

## Resolution or Disillusion

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Reporter

The tradition of turning over a new leaf and staying resolved to change or improve an aspect of one's character or life is a common practice this time of year when the calendar is reborn, unmarked and blank with possibilities. Everyone likes the idea of wiping a slate clean and starting fresh with no strings attached, to conveniently forget past transgressions, bad habits, and undesirable outcomes. If the idea of making a New Year's resolution is so appealing – appealing enough to become embedded in our culture as a tradition – Why do so many people have difficulty honoring their promises to themselves?

The first problem is that our sense of ourselves is not re-born every January 1<sup>st</sup>. Our own self concepts and habits of behavior are cumulative – they form year after year as the residue of living. Living a life requires an orientation; one needs to know who they are and what the context is in which they live. Habits – even bad habits – offer this service to the human race – they give us a sense of continuity.

On further inspection, the more I look at that first problem the more I realize that it is in danger of rising off the ground and drifting away. There might be something to it but at the moment it is amounting to a blustery gust of humid, hot air that is blowing recklessly over a simpler and more plausible reason for our lack of resolve to carry out our self – improvement projects.

The fact that large quantities of alcohol are ingested around this time of year and that this practice of getting “altered” coincides with the tradition of making a resolution somehow is non-productive. The confluence of streams of alcohol and moral resolve create a confusing mixture of action without purpose and purpose without action – they both cross one another out. Of course everything is clear after a few beers; your sense of compassion is unbridled, and like your eyeballs, your sense of

self-righteousness is floating along meeting no objection. In this “pickled” state the moment is perfect to end world poverty, eliminate the value of oil or invent the perfect political system - I do think James Watt invented the steam engine after a few to many single-malts but that is an exception, it is Scotch after all. Change takes consistency, the ability to string together a series of moments that are dedicated to an outcome, not by a beer drenched moment that is diluted, singular and intoxicated with its own whimsical nonsense. Basically we have a cultural conflict: We want change that requires dedication but we're only willing to commit to that end if it is comfortable – in short, serious resolve and alcohol intoxication cannot exist simultaneously!!

This is beginning to take on the complexion of a very boring essay with unnecessary digressions. I guess what it all comes down to – unless you're incredibly good at negotiating compromise and achieving balance – is what do you value more from a New Year: A great kick-ass party or the chance to re-invent yourself? The first is much easier, or at least it should be. The second is a bit more difficult to navigate. It requires taking an inventory of yourself and asking sharp, honest questions like: Who am I? Where do I want to go? How can I be a better person? The combination of self-inquiry and persistent effort is probably the reason most resolutions lose momentum or are never started in the first place; they're just too much work for some people. I personally have a New Year resolution that involves achieving more balance in my life, not the least of which is taking the best from a commitment to change, and of course, enjoying all the perks associated with a great party! If I can't balance the tricky weights and measures of fun and personal growth, well, there is always next year isn't there. Have a great 2006!

## UPEI's New Greenhouse Houses Project on Wild Roses

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Contributor

Many students may have noticed the new greenhouse which has recently been built behind the Duffy science building and wondered “what's in there?”. The fully computerized, climate-controlled greenhouse is the center of an exciting and innovative research project



taking place in Atlantic Canada. The project's investigative team includes scientists across the region, carrying out research on wild roses from both agricultural and bio-medical perspectives. It is the agricultural part of the project that involves the greenhouse. Jim Kemp of the Biology department at UPEI, Kevin Sanderson of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada PEI, and Wilf Nicholls of Memorial University of Newfoundland's Botanic Garden are the key collaborators.

Recently, I spoke with Sarah Clark, the greenhouse technician, who explained the project to me. The greenhouse will be used to establish early growing procedures for wild roses so that roses can be planted as a commercial crop on Prince Edward Island. In particular, it is the fruit of the plant, known as a rose hip, that has huge economic potential for its use in the cosmetic and nutraceutical industries. The roses' project is part of the mission of the Atlantic Canada Network on Bioactive Compounds, which is centered within the Faculty of Science at UPEI and funded through the Atlantic Opportunities Agency, Technology PEI, and the private industries.

But, why would wild roses be a potential crop in the first place? The rose hips contain high amounts of Vitamin C and antioxidants. Antioxidants are compounds which have the potential to reduce harmful oxidative stress which occurs in the body on a daily basis. They have been shown to contain health promoting benefits such as decreasing risk of certain cancers, decreasing risk of heart disease, and even potentially slowing the aging process. In Europe especially, rose hip extracts are used in the cosmetic industry in soaps and shampoos and also in the natural health products sector as

nutraceuticals. Nutraceuticals are foods which are marketed as having some health promoting effect which makes them a blend of food and drug. Although both rose hip tea and rose hip syrup are commonly used in Europe, the potential for rose hips has not been fully realized in the North American market yet.

Wild roses grow abundantly in Atlantic Canada, but until now no one has attempted to grow them in large quantities commercially. If these plants are to be used successfully as a commercial crop, optimum growing conditions must be established first. There are several variables being investigated in this project, including which species to use, which part of the stem to cut, which time of year is best to plant and harvest, and how to space the plants in the fields. The ideal would be to find a set of growing conditions that produces the highest yield of rose hips with the highest amount of antioxidants. As part of the project, investigators are taking cuttings from wild roses across the region, propagating them in the new greenhouse and then transplanting them into field sites to determine growing conditions. Agriculture and Agri Food Canada's farm at Harrington, PEI is a major field site, but several farmers in PEI and other provinces have made land available as well.

Along with the economic potential of this crop, there are environmental advantages as well. Wild roses have prodigious root systems which hold the soil in place making them an appropriate buffer zone crop. Farmers could plant these along waterways to prevent run-off of soil, while at the same time receiving a cash return on what might otherwise be unused land.

I am amazed that all of this is taking place right here on campus. I have walked by the Duffy greenhouse many times and wondered what was inside, but now I know that inside is a truly innovative and exciting project with huge potential for Prince Edward Island farmers.