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Upcoming Speaking Engagements; Jan 1 – Feb 28, 2019  
(see further down for more info on Sean and a list of his speeches)  
Some of these events may have fees and require registration.

Toronto Master Gardeners – Technical Update

**'Soil and the Things Living in it'**

Saturday, January 12, 2019

(Master Gardeners only – sorry)

<http://www.torontomastergardeners.ca/>

Toronto Botanical Gardens – 777 Lawrence Avenue East, North York, Ontario M3C 1P2

Galt Horticultural Society Dream Garden Conference

**'Fusion Gardening'**

Sunday, January 20, 2019 – conference runs 10am – 3:30pm

<https://galthort.com/dream-garden-conference/>

640 Ellis Road West, Cambridge, Ontario, N3C 4N1

Credit Valley Horticultural Society

**'Nifty Natives'**

Wednesday, February 13, 2019, 8pm

<http://www.gardenontario.org/site.php/creditvalley>

Green Room at South Common Community Centre, 2233 South Millway, Mississauga, Ontario

The North West Flower and Garden Festival

**'Devil's in the Details – Designing a Small Garden'**

Friday, February 22, 2019 12:30pm

<https://gardenshow.com/>

WASHINGTON STATE CONVENTION CENTER, 705 PIKE STREET, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

The North West Flower and Garden Festival

**'Container Wars'**

Saturday, February 23, 2019 11:30am

<https://gardenshow.com/>

WASHINGTON STATE CONVENTION CENTER, 705 PIKE STREET, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

The North West Flower and Garden Festival

**'Making a Splash – Water in the Garden'**

Saturday, February 23, 2019 1:45pm

<https://gardenshow.com/>

WASHINGTON STATE CONVENTION CENTER, 705 PIKE STREET, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Landscape Ontario (open to the LO members & non-members (different price))

**'What to do with a Downpour – Ornamental Ways to Handle Rainwater' (1/2 day course)**

Thursday, February 25, 2019 9am

<https://legacy.horttrades.com/seminars/bydate#2991>

Best Western 161 Chisholm Drive, Milton

Toronto Botanical Gardens

**'Soil and the Things Living in it'**

Wednesday, February 27, 2019, 6:30pm

<https://torontobotanicalgarden.ca/learn/adult/latest-program-guide/>

Toronto Botanical Gardens – 777 Lawrence Avenue East, North York, Ontario M3C 1P2

Landscape Ontario (open to the LO members & non-members (different price))

**'Xeriscaping – the Necessary Wave of the Future' (1/2 day course)**

Monday, February 28, 2019 9am

<https://legacy.horttrades.com/seminars/bydate#2988>

Best Western 161 Chisholm Drive, Milton

## Thank you for your interest my list of presentations!

Of all aspects I'm involved with in the horticultural world, my favorite, by far, is educating. Below is a listing of my presentations for your consideration. Hopefully there's something for everyone, although I'm open to new ideas. (Have a look at 'What We Used to Kill' below.) My years of horticultural experience, and my history of public speaking will pay off for you. You can contact me by e-mail at [sdjames@on.aibn.com](mailto:sdjames@on.aibn.com).

I have spoken to horticultural societies, Master Gardener chapters, environmental groups and service clubs throughout Ontario for more than 25 years. I've presented at Canada Blooms, the Stratford Garden Festival, the Hamilton Home Show, several botanical gardens, and from coast to coast, at landscape trade shows including HortEast and CanWest, and have taught at the college level for over a decade. In 2019 I'll be presenting at the North-West Flower and Garden Show (the second-largest indoor garden show in North America!) in Seattle! I've also landscaped, professionally, from Nova Scotia to California. It can be difficult to assemble a list of speakers a year in advance. Possibly a greater challenge is to replace a speaker who drops out at the last minute. Please keep this on file for future opportunities in case I'm available on short notice to help out.

A long and short version of my bio are included for your files and you may cut, paste and edit as you like.

For small groups -- such as horticultural societies and nature groups -- rates are \$95/hour (travel included) with a minimum fee of \$250. If you schedule your group's 'business' *after* my presentation, you will save. Rates for larger events will be determined on a client-by-client basis. Contact me for a firm price

Horticultural consultations and customized workshops are also available.

### Sean James

NPD & Master Gardener

*Owner:* Sean James Consulting & Design

*Chair:* Landscape Ontario's Environmental Stewardship Committee





# Sean James

## Bio: Short version

“Named by GardenMaking magazine as one of “20 Making a Difference”, gardening has been Sean James’ hobby and profession for over 35 years. A graduate of Niagara Parks School of Horticulture, a Master Gardener, a public speaker, writer, and teacher; Sean focuses on eco-gardening techniques, which makes sense since he grew up surrounded by nature near Crawford Lake in Campbellville. He sits on several environmental committees and has appeared on many television and radio shows. Sean founded Fern Ridge Landscaping & Eco-consulting and ran it for over 20 years, recently handing it over to his leadership team. He now owns ‘Sean James Consulting & Design’, with projects including designing, consulting, teaching, speaking and writing.”

## Bio: Long version

“Named by GardenMaking magazine as one of “20 Making a Difference”, Sean has been gardening professionally since he was sixteen and speaking to horticultural societies for more than 25 years when he graduated from the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture. Sean ran Fern Ridge Landscaping & Eco-consulting for over 20 years, recently handing it over to his leadership team. He now owns ‘Sean James Consulting & Design’, focusing on teaching, speaking, writing, designing and consulting. He is a 2X (not ‘two-timing’!) past president of the Milton & District Horticultural Society. He designed the award-winning sustainable Anderson Parkette in Oakville and several other landmark gardens. He has written several regular eco-gardening columns as well as articles for Garden Making magazine, Ontario Gardener, Trellis, (the magazine for the Toronto Botanical Garden), and has been published in books as well as in the global digital newsletter for the Perennial Plant Association. He’s also a member of Master Gardeners of Ontario.

He has had the privilege to help put together the national curriculum for Horticultural Apprentices. He’s been featured on the CBC and on two HGTV shows including ‘Green Force’. He’s co-hosted ‘the Garden Show’ with Charlie Dobbin and been on the radio in Halifax and Ottawa with Niki Jabbour. He chairs Landscape Ontario’s Environmental Stewardship Committee and sits on the Ontario Invasive Plant Council’s Horticultural Outreach Collaborative, and the Perennial Plant Association’s Environmental Committee. He’s a judge for the All-American Selections Garden Competition the Ontario Spokesperson for Garden Days Canada.

Sean grew up surrounded by nature, near Crawford Lake in Campbellville, so it was destined that he would choose a career like landscaping.”





All speeches run between 45 minutes to 1 hour (with questions anytime) followed by an 'official' question period. For some talks, more in-depth 1.5 hour versions are available.

### 20+ Bulletproof Plants

Gardening can be challenging. We'll look at different situations and what plants do best in them. (The original request was for 20 plants, but it couldn't be kept to just that number.)

Most importantly, folks think that certain circumstances are challenging. The truth is, one just needs to know the right plants.

Sean

### Nova Scotia Summer: A Horticultural Epic Tour

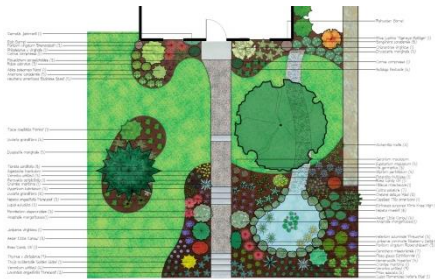
Summer, 2016, and the Fern Ridge Gang went to Guysborough, NS to install an eco-landscape and came back, and went down and came back... and so on. This resulted in upgrading an incredibly biodiverse 120-year-old mill pond. Along the way, we visited a litany of botanical gardens... and more. We've been told the replay is quite fascinating.



Take a chance! ☺

### Growing Gracefully: The Evolution (Creation?) of a Garden from Young to Mature

Is your garden tired, in need of a little sprucing up? Did you inherit somebody else's garden 'issues'? Gardeners make mistakes! Hard to admit but true. We'll examine those mistakes early on, how to avoid them and we'll discuss how a garden changes as it ages as well as how to manage it. A large and overlooked topic.





## Flowers for Feathered Friends

Gardening to attract birds can be mixed with any other kind of gardening, but requires a few specific considerations. It also has benefits to your landscape beyond the joy of birdsong. This is a talk for more than just birders, covering concepts such as biodiversity and native plants.

### NEW!

## Fusion® Gardening

Encouraged by many municipalities and regions, Fusion Gardening® blends LID (rainwater handling) with xeriscaping (drought-tolerant gardening) and folds in plantings to enhance biodiversity. One of the main foci of this style is to engage the public with *beauty*. Since it's so important that property owners take up this gauntlet, we'll address the backbone of each of these disciplines, and discuss how to do each artfully.



## B4 Gardening: Beautiful Blooms for Birds and Bees

We LOVE butterflies in our gardens and we recognize that bees, upon which our food supply depends, are under stress. Any garden can be a pollinator garden and we'll discuss how, with a brief discussion about pollinators themselves.

A broader picture than "Flowers for Feathered Friends", this talk also covers attracting pollinators and other desirable wildlife to the garden. This ties into how biodiversity will benefit your garden...and how incredibly beautiful it can be.





## Keeping it Green: Keeping it Beautiful

It is one of my fundamental beliefs that whatever your sustainable palette -- permaculture, native plantings, rainwater handling etc. -- beauty should be the starting point. If we don't make these initiatives beautiful, folks won't buy in.

This is an in-depth talk on design principles using any list of plants and discussing several 'green' gardening techniques.

## What to do With a Downpour: Ornamental Ways to Handle Rainwater

Urban Development has resulted in large areas of impermeable surfaces, leading to poor water quality and erosion, as well as drying of the creeks during droughts. Techniques will be discussed to aid in infiltrating rainwater into the soil while beautifying your landscapes and allowing a more unusual palette of plants to be used. Rain Gardens can be a beautiful

addition to any yard and allow the planting of some truly interesting plants. They also help the environment by infiltrating water to clean it and restore the water table and base-flow (the water that seeps through the ground to our creeks). We'll cover how to design and build a rain garden including placement, construction, and plant choices.



### NEW!

#### Texture Workhorses: Sedges and Grasses

Only recently appreciated, grasses offer interest throughout the year, increase biodiversity and offer sound and movement. Their close relatives, sedges, are indispensable in the fast-growing area of rain gardens. Horizons will be broadened!

### NEW!

#### Simply Shrubs!

Focusing on natives and nativars (cultivars of native plants), we'll talk about some of the best shrubs for all types of gardens from rain gardens through shade and sun and look at tolerance to soil types as well.





## Working WITH Nature

- a common-sense approach to avoiding pesticides in the garden
- how to let nature do the work by encouraging soil health, biodiversity, and proper plant care
- just a few slides and lots of information and answering of questions

## Xeriscaping: The Necessary Wave of the Future

- drought-resistant landscaping using perennials, shrubs, trees and annuals
- winter interest
- a short slide presentation



## Making a Splash: Water in the Home Garden

- design, construction, planting & maintenance
- lower maintenance than you think...no weeding & no mowing!
- plus, a bit about rain garden construction



## NEW!

### Nifty Natives

Why do we think that going native means a sacrifice in beauty? It does *not*! We'll discuss various, desirable, ornamental natives, including some you may not even know are native, will be covered. Location suitability will be dealt with, including addressing difficult soils and situations. Benefits to birds and pollinators. We may even get into the debate on 'Nativars'!

## It Doesn't End in August: Extending Interest in the Garden







- a study, month by month, from September to December and beyond
- combinations, individual plants
- breaking down the belief that the spring garden is the climax, and the rest of the year is the denouement

### **Fall Cleanup: The Green Way**

- addressing the many misconceptions about what to do in the fall
- labour-saving techniques
- extra information about biodiversity and general horticulture

### **Looks Good Enough to Eat! Permaculture: Living off YOUR Land**

- the basic principles of growing food on your property
- creative solutions for city yards
- keeping it ornamental
- using edible natives and perennials to be eco-friendly



### **Fighting the Triffids: Native Alternatives to Invasive Ornamentals**

We love plants, but some of the plants we love are a bit too enamoured with our natural areas. They're not native to Canada and they move aggressively into our wild spaces. Not all non-natives are bad! We'll talk about which plants we'd like to avoid and what options – native and non-native, non-invasive – might be better options. We'll also touch on how to control some of these aggressors. How invasives affect our biodiversity will also be addressed.





## English Cottage Gardens: A Canadian Approach

- an in-depth presentation of design principles, matching plants to soil, and planting combinations
- slide presentation of perennials and examples of cottage gardens and shade cottage gardens



## Proud of My Pruning

- how to prune woody ornamentals – shrubs to trees – young and old
- an in-depth pruning demonstration of how to make proper cuts and maintaining aging shrubs
- a short discussion on identification of diseases and how to deal with them
- everyone needs to hear this but may not know it

## Bringing Back the Nearly Dead: Renovating an Existing Landscape

- step by step, dealing with a landscape afflicted with the usual challenges
- starting with a standard landscape, we erase those challenges and redesign the situation
- (including Q&A) of how to use the existing material & assets when upgrading older landscapes
- talk of design principles and construction priorities & winter interest
- a brief talk on pruning techniques
- a brief talk on principles of hard landscaping (using stone, concrete & wood)

## Rocks, Blocks & Wood: Understanding Hard Landscaping

- using stone, wood, and interlock in the landscape, includes sources
- common mistakes
- large focus on design principles
- dealing with contractors





## Close Companions: Using Perennials and Annuals Together

- discussion on how to keep colour in your garden through the entire season
- keeping costs and maintenance low
- using colours together
- using bulbs, tender perennials (e.g. Dahlias), self-seeding annuals with perennials



## Reduce Your Maintenance: Groundcovers & Mulches

No one call a landscaper looking for something sort of 'Palace of Versailles'! The first request is usually 'low maintenance'. The best and most visually appealing way to reduce work is by using mulches and groundcovers. We'll discuss a variety of both, their pros and cons and how to design with them. We'll also touch on natives and biodiversity enhancement, which are becoming major interests. The soil microbiome will also be touched on.

## NEW!

### What We Used to Kill: Caterpillars and Their Food

It wasn't so long ago that if something was nibbling on our plants, we whipped out the insecticide. In recent years there has been an explosion of interest in pollinators, including butterflies and moths. Folks frequently seek advice to identify various caterpillars, larvae and other insects. Equally important is how to enhance our gardens to provide habitat for these creatures. Host plants and garden maintenance will be topics of discussion.



## The Art of Lighting

- if you've put so much work into the landscape why not enjoy it at night...





when you are home?

- different types and styles of lighting the landscape with a focus on low voltage fixtures
- what to look for and how to deal with contractors
- slide presentation & how-to demonstration



### **The Devil's in the Details:**

#### **Landscaping a Small Yard... Some Design Tips from a Pro**

- small yards have great potential, more than large yards in many ways
- a short slide show will be analyzed to share ideas and help guide you

### **Couples and Threesomes: Companions for Hostas**

Achieving the potential of a shade garden

- an in-depth look at using more than just Hostas to bring all aspects of garden design to a shade garden
- includes discussion of biodiversity and sustainability

### **Practical Perennials**

Focusing on 50 or so perennials that provide easy care, long periods of interest, seasonal colour, salt and shade tolerance. We'll also cover how to grow them and spring and fall maintenance, as well as thoughts on designing, growing & winter interest. (This talk is an hour and a half, but there's a shorter version as well.)

### **Green Roofing: An Overview**

- think long term and this is a no-brainer
- why should we and how should we?
- what does it cost?
- some of the plants we can use
- based on a CBC interview with Sean James





## Catching a Garden: Photography Tips for Real Gardeners

- not high tech! Just a simple look at how to photograph nature and more
- I am a semi-professional (just a bit in my spare time but I have sold works and done paid shoots)
- we will NOT discuss f-stops and aperture sizes and all that...it's not usually necessary with today's cameras
- we will discuss composition, colour, form and perhaps a few useful tricks



## NEW!

### Soil, and the Things Living in It

We're learning much about soil and its importance to plant health and climate change. The latest information and research will be discussed including. Several main questions will be asked and answered. How do we steward the soil microbiome? What are the beneficial bacteria and fungi? What activities harm the soil and therefore the plants? Can better soil stewardship also mean lower maintenance? It's a dirty topic, but someone's got to cover it

## NEW!

### A Pillar of Salt... and Plants that Tolerate It

- designing and planting for roadsides, sea sides, and other salty conditions
- with boulevard gardens gaining ground but slip and fall insurance claims on the rise, choosing plants that can tolerate salt is of particular interest to gardeners and municipalities alike
- restrictions on boulevard gardens will be discussed
- touching on how these plants often support biodiversity





# Fundraisin

*Consider offering a course to your membership or the general public. Stack several speeches together or choose from the courses below.*

*Hire me for the day, offer lunch (when we did this for Oakville Master Gardeners many moons ago, a local Subway donated lunch) and charge participants to raise money for garden projects or just top up your organization's coffers. As with any of the talks above, I'll promote your group through my newsletter and social networking platforms.*

## **Woody Plants: Their Appeal and Uses in the Landscape (Full Day)**

- a 6-hour presentation of the advantages and concerns surrounding woody plant choices
- includes discussion of plants suitable for rain gardens, attracting birds, invasive species, native species and suitability to soil type
- hardiness zones will also be included

## **Dig Deeper: Landscape Plants and How to Use Them (Full Day)**

- a 6-hour presentation on various types of plants; annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs and even veggies!
- design will also be tackled throughout
- includes discussion of plants suitable for rain gardens, attracting birds, invasive species, native species and suitability to soil type

## **Do-it-Yourself: A Design Workshop (Full Day)**

- the morning will involve a presentation on all aspects to be considered to create a landscape design, from construction basics to prioritizing needs, to aesthetic principles
- the afternoon will be spent working with participants, one on one, to help them create their design
- participants should bring a design of their property, preferably measured to scale, photos of their house and garden, paper (11x17 is best), a ruler or scale, pencils and erasers (or the host group can provide stationery and supplies)
- typically, the host group provides a simple lunch to participants.
- maximum of 12 participants

## **Xeriscaping: Drought-tolerant Landscaping (Half- Day)**

- a 3-hour workshop on all aspects of reducing water use in the landscape.
- with municipalities beginning to charge what water actually costs, and with an increasing awareness of environmental issues, this is a valuable presentation
- plant choices, whys and hows and different styles will be discussed

