



Greely Gardeners Group

Newsletter

February 2002

GREELY GARDENERS CALENDAR:

Monday March 4, 7:45 p.m. Greely Community Centre *Next meeting*

Bedding plants can be expensive. Why not save a little money by growing your own. It's not too late to start for the coming season. We'll look at some of the do's and don'ts of starting flower and vegetable seeds at home.

Monday April 8, 7:45 p.m. Greely Community Centre

Prepare Your Lawn for Summer.

Saturday May 11, 10:00 a.m. Greely Community Centre

Flower bed design — hands-on demonstration.

Monday June 3, 7:45 p.m. Greely Community Centre

Gardening that you can eat.

Saturday June 22, 10:00 a.m.

Members garden tour.

August – date to be arranged

Field trip.

Monday September 9, 7:45 p.m. Greely Community Centre

Members' Flower Show and Annual Meeting.

Monday October 7, 7:00 Greely Community Centre

Plant Swap and Sale.

Monday November 4, 7:45 p.m. Greely Community Centre

Birds in the garden.

Monday December 2, 7:45 Greely Community Centre

Christmas Pot Luck Dinner.

Other Upcoming Events

Tuesday March 12, 7:30 p.m. Tomkins Hall, Church Street, Manotick.

Manotick Horticultural Society meeting. "Celebration of Tulips", a slideshow of major flower parades in England and Holland, by Linda Thorne, owner of Thorne & Company.

Wednesday March 13, 7:00 p.m. Greely Community Centre.

COGG (Community Organization Greening Greely) monthly meeting. New members always welcome.

Wednesday March 20, 7- 9 p.m. Building 72, Arboretum, Central Experimental Farm.

Friends of the Farm: Roses and the Rose Garden, with Jan Phillips. Members \$10, non-members \$12. Limited space, call 230-3276 to pre-register.

Tip of the Month

One of the methods for starting seeds that will really improve your plants is bottom heat. Your seeds will germinate faster and more of that expensive seed will grow. Besides these advantages you will also have fewer problems with disease. Even after the seeds germinate bottom heat is a good idea. If you are just starting a few plants and have an older refrigerator you can just set them on top. With the older appliances the top is warm. The top of a water heater will also work. Either way the idea is to keep the soil at 22 degrees C. Place a seed flat with moist soil in place and check the soil temperature for a couple of days before you seed to get it right. A low wattage propagation mat to start seed will greatly increase your percentage of germination and they are easier to use because they have a thermostat so you can set the right temperature. Propagation mats are available from most of the seed catalogues, and locally from Lee Valley Tools. Another alternative is a soil heating cable. The temperature is preset and you just bury it in a bed of sand and plug it in. These are also available from most of the seed catalogs.

Keep your seeds and the seedlings from drying out. Not wet but damp all the time. Seedling trays with a clear lid help to keep the moisture in but open them up once a day at least to let some air circulate. Remove the lids when the seedlings reach the top. With some bottom heat your seedlings will grow faster, be healthier and you'll have some great plants to set out in the spring.

About African Violets

The topic at the February GGG meeting was care of indoor plants. One member asked for advice on getting African violets to flower. Here are some tips from one successful grower: Give them good light but not too much sun, an east window is ideal. Don't over water, let the top half inch of soil dry out between waterings. Don't wet the foliage. Feed sparingly. African violets flower best if they're pot bound, so don't repot them until you absolutely have to, then go to the next size of pot. Repotted plants won't likely flower for one year. Now for the real secret for prize winning blooms – add about a half teaspoon of Epsom salts to the regular watering about the end of March. Your violets will love you for it.

Last Call for Membership Renewal...

If you haven't renewed your Greely Gardeners membership yet, now is the time to do it. The cost is still just \$10 for the year, and includes all of the Group's events, plus this monthly newsletter to keep you up to date on the Group's activities.

To renew, just come along to the next meeting on Monday March 4. If you can't make that meeting, call Shelagh Heatlie at 821-0816 to renew your membership. All those who haven't renewed after March 4 will be removed from the mailing list.

Greely Gardeners Group, Executive Committee

President ~ Bob Stanley 821-1847

Activities Director ~ Alison Whitlock 821-4469

Secretary/Membership ~ Shelagh Heatlie 821-0816