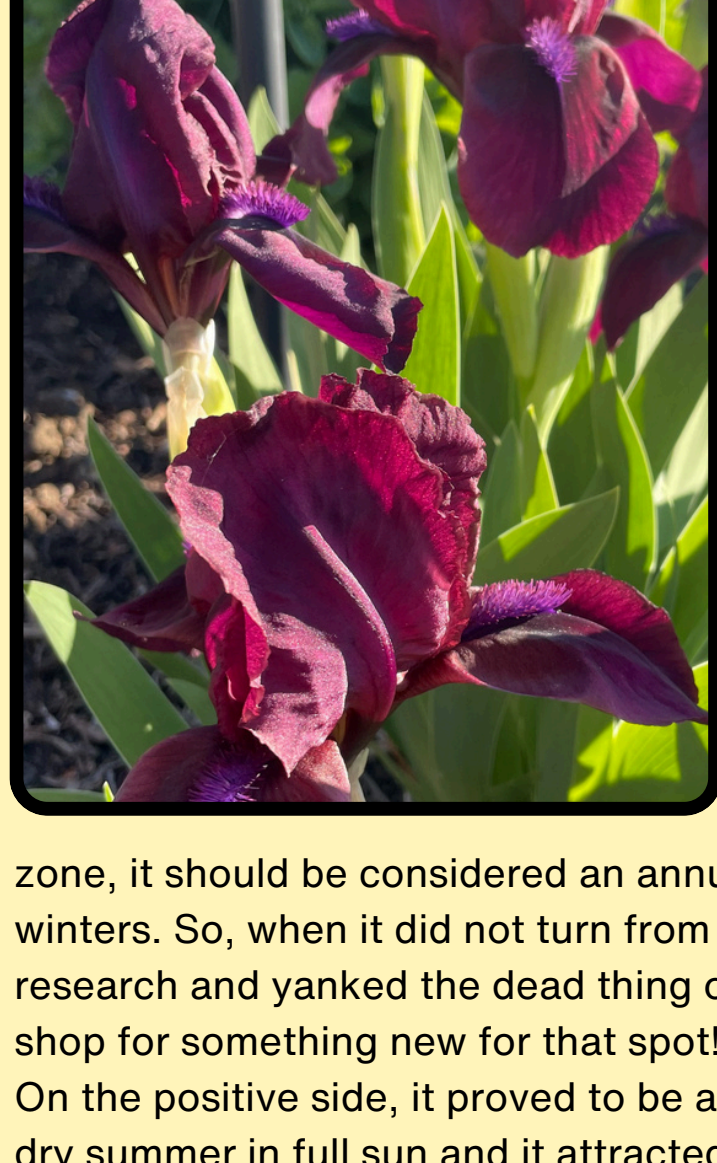


May 2025

NEWSLETTER

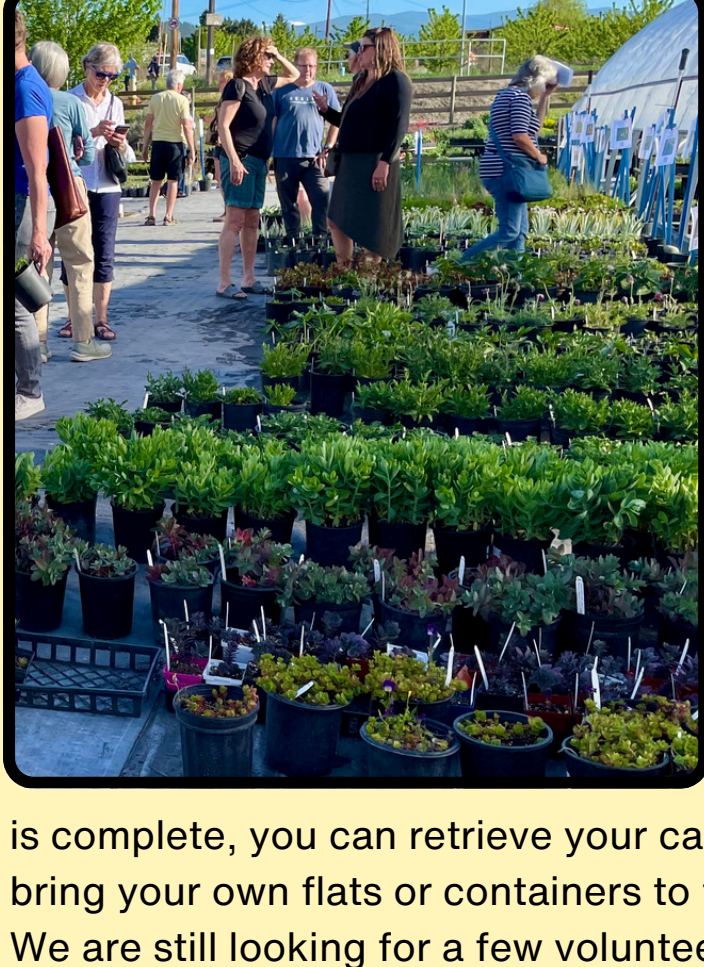
Help us help you do your research



Nurseries loved me last year as I enthusiastically browsed and bought hundreds of trees, shrubs and perennials to replace the landscape I lost in the 2023 MacDougall Creek Wildfire. This year, I am a great resource for OXA, as I review how each of those plants grew over the past year and which did not do what they were expected to do. You could join me in helping OXA define and expand the detail in its already-expansive plant database. For instance, I found in doing research on potential new additions to my garden, that Dr. Google is not infallible. According to some websites the ganzania is a perennial, but since it does not survive winters in our cold-hardiness

zone, it should be considered an annual in the Okanagan Valley - even in mild winters. So, when it did not turn from brown to green this spring, I renewed my research and yanked the dead thing out. It does not like winter here. Now I get to shop for something new for that spot! On the positive side, it proved to be a terrific bright bloomer and loved the hot, dry summer in full sun and it attracted lots of pollinators. It didn't get much water and seemed quite content with that. In retrospect, I should have been well aware it was an annual here, since much of my research involved use of the popular plant database on OXA's website which lists it as an annual. On the other hand, the Winter Lemon Sandwort is supposed to be a hardy perennial, yet it has simply disappeared from the garden this spring. Arenaria are supposed to be hardy and drought-tolerant, but it has not survived its first year in my new garden. Neither has my red Jewel Series Delosperma, although it is also supposed to be a hardy perennial here in the Okanagan. But, the Iberis, or Candytuft, is currently in bloom and looking beautiful, as is the velvety purple dwarf German Iris, the Veronica pectinata or Woolly Veronica, Heartleaf Bergenia, Aurinia saxatilis, and the Aubrietia is a stunning mass of purple blossom at present. As well, the pink Moss Phlox are a lovely contrast right now with the bunch of deep blue Grape Hyacinths and the yellow Tarda tulips I planted last fall. It's always rewarding to plant bulbs and/or perennials of complementary colours which will bloom at the same time. OXA's plant database is genius at helping you do that because you can search it specifically for plants that have similar bloom times. That's the only one of the many characteristics, which include bloom colour, height and spread, light needs, and other features. In fact, it's an invaluable resource for learning about xeriscape plants. And, you can help us make it better by reviewing the listing for plants in your garden and let us know wherever your experience with that plant differs from what our database says. Send us photos of your plant and describe exactly what differs from our database and your experience. Or, even tell us if you can corroborate what the database describes! Thanks for your help and support for making our database even stronger and more useful than it already is. Send your photos and comments to: admin@okanaganxeriscape.org - Judie Steeves, newsletter editor

Join us at the Spring Plant Sale May 9 and 10



This year's annual OXA Spring Plant Sale will be held Sat., May 10 at the greenhouses of Wild Bloom Nursery on Old Vernon Road in Kelowna from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., with a members-only pre-sale meet and greet on-site from 5 to 7 p.m. the evening previous, with treats. OXA's plant sale is always busy and we ask that you follow the traffic signs for parking and the volunteer traffic coordinator in the parking lot. There will be no parking on Old Vernon Road near the entrance. After your purchase

is complete, you can retrieve your car and drive into the lot to load it. Please bring your own flats or containers to take your plants home. We are still looking for a few volunteers for Saturday. There are two shifts: 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 12 p.m. to 3 p.m., so if you can help out for three hours, it would be much appreciated. This link will take you to sign up for the available positions: <https://signup.com/go/RKEeqQS> If you are an OXA member, join us for the member pre-sale event where you can meet OXA staff, board members and fellow OXA members; get all your questions answered; and enjoy snacks and drinks. Both XEN and Wild Bloom Nursery will be selling xeriscape and native plants again, and you can review the plant list on the website the week before the sale. We will also be selling special Mother's Day membership packages again this year, so you can take home a gift for your favourite mom while you shop for your own garden. Each contains an adult OXA membership, a perennial xeriscape plant, a hand-made, collectible garden stake with a choice of select sayings, and a Mother's Day gift tag, all for only \$59. Be sure to 'friend' OXA on Facebook or Instagram, so you receive our social media information, and check our website regularly for event updates and new blogs.

Save money on plants this year

Don't forget that one of the perks of a membership with OXA are the discounts you are eligible for at local nurseries. Participating nurseries include: Kel Lake Garden Centre in Lake Country; Nicolas Alexander in Vernon; Wild Bloom Nursery in Kelowna; Dogwood Nursery in West Kelowna; XEN in West Kelowna; Bylands Nursery in Kelowna and West Kelowna; Art Knapp Garden Centre in Kelowna; and Sagebrush Nursery in Oliver. Site One Landscape Supply's many outlets also give OXA members a 10% discount. Thanks to all of you for your support of OXA. As well, your personal financial support of OXA through the purchase of a membership is a valuable way to support water conservation in the valley. And, there are many other benefits of membership. For details, go to: <https://okanaganxeriscape.org/about-us/join-oxa/> The winner of this year's gift certificate draw for members who joined before March 14th this year is Judith Gunderson, a new member of OXA from Kelowna. She received a \$50 gift certificate for xeriscape plants from the plant sale.

New gardens manager appointed



OXA has split the position of Executive-Director and Gardens Manager and hired Brad Parks to fill the contract position of Gardens Manager, while Sigrie Kendrick will continue as OXA's Executive Director. Brad is a landscape Architectural Technologist who trained at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, followed up with 40 years experience in the landscape industry. He grew up in Edmonton helping his Dad with the large gardens he grew to feed the family. "I found my passion early and have been embracing and sharing it ever since," he comments. He has been volunteering with OXA in our gardens for the past few

years, following his retirement, but agreed to a more-formal arrangement to give Sig more time for her other work with OXA. "To share knowledge and skills with other people in the horticulture community keeps me energized and engaged," he says. "When I am not found with a shovel or a rake in hand, I like to travel, maintain my personal cacti garden (xeriscape-friendly!) and cook delicious meals," he adds. Brad will be at the Plant Sale on Friday - please say hello and join us in congratulating Brad on his new role.

WaterSmart

Residents of the City of Kelowna should be aware of the city's water smart rebate program that encourages them to conserve water by using it more efficiently, such as planting xeriscape plants. Learn more at: <https://www.kelowna.ca/city-services/water-wastewater/city-water-utility/water-smart>

Xeriscape Comments or Questions?

If you have experienced a great success or a bit of a failure in your xeriscape efforts, feel free to help fellow xeriscape enthusiasts by sharing your experience. Please go to the member section of the OXA website. There you can fill in a request form to comment or ask questions about xeriscape issues you've come across. You will notice the other exclusive member opportunity in this section - you can request a visit to your home using our Garden Mentor program. <https://okanaganxeriscape.org/about-us/member-area/> All of us can learn so much from each other, so sharing our successes and disappointments helps everyone.

Join us on social media on Facebook and Instagram for regular updates about all things of interest to gardeners interested in xeriscape. The blog on our website is also regularly updated and includes a wide variety of information about gardening. There are lots of perks to membership in OXA. Read about them by going to our website: www.okanaganxeriscape.org.

[Visit our Website](#)

[OXA Membership](#)

Feel free to share this OXA newsletter with friends and family, co-workers and neighbours and encourage everyone you know to support OXA by becoming a member. Everything we do depends on your support. Contact the editor at: judiesteeves49@gmail.com if you have questions.

The Okanagan Xeriscape Association is a not-for-profit organization formed in 2009 to provide information on gardening with nature, or xeriscape, for those living in the Okanagan.

In collaboration with the Okanagan Basin Water Board
Make Water Work Program

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