Gardening with Nature by Sigrie Kendrick

2023 IN THE GARDEN

A look back at the year that was for gardeners

Sigrie Kendrick - Dec 20, 2023 / 11:00 am



Photo: Contributed

OXA president Joan Byrne supporting the Make Water Work campaign.

It's been quite a year! From fires and floods to extreme drought, it's been a year of extremes for gardeners again.

I can't help but be pleased at the successes of the Okanagan Xeriscape Association in 2023, complete with challenges, but also with wonderful new relationships and gratifying support from people like you.

Both our spring and fall plant sales, where we meet gardeners and would-be gardeners interested in conserving water while creating beautiful landscapes, were the best on record.

As well as introducing all of you to the wide variety of drought-tolerant xeriscape perennials and annuals, those sales are an important revenue source for our charitable organization, which operates mainly with volunteers doing the work.

The success of these sales also indicates the increasing interest on the part of valley residents in conserving water, a precious resource in our near-desert climate.

than in there spring—to give them a chance to get settled during cooler weather before being subjected to summer's heat and drought.

As outdoor work in the garden has slowed, I have pored over seed and plant catalogues to select

It's clear you have adopted our advice that planting perennials in the fall makes far more sense

exciting new xeric plants which will be offered for sale next year. I look forward to sharing the new cultivars which we will be propagating at the greenhouse over the coming months. The number of visits to okanaganxeriscape.org topped 25,000, a new high for our organization. If

you use our website, blogs or plant database, please become a member of OXA to support our work. Over the next couple of months OXA will enlist the expertise of tree specialist Robert Hogue to

significantly increase the number of xeric trees on our plant database, so stay tuned for the new additions.

A membership to OXA makes a great holiday or birthday gift for both the experienced and novice

Earlier this year, OXA was approached by Kelowna Rotary to collaborate on two pollinator gardens and after more than a year of meetings, planning and weighing the benefits of various sites, the

gardeners in your life. The many benefits of membership are outlined on our website.

gardens were planted at Sarsons Beach and Cameron Parks in Kelowna.

Our planting bees were punctuated by laughter as many of the Rotary members were not gardeners but their enthusiasm made up for their knowledge. Rotary is focussed on creating a pollinator corridor throughout the Okanagan because its members are acutely aware of the threats to pollinators worldwide.

OXA also collaborated on a pollinator garden at JoeAnna's House, which was probably the most challenging of all. When you spend so much time outside it is difficult to imagine what the outside looks like when you can't be out there. Yet, many of those staying at JoeAnna's must look outside from within all day. We considered both colour and fragrance in our design for those unable to step outside and are grateful that we were able to contribute to the experience of those staying at

JoeAnna's House. The Okanagan Xeriscape Association also continues its close relationship with the Okanagan Basin Water Board's Make Water Work campaign, which educates homeowners throughout the valley

The Make Water Work program has a list of xeriscape plants ideal for those beginning on their xeriscape journey. It was created in collaboration with OXA. Yearly, the Make Water Work campaign awards two prizes of \$500 for those who take the pledge to Make Water Work more

efficiently on their landscapes. After a Covid-enforced hiatus OXA was proud to host the Make Water Work launch in the Xeriscape Demonstration Garden last May. Keep an eye out for the beginning of the campaign

and make sure you pledge.

OXA is an organization whose strength is entirely dependent on the strength of our volunteers.

May all of you have a wonderful holiday with friends and family.

on ways to decrease their water consumption.

The Okanagan Xeriscape Association is grateful for the ongoing financial support of the Okanagan Basin Water Board and is proud to be collaborating with them on their Make Water Work campaign.

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