

## Big, Bold and Beautiful – May 7, 2014

Our guest speaker for the evening, Master Gardener **Nancy McDonald**, guided us through a wonderfully illustrated presentation on **“Big, Bold and Beautiful Plants”**.

Nancy grew up on a farm on PEI and learned the practical aspects of gardening from her parents. She inherited a love of flowers from her grandmother who had a beautiful mixed garden and the importance of pollinators from her grandfather who kept bee hives. She enjoys her small suburban garden and the birds, bees and butterflies that visit. Four years ago, Nancy became a Master Gardener as part of her retirement plan to challenge herself, to continue to learn and to share her love of gardening.



Nancy defined big plants as taller than one metre or having a large footprint. A plant may be bold because of its form, texture, colour or other feature. A beautiful plant is one that pleases the individual gardener. It is not necessary to have a large garden to use big, bold and beautiful plants. A big plant can be used effectively in a small space and can form the backdrop for layered plantings. Big plants can have a dramatic impact, define garden spaces, camouflage undesirable views and provide privacy. They can have strong architectural interest due to growth habit, foliage, stem and flower shapes; can provide a focal point or a dramatic impact; and can also be used effectively in herbaceous and mixed borders.

Big plants may, as specimen plants, have distinctive shape or very attractive flowers, fruit, foliage or stems. One specimen plant is often enough to bring drama and impact. Bold colours and colour combinations can bring drama to the garden.

Nancy showed stunning photos of over 60 BBB plants, explained their use and characteristics and shared growing hints. An annotated list of these plants was provided to attendees and a copy of this list is available on the GGG website via a link attached to our 2014 past events.

Thanks to Jane Rietze for the photograph and to Elaine Routledge for the write-up of the meeting.