



Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, M.P.
Beaches-East York



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For immediate release:

- TORONTO, ON

In a nationwide poll that ended on Canada Day, 80% of almost 10,000 Canadians picked bunchberry (*Cornus Canadensis*) as their choice for a national flower. The flower is known as *quatre-temps* in French and *kawiscowimin* in Cree.

A petition was submitted to the Government of Canada on Monday December 4, calling for the creation of this national flower designation. Video link here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Dqb4iuStG-Z71eevvO4ZPHC4LFxt85sQ/view?usp=sharing>

The petition was created by Maureen Hulbert, Executive Director of the Toronto Master Gardeners, using the Parliament of Canada e-petitions process (www.ourcommons.ca) and it was promoted by the Master Gardeners of Ontario.

Bunchberry, along with Hooded Ladies Tresses (*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*) and Twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*), were identified as three finalists in the poll with the help of Todd Boland, research horticulturist with Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John's, because they are found all across the nation, growing wild in most areas, and are not already designated as provincial or territorial emblems.

M.P. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith was pleased to sponsor this petition in the year of Canada's 150th birthday. With its white and red flowers, and its distribution in habitats in every province and territory, it is an ideal candidate to be designated as Canada's National Flower.

Quotes: "Maureen and Claudette's petition is a perfect initiative to commemorate Canada 150. Canada should have a national flower, and we should rely on their expertise."

“At a minimum, Heritage Canada should undertake a public consultation, to build on the work of the Master Gardeners of Ontario.”

“I was happy to support my constituent in bringing this conversation forward. Our natural history is an important part of the Canadian identity, and after 150 years, it’s about time we had a national flower.”

M.P. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith
Liberal Party of Canada
Beaches-East York

“Words and symbols are very powerful things. When you take the time to name something and recognize it, you imbue it with power. The Ontario Trillium is a good example of that. Its designation encourages people to both protect the plant in wild populations and plant it in private gardens.”

“Native plants have never been at such risk, both in Canada and globally. They are under threat from destruction of wild areas, the spread of non-native invasive plants and the lack of awareness in the general public about the role that native plants play.”

- Maureen Hulbert (Executive Coordinator) Toronto Master Gardeners
- Claudette Sims (President) Master Gardeners of Ontario

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Maureen and Nathaniel are available for media inquiries and interviews.

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