

In 1909 a group of local civic leaders & gardeners organized the Lethbridge Horticultural Society. In the minutes of the first meeting they urged each citizen to use individual effort as much as possible & do their utmost to make Lethbridge beautiful. Father Van Tighem was named Honorary President for “his garden has done more than anything else to prove what can be done in the culture of trees, fruit & flowers.”

Unfortunately the activities of the Society were suspended during the First World War. It wasn't until 1921 that another group of gardeners re-established the Lethbridge & District Horticultural Society.

The driving force behind the Society for the next 20 years was its president, George H. Stacey. Under his leadership, the Society worked to beautify the city by initiating annual flower shows, home garden & commercial grounds competitions & meetings with speakers on various horticultural topics.

Representatives of the Society have also lobbied City Council for development of parks & planting trees. In 1950 the Society approached City Council about naming a City Flower & the public was invited to vote for their favorite flower at the Society's Annual Flower Show in August of that year. The gladiolus received more than two thirds of the votes.

The annual flower shows & garden competitions continued until 1999. In spite of years with severe winters, cold & wet springs, summer hailstorms & of course the drying winds, the show was cancelled only once in 77 years because of a poor growing season.

Ironically, just as gardening was increasing in popularity as a recreational activity, interest in participating in competitions & flower shows was declining. In response to the changing times those events were cancelled. The Society continues to promote horticulture by focusing on monthly gardening presentations & special garden projects such as:

Establishing an arboretum at Henderson Park

the garden at the entrance to the Garden view Lodge

a feature garden at the entrance to the St. Michael's Health Centre  
planting a Gingko tree at City Hall  
the Lois Hole Memorial Garden at the Public Library  
& the Native Prairie Plant Garden at the Galt Museum.

Our recently proposed mission statement states as a Society we strive to:  
Encourage & enable enjoyment of gardening & the natural environment in our  
city & surrounding communities in order to enhance our quality of life through:

Promotion & support of the practice of horticulture by providing learning  
activities suitable for all ages & levels of expertise.

Creation of a supportive community of gardeners who are willing to share their  
knowledge & experience with others.

Enhancement of our communities by assisting in the maintenance of our natural  
& cultivated spaces.

Fostering a culture of environmental conservation & sustainable practices in  
horticultural pursuits.

Hopefully, the Society can continue with original intent in 1909 to do our utmost  
to make Lethbridge beautiful, whether in large public projects or just encouraging  
home owners to create lovely yards that provide joy to others as they walk or  
drive by.