



Greely Gardeners Group

Newsletter

February 2003

REMINDER: GGG meetings are now held on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:15 pm. Because of rehearsals by the Greely Players, the March meeting will be in the Committee Room, not in our usual room.

GREELY GARDENERS CALENDAR:

Wednesday March 5, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre

Growing and Using Herbs. Our speaker Debbie Luce, of Herbs for All Seasons, has a herb farm in Metcalfe and markets herbal products and much more at her unique store in Manotick.

Wednesday April 2, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre

Topic to be arranged.

Wednesday May 7, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre

Topic to be arranged.

Saturday May 10, tentative. Spring plant sale. Organizer wanted!

Wednesday June 4, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre

Topic to be arranged.

Saturday June 21, 10:00 a.m.

Members garden tour. We're looking for gardens to include on the tour. Don't be shy – even if your garden isn't perfect (yet) we'd still like to see it. And you might get some helpful suggestions from some of the members passing through.

Wednesday September 3, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre

Annual Meeting and election of new executive.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, March 11, 8:00 p.m. Manotick Horticultural Society. Monthly meeting held at Tomkins Hall, Church Street, Manotick

Wednesday, March 19, 7 p.m. Friends of the Farm – Bonsai Design and Techniques presented by Barney Shum of the Bonsai Society and Friends of the Central Experimental Farm on March 19 from 7 to 9 pm, building 72 in the Central Experimental Farm Arboretum. \$10 for members, \$12 for non-members. Pre-registration recommended. Call 230-3276.

March 25 to May 27, Tuesdays at 7 p.m. Master Gardeners Lecture Series, presented by Master Gardeners and Friends of the Farm. Building 72, Arboretum, at the Farm. The series will cover the secret of success from seeds and soil, choosing the right spot, to tips and maintenance techniques. Members \$60.00, non-members \$80.00. Pre-registration *required*. Call 230-3276.

TIP OF THE MONTH

POPPIES DESERVE A PLACE IN ANY GARDEN: in wildflower and meadow plantings, perennial borders, cutting gardens or mixed-shrub borders. Their flower colors range from vibrant to subdued—from deepest crimson, bright orange and yellow to soft pink, dusky peach, rose, lilac and cream. Flowers may be single, double or semidouble, with amazing texture and size. The Iceland poppy produces flowers up to seven inches across above attractive blue-green, segmented foliage. The Shirley poppy bears single or double crepe-paper-like blooms edged with white. Field, or Flanders, poppies sport single, crimson flowers, which suit wildflower plantings perfectly.

In a border garden, poppies combine beautifully with lamb's ears, cornflowers, larkspur, Shasta daisy, and veronica. For a meadow look, you can't go wrong with a sowing of poppies among lupine, coreopsis, Indian blanket, black-eyed Susan, and cornflower—the colors complement each other and the various plants extend the flowering season into fall. Poppies vary in height from 2 to 3 feet tall, although there are dwarf strains of the Iceland poppy that reach only 12 inches. The latter work well in rock gardens, in containers, and at the front edge of a border. Most poppies look good in the middle or towards the rear of perennial beds.

ANNUAL POPPIES

Corn poppy *Papaver rhoeas*, grows 2 to 3 feet tall, blooms from late spring through summer and bears red, purple, lilac, white, salmon, peach, pink or orange flowers with a distinctive dark blotch at the base of each petal. The Shirley poppy, a selection from the species, grows to 4 feet tall; its pastel blooms lack the blotch but have a narrow white or tinted edge on each petal.

PERENNIAL POPPIES

Alpine poppy *P. alpinum*, grows 5 to 10 inches tall, blooms from late spring to summer and bears white, yellow, or occasionally orange or red flowers. It is hardy to Zone 5. Iceland poppy *P. nudicaule*, grows 1 to 2 feet tall, blooms from late spring through summer and produces orange, red, yellow, apricot, pink, salmon or white flowers. It is hardy to Zone 2. Oriental poppy *P. orientale*, grows 2 to 4 feet tall, blooms from late spring to midsummer and bears scarlet, salmon, pink, peach, white or rose blooms, usually with a black blotch at the base of the petals. The foliage dies back after flowering but begins to regrow in fall. It is hardy to Zone 4.

GROWING FROM SEED

Poppies grow easily from seed. Be sure to select the correct species for an annual or perennial planting. They are known for self-sowing, sometimes with abandon, and you may find seedlings popping up all around the garden bed. They are not invasive and the seedlings are easy to pull up if they land in unwanted places.

Poppies are frost tolerant and germinate best in cool weather and soil. Sow seeds as early as the ground can be worked in spring. Poppies bloom profusely under cool growing conditions. When temperatures rise poppy plants tend to bloom only sporadically.

Select a site in full sun, one that receives at least six hours of direct sun daily. In warm climates (zones), plants do best with some protective shade at midday. Poppies grow in almost any kind of soil with good drainage. Mix the tiny poppy seeds with some sand to make even spacing easier. Sow thinly where you want the plants to grow in the bed and cover them with a very thin layer of fine soil (poppies germinate best with some light) and water the area. Keep the soil moist, but not soggy, until seeds germinate. When seedlings are about 1 inch tall, thin them to stand 6 to 10 inches apart. If you're growing annual poppies, sow more than once during spring to extend the colour season in the garden.

Greely Gardeners Group, Executive Committee

President ~ Bob Stanley 821-1847

Activities Director ~ Alison Whitlock 821-4469

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