



Greely Gardeners Group

Newsletter

April/May 2003

GREELY GARDENERS CALENDAR:

Saturday May 24, 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Spring plant sale. Andy Shields Park.

When you're dividing those perennials, be sure to pot up the extras for our plant sale. Label them and bring them along to Andy Shields Park on Old Prescott Road at 9:30. For more information call Marie Smith at 821-5457.

Saturday May 31, 10:00 a.m. Time to plant the flower bed in front of the Community Centre (this is how we pay the rent for our meeting room). Bring tools for weeding and planting. This should only take a couple of hours, and the more hands we have the faster the work goes.

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

Last meeting before the summer break. We'll be finalizing details of the garden tour and a summer outing. Also, is anyone interested in reviving the garden photo contest? Maybe this time with real prizes?

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 10, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre

Annual Meeting and election of new executive. Also seed swap – collect seeds from your favourite plants and trade them with other members. Note that this meeting is on the second Wednesday of the month.

Wednesday October 8, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre

Winterizing your garden. Note that this meeting is on the second Wednesday of the month.

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

Roses for Canadian gardens. The very knowledgeable Tony Williams of Peter Knippel Nursery will be our guest speaker.

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

Christmas Pot-Luck Supper.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday July 1, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friends of the Farm Strawberry Social, in Memory Park behind the Central Experimental Farm Museum. Cost \$5. For information call 230-3276

Sunday August 10, 2 – 4p.m. Friends of the Farm Victorian Tea. Classic tea \$5 served on the lawns of Bldg. 72 in the Arboretum. Bring a patio chair and listen to the music. Enter the best hat contest. For more information call 230-3276.

July 16, 6th Annual 10-Mile Run On The Farm. Starts at Morningside & The Driveway.

Registration 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. Run starts at 6:30. Registration \$15; advance registration \$12. For information call 230-3276

TIPS OF THE MONTH

DAZZLE THEM WITH DAHLIAS. The first dahlia tubers arrived in Europe at the end of the 18th century, sent over to Madrid by Spanish settlers in Mexico. Andreas Dahl (after whom the plant is named) regarded it as a vegetable rather than a garden flower, but interest switched from the edible tubers to the blooms when the first varieties with large, double flowers were bred in Belgium in 1815. Within a few years nearly every colour we now admire had been introduced and Victorian catalogues listed hundreds of varieties. The favourites in those days were the ball and small decorative dahlias. Today it is the large decorative and cactus varieties that capture the public fancy. Fashions change but the popularity of this late summer flower continues to increase. The reasons for this devotion to the dahlia are fairly obvious. First of all the skill of breeders in England, Holland, Germany, Australia and America has produced a range of sizes and colours unmatched in the world of garden flowers. Plants ranging from 12-inch-high dwarf bedders to six-foot giants. Flowers range in size from one inch to the largest dinner plate.

Equally important is the time of flowering. From the end of July to the first frosts, dahlias provide large orbs of colour when so many flowers are past their best. Above all the dahlia is an accommodating plant. It likes a good loam, but will grow almost anywhere. It relishes sunshine, but tolerates partial shade. A bed just for dahlias is really the ideal way to grow them, but they are quite at home in the herbaceous border or even the rockery for dwarf bedding varieties.

Even the novice gardener can grow great dahlias. Plant the tubers when all danger of frost is past, and if no tubers are available then a trip to the garden centre offers a wide range of pot tubers or rooted cuttings. With planting out of the way, it's just a matter of staking when the stems threaten to fall over and the foliage is sprayed when blackfly becomes a nuisance. Even with such simple treatment a surprisingly good display can be obtained.

But it need not be an easy plant. For the enthusiast, growing dahlias is an exacting and absorbing hobby. There are soil mixtures and composts to prepare in winter, cuttings to raise from tubers, growing points to pinch out, fertilizer to apply, side shoots to remove, plants to disbud, roots to be kept moist and show blooms to stage. There are many challenges for the enthusiast; there is the world record 21-inch bloom to beat, the elusive blue dahlia to raise and a variety of show awards to win.

Dahlias are excellent for providing cut flowers and will bloom vigorously throughout the summer until the first frosts. Colours range from vibrant pinks and crimsons through rich hues of mauves and purples to the pastel shades of lilacs, pinks, and creams. Under the right conditions a single plant may produce as many as 100 blooms!

For much more information about dahlias (and a lot of other great gardening information) visit Susan Doyle's website at www.susansgardenpatch.com.

THOSE PESKY LILY BEETLES are a menace this time of year. Jennifer Llewellyn, Nursery Crops Specialist for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, says the larval stage is protected by its slimy covering and the adult beetles are very difficult to kill. A direct spot spray of insecticidal soap may help to smother the adult beetles, but she says "You will likely have a higher rate of success with hand removal." In other words, pick them off and drown the things! Look for yellow-orange elongate, oval eggs crowded together and stuck to the undersides of leaves. Don't bother checking your daylilies, since this pest does not bother them. Look for the adults right now, crawling around emerging true lilies (Asiatic, Trumpet, Oriental, etc.) and also around fritillaria. It's important to kill the adults *before* they lay their egg masses. Lily leaf beetle has also been reported on Solomon's seal, bitterweet, potatoes, hollyhocks and some hostas, so be on the lookout!

Greely Gardeners Group, Executive Committee

President ~ Bob Stanley 821-1847

Activities Director ~ Alison Whitlock 821-4469

Secretary/Membership ~ Shelagh Heatlie 821-0816