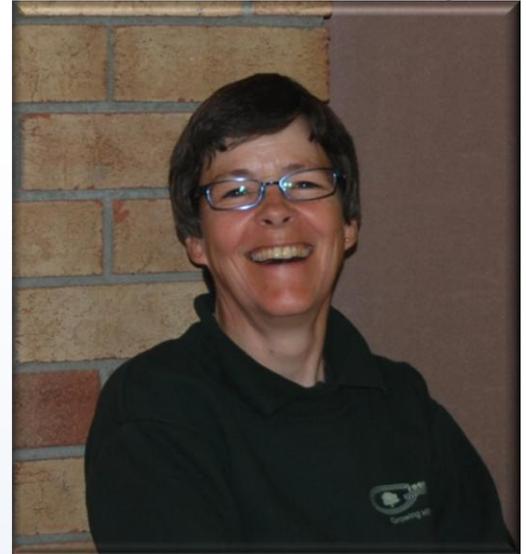


You're Not Done Yet! – September 3, 2014

Mary Shearman Reid grew up in Montreal in a family of gardeners and worked as a gardener during her summers at university. In 1996, she purchased a share of Green Thumb Garden Centre and by 1998 she was the sole owner. Mary has made Green Thumb a garden centre that serves both new and experienced gardeners. It is customer focused, there is always someone to answer questions and the plants are organized so that you know where they will be happiest in your garden. Mary is a member of Landscape Ontario, a Certified Landscape Professional and a Master Gardener.



At the September meeting of the Greely Gardeners Group (www.greelygardeners.ca), Mary gave an illustrated talk packed with useful information about tasks we can undertake in the fall to make our gardening less arduous in the spring and to give us a head start on the next season. Below are just some of the points made during her presentation.

She noted that many perennials and shrubs can be divided and transplanted in the fall; though she did emphasize the need to water daily for two weeks and weekly to the end of the season. Most grasses are best divided in the spring.

Mary spent some time talking about pruning. Many shrubs can be pruned in the fall, though it is essential to know when shrubs flower. Those that flower in the spring are best left to be pruned following flowering; they have already set their buds for the spring flowering and if pruned in the fall will not flower in the spring. For hydrangeas and clematis, it is important to know which type you have as some can be pruned in the fall and others are best left till spring. Roses as well are best left until the spring to prune. For other perennials it is a question of taste; most can be pruned in the fall but some can be left to go to seed for the birds (e.g. cone flowers). Some evergreen perennials such as candytuft and Japanese spurge do not need any pruning.

Certain summer and fall flowering bulbs should be dug up and stored for the winter; these include cannas, gladioli and dahlias. Most should be dug up before the first frost though dahlias can tolerate some frost before they are dug up. Mary noted that the bulbs can be stored for the winter in various mediums including vermiculite or newspaper.

Planting bulbs for spring flowering should be done before mid-October. A good way to recall how deep to plant bulbs is three times their height. This is less important for tulips that can be planted even deeper and planted even later. It is even possible to plant tulips after the ground has begun to freeze. Dig though the top of the frozen soil and below it is still soft. By planting this late the soil immediately freezes over again and the squirrels are unable to get to the bulbs. If you are unsure which way is up on the bulb, then plant them on their side. Bulbs can also be put in pots in the fall. The pots should be buried and dug up in the spring for use in planters. All bulbs that are planted need to be well watered before the ground freezes.

Mary also spent time talking about the importance of mulching, especially for shallow rooted and newly transplanted plants. Tree trunks should also be wrapped to prevent rodent and animal damage in the winter and "Scoot" could be applied on tree trunks that are particularly vulnerable, especially to deer and rabbit damage.

Finally, it was noted that fertilizers should not really be applied to plants after the middle of August. In addition, all plants need water throughout the winter and it is a good idea to give them a good soak before the ground freezes; it will make their spring awakening a less stressful process.

Mary answered many questions from members following her presentation and was still answering individual questions for quite some time after the formal close of the meeting.