

# Horticultural Society continues to blossom as it celebrates 55th anniversary

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The Orangeville and District Horticultural Society is blooming into a new milestone and future.

The local horticultural society is set to celebrate its 55th anniversary as a service group in the community.

"The fact is, 55 years is a big number and unfortunately our 50th anniversary happened during COVID so our big celebration didn't happen," said Vivian Petho, president and archivist for the horticultural society. "I thought this year we should make a point of publicizing that we're here and that we do a lot for the town."

The first iteration of the Orangeville Horticultural Society dates back to 1874, with the original members responsible for the planting of over 200 trees lining the corridor of Zina Street and Alexandra Park in Orangeville.

In 1914, the Orangeville Horticultural Society folded but was reinstated after the end of the First World War. The local horticultural society would close again in 1936 and would remain inactive for more than three decades.

The latest version of the Orangeville and District Horticultural Society was founded on April 20, 1970, with roughly 60 attendees at its first meeting. Early projects by the group included the pruning of shrubbery, planting flowerbeds, and flowering crab apple trees at the Dufferin Area Hospital.

During their first 10 years, the local horticultural society tended garden beds at the Orangeville Fire Hall, Orangeville Legion, Orangeville District Secondary School (ODSS), and train station.

Since then, they've expanded to manage a total of eight community gardens in Orangeville. The gardens are located at the Orangeville Seniors Centre, ODSS, Greenwood, Centre St., C-Line Works Yard, Orangeville Fire Hall, Kay Cee Gardens and Alexandra Park. Additionally, they have the Hockley Holding Garden and a Town Holding Garden, where plants are stored and grown for their annual events.

"We've done a lot in the town over the years," said Petho.

As they look to the future, the local service group is hoping to bring in the next generation of garden enthusiasts by encouraging families and children to get involved.

"I want to respect the past and where we've been, because the archives are important. But I also want to look to the future and work on bringing in more members; keeping us relevant," said Petho.

At each of their flower shows the Orangeville and District Horticultural Society hosts a youth division for younger members to highlight their arrangements. The service group also started an outreach community project called "The Opportunity Garden," which teaches neurodiverse individuals how to grow pea shoots that are then donated to the Orangeville Food Bank.

The local horticultural society also provides scholarships to graduating secondary students studying horticulture or an environmental-based field.

"Our big thing is maintaining the garden we look after and sharing our knowledge and love of gardening," said Petho. "Fifty-five years doesn't mean old, it just means established and continuing to grow."

For more information about the Orangeville and District Horticultural Society including upcoming events or how to become a member, visit ? [www.orangevillehort.com](http://www.orangevillehort.com).