



**ONTARIO HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION**  
**2012 TED REED WEB COMPETITION**  
Niagara College Niagara on the Lake Campus  
August 17-19, 2012

**Host: District 9, "Theme: Gardening Then and Now 1812 - 2012"**

**CHAIR:** Jeff Blackadar, 1143 Burgundy Lane, Ottawa, ON, K1C 2M9, (613) 841-9263, E-Mail: [web@ottawahort.org](mailto:web@ottawahort.org)

Ted Reed is a Past President of the Ontario Horticultural Association and the founder of its web site. This competition was named in his honour by the OHA's Board in 2009 in recognition of his contributions to the OHA's web site.

**Purpose of Competition:** Recognize excellence in the creation of society web sites and to show examples to inspire other societies to improve their web sites.

**Scope of Competition:** The competition in Class 1 is for web shells created in the [www.gardenontario.org](http://www.gardenontario.org) website. The competition in Class 2 covers web sites hosted externally to [www.gardenontario.org](http://www.gardenontario.org) including unique websites (independent of the GardenOntario web shell) hosted on sub domains of [www.gardenontario.org](http://www.gardenontario.org). All Society web sites are automatically entered in this competition.

#### **RULES and REGULATIONS:**

1. The competition judge will review the websites of every Society in the OHA, both internal and external.
2. Societies do not need to enter the competition, their website will be automatically entered.
3. Judging will take place anytime between March 1, 2012 and July 15, 2012.
4. Building web shells can be a collaborative effort. The society web shell may be the work of more than one person.
5. The prize is awarded to the society.
6. Ribbons and prize cheques are to be picked up between 7:00-9:00 am on Sunday, August 19, 2012. Please designate someone to pick up the prizes.
7. Decisions of the judge are final.

#### **Class 1**

GardenOntario web shells using standard features as outlined in the manual "Garden Webs for Societies" or "Garden Webs for Districts" (as appropriate). An example of a society using a web shell can be found at [www.gardenontario.org/site.php/clover](http://www.gardenontario.org/site.php/clover)

Judging will be based on content, appropriate use of the pre-formatted gardenontario pages, and visual appeal and overall impression.

#### **Class 2**

Horticultural Society web sites outside of gardenontario.org. The creators of these sites have full control over the design and appearance of their sites, and can usually include a larger amount of graphics, pdf files, or other information. Web sites hosted on gardenontario.org subdomains are also included in this class. Examples are [www.oakvillehort.org](http://www.oakvillehort.org) and [www.paahs.gardenontario.org](http://www.paahs.gardenontario.org).

Judging will be based on content, visual appeal, navigation, functionality and overall impression.

Prizes: First \$10.00, Second \$8.00, and Third \$6.00

#### **Some Explanatory Notes:**

##### **Content**

Is the information useful to members? Meeting details (upcoming and past), newsletters, society news (flowers shows, plant sales, public plantings, etc.) and community events are just a few of the items that can be of interest. But only by listening to the membership of your society will you know what they wish to see included.

*Keeping Ontario Beautiful*



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2012 Ted Reed Web Competition - 2

### ***Some Explanatory Notes, Content continued***

Does it make non-members want to join, and does it include the particulars that they'll need in order to join (e.g., contact information, meeting times & locations, fees, membership form)?

"A picture is worth a 1000 words" – but only if you can see what's in the picture. Tiny photos of undistinguishable people appearing at some indistinct public function can be almost useless. On the other hand overly-large pictures can take too long to load and take up far too much screen "real-estate". Try to strike a happy medium.

One of the great strengths of the web is the ability to use links to easily jump to other sites that contain related information. As an example, if the speaker at your next meeting is renowned rose-expert Fred Smith from Fred Smith Nursery, you can include a link to his nursery's site, and perhaps another one to a related news article or other relevant site. Your site's readers will be better-informed, and will be more likely to attend the meeting. And of course, your speaker will appreciate the link.

How current is your site? You may have a page that includes a list of meetings for the year, but if it's October and your opening page discusses your next meeting, "on June 24", the reader will assume that information is not being updated on a regular basis. Try to include items that demonstrate that there's a reason to take a look at the site again in a few days or next week.

### **Visual Appeal**

How pleasing to the eye is the site's appearance? No one wants to look at a site that's unattractive. Strange mixes of colours, odd assortments of typefaces, inconsistent layout of pages, overuse of animated graphics, scrolling banners – all of these can be distracting and can make it difficult to communicate information to the user. If the design is particularly unappealing, the user may not come back.

### **Navigation**

How easy is it for the users to find the information that they're looking for?

Is the site organized in such a way that topical information is readily available? For example, the time, location, and subject of the next meeting shouldn't be buried in a page that requires several mouse-clicks to find.

The user should never describe information on your site as "hard-to-find".

### **Functionality**

This overlaps with "Visual Design" – readability is an important consideration when designing a web site. Text that is too small is unreadable, and text that is too big can be annoying. Remember that there are numerous colour combinations that are both annoying and unreadable (green text on a red background is particularly difficult). As well, spreading text into two or more columns often enhances readability.

Functionality is a consideration when looking at "Navigation" – make sure that, when the user clicks on a link, they end up at the proper page; the "flower show" link shouldn't end up at the plant sale, and it certainly shouldn't end up a "Page not found" error. As obvious as this seems, it's amazing how often one encounters "dead links", or links that have been misspelled by the developer.

### **Overall Impression**

To some extent this includes all of the already-mentioned criteria. But it also addresses readers' satisfaction with the site. They'll stay longer at a site that's informative, easy-to-use and enjoyable. They'll also return more often to that site. And of course, they'll know more about your society, have a favourable view of its activities, and will be more likely to join