

Community Garden Fair returns for second year



Members of the Aurora Garden & Horticultural Society prepare plants that will be on sale later this month at a plot lent to them by Pathways to Perennials in King Township. Auroran photo by Mark Pavilons

By Brock Weir

Mother Nature looked kindly upon the Aurora Garden and Horticultural Society as they tried something new ? a full-blown Garden Fair at Town Park. Now, the society is hoping for a repeat of their inaugural success when the second-annual event returns this month.

On Sunday, May 24, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Society, along with nearly 30 vendors and feature gardens designed by King's Pathways to Perennials, transforms the downtown hub into a gardener's paradise.

Repeating last year's overarching theme of 'From the Ground Up', the 2015 Community Garden Fair aims to truly provide something for everyone, whatever shade of green your thumb happens to be.

'Gardening is big and it is growing,' says Judy Ryan of the Aurora Garden and Horticultural Society. 'Even young people are showing a greater interest in it, but this fair is not just gardening; we have got landscapers, we have irrigation systems, arbours, and fencing. It is everything for the outdoors, because Canadians live for the outdoors, eh?'

'Everybody is very much in tune with getting back to nature. There is a big backlash against all the chemicals we are introducing into our food and all the chemicals we are introducing into our landscapes, and people just want a more natural way of living. That means gardening and attracting all the birds, bees and insects. Increasingly, people are not objecting to nature, the animals, the birds and things that live in nature intruding into our yards. They are looking out and saying, 'this is something we can all enjoy.'"

In addition to their full slate of local vendors from Aurora, King and Oak Ridges, the fledgling Community Garden Fair will include the Society's popular annual plant sale, which has been a mainstay ? and a particular money-maker ? of the group for decades.

Organizers got their hands dirty last week digging out and preparing some of the items they plan to sell later this month after starting the plants in ground leant to them by Pathways in Pottageville. Each plant is being lovingly cared for by members so they are in pristine condition for purchase and planting on May 24, says Ms. Ryan.

'Going 'From the Ground Up' really says what we're doing,' she says. 'Not everyone wants to plant. Lots of people would love to have a patio and put out a few pots and that's about it. Or maybe they just want to have grass ? and there is nothing wrong with grass. It is better than paving over your lawn!'

?Through the show, we're hoping people recognize the fact we have a garden club in Town they can connect with to help with their gardens. People are sometimes afraid to go to a garden club because they think they're stupid and they're not going to ask the right questions. We're not that. Part of our mandate is to educate and if you have a question and we can answer it, then we have done our job.

?There is a wealth of resources here in our town, so you can shop locally. The range of exhibitors and vendors is broad and you don't need to go to Toronto, or Woodbridge, or Thornhill. You can find what you need right here in our Town.?