



Merrickville-Wolford

IN BLOOM

2018 NATIONAL FINALIST



JEWEL OF THE RIDEAU
MERRICKVILLE CELEBRATES 225 YEARS



An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood. The scene is dominated by dense green trees, many of which have a golden-yellow hue, suggesting late summer or early autumn. Several houses are visible, including a prominent white house with a dark roof and a church with a tall, pointed steeple on the left. Power lines and poles are visible, crisscrossing the landscape. In the lower right, a small body of water, possibly a pond or a slow-moving stream, is bordered by a stone wall and more trees.

About COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM

Communities in Bloom is a Canadian non-profit organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility and beautification through community involvement and the challenge of a national program, with focus on the enhancement of green spaces in communities.

In 2018, hundreds of Canadian communities will be participating in the national and provincial editions of Communities in Bloom (CiB), along with municipalities from Belgium, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, United Kingdom and the United States of America in the International Challenge.

In July and August, qualified volunteer Canadian and International judges will visit participating communities and evaluate each one on its overall performance within the following criteria: tidiness, environmental action, heritage conservation, urban forestry, landscape and floral displays. As community involvement is the essence of the program, the evaluation, which provides guidance on further steps of improvement, is based on the local conditions and achievements of citizens, businesses, organizations, institutions and the municipal government working together towards common objectives.

The communities will be rated from 1 to 5 Blooms, based on the scoring obtained. Also, the National and International Communities will aim to obtain Bronze, Silver or Gold levels in their 5-Bloom rating.



2018 Profile **MERRICKVILLE - WOLFORD**

A village formed by history and brought together by community, The Village of Merrickville-Wolford stands as a distinctive ode to the past along the Rideau Canal - a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Merrickville-Wolford otherwise known as the “Jewel on the Rideau” attracts visitors from near and far, with our distinctive character, rich heritage and rural aesthetic. An hours drive from the Nation’s Capital makes Merrickville-Wolford a tourism hub no matter the season. Merrickville-Wolford offers a variety of unique experiences both in the village and throughout the countryside with local producers introducing more organic alternatives promoting locally grown organic produce.

To keep Merrickville-Wolford the strong community it has become, collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Committee alongside participation from local businesses and the artistic community has introduced promotional and marketing programs to benefit all citizens.

Merrickville-Wolford is truly a Jewel that has withstood the test of time, apart from the visible heritage Merrickville-Wolford offers affordability, charming and friendly atmosphere that is walkable, livable safe and quite - all while being only a short drive to the nation’s capital.

*“...formed by history, brought
together by community...”*



HERITAGE

The Village of Merrickville-Wolford in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville in Eastern Ontario spans the Rideau River an hour southwest of Ottawa. The current municipality dates to 1 January 1998 when the Village of Merrickville and Wolford Township amalgamated. Jewel of the Rideau became Merrickville-Wolford's when the community won the **Communities in Bloom Canadian title in 1998**. Merrickville where village streetscapes reflect the era of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 has blossomed into a favoured tourist destination. In addition to Merrickville, the village comprises the smaller communities of Carley's Corners, Eastons Corners, Hemlock Corners, Snowdons Corners, Jasper, Wolford Centre, Wolford Chapel, and Yule. Only Easton's Corners and Jasper to the west stand today as more than names on a map. Easton's Corners was named for Joseph Easton, a Loyalist, who settled in the area in the 1790s. Samuel Star Easton, the owner of mills and a general store, became the first postmaster office in 1845. Today, Easton's Corners has several heritage homes and buildings. Jasper, a later community, owes its origin to the arrival

of the railway in 1859 and thrived during the heyday rail transportation. To the east Andrews ville, another community founded around water power, deserves note for the Save Our Bridge movement to preserve the historic cast-iron bridge and maintain the crossing over the Rideau. Funding of \$120,000 has been committed by Leeds and Grenville County and Lanark County (each pledging \$60,000) to repair the bridge that links the two counties. Agriculture is the mainstay of rural Wolford. Merrickville has deep Loyalist roots. Lieutenant Roger Stevens, a King's Ranger from Vermont, lived with his family at the north side of the Rideau River by 1791 above what is now Andrews ville. His mill was at the Great Falls, the future site of Merrickville. His sudden death by drowning ended his early improvements. Captain William Merrick from Massachusetts, also a Loyalist, received a Crown Grant of 200 acres at the Great Falls in 1793. He completed Stevens' un-finished mill and pushed forward water-powered industries. Intrepid settlers moved toward to the region. The three sons of Benedict Arnold received land grants on the west side of Wolford

The enterprising community of **Merrickville flourished with the opening of the Rideau Canal in 1832.** What was built as a defensive work, to bypass the St. Lawrence River should there be another war with the United States, immediately became a transportation route for the growing number of manufacturers and settlers coming to the interior. Eventually more than 50 industries, many dependent on water-power clustered by the river. Grist mills, sawmills, a cloth factory, woollen mills, and foundries accompanied manufacturers farm equipment and domestic goods,

along with a tannery, creamery, cheese factory and other industries essential to supplying an increasingly populous Canada. Merrickville survived the late arrival of the railway in the 1870s and flourished until the upheavals of the 20th century delivered economic shocks. In the past three decades, these shocks have been relegated to the past. The 2010 vision for Merrickville-Wolford committed to an attractive living and working environment based on preserving the community's heritage character and natural resources.



ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

In 2017 the Municipality of Merrickville-Wolford undertook a strategic planning process. Through extensive public consultation via surveys, workshops and focus groups, one of the key priorities that emerged from residents was to enhance and protect the natural environment.

Main concerns identified were the Rideau River and preserving or increasing tree cover.

As a result, the Municipality is setting several initiatives in motion to address these areas. A survey of the beach and surrounding shoreline in Merrickville has been conducted with the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority and planting will be done to prevent further shoreline erosion. The finalized Strategic Plan includes the goal of continuing this process for all Municipal shoreline areas by 2025 as well as testing and improving river water quality.



A comprehensive tree planting and replacement program is being created by the Environmental Advisory Committee, with a draft to be completed and presented to Council by the end of 2018. The program will include suggestions for the inventory, maintenance, replacement and protection of trees on public lands. A backyard planting program is also being discussed to encourage residents to plant more trees on private property.

In early 2018 a public workshop was hosted by the lead forester for the United Counties of Leeds-Grenville on the topic of forest-related diseases and pests in our area, in order to begin making plans for at-risk species. A list of recommended tree species for future planting has been compiled from this and other local sources. In 2017 Merrickville-Wolford received a grant from Tree Canada and was able to have several trees planted at the public park in Easton's Corners, and more tree planting is planned for the fall of 2018 with funding from the Municipal budget. Ecological beautification, incorporating more native perennial and pollinator-attracting species into the local landscape is also in the works.

Another key area identified in the Strategic Plan was waste reduction. A new weigh scale system put in place at the landfill has helped the facility operate better and track data more accurately from year to year in order to set diversion rate goals. Already, comparing the first quarter of 2017 to that of 2018 the Public Works Department found that container recycling is up by 4.36 tonnes and fibre recycling up by 1.01 tonnes while garbage disposal has decreased by 29 tonnes. The re-use centre for donating used household goods is also seeing more activity after being cleaned up and given a brightly painted exterior by local artists.

Other environmental initiatives from the Municipality include a by-law which prohibits vehicles from idling for more than 3 minutes and the recent conversion of the street lights to LED bulbs which has reduced both energy use and light pollution.

Merrickville-Wolford actively promotes and participates in Pitch-In Canada Week, a national effort to collect litter from roadsides and public spaces. In the early spring of 2018, 64 bags of refuse were collected by residents, which are accepted at the landfill at no charge. Due to the success of the program in recent years, plans are being made to hold a second Pitch-In Canada Week in the autumn.

The local food community in Merrickville-Wolford is vibrant and growing. For the 2018 season, the farmers' market, organized by Merrickville Goes Green, found a new larger space to accommodate the increase in vendors. Local produce, honey, preserves, baking, and crafted items are readily available and several local restaurants and shops also feature products from local farms. There are several community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs in the area where residents can directly support farmers by purchasing weekly food baskets.

The Lions Club organizes a community garden program where residents without the space to plant their own vegetable gardens can rent raised beds and share resources. The Scouts group has also planted a butterfly garden at the library which raises awareness about the importance of local pollinator insects.

Merrickville-Wolford is the home and habitat for many important species, especially in the Rideau Migratory Bird Sanctuary and Limerick Forest. Many volunteers and landowners work tirelessly to preserve the natural heritage and biodiversity we all enjoy here and their contributions ensure that Merrickville-Wolford continues to be a beautiful place for all creatures to live and thrive.

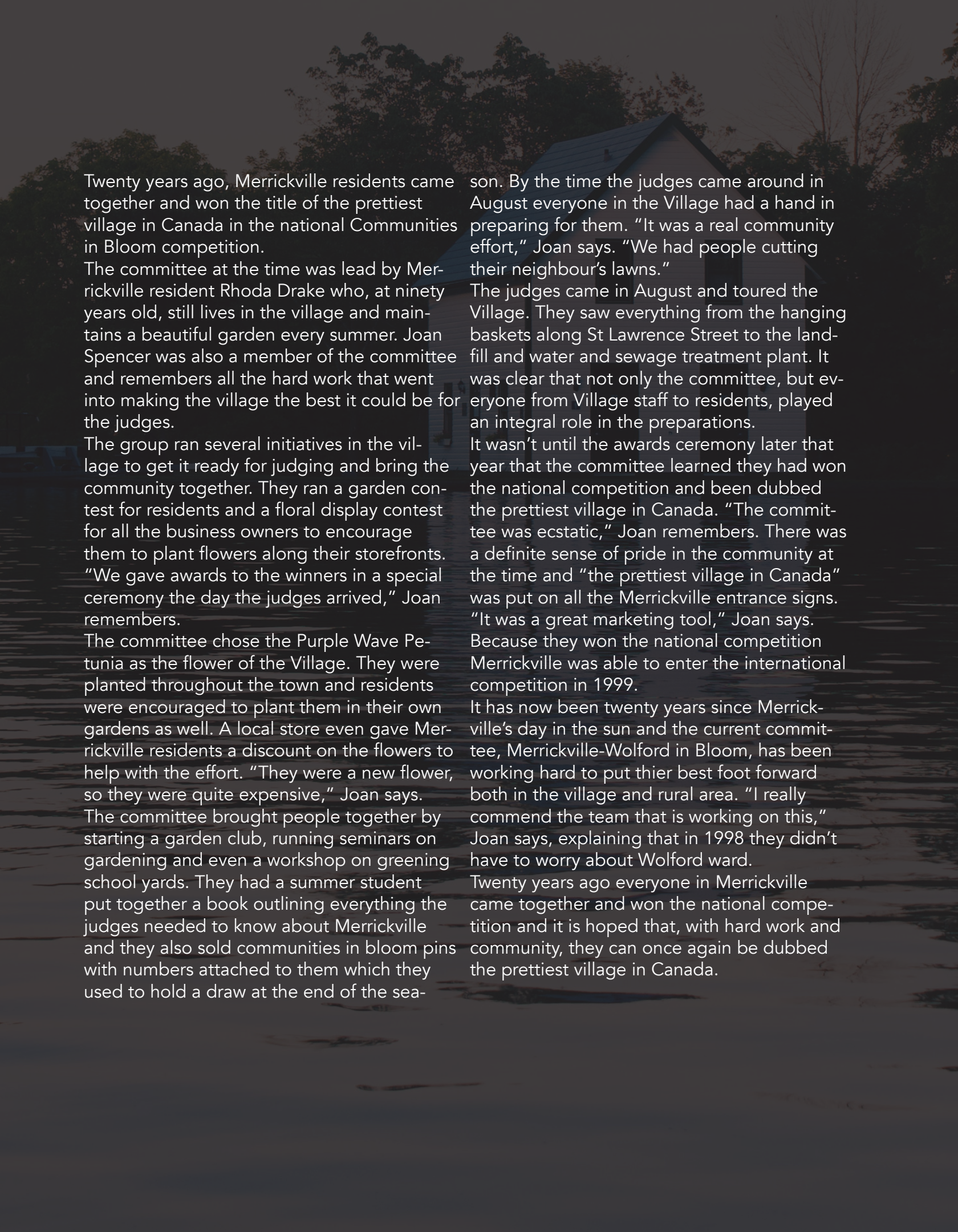
- Environment Committee



Celebrating Merrickville

225 YEARS

*"...the story of how Merrickville became
Canada's prettiest village."*



Twenty years ago, Merrickville residents came together and won the title of the prettiest village in Canada in the national Communities in Bloom competition.

The committee at the time was lead by Merrickville resident Rhoda Drake who, at ninety years old, still lives in the village and maintains a beautiful garden every summer. Joan Spencer was also a member of the committee and remembers all the hard work that went into making the village the best it could be for the judges.

The group ran several initiatives in the village to get it ready for judging and bring the community together. They ran a garden contest for residents and a floral display contest for all the business owners to encourage them to plant flowers along their storefronts. "We gave awards to the winners in a special ceremony the day the judges arrived," Joan remembers.

The committee chose the Purple Wave Petunia as the flower of the Village. They were planted throughout the town and residents were encouraged to plant them in their own gardens as well. A local store even gave Merrickville residents a discount on the flowers to help with the effort. "They were a new flower, so they were quite expensive," Joan says.

The committee brought people together by starting a garden club, running seminars on gardening and even a workshop on greening school yards. They had a summer student put together a book outlining everything the judges needed to know about Merrickville and they also sold communities in bloom pins with numbers attached to them which they used to hold a draw at the end of the sea-

son. By the time the judges came around in August everyone in the Village had a hand in preparing for them. "It was a real community effort," Joan says. "We had people cutting their neighbour's lawns."

The judges came in August and toured the Village. They saw everything from the hanging baskets along St Lawrence Street to the land-fill and water and sewage treatment plant. It was clear that not only the committee, but everyone from Village staff to residents, played an integral role in the preparations.

It wasn't until the awards ceremony later that year that the committee learned they had won the national competition and been dubbed the prettiest village in Canada. "The committee was ecstatic," Joan remembers. There was a definite sense of pride in the community at the time and "the prettiest village in Canada" was put on all the Merrickville entrance signs. "It was a great marketing tool," Joan says. Because they won the national competition Merrickville was able to enter the international competition in 1999.

It has now been twenty years since Merrickville's day in the sun and the current committee, Merrickville-Wolford in Bloom, has been working hard to put their best foot forward both in the village and rural area. "I really commend the team that is working on this," Joan says, explaining that in 1998 they didn't have to worry about Wolford ward.

Twenty years ago everyone in Merrickville came together and won the national competition and it is hoped that, with hard work and community, they can once again be dubbed the prettiest village in Canada.

TOWN PRIDE

"...plenty of sights to see and people to meet, and thanks to it's residents and business owners we are proud to be the Jewel of the Rideau."

Business owners alongside the citizens of Merrickville-Wolford are to thank for the overall tidiness of the town. With the addition of multiple municipal & private trash and recycling bins make keeping the town clean and tidy an easy task. Merrickville-Wolford is so much more than just than the Village of Merrickville, as the town is bordered with much woodland properties and farms.

Rural Wolford is home to a booming Agricultural community. Beyond village limits the municipal government takes care of daily maintenance in whatever form this may take , whether it be (although very rare) vandalism, graffiti or the more common trimming of the ditches. Another key contributor in maintaining the Merrickville-Wolford area are the bylaw staff who help to prevent any clutter, help to maintain signs, controlling advertising and posters along sidewalks buildings and along roadways.

During the summer months Merrickville-Wolford is always extremely pleased to welcome in the warmer weather for they know that planting season has arrived and with that comes the busiest time of the year. Throughout the town and rural and countryside you'll see magnificent gardens. We are so very proud to have so many residents who care and maintain their gardens so vigorously. This care and maintenance extends into businesses throughout the

area with beautiful floral hanging baskets and window flower baskets. One particularly memorable part of the summer floral displays is the hanging baskets which line the Village of Merrickville main street bringing colour and life to the village.

We are very blessed to be alongside a **UNESCO world heritage site**, "The Rideau Canal" which features a large park filled with gardens welcoming visitor's into the downtown core of the Village of Merrickville. With plenty of benches and green spaces you'll find plenty of people enjoying the summer days here alongside the blockhouse and lock-station. A nearby campsite and docking area offers passing travelers the perfect overnight stop.

Another popular spot with locals is the fairground where the annual Merrickville Agricultural Fair (since 1838) is hosted. An area which features soccer fields, a boat launch, public beach right beside the public library which overlooks the Rideau Canal. Bordering this park is the Rideau Migratory Bird Sanctuary, a bird watcher's paradise with trails that residences can explore to see the bird's of season. Within Merrickville-Wolford there are plenty of sights to see and people to meet, and it is thanks to it's residents and business owners we are proud to be the **"Jewel of the Rideau."**





LANDSCAPE

The landscape of Merrickville-Wolford is greatly influenced by the nature world - combining the beauty of historical architecture with countryside ambiance. The 1st Merrickville Beavers began last year the "Butterfly Garden" a project in partnership with Scouts Canada's "Good Turn Week" to inspire youth and community to do unto others as they would to you.

Exploring the city center of Merrickville takes you on a journey through history with many buildings dating back to the 1830's. The charm of these buildings and rich history brings s a certain sense of **connection with the past that Merrickville holds dear**. Dressing up the streets of Merrickville residents and business owners alike showcase beautiful hanging baskets, window boxes, flourishing flower pots and flower beds. Hanging baskets which line the main street of Merrickville are courtesy of the Chamber of Commerce and maintenance is done by the municipality. The village features many parks at it's core one being Cenotaph park, adorned with various native trees, annuals and shrubs. Constructed in 1938 this park stands as a memorial to the men and women who service of God, King/Queen and Country. Welcoming all to the village the Merrickville lock-station features a large park visitors to enjoy - dressed with old growth trees and various flower beds. This area also features a visitor center for those new to the area offers resources for further exploration.

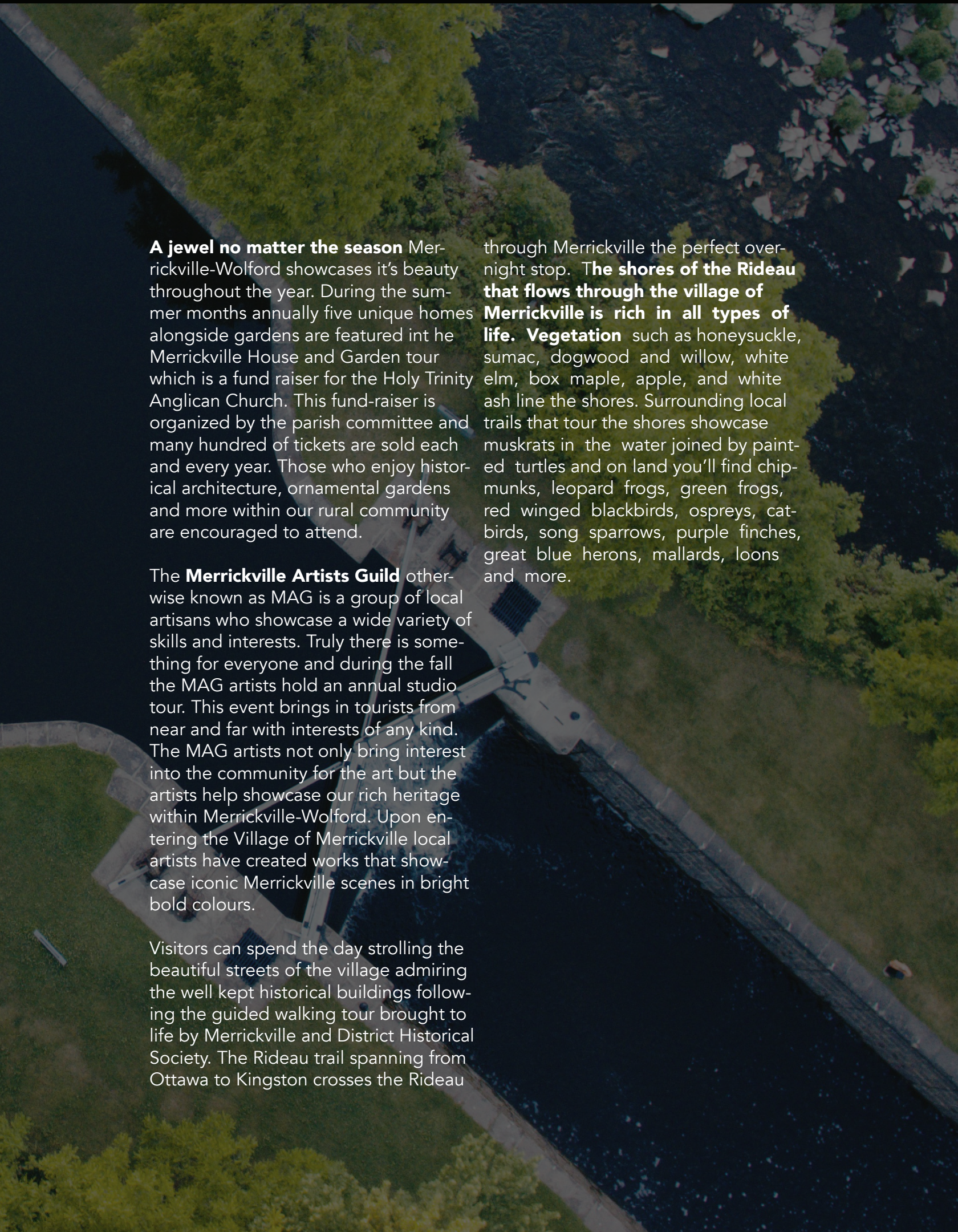
Many residents both in the village and outside the village care for vegetable gardens and for those who do not the Merrickville Community Garden sponsored by the Merrickville Lions Club brings gardening to all in the community. The Community garden brought life to a once vacant lot, now **bringing together people young and old for a common cause.**

See below.



Photo Courtesy of Tim Molloy

Gardening is a healthy activity which residents through Merrickville-Wolford embrace. Gardening has shown to deepen an individual's connection with the world around them, reduce stress and build a sense of pride. Merrickville - Wolford is a true symbol of the benefits of the natural world combined with history and urban develop can create a truly unique and thriving community.

An aerial photograph of a river, likely the Rideau River, flowing through a lush green landscape. A concrete dam or weir structure is visible in the center, creating a small pool of water upstream. The riverbanks are covered in dense green trees and vegetation. The water appears dark and calm. The overall scene is serene and natural.

A jewel no matter the season Merrickville-Wolford showcases its beauty throughout the year. During the summer months annually five unique homes alongside gardens are featured in the Merrickville House and Garden tour which is a fund-raiser for the Holy Trinity Anglican Church. This fund-raiser is organized by the parish committee and many hundred of tickets are sold each and every year. Those who enjoy historical architecture, ornamental gardens and more within our rural community are encouraged to attend.

The **Merrickville Artists Guild** otherwise known as MAG is a group of local artisans who showcase a wide variety of skills and interests. Truly there is something for everyone and during the fall the MAG artists hold an annual studio tour. This event brings in tourists from near and far with interests of any kind. The MAG artists not only bring interest into the community for the art but the artists help showcase our rich heritage within Merrickville-Wolford. Upon entering the Village of Merrickville local artists have created works that showcase iconic Merrickville scenes in bright bold colours.

Visitors can spend the day strolling the beautiful streets of the village admiring the well kept historical buildings following the guided walking tour brought to life by Merrickville and District Historical Society. The Rideau trail spanning from Ottawa to Kingston crosses the Rideau

through Merrickville the perfect overnight stop. **The shores of the Rideau that flows through the village of Merrickville is rich in all types of life.** **Vegetation** such as honeysuckle, sumac, dogwood and willow, white elm, box maple, apple, and white ash line the shores. Surrounding local trails that tour the shores showcase muskrats in the water joined by painted turtles and on land you'll find chipmunks, leopard frogs, green frogs, red winged blackbirds, ospreys, catbirds, song sparrows, purple finches, great blue herons, mallards, loons and more.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Promoting Healthy Living

A community that supports physical and mental well-being and helps people pursue their passions.

Healthy Community - Ensure a healthy community that considers the wellbeing of people and ecosystems.

- Trails - support further develop & connect trails - Merrickville trails, Rideau Canal & Rideau trail.
- Create a sustainable health and wellness infrastructure
- Better support to people with disabilities

"Aging in Place" – A strategy that encourages and supports residents to remain in the community.

- Accommodate people with accessibility issues
- Change by-laws to allow for granny flats / Allow multiple buildings on single lot to assist seniors
- Attract developer for residential facilities for aged including small, single floor units

Younger, More Diverse Population - Attract & retain younger demographic/families, to encourage diversity & sustainability in the community.

- Improve recreational facilities and programs for young children
- Develop a young family attraction strategy to make it attractive for young families
- Work with developers to market to young families, promote starter homes and affordable housing

Building A Progressive, Growing Economy

Encouraging economic growth by offering a development environment that is wel-

coming to potential business owners and residents but consistent with the community's overall goals.

Strong Agricultural Base - Enhance supports to maintain a strong agricultural base.

- Undertake a feasibility study on sustaining a farmer's market
- Plan for transportation of agricultural product & supplies on rural roads and through village
- Promote and support value added agriculture
- Develop Agri-tourism strategy
- Campaign for local residents and businesses to support local farmers

Economic Vitality - Create a supportive business-friendly environment that retains, grows and diversifies our economy.

- Update economic development plan
- Single contact for interested businesses
- Economic Development capacity
- Water, sewer and gas expansion, including North side
- Explore promotional program with Parks Canada as well as other potential partners

Transportation Strategy – Improve how people get around.

- Long-term plan for the safety of rural roads including eliminating narrow/no shoulders / Cost-effectiveness of tar & chip
- Improved parking plan to deal with summer and weekend load
- Street calming measures / Merrickville bridge and in Jasper crosswalk in village / truck bypass

An aerial photograph of a town, likely Merrickville, showing a river, trees, and buildings. The image is faded and serves as a background for the text.

Protecting Heritage, Rural, and Natural Environments

A community that preserves local natural beauty and ecosystems.

Community Resilience - Enhance and protect the natural environment

- Water quality and River Management/Protection
- Build an ecologically-oriented beautification plan
- Waste reduction strategies

Rural and Heritage Nature - Nurture and enhance rural and heritage character.

- Implement Bylaws to help protect heritage properties and encourage compatible new building
- Beautification of St. Lawrence Street (signage, buildings, etc.)
- Heritage walk/drive (electronic)

Ensuring Efficient, Effective Services and Civic Engagement

The Municipality will offer a great customer service experience and instill confidence in municipal spending.

Enhanced Municipal Services - Providing a great customer experience.

- Create a one-stop-shop for development
- Develop a stronger customer service approach between municipal staff and public
- Governance structure should be reviewed to streamline committee structure, reflect the strategic priorities, and address rural-urban divide
- Improved building regulations, more service capacity, property standards
- Marketing capacity

Fiscal Sustainability - Sound financial plan and reasonable reserves.

- Increased capacity to obtain funding through government grants & partnerships, shovel-ready (pre-engineered) projects
- Increased tax revenues through residential and commercial development
- Inter-municipal sharing of regional assets and expert resources

Improved Communications - Better information sharing for all.

- Enhance Municipal communications practices and systems to improve connectivity with community
- External communications, start with awesome M-W website, portal
- Council interaction with community should be improved: Council meetings should be better structured, managed and resident-friendly, location of Council meetings should alternate between Merrickville & Wolford
- Measurement and Reporting of progress on strategic priorities
- Improved information sharing between all stakeholders so residents are aware of what services are available.

THANK YOU

TO THE VOLUNTEERS BEHIND THE SCENES OF MERRICKVILLE-WOLFORD
IN BLOOM AND MERRICKVILLE WOLFORD'S RESIDENTS

Merrickville-Wolford
IN BLOOM

