



Confessions of a Plantaholic

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I am a plantaholic. This is not a confession I want to make publicly but unfortunately plants are my addiction. Fortunately this obsession is not detrimental to your health but it can be hard on relationships and sometimes the pocketbook. The idea would be to keep it under control but you know you are in trouble when you start bringing home plants and sneaking them into the garden without telling your partner. 'That hosta has been there for years. It was just small so you did not notice it before.'

However, one good thing is that I am married to a fellow addict. Neither of us is able to pass up an opportunity to adopt another plant.

We have an area under our carport where you will find our 'plants in waiting'. The number of plants is in direct correlation with the activities that we have recently been enjoying - usually bus trips, Horticultural Society plant sales or garden tours and is not necessarily dependent upon the time of year.

Usually horticultural based bus trips include a visit to at least one nursery sometimes one that specializes in a particular kind of plant. Recycling boxes are a great accessory to organize those purchases. We have even brought home tree on a bus. Picture two otherwise sane adults maneuvering an eight-foot tree in a large pot in the cargo bay of a coach. What a sight!

Horticultural Society plant sales are another great source for quality plants that are hardy in your area since most of the plants are grown in the members' gardens. Look for the sales in both spring and fall.

And then there are those 'must have' plants that we see in other people's gardens while we are on a garden tour. Emergency retail therapy on the way home is not unusual.

Then there are those plants that people give to us. Once people know you are a plantaholic, they share their treasures or the ones that have become too big. Don't we all? Better to give away than to compost and these friends know that a good home awaits their treasures. It is always a puzzle when a plant suddenly appears on your doorstep - sometimes with no explanation! The generosity of friends and acquaintances is overwhelming at times. But we do not usually refuse these kind offers.

And let us not forget those great bargains – the plants that are sad and have not been adopted - you know the ones at the nursery that are half price, or the one that your 'friend' who happens to work there convinces you that 'you really need it!' I have a section on the property that is our nursery area. Here you will find those sad plants that need some extra TLC. Sometimes these finds are repotted into a larger container and then the whole thing is placed in a hole. This reduces the amount of trauma when the final placement is made. It also helps to quarantine any potentially sick plants.

Every spring, I set out with the idea that I will not buy or acquire a plant that I do not already have a spot in mind. That resolution lasts until my first visit to a nursery. The good thing is, we still have space for more plants as we still have an area that is being developed. Once all the areas are planted, I will turn my attention to the lawn. Less lawn, more beds. And, of course, I believe that if you have plants close enough together there will be no, or at least fewer weeds and those weeds will be weakened because of the lack of light that they are able to get because of the plants around them. Well that is the theory. It is my story and I am sticking to it.

There is an ongoing ebb and flow of plants in waiting throughout the growing season. One year, there was barely enough room for the car under the carport. We were renovating a bed that was filled with every nasty plant that we inherited when we bought the house – periwinkle, creeping bellflower, a nasty phlox that had roots that went on forever. Every plant that I cared about was removed from the area, the roots washed and then potted up, as it turned out, for about six to eight weeks. In that time, we were able to ensure that we had not taken any undesirables along for the ride. Then the bed was dealt with. Lots of work and time spent waiting to ensure there was no regrowth - but definitely worth it. And the good thing was, there was room for more plants!

This year my goal is to have everything in the ground by September 1. All plants must be in! But then there are the fall plant sales! What can I do?

Previously published in the Peterborough Examiner.