

March 31, 2021

The Friends  
of the Public Gardens



# Newsletter

PO Box 36013 5665 Spring Garden Road Halifax, NS B3J 3S9 [www.halifaxpublicgardens.ca](http://www.halifaxpublicgardens.ca)

## Water Woes!

A major feature in the Halifax Public Gardens since its inception is Griffin's Pond and its associated brook. Together, these water landscapes cover about 25% of Garden's surface and they make a significant contribution to the serene, whimsical character of The Gardens.

Richard Power, The Garden's first Superintendent, worked hard to make the man-made pond and brook appear more natural. He altered the pond's shoreline and added the island, and he introduced waterfowl and fish. Over the years, various built structures have enhanced the water features, such as the duck house built in 1908, the bridges and the model of the Titanic added in 1994.

Originally supplied water by the Fresh Water Brook, the flow of which is now encased underground in pipe, city construction over the years has diverted water flow away from our Gardens, and waters in the pond and brook are now primarily replenished by rain water and run off into the pond.



Basking in the warm golden glow, looking out on Griffin's Pond from the duck house on the north shore of Griffin's Pond. Photo by Serena Graham-Dwyer

## Water Woes, Continued from page 1

As shown in this photograph taken in July 2014, Griffin's Pond can be prone to infilling by semi-aquatic perennial plants, the water surface can be significantly covered aquatic plants and algae growth can cast a green tinge to the water. Although not seen at the surface, significant amounts of organic debris can also accumulate on the bottom of the pond.

Climate change in recent years has added to the challenges of managing Griffin's Pond. With hotter, drier summers becoming the norm, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the water level of the pond during the drought periods.



This photo from July 2014 shows aquatic plants flourishing in Griffin Pond and marsh plants such as Cattails infilling from the sides towards the interior of the pond.

Photo by Serena Graham-Dwyer

Over the years HRM's Parks management have tried a number of interventions to address issues associated with Griffin's Pond. Filtration systems were installed to try and improve the water circulation, but these weren't effective and were discontinued. In 2018, Griffin's Pond was emptied and dredged. This work did have a positive effect on reducing the infilling of the pond by cattails and it also was helpful in reducing the amount of organic material that sits on the bottom of the pond.

Unfortunately, in the years following the dredging, milfoil growth has exploded and much of the aquatic growth seen floating at the surface nowadays is the tips of milfoil plants rooted at the bottom of the pond. Careful and frequent removal of milfoil plants by cutting the plant off at its base seems to be one of the best, but labour-intensive ways to control the growth of this plant.

## Water Woes, Continued from page 2

During the later part of the summer of 2020, HRM introduced some new approaches to try and improve the condition of Griffin's Pond. You may have noticed small areas bubbling away in Griffin's Pond. These are where aerators are placed, 12 in total, which are intended to reduce the algae growth in the pond.

HRM has also begun to use a non-toxic product to diminish growth of algae. The algae bloom was very heavy by the time this product was introduced last season and not much impact was observed. HRM is looking to employ this product early during the upcoming season to assess if this product can suppress algae growth.

Finally, to keep up water levels in Griffin's Pond, HRM is looking for other sources of water during times of drought to augment natural replenishment by rain and runoff. Hopefully all these steps will improve Griffin's Pond this summer.



Magnolia stellate blossoms. The lighthouse on the island in Griffin's Pond is in the background. Photo by Serena Graham-Dwyer

### Is a fountain still a fountain when it has no water?

Unfortunately, the water challenges in The Gardens don't stop here at Griffin's Pond. Last year, neither the Victoria Jubilee Fountain, nor the Soldiers' Memorial Fountain was functioning as a water fountain. This time the culprit is an antiquated water delivery system that has degraded after a century or so of service.

If you were in The Gardens last summer, you would have noticed the extensive construction work happening along South Park Street, immediately adjacent to The Gardens. Crews were replacing the old, very old, water infrastructure. This year, the water distribution system in the Gardens will be replaced. First, an underground vault at the South Park service entrance that is prone to flooding will be replaced by a discrete above ground structure.

The next step, which should happen this spring, will be the replacement of the main water distribution line running up the Grande Allée. This step will be taken with extreme caution, as the preservation of the tree roots of the stately trees along the Grande Allée is a priority.

## Water Woes, Continued from page 3

If the water distribution pipe along the Grande Allée is successfully replaced this spring, HRM expects to have the Victoria Jubilee Fountain fully operational this season. Not so with the Soldiers' Memorial Fountain.



Although the water delivery pipes going to the fountain will be replaced, the interior plumbing of the Soldiers' Memorial Fountain has not been working well and needs to be replaced.

We will be waiting until the Soldiers' Memorial Fountain itself is repaired, before we see this fountain functioning again.

The water distribution pipes beneath the Grande Allée will be replaced this spring. A daunting task with so many tree roots to protect! Photo by Serena Graham-Dwyer

## Upcoming Activities in The Gardens!

### Chess on Saturdays

Play Chess outdoors in the Family Lawn area

Free, all-ages and skill levels

Starting in May through August 2021

Saturdays, 11 am to 3 pm

Organized by a member of the Public.

More details to come as they come available

### FIN Movie Nights Return

FIN Atlantic International Film Festival is planning to relaunch their very popular movie nights in The Gardens

Keep your Friday nights open in July

Stay tuned for more details

*Did you know the status of your membership? To find out, email us at [infohalifaxpublicgardens@gmail.com](mailto:infohalifaxpublicgardens@gmail.com). We've added eTransfer as a third payment method, in addition to online and by mail.*

## NEWS

### Communities in Bloom



Photo by Serena Graham-Dwyer

Communities in Bloom is encouraging Canadian gardeners to plant ‘gardens for hope’ in 2021, featuring the colour yellow. From coast to coast to coast, the goal is to have gardens brimming with yellow flowers, foliage and vegetables.

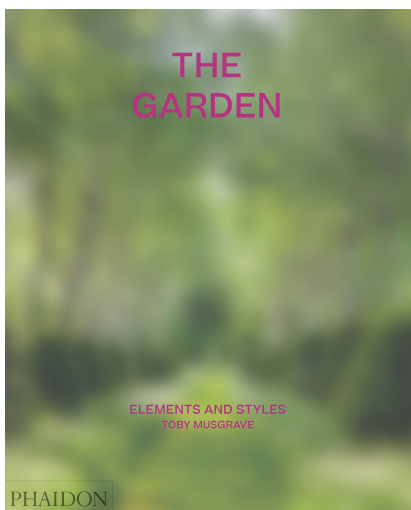
Some of their suggestions to consider planting are Sunflowers, Black-eyed Susans, Marigolds, Summer Squash and the Forsythia shrub.

### Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens – 40 years old in 2021

If you have the opportunity this summer, consider a trip down to Annapolis Royal to see the wonderful Historic Gardens. Our sister gardens have had a challenging time through the pandemic and would welcome your support!

In addition to the beautiful gardens, they have a lovely in-garden café, and an interesting gift shop (now online). This year the Historic Gardens are running a monthly 50/50 draw, available directly by typing [rafflebox.ca/raffle/arhg](https://rafflebox.ca/raffle/arhg) into your browser or by visiting the Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens website at [historicgardens.wordpress.com](https://historicgardens.wordpress.com).

### Book offer from Phaidon books



Phaidon books has kindly provided The Friends with several free copies of “*The Garden: Elements and Styles*” by Toby Musgrave, published in the fall 2020. It is a compendium of garden elements, styles, features and ornaments from public and private gardens from around the world, including a short feature on our Halifax Public Gardens. We plan to use those books as prizes in some of our contests.

Phaidon is also offering our readers a limited time discount of 20% on “*The Garden*” and Phaidon’s new flower book, “*Flower: Exploring the World in Bloom*”. Visit [phaidon.com](https://phaidon.com) and use the discount code THEGARDEN20 at the checkout.