

AH SPRING!

Spring is here at last, and gardeners and botanical artists alike rejoice in it!

BAC is celebrating spring with our guided walk of the Wildflower Preserve at Todmorden Mills on Sunday, May 6, at 10 am. Under the guidance of Paula Davies, executive director of the Preserve, we're likely to see some of the spring ephemerals – trout lilies, trilliums, Mayapples, bloodroot, jack-in-the-pulpit and more. Join kindred spirits and get inspired for your Todmorden work.

Spring is also planning time for the BAC coordinating group. Results from the members' survey have given us direction for fall and winter events. (The survey report was distributed to all members in April.) We were pleased that almost half of you participated, and in addition to telling us what events you enjoy, you gave us plenty of new ideas. Good ideas need people to turn them into exciting and vibrant events, so please step forward and offer your help.

We've also been planning for the Annual General Meeting, to be held on Thursday, June 14, 7:00 pm at the Toronto Botanical Gardens. We have an excellent speaker in Miriam Goldberger – see the announcement in this newsletter – and we hope to see as many of you as possible. The AGM is a great opportunity to provide input to the running of your organization, raise your queries, renew acquaintances and meet new members, as well as to enjoy pot-luck food and win one of the door prizes.

For details on all events, please consult the website, www.botanicalartistsofcanada.org.

Happy painting and gardening!

– Gerry Jenkison, Chair, BAC
gerry.jenkison@sympatico.ca

COMING EVENTS

TODMORDEN TOUR

Walking Tour of
Todmorden Mills Nature
Preserve
Sunday May 6, 10am to 12
noon. See page 4

FINANCIAL UPDATE

The current BAC bank
balance is \$ \$4,640.31.

ANNOUNCEMENT: BAC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Botanical Artists of Canada Annual General Meeting will be held at the Toronto Botanical Gardens, Thursday, June 14, 2007, 7 pm to 10 pm. All members in good standing are invited to attend.

The guest speaker will be Miriam Goldberger. She will present a slide show on Native Plants of Ontario. See page 4.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to BAC:

- Sherry Mitchell, Qualicum Beach, BC
<http://www.islandillustrators.org/membpage/mitchell-s/s-mitchell1.htm>
- Shirley deLang, GTA <http://www.shirleydelang.com/>
- Valerie Rabold, GTA
- Piper Courchesne, GTA <http://www.gardenspainted.ca/index.html>

A 'WOW' WORKSHOP WITH KATIE LEE

Possibly one of the best workshops BAC has ever arranged took place in early March. For three days participants learnt new techniques (painting with only six colours, using gouache, etc) and received lots of practical advice, feedback and coaching from Katie. Katie is an avid photographer and showed us wonderful photographs that she uses as reference points for the birds, animals and plants that she paints. www.katieleeartist.com



M. GRAHAM CO. Watercolour Paints *by Irene Hunchak*

The recent Katie Lee workshop was very enjoyable and informative. Katie was very happy to share her vast knowledge on techniques and equipment. Katie herself uses and recommends watercolour and gouache paints manufactured by M. Graham Co. from Oregon, USA. My curiosity was piqued, and I found these watercolour (but not gouache) paints at Curry's Art Store. Having tried them, I now understand why Katie loves these paints. They glide onto the paper almost by magic, and are very forgiving if you go back in to rework an area (hard to get cauliflower blooms). The paint has an almost creamy texture, the pigments are very bright and pure, and go a long way.

I also found the cost to be far more reasonable than other well known "artist quality" watercolours. For example, most sell for \$7.75 for a large tube (15 ml), with the cadmium pigments selling for about \$12.55 (15 ml).

The watercolour and gouache paints are handcrafted and composed of high quality pigments, pure honey, gum arabic, and glycerine. Because honey loves moisture, it absorbs water from the atmosphere. Paints made with honey do not dry up in the tube or on the palette, and are easy to dilute or reconstitute often after being dry for months. Saves a lot of wear and tear on brushes!

For more information, visit www.mgraham.com. There you will find a technical information page which describes each of their paints, giving information on the substances used as pigments, and other attributes such as light fastness, staining, and transparent / opaque qualities. You might like to treat yourself and try a tube!

EXHIBITIONS OF INTEREST

Helen Fitzgerald has just completed painting 90 botanical, bird and landscape paintings for her 10th solo watercolour exhibition at the Bungendore Woodworks Gallery in Australia. It opened April 1st. Distance need not prevent you viewing her works!

http://helenfitzgerald.com/images/photo_gallery/exhibitions/bungy_woodw_2007/woodworks_2007.html

From May 2 to 31, 2007, new BAC member, **Piper Courchesne**, is having an exhibition of floral watercolours, including some botanicals at the Runnymede Public Library, Upper Gallery, 2178 Bloor Street West Toronto. The show is also a fundraiser for the Colborne Lodge Gardens recreation project. www.gardenspainted.ca

Bargains anyone?

Liz Tudor reports that Woolfitt's, at 1153 Queen Street West, Toronto (416- 536-7878 www.woolfitts.com) has a spring sale underway until the end of May (while quantities last). Here are some of their deals.

- Winsor & Newton Water Colour 5ml and 14 ml tubes 33% off.
- Arches Watercolour Paper Blocks 40% off.
- Artist's studio easels. Some are 60% off, e.g. one is reduced from \$311.00 to \$124.00.
- Plus other watercolour items.

Also Woolfitt's are going to be carrying Crystal Clear Poly Bags, in various sizes. This is great, I have been after them to stock them for ages, and no other art store in Toronto does. Before you had to order them direct from the manufacturer in lots of 500 or 1000. Woolfitt's now have them in lots of 50. From 5x7 @ \$6.20 to 16x20 @ \$21.95.



Let's Grow Our Membership

In order for BAC to continue to grow and be full of vitality, we need to increase our membership. Each of us needs to be an Ambassador for BAC. Talk to others with artistic skills! Encourage them to visit our website and ask about membership!! More members will lead to a greater variety of events, increased participation in our exhibitions and website, and a larger pool of volunteers to stage events.

Help Wanted: BAC needs a special member

- With interest and enthusiasm to take on the specific task of increasing awareness of BAC and growing our membership.
- With Marketing and Public Relations skills to contact special targeted groups or individuals to receive information about BAC.

This is an important job. If it fits your talents and interests, please contact Gerry Jenkison (gerry.jenkison@sympatico.ca)

Newsletter distribution

We usually send you the newsletter electronically as a Word file. This limits the number of photographs and illustrations we can include before the file becomes too large to transmit. This edition will be sent to you as a PDF which compresses the file and enables us to enrich the content with illustrations. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to open it. To download a free copy, go to <http://www.adobe.com/downloads/>.

SPECIAL SECTION: PREPARING FOR TODMORDEN

BAC 2007 Exhibition - Native Plants at Toronto's Todmorden Mills. Oct. 4–28, 2007

Here are some useful reminders about our upcoming exhibition, as well as three articles on sources of information.

Subject matter

- Your species can be plants native to anywhere in Canada, if you're not able to work on something from Todmorden.
- Make sure the plants you choose are native, not an invasive species from elsewhere* (e.g., Chicory, Queen Anne's Lace).
- Don't forget trees and shrubs: they are plants too and can make very interesting subjects.
- Looking for fresh subject ideas? Contact exhibition coordinator Irene Hunchak at dandi@eol.ca.

**If you have any doubts about the origins of a species you're interested in, contact Irene Hunchak at dandi@eol.ca.*

Important dates

- **Sunday, May 6, 10 am to noon**, join us for a guided spring walk through the wildflower preserve and see many species firsthand. Our guide will be Paula Davies, Executive Director of the wildflower preserve. Meet at the railway station in the Todmorden Mills grounds, rain or shine. No need to book, just come.
- Call for Entries due *August 31*; please take time to read the CFE carefully (download a copy from www.botanicalartistsofcanada.org)
- Exhibition dates: *October 4 to 28*
- Opening reception: *October 4 at 7:00 pm*

Special Presentation at BAC AGM in June

As a prime focus of attention is the Todmorden Mills exhibition in October, and to help those members who have not yet decided on their subjects, the speaker for the BAC Annual General Meeting will be an expert on native plants.

Miriam Goldberger of Wildflower Farm (www.wildflowerfarm.com/) in Orillia will be talking about Native Plants of Ontario. She will give a slide show, concentrating on the shapes, textures, colours and bloom time of many native Ontario species of plants.

The 2007 Annual General Meeting takes place on Thursday, June 14, 2007 from 7-10 at the Toronto Botanical Gardens at Lawrence and Leslie.

Pricing paintings

With the Todmorden exhibition in October, BAC members may find it interesting and worthwhile to read this article on pricing paintings and artworks by Mona Youssef on her website <https://www.mona-gallery.com/news&articles/article02.php>. It is not reprinted here for copyright reasons.

Identifying Wildflowers – some useful references

By Celia Godkin

Todmorden Mills has supplied us with a list of wildflowers, but how do you know that you've got the right species? For example, three species of goldenrod are listed. You'll need a field guide to distinguish them. Here are three field guides I have found useful, especially in combination with each other, as each tackles the problem from a different perspective. Note that two of the three are particular to Ontario, which eliminates a lot of unnecessary information.

The ROM field guide to Wildflowers of Ontario, T. Dickinson, D. Metsger, J. Bull & R. Dickinson, 2004, Royal Ontario Museum

Up to date and scientifically accurate, it's organized by a scientific key that's based on plant classification. This makes it very hard for the non-botanist to use. There's an illustrated introduction at the front that's useful for learning botanical terminology, but the wildflowers themselves are illustrated only by photographs that are often too small to be really useful. Recommended for serious botanists and as a back up when the more user friendly guides don't give you the answers you're looking for.

Peterson Field Guides: Wildflowers of NorthEastern/NorthCentral North America, Roger Tory Peterson & Margaret McKenny, 1968, Houghton Mifflin

For the visual person, this is much more user friendly than the ROM guide. It's organized first by colour, then by general shape and structure and lastly by the characteristics that distinguish similar species. (I found this last category very useful for distinguishing the many varieties of goldenrod, for example.) Though this organizational arrangement is easy for the non-botanist to use, it must be extremely irritating to the botanists because the primary division by colour means that closely related species which come in different colour varieties, like the Trilliums, may be scattered throughout the book. (Very unscientific!) The guide is profusely illustrated with excellent line drawings and colour plates.

If you ever need to convince someone why illustrations are better than photographs, just show them these two field guides. Better yet, show them the next book, which has both.

Flowers of the Wild – Ontario and the Great Lakes Region, Zile Zichmanis & James Hodgins, 1982, Oxford University Press

This book may not be a great help in identifying unknown specimens, because it's not designed as a field guide, but it's a tremendously useful reference all the same. Plants are organized alphabetically, by common name. Each plant is illustrated with both a large photograph and a large and detailed line illustration, on opposite pages for comparison. The index only notes the species that's in the photograph, but in some cases, closely related species are shown in the line illustrations, so it's worth having a look to see if the one you're interested in is there. I'd recommend it as an adjunct to your own photographs and sketches. Note: I found 15 of the native Todmorden Mills species in this book and 5 of the non-native.

The Importance of Native Plants *by Irene Hunchak*

There are nearly 3,000 flowering plant species found in Ontario alone, of which approximately two thirds are referred to as native. Native plants are plants that have evolved in a particular region over thousands of years by adapting to the climate, geography, and animal populations. In this scenario, a single species does not dominate the community, but co-exists with one another and promotes biodiversity. Because native plants are part of a community that includes other plants, a natural and harmonious balance has developed between the living organisms. A region containing native plants will provide many different shapes, sizes, textures and colours while areas with non-native plants will become limited and not allow this diversity to thrive.

Non-native species introduced to Ontario and Canada originated primarily from Asia and Europe. Some of these were intentionally introduced as garden or agricultural plants. Other plants were inadvertently introduced through animal fodder, in ships' ballast, and sometimes even through mud on people's shoes. Some non-native species introduced to Ontario in particular originated from other parts of North America by way of railroads and highways. Non-native species that grow and reproduce unassisted are described as *naturalized*, and are said to be *invasive* if the spread of these plants begins to threaten the existence of native species.

There is a trend with urban and rural gardeners to restore native plants in an effort to re-establish native plant populations, such as at Todmorden Mills' Wildflower Preserve. Native plants provide shelter and food to birds, butterflies and other wildlife. Every summer I am amazed at the swarms of bees and butterflies that constantly surround and feed on the Joe Pye Weed, the Black Eyed Susans, and the Bee Balm in my garden when these plants are in bloom! I think back to when we moved into our present home – there was nothing but a lawn -- and there were no visitors to this "garden". Because many habitats are being lost to urban development, consciously creating or maintaining a habitat full of native plants can be of great help and relief to animals and insects looking for food and a home. If you'd like to learn how native plants play a key role in attracting all kinds of wildlife, visit www.wildaboutgardening.org, a Canadian Wildlife Federation website.

Did you know that hummingbirds are common in Ontario, as long as there is sufficient food (spiders, insect eggs and larvae, mosquitoes, gnats, fruit flies, and small bees) to be found amongst trees, shrubs, and flowers? If you'd like to attract these fascinating birds to your garden, try planting native bell or trumpet shaped flowers that are red, purple, blue, or yellow. Hummingbirds will likely visit these flowers first in preference to others.

Let's take a closer look at how pollination occurs between plants and insects and animals. Pollinators are organisms which aid in the transfer of pollen to allow for fertilization of plants essential to fruit and seed production. While some plants, such as grasses, have very light pollen which can be transferred by wind, about 80% of flowering plants are dependant on pollinators to help them transfer their pollen.

A pollinator goes to a flower seeking nectar and in the process pollen from the male part of the flower sticks to the pollinator's legs or other body parts. When it flies to another flower of the same type, the pollen is deposited on the female part of the plant. This allows the plant to reproduce by creating seeds and fruit.

When people think of pollination, many focus on bees. Bees are the principal pollinators, but there are other important pollinators as well. These include other insects such as flies, moths, butterflies, wasps, and even some beetles. They also include hummingbirds and bats. Many of the pollinators we depend on are under threat. Some crops are showing decreases in production due to a shortage of pollinators. Farmers have to import and raise pollinators to ensure good production of their crops. The main threat facing pollinators is loss of their habitat. Expanding urbanization is eating up the habitat of many of these creatures. As native vegetation is lost or replaced by exotic garden plants, large expanses of lawn and roadways, pollinators lose the resources that are necessary for their (and our) survival.

The loss of Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) from many areas, for example, threatens the monarch butterfly which will only lays its eggs on this plant. The name milkweed refers to the milky white sap, which contains bitter chemicals to protect the plants from predators (no chance against bulldozers, though). A few insects are immune to the poisons and accumulate them in their bodies, protecting themselves from their own predators! We all can help by preserving and choosing to plant native flowers that are abundant in nectar and pollen, rather than exotic flowers which are typically bred for showiness but may not yield nectar and pollen.

In preparation for our Todmorden Mills exhibition, take the time to learn about particular native plants you might be interested in painting or drawing. This is also a perfect opportunity to include an insect or mammal that has a natural and reciprocal relationship with the plant subject.

Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve is a nine hectare natural area in the Don Valley in Toronto. It is off Pottery Road. Access to Pottery Road is from Bayview Avenue or from Broadview Ave.

Events Calendar 2007

Date	Event	Details	Contact
May 6	Spring Walk at Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve	10 am to noon Meet at the railway station in Todmorden Mills off Pottery Road.	Irene Hunchak dandi@eol.ca
May 13	Tasira Strimban workshop	To be announced	To be announced
June 3	BAC Open Studio (garden)	10 am – 3 pm Liz Tudor's garden	litzca@yahoo.ca
June 3, 4	Hunt Institute Open House: Virtues and Pleasures of Herbs through History	Hunt Library building at Carnegie Mellon University	412-268-2434
June 10	BAC Open Studio	10 am – 3 pm Venue to be announced. \$10 per session	litzca@yahoo.ca
June 14	BAC AGM	7pm to 10 pm Toronto Botanical Gardens, Lawrence and Leslie St, Toronto	gerry.jenkison@sympatico.ca
August 31	Deadline for entries for Todmorden Mills exhibition		Irene Hunchak dandi@eol.ca
October 4–28	BAC 2007 Exhibition	Native Plants at Toronto's Todmorden Mills.	Irene Hunchak dandi@eol.ca
October 4	Opening Reception and Awards Presentation	Todmorden Mills, 7:00–9:00 pm	Irene Hunchak dandi@eol.ca

ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS WORKSHOPS AND WALKS

The Royal Botanical Gardens have a number of walks/hikes scheduled which could be of interest to members.

Irene Hunchak reports that she attended a workshop called "Wildflower Identification". It was a Botany 101 class, with instruction on how to use the various field guides in identifying wildflowers. Then we put that to practise by going out on a 3 hour walk through Cootes Paradise, to see and identify the early spring wildflowers.

Upcoming events include:

Spring Wildflower Walks: May 5 and 12, 9:30a.m., \$10 each
Evening Spring Wildflower Hikes; May 7 & 14, 6:30p.m. \$10

For more information <http://www.rbg.ca/>

BAC working for you: Highlights of recent coordinating group meetings

(Copies of the minutes can be obtained from Margit Sampogna at any time.)

CG meetings were held on January 7 and April 12, 2007 and topics discussed included:

- Detailed planning for the Todmorden Exhibit scheduled for October, 2007.
- Detailed review of BAC activities based on verbal feedback and the membership surveys. While the feedback tells us that we're on track, we need volunteers!
- The BAC website is up and running – we'd like each of our members to post a gallery! How can we facilitate this?
- Review of the BAC constitution: to remain current, some changes are needed and these will be circulated to membership prior to the AGM.
- Detailed planning for the AGM on June 14th includes a great speaker, a lively agenda and a lucky draw. Plan to be there!

Botanical Artists of Canada is a not-for-profit organization serving botanical artists across Canada. We aim to promote the development and appreciation of botanical art, and encourage individual artists in the pursuit of excellence. www.botanicalartistsofcanada.org

BAC coordinating group

- Gerry Jenkison – Chair
- Raquel Baranyai – Membership and Communications Coordinator
- Donna Greenstein – Treasurer
- Irene Hunchak – Exhibitions Coordinator
- Margit Sampogna – Secretary
- Emily Luks and Lynda Bryden – Workshop Coordinators
- Liz Tudor – Member at large
- Peta Lomberg – Newsletter Coordinator

Four newsletters are published each year. Deadline for the next newsletter is July 15, 2007. Please send submissions to peta@lombergnetwork.com

To join BAC please send a cheque for \$30.00 or \$50.00 if you wish to have a webpage gallery (made out to BAC) to Raquel Baranyai, BAC Membership & Communications, 203 Shaughnessy Blvd #403, Toronto ON, M2J 1J9

For more information contact Raquel Baranyai at raquelbaranyai@sympatico.ca. See membership information at www.botanicalartistsofcanada.org

BAC offers members your own gallery space on the BAC website. You can have up to three images on your gallery, as well as your biography and contact information. BAC has made it really easy for you! Here's what you need:

1. A biography of not more than **500 words**.
 - consult this web page: <http://www.art-in-guelph.com/Pages/howtobiography.html>
 - Think about how much personal information you're comfortable disclosing – you may want to omit your address and phone number.
 - Include your email address and, if you have a website, its address.
 - For inspiration, take a look at bios on another professional association's website.
2. Each image should be:
 - In **JPG** format
 - Not less than **72 dpi**
 - Pixel size of about **700** width/height (anything larger can be reduced but smaller is unworkable.)
3. Send a cheque for \$20 to BAC's treasurer – Donna Greenstein, at 14855 Concession 10, RR3, Schomberg, ON LOG 1T0

Work can be turned into JPGs by scanning the image or photographing it - we can suggest a professional photographer to do this at a nominal cost. If you don't have a PC, but would still like a gallery page, please call Gerry Jenkison at 416 366 1735.

Email Items 1 and 2 to gerry.jenkison@sympatico.ca. Depending on workload you'll have your new gallery in about two weeks.