of ways. First and foremost, Ottawa members of the society have been instrumental in the development of the current peony garden collection. Some of the peonies at the Farm, purchased by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), have come from nurseries and from individuals active in the society. And peony blooms from the Farm have garnered top prizes at the annual peony shows.

Thanks to the initial efforts of Mary Pratte and Freda Godby, and subsequently Bill Wegman and Lynne Zeitouni, peony buds from the Farm were among the 1,000 annual peony bloom entries over the years. Qualified CPS judges award ribbons in different categories and then select from among

these the best in show. Consistently, the CEF entries have been awarded several ribbons.

In the 2013 CPS show, buds brought by Bill and Lynne were awarded Best Single – ‘Aerie’ (*semi-double*; light pink, yellow stamens around a tuft of centre petals) and Best Japanese – ‘Bordeaux’ (*single*, claret, huge centre of yellow stamens and petaloids). In that show, the CEF received a total of 21 awards. At the 2017 show, ‘Moonrise’ (*single* – exquisite ivory yellow) was awarded a first in the single hybrid category and then was placed in the Court of Honour. Both ‘Bordeaux’ and ‘Moonrise’ were hybridized by A.P. Saunders, the son of the first director of the CEF. Previously, in the 2015 Ottawa show, the Itoh peony, ‘Haleigh’s Hallelujah’ (*double*, light yellow flushed deep rose pink) was deemed best Itoh and then selected as Grand Champion. Another Farm entry, ‘Gardenia’ (*double*, blush white) was awarded first place for a double peony. The ribbons awarded to the CEF peonies have brought proud smiles to

the peony team members as well as to the AAFC garden team.

Shows also create friendships. It was at the 2001 Rideau Hall show, where Bill’s entry, ‘Nick Shaylor’ (*double*, light pink) took Grand Champion, that Lynne introduced him to Mary. Bill decided to volunteer on the Thursday peony team, latterly becoming its team leader.

This year’s 25th anniversary CPS show runs from June 9-11, at the Oshawa Botanical Gardens, 155 Arena St, Oshawa, ON. More information is available at www.peony.ca.

PHOTOS ABOVE:

Left: Lynne Zeitouni and Bill Wegman with the award-winning ‘Moonrise’ peony at the CPS show, 2017. *Sami Zeitouni*. Right: CEF awards from the CPS show, 2010. From left to right: Bob Barron, Bill Wegman, Jean-Pascal Gratton (AAFC), Stephen Joy, Mary Pratte. *R. Hinchcliff*.

Thanks to Our Volunteers

As we celebrate National Volunteer week on April 16 - 22, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers of Friends of the Farm. Without volunteers we could not continue to carry out our mandate which is to protect,

enhance, maintain and preserve the Ornamental Gardens, the Arboretum, and other public areas of the Central Experimental Farm.

There are many areas where volunteers generously donate their time, for example, working in the Arboretum, Ornamental Gardens, and Shelter

Belt, helping with fundraising and special events, office support, communications, membership, special projects, or sitting on the Board of Directors.

Thanks to all of you.

Eric Jones

President of the Friends of the Farm

City Hosts Information Session on the Hospital

An estimated 140 people attended a virtual Community Information and Comment Session held by the City of Ottawa on February 9, 2023, regarding ongoing development of The Ottawa Hospital's (TOH) new Civic Campus at the Central Experimental Farm. The session focused on Phases 3 and 4 of the new development, namely the Central Utility Plant and the Main Hospital Building. (Phase 1 covered the Master Site Plan; Phase 2, the Parking Garage now under construction at the corner of Prince of Wales Drive and Preston Street.)

As part of the City's established site plan control process for developments of this magnitude, the February 9th session offered the public the opportunity to learn more about TOH plans and provide feedback on those plans. It is during this stage in the planning process that interested citizens may influence the design of the hospital and the way in which it relates to its Experimental Farm site.

TOH representatives walked participants through their plans for the hospital. Off Carling Avenue, a new road will lead to the hospital's Main Plaza, where visitors enter a two-storey central 'concourse', the Sky Lobby. Abutting the concourse will be a 'pavilion' with non-medical facilities such as a cafeteria, meeting rooms, and an auditorium. The pavilion will be flanked by two towers to house patients, one at eight storeys and the other at twelve storeys, with a helicopter pad on the

roof of the taller tower. The façade of the hospital will be modern, dominated by windows on all sides. The Central Utility Plant, containing electrical, heating, and cooling equipment, will be sunken between the back of the main hospital building and Maple Drive, with a proposed 7.5 metre setback from Maple Drive.

The session moderator provided ample time for comments and questions from participants. Engaged citizens raised diverse points, many related to concerns around:

- negative impacts on the Central Experimental Farm, its trees and plants, and people's enjoyment of the natural surroundings;
- preservation of the integrity of the Farm and its buildings as a National Historic Site;
- potential impacts of the rooftop helicopter pad, including risks to neighbourhood residents, Farm and canal wildlife, and helicopter and hospital users;
- impacts on traffic and potential congestion on 'feeder' roads such as Prince of Wales Drive and Carling Avenue and Farm roads such as Maple Drive; and,
- the need for a large facility such as that proposed, in light of research that suggests that a greater number of small, local hospitals is more effective in providing health care.

Of note, while the Master Site Plan had promised forty percent tree canopy cover on the hospital site, in response to questions, the TOH Lead Landscape

Architect acknowledged that this would be impossible due to space limitations. He indicated that only 28 percent tree canopy is possible on the hospital site; however, TOH is talking with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada about the possibility of planting trees elsewhere on the Farm to reach the target 40 percent.

As part of the next step in this process, the "issue resolution" stage, the City will provide detailed comments to TOH on issues relating to design, engineering, heritage and environmental considerations, transportation and traffic, and lighting, noise and wind. Although the public consultation phase of the process formally closed on February 23rd, the City continues to invite comments from the public, which it will consider in the context of its own review and share with TOH planners. TOH is expected to consider these comments and submit a revised proposal to the City for final staff review and approval. For Phases 3 and 4 to proceed, National Capital Commission Federal Land Use and Design Approval is also required, given that the land is federally owned.

To get more information and submit comments on the new hospital design, visit the City of Ottawa's development applications website, at Application Details - Development Applications Search (ottawa.ca)

Dianne Caldbick
Friends of the Farm Board Member

Join Our Gardening Teams!

It is no surprise that people are once again signing up to do volunteer work on one of the Friends of the Farm's gardening teams. It is hard to imagine more beautiful work environments than the Ornamental Gardens, Arboretum, and Shelter Belt.

The teams will soon be out among the flowers, shrubs, and trees, doing the various tasks such as weeding, hoeing, and pruning that will help Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada staff prepare another dazzling display this year.

It's never too late to join a team! Knowledge of plants is not required, and neither is a green thumb. There are many things to do, and all are welcome. More detailed information can be found on our website at: www.friendsofthefarm.ca/volunteer.



R. Hinchcliff

Farmhands using a marker like the one in the collection. *Ingenium*, CAFM-735.

From Seed-plot Marker to Notebook Mystery

by William Knight

Examining the history of an object in Ingenium's artifact collection can uncover mysteries and kickstart research adventures. This one began in the fall of 2022 when Suzanne Saunders, the great-great-granddaughter of William Saunders—the founding director of Canada's experimental farm system in 1886—visited Ottawa to tour the Central Experimental Farm.

I took part in the tour, organized by the Friends for Suzanne and her daughter Brittany Shaw. Suzanne had brought with her some family heirlooms to show us, including the knighthood medallion awarded to Charles Saunders, her great-great uncle, for his wheat-breeding research. (See the *Friends Winter 2023* newsletter.)



Charles took up the wheat-breeding program begun in 1888 by his father William and brother Percy, when he was appointed Dominion Cerealist in 1903. He carried on their work to establish Marquis, an early-maturing, high-yield wheat with good baking properties that was suited to the western Canadian climate. By the 1920s, it was the most seeded wheat variety in North America.

portmanteau of “cent” (one hundred) and “gener” (generation), centgener breeding involved the planting of 100 seeds from a single parental source. Each year, and every year following, breeders selected the most promising progeny and repeated the centgener cycle until, after multiple generations, a plant with desirable characteristics was established.

AN ESSENTIAL TOOL IN WHEAT BREEDING

Prompted by Suzanne Saunders' visit, I revisited our collection to examine an object connected to Charles Saunders—a seed-plot marker. The marker was transferred to us from the Central Experimental Farm (CEF) in 1969 with a note that Saunders had used it.

Seed-plot markers are essential tools in plant-breeding work. Pressed into a level bed of earth, a marker makes uniformly spaced rows of holes into which individual seeds—in this case wheat—are dropped. As the wheat grows, researchers can examine each plant and select, at maturity, the best ones for further experiments. (A similar type of marker is still in use at the Farm—see the sidebar.)

Seed-plot markers are associated with the plant-breeding technique historically known as the centgener method. A

Canadian and American wheat breeders like Saunders, who worked on the first North American experimental farms in the 1880s, adopted the centgener technique. The method's development is credited to French seed-merchant Louis Vilmorin, who used the technique to selectively breed a sugar beet with high sugar content in the 1850s. Indeed, the CEF transfer document records the object as being a “centgener marker.”

ONLY 96 DIBBERS ON THE CEF MARKER

Charles Saunders would have planted centgener plots on the CEF to continue his work on Marquis. From these small plots, he selected individual heads from plants and, in a quick test of gluten content, chewed the wheat seeds. He also baked bread made with flour from these varieties in a specially outfitted kitchen in the Cereal Barn (Building 76).



PHOTO ABOVE:

The seed-plot marker is a handmade tool crafted by an unknown farm worker. It bears the marks of skilled fabrication in its mortise-and-tenon joints, forged handles, and individually carved dibbers. Ingenium artifact no. 1969.1110. *William Knight.*

After examining the marker stored in our new collection facility, the Ingenium Centre, I realized that the marker was not used to create centgener plots. This marker has 96 individual dibbers in a rectangular array, rather than 100 in a square form, the standard centgener shape. It is more likely the marker was used to create long rows to grow out new varieties to produce seeds in greater quantities for mass production and distribution. For Marquis, for instance, the journey from centgener plots to production plots—and eventual distribution to farmers—was more than 12 years.



‘OLD SCHOOL’ TOOLS – TRIED AND TRUE

We asked Jeremy DiZazzo, Acting Supervisor, Arboretum and Ornamental Gardens, if the grounds staff at AAFC used something like the seed-plot marker described by William Knight for tasks like planting annuals. Jeremy responded:

“... We use something that is certainly different from this seed-plot marker, but which has a similar purpose. We had our ‘marking rake’ made by the Farm’s machinist on site but it was designed from a much older (wooden) rake that was somewhat like the seed-plot marker. The tool is designed to allow us to change the ‘spacing’ quite easily, is heavy enough to clearly mark the soil, and is more durable than the wooden one we modeled it from.

It is nice to see an example of an ‘old school’ technique that is still in use and functional today!”

PEONY SUPPORT

Another example of an ‘old school’ technique is the peony support that was created at the Farm, still in use by the Friends, and for sale at Lee Valley Tools. Peter Elliott, founder of the Friends organization, wrote the following:

“I remember one of the early volunteers was Lorraine Lee, whose husband, Leonard Lee, was founder of Lee Valley Tools. He noticed a peony support being used by the volunteers and asked Trevor Cole (former curator of the Gardens and Arboretum) if there was a patent on it. Trevor told him that was very unlikely since it had been around the Farm for a hundred years. So the peony support you see in the Lee Valley Catalogue now was modelled in part on the one that had been used by the Friends of the Farm!”

WAS IT USED BY CHARLES SAUNDERS?

We do know from our records that the marker was fabricated and used on the farm. But we lack more concrete evidence that corroborates the claim that Saunders used it. A photograph or a precise textual description from Saunders would firmly establish this connection.

During my research, I found a source that I thought could help answer this question. In 1960, J.W. Morrison, a cereal scientist with what is now known as Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (AAFC), published an account of Saunders’ work on Marquis wheat in *Agricultural History*. In it, Morrison refers to Saunders’ notebooks that belonged to the Agriculture department that contain extensive notes about Marquis. Morrison included images of notebook pages in his article.

Malcolm Morrison, the son of J.W. Morrison, is a CEF cereal scientist who has also published an article about Charles Saunders and Marquis. It appeared in the journal *Genome* in 2008 and mentions the Saunders notebooks as well, then apparently still in AAFC’s possession.

Hoping to consult the notebooks, I reached out to the AAFC librarian who informed me that the notebooks were no longer in the department’s collection, but with Library and Archives Canada (LAC). I arranged to examine the notebooks in person and in early February spent the morning leafing through them in the LAC reading room.

SAUNDERS’ NOTEBOOKS

The notebooks—contained in a single archival box—had been used by William, Percy, and Charles Saunders to record data and observations on a variety of plants. To my delight, I also found one of the notebooks in which Charles Saunders had recorded the results of his baking tests, including a page that J.W. Morrison had reproduced in his article.

Unfortunately, the notebook in which Saunders recorded a key moment in the breeding of Marquis—on a page included in Morrison’s article—was not among those in the LAC box. Unfortunately, this notebook appears to be missing.

The search continued when I remembered that the Ingenium collection held a notebook used by William Saunders (1987.2110). This

large, alphabetically indexed ledger contains handwritten drafts of reports, and notes about the yield of crops such as oats, carrots, mangels, and barley. When I examined it in mid-February, I found no notes, however, about the Marquis breeding program.

This project grew organically from Suzanne Saunders’s visit, which prompted me to have a closer look at the seed-plot marker, which led onward to the history of wheat-breeding techniques, which led finally to a search for the archival records of Charles Saunders’ career as Dominion Cerealist, a post he left in 1922. There is more work to do, and I hope that, in the end, we can find the missing notebook.

William Knight is Curator of Agriculture and Fisheries at Ingenium, with the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum as his home base.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Malcolm Morrison for reviewing this article.



PHOTO ABOVE:
Charles Saunders at work. *Western University Archives, RC-605.*

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a very similar climate to Canada's. Unfortunately, the war has ended these exchanges.

Some institutions publish seed lists, called 'Index seminum'. Other botanical gardens are invited to request seed from the list. Some lists may have ten items - others over a thousand. This is an important method for obtaining new material. The seeds on the list can be of a common garden plant or rarities that could not purchased. Some seed is collected in the wild, while others are obtained from material in their collection. Often, they come with a provenance. It is good to know the origin of your offspring. There is no charge for the seeds. This is little short of incredible, considering the time taken to collect, clean, and prepare for shipping.

It turns out that we get much more than we give, seed-wise, but whenever we do get a request from another institution, we do our best to accommodate it.

Propagating from our own material is also very important, given that one of our mandates is to preserve the collection. Every autumn you will see me collecting seed for both our own use and to share. Also, being able to show a continuation of the family line in our records can be significant. If something grows here but shouldn't - according to the books - there is a good chance that the special hardiness found in its genes will manifest itself again in its offspring.

It is my experience that 'plant people' are sharers. Our records show we have received a significant portion of our collection as gifts in various ways, from many sources. Historically and currently, we are indebted to individuals and institutions. You will not have to walk too far in the Arboretum, gardens, or tropical greenhouse to find examples of the generosity of seed-swapping gardeners.

Robert Glendinning is Propagator/ Landscape Gardener with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

PHOTO ABOVE:

Some of the seeds in this selection recently received for the Arboretum have come from as far afield as Czech Republic, Sweden, Norway, Massachusetts, and Michigan. *Robert Glendinning.*

Seeds are for Sharing

by Robert Glendinning

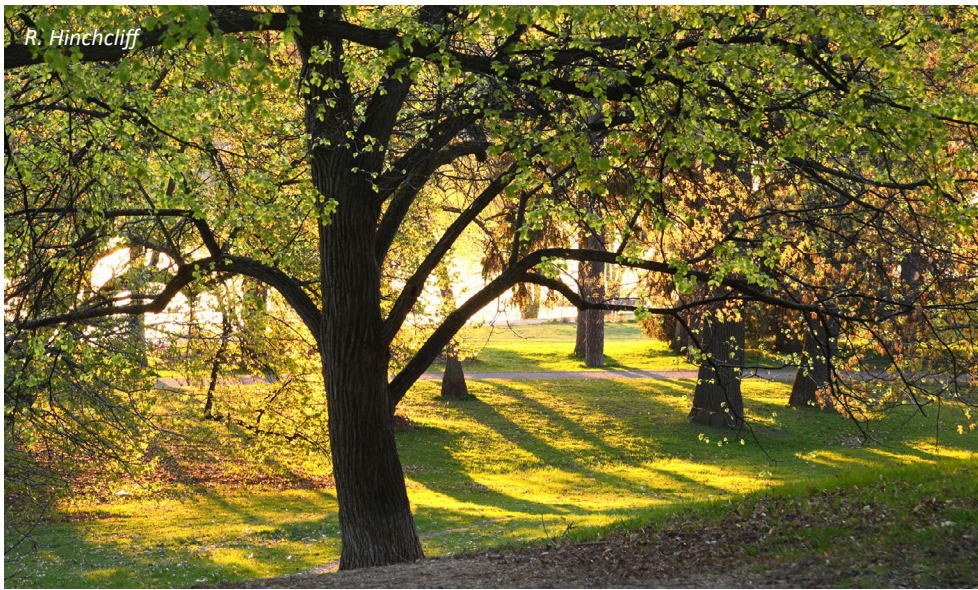
Most gardeners love to propagate plants, and some, like myself, become a bit obsessive about it. Growing plants from seed is an adventure as it is always possible you might get variation. How exciting if the next seeds you sow in the garden result in a new discovery!

In the Arboretum we propagate plant material by rooting cuttings and sometimes by grafting. This will result in a clone, identical to its parent. That is often exactly what you want when it comes to cultivars with desirable attributes.

Unlike most gardeners, this time of year we are not contemplating what seeds to buy. Purchasing seeds is a rarity, except for the gardens staff who order seed for annuals. For woody plants, perennials, and tropicals, most of our seed comes to us from the people and institutions we have relationships with. For example, a friend of mine and a Friend of the Farm, Anthony Beane, is a regular contributor. He is responsible for our *Catalpa bungei* trees, as well as a hardy strain of *Cornus florida* and a variety of Magnolias, to mention a few.

Sometimes a mysterious envelope will just appear from someone we do not know, containing seeds and a story. This year we received a large package from the Reader Rock Garden in Calgary. We had allowed them to collect cuttings from our gardens last year and they returned the favour with close to a hundred envelopes of seed. They had mentioned they would be sending some, but what a pleasant surprise to get so many seeds.

We have relationships with many institutions. For example, this year we have requested seed from botanical gardens in the US, Norway, Sweden, Latvia, Estonia, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Czech Republic. In some cases, I will have a personal relationship with a counterpart propagator. We request certain seeds from each other and look out for sources that the other may want. Sometimes an email exchange from five years ago will result in a small package containing something I had been searching for. Generally, we focus on Northern countries with similar growing conditions. In the past I have received a lot of material from Russia. The Amur region/Siberia has



in the city will want to ensure this opportunity for service and fellowship exists in the future. Many people spend hours strolling around the ornamental gardens or walking their pets in the Arboretum at the Farm. Spending time in this historic location is always rewarding and special for many families, from great-grandparents to great-grandchildren.

While we are fortunate to have a dedicated volunteer and member population that help to support our financial requirements, we do need to secure stable funding for our organization into the future. Legacy gifts are just that. They offer each person the opportunity to support the causes near and dear to them in the future.

Leave a Legacy GIVE TO SOMETHING YOU LOVE

Are you looking for a way to ensure that the Central Experimental Farm will always be here for the people of Ottawa and the many visitors to our city? Have you ever thought of creating a legacy that will support one of the most important historic sites, green spaces, and recreational areas in the nation's capital? The Friends of the Farm have many ongoing activities and long-term projects that require support. We need your help to ensure our efforts can be maintained over the

years to come. Providing a gift in a will or through some other form of planned giving donation will help the Friends of the Farm provide the nurturing care this beautiful sanctuary needs and deserves.

Legacy giving provides a way to ensure that the efforts and concerns that were integral to one's life can continue to be honoured. Those who love gardening and who volunteered at one or more of the horticulture organizations

For more information, please reach out to fundraising@friendsofthefarm.ca or contact me through the Friends' office at 613-230-3276. We would be happy to discuss the many ways support can be provided. Watch for more information in this newsletter or sign up for our monthly Farm Notes e-mail to receive updates on creating a lasting impact in our community.

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The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm is a volunteer organization committed to the maintenance and protection of the Ornamental Gardens and the Arboretum of the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm publish the Newsletter (ISSN 1702 2762) four times a year (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall). All members receive the newsletter and it is sent by regular mail or e-mail.

Consider joining us!

Find our membership form on the website by using the QR code to the right:
<https://friendsofthefarm.ca/become-a-member/> and pay by PayPal, or send in a cheque.



Benefits include discounts on Master Gardener lectures, discounts at some local nurseries, one free admission per group per visit to the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum, quarterly printed newsletters by post, and monthly Farm Notes e-newsletter.

We also accept donations to support our activities and events, which also support the garden teams that maintain the cherished Ornamental Gardens.

A variety of donations can be made through our webpage:
www.friendsofthefarm.ca/donations/.



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