

July Garden Tour in the Stanley Park Neighbourhood

Garden A: 83 Georgian Crescent*, Kitchener

Access to backyard : 6 steps (memberships available here – cash only!)

**Note: We're touring Georgian Crescent, not Georgian Place, or Georgian Street, which are both nearby.*

Scott and Sandy moved into their pie-shaped, sloped property 30 years ago. The trees on their own and adjacent properties provide excellent shade throughout the day. Two large, mulched flower beds in the front feature an assortment of daylilies, coral bells, peonies, grasses, irises, hostas and evergreen shrubs. On one side of the house is a patio and deck built by Scott. Here, he has many containers of plants including calla lilies, canna lilies and agapanthus that he overwinters inside. The backyard space is gently sloped and leads to a line of trees, creating a beautiful setting for their plants. When they first moved in, Scott built a series of low retaining walls to create terraces filled with plants and bulbs. In the spring, approximately 2000 bulbs (including some purchased at past gardenKitchener bulb sales!) put on a magnificent show. The late spring and summer flowering season continues with irises, daylilies, liatris, sweet Williams, coreopsis, sedums and hostas. To keep track of all of his plants and bulbs, Scott has them inventoried on Excel. This allows him to know what is already in the gardens and where there is room for a new plant. (Spoiler: there's always room!) Scott and Sandy also decorate their wooden fence, as well as the side and back brick walls of the house, with a variety of artwork, creating an eye-catching experience wherever you look.

Garden B: SPROUT Community Garden at the Stanley Park Community Centre, 505 Franklin Street North, Kitchener

Access: Lots of parking can be found in the Stanley Park Community Centre / St. Daniel's Church lot, accessed from Franklin Street.

Eight years ago, Deborah M. and another Stanley Park neighbourhood resident had the idea to create a community garden at the Stanley Park Community Center. After two years of careful planning and considerable support from the City of Kitchener, the idea was finally realized. SPROUT (Stanley Park Routed in Togetherness), a community garden at Stanley Park Community Centre, opened six years ago featuring 16 plots. Those have since been expanded to 30 plots, each measuring 10 feet by 12 feet. Most recently, 3 raised beds measuring 5 feet by 7 feet were built and added by a Grand River Collegiate teacher with his students, providing more accessible gardening options.

The concept of growing vegetables is so popular in the Waterloo Region that there is a wait list for community garden spots. The SPROUT garden promotes community spirit: they have several 'working parties' every season where volunteers add fresh soil to the plots, mulch, and weed the pathways, neighbours often drop off tools and plants for use in the gardens, and when they have an abundant harvest, many SPROUT gardeners will donate vegetables to Stanley Park Eats, an initiative run by the Stanley Park Community Centre that provides individuals in need with a fresh meal once a week. SPROUT truly showcases how a community garden grows food, builds friendship, and fosters a sense of community spirit.

Come and tour the SPROUT garden to learn about growing vegetables. Several of the gardeners will be on hand to chat with, and answer questions, and Deborah will be on site to share her experience about starting a new community garden and talk about the many supports that are now available for others looking to do the same.

Garden C: 212 Ross Avenue, Kitchener

Access to backyard: Sloped flagstone pathway and one step.

Lorraine has been at her property for over 35 years. She has created an enchanted garden that is a wonderful blend of almost 200 hostas, perennials and more, against a backdrop of tall trees. In the last 10 years, she has lost seven trees from severe wind and rain storms, and has had to rework the space a number of times as a result.

The Pendragon Hosta Gardens banner and a dragon statue in the front yard set the tone of her garden. Most of her hostas are labeled: she has hostas of the year planted from 1996 to 2022.

The front hosta bed near the house is edged with donkey tail spurge and includes a 50-year-old Japanese maple.

Lorraine's tireless efforts have transformed her backyard into a charming assortment of themed areas, featuring enchanting sections inspired by the legends of Avalon and King Arthur. Move slowly through this garden to appreciate the magical feel conjured by its plants, trees, and artifacts, including statuary, knights' armor, blown glass balls, mushrooms, eggs, and a bridge with a river bed. A crystal cave and Excalibur sword sitting in its stone are wonderful nods to King Arthur's legend.

Lorraine strategically built a pergola in the middle of her back garden, ensuring ample shade for her beloved hostas. On particularly sunny days, she cleverly employs umbrellas to shield her more delicate plants. Admittedly, the garden hasn't been without its challenges: battling beds of lily of the valley and violets, as well as navigating the mischievous presence of slugs, squirrels, and chipmunks.