

WOODSTOCK HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

CODE OF CONDUCT

Background:

The Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) has stipulated that each member society is required to have a Code of Conduct which will outline the behavioural expectations for members of that society.

Introduction:

What is a Code of Conduct? The Code is a written set of principles which provide guidance for members of an organization regarding agreed expectations for appropriate behaviour. The Code outlines those behaviours that align with a set of shared values (such as integrity, honesty, transparency) to which all members strive.

Why develop a Code of Conduct?

We strive to show the principles and values described in the code of conduct are ones that members already endeavour to live by; they describe who we are as an organization.

Why is it necessary to put these into a formal document? Aside from the requirement by the OHA, the process of developing a Code of Conduct in any organization can help members articulate their vision for how the organization should function, how members should be treated and how awkward situations (such as conflicts of interest) should be dealt with in a responsible and fair way. The Code of Conduct is an opportunity for members to identify and strengthen shared values such as a commitment to honesty and integrity in the work of the Society.

General:

For the purpose of this document:

'The Society' is deemed to proxy for the Woodstock Horticultural Society.

A member in good standing is deemed to be a person who has paid their annual dues and abides by the Society's Code of Conduct.

NOTE TO MEMBERS AND PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

All members and prospective members of the Society are expected to familiarize themselves with the Code prior to becoming a member or renewing their membership. If you have any questions about any part of the Code, please contact the President of the Society.

GENERAL PRINCIPLE:

The Society is committed to fostering an environment in which members, visitors and speakers feel welcomed and are treated honorably and respectfully.

CODE OF CONDUCT:

Members of the Society are expected to:

1. Actively participate in and encourage participation by others in the activities of the Society.
2. Respect and uphold the rights and dignity of fellow members and all individuals who participate in the Society's programs and activities.
3. Behave in a manner that is collegial and fosters a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
4. Refrain from engaging in behaviours that might have the effect of limiting free and open discussion.
5. Refrain from engaging in behaviour that is or may be perceived to be harassing or abusive as defined in the Ontario Horticultural Association's Code of Conduct. (see Appendix A)
6. Demonstrate good faith, prudent judgment, honesty, transparency, and openness in any activities engaged in on behalf of the Society.
7. Serve the overall best interests of the Society, in accordance with the Society's Constitution, By-Laws, Policies and Procedures, and to support its current strategic objectives and planning decisions reached by the elected Board of Directors.
8. Avoid or immediately declare any personal conflict of interest, actual or perceived, that may influence their role in the Society and/or decisions made for the Society and recuse themselves as appropriate. (see Appendix B for a definition and examples of Conflicts of Interest)

If a member becomes the subject of a complaint under the Code of Conduct, they are expected to participate in the Complaints process as outlined in Appendix C

APPENDIX A:

Extract from the Ontario Horticultural Association Code of Conduct

DEFINITIONS:

Harassment:

Harassment consists of offensive, abusive, belittling, or threatening behaviour directed at a person or people because of a particular characteristic of that person or people, including the person's level of empowerment relative to the harasser. The behaviour must be unwelcome and the sort of behaviour that a reasonable person would recognize as unwelcome and likely to cause the person to feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated.

Sexual Harassment:

A person is deemed to have sexually harassed another person if:

- the person makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the person harassed, or the person engages in unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the person harassed, in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated, or intimidated.
- "Conduct of a sexual nature" includes making a statement of a sexual nature to a person, or in the presence of a person.

Behaviours constituting harassment:

Harassment may take many forms and may be explicit or implicit, physical, verbal, or nonverbal. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Jokes or comments directed at a person's body, looks, age, race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability;
2. Abusive behaviour aimed at humiliating or intimidating someone in a less powerful position;
3. Unwelcome remarks including teasing, name-calling, or insults, innuendo, or taunting;
4. Homophobic comments and/or behaviours;
5. Uninvited touching, kissing, embracing, or messaging;
6. Unwelcome staring, leering, or ogling;
7. Unwelcome smutty jokes and comments;

8. Unwelcome persistent or intrusive questions about a person's private life;
9. Repeated invitations to go out, especially after prior refusal;
10. Unwelcome sexual propositions;
11. The use of promise or threat to coerce someone into sexual activity;
12. Sexual insults, taunts, or name-calling;

Abuse:

Abuse can be defined as, but is not limited to, any act of threat involving molestation, harassment, corporal punishment or any form of physical, sexual or mental abuse; the misuse of power or authority; treatment of a person or persons in a harmful, injurious, and or offensive manner; speaking insultingly, harshly and /or unjustly to or about another person(s); or committing an act of sexual assault.

APPENDIX B:

Conflict of Interest: Definition and Examples:

A Conflict of Interest refers to a situation in which personal, occupational, or financial considerations affect, or appear to affect, a member's objectivity, judgment, or ability to act in the best interests of the Society. A Conflict of Interest may be actual, potential, or perceived in nature. Examples may include but are not limited to:

1. Personal interests which conflict with the interests of the Society or are otherwise adverse to the interests of the Society;
2. Accepting payment or benefitting financially through Society involvement, other than reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses pursuant to the Society's By-laws and/or generally acceptable financial practices and/or through the normal business practices of the Society.

APPENDIX C:

Outline of Complaints procedures:

The following section outlines the procedures to be followed in the event of a complaint under the Code of Conduct. For the purposes of this document, the person who initiates the concern is referred to as the complainant, and the person whose behaviour is the subject of the complaint is referred to as the Respondent.

STEP ONE: INFORMAL RESOLUTION:

Initially, the complainant (*if they feel safe to do so*) is encouraged to speak to the respondent, and, where appropriate, attempt to resolve the issue themselves.

STEP TWO: FORMAL RESOLUTION (I):

If an informal resolution cannot be reached in Step One, or the complainant does not feel comfortable in completing Step One, the Complainant may make a formal complaint in writing to a member of the Board of Directors of the complainant's choice who will attempt to reach an appropriate resolution.

This complaint should contain the following information: Who / What / Where / When and the effect it had on the complainant.

The names of witnesses to the event should be included whenever possible.

STEP THREE: FORMAL RESOLUTION (ii):

If a resolution cannot be reached in Step Two, the complaint will be referred to the OHA District 10 Director. The decision as to a course of action as set out by the OHA District10 Director is deemed to be the final resolution to the complaint.

Resolution of the complaint may involve revocation of membership in WHS.