



Greely Gardeners Group

Newsletter

April 2005

GREELY GARDENERS CALENDAR:

Wednesday, May 4, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre. Monthly meeting. Topic "Ornamental Grasses in Your Garden". Guest speaker: Suzanne Patry of Whitehouse Perennials in Almonte.

Saturday, May 28, 9:00 a.m. to noon. Greely Gardeners Annual Plant Sale. Andrew Shields Park, Old Prescott Highway.

Wednesday, June 1, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre. Monthly meeting. Topic: "Living fences – separating flower beds, property, using trees, shrubs, and vines." Guest speaker: Neil Ritchie of Ritchie's Feed and Seed.

Saturday, June 18, 10:00 a.m. GGG Members Gardens Tour. Starts from the Greely Community Centre parking lot.

Saturday, July 16, GGG's annual field trip. Details to be announced.

Saturday, August 20, GGG members' BBQ. Details to be announced.

Wednesday, September 7, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre. Monthly meeting and AGM. Topic: "New Plant Trends." Guest speaker: Mary-Anne Schmitz, of Gardening by Design.

Wednesday, October 5, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre. Monthly meeting. Topic: "Pruning and Protection of Plants." Guest speaker: Mary-Anne Riley.

Wednesday, November 2, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre. Monthly meeting. Topic: "Container Gardening." Guest speaker: Helen Halpenny

Wednesday, December 7, 7:00 p.m. Greely Community Centre. Christmas Pot Luck Dinner.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Friends of the Central Experimental Farm – Rare and Unusual Plant Sale, presented by FoF and speciality growers and nurseries. A perfect Mother's Day outing! **May 8, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm** in the parking lot of the Neatby Building, Carling & Maple Drive, Central. Admission is a donation to the Food Bank. For information, call 230-3276.

Volunteer Gardening Information Sessions. Volunteer this season with Friends of the Central Experimental Farm. Explore volunteer opportunities on **May 10 and June 7 1-3 pm** in Building 72, Arboretum. For information 230-3276, or email volunteer@friendsofthefarm.ca.

Manotick Horticultural Society meets on the second Monday of the month, 7:30 p.m. at the Legion Hall on Ann Street in Manotick.

Osgoode Garden Club meets on the third Wednesday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at the Osgoode Library on Main Street. For information call Louise Boudreau 826-0385.

Russell and District Horticultural Society meets on the third Monday of the month, 7 p.m. at the Legion Hall, corner of First Street and Legion Lane. **Monday, May 16**, talk by Jennifer Hendricks, Horticulturalist and Master Gardener, on "Basics of Landscape Design." **Saturday May 21**, Annual Plant Sale at the Russell Curling Club, 8:30 am to 1:00 pm – annuals, perennials, small trees and shrubs, mixed hanging baskets and hardy roses.

Tip of the Month



APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS, the saying goes. They also mean it's time to start the garden cleanup, and get going on all those spring chores we've been just itching to get at. Some people regard the spring cleanup with about as much enthusiasm as they do preparing their income tax. But others can't wait to get their hands back into the soil, after dreaming, plotting and planning their great garden expectations all winter.

We all know how capricious spring can be here. Remember last spring, when we had a severe cold snap in April? That was tough on tender young growth if their protective covering of mulch had already been removed by a gardener who just couldn't wait to get started. Waiting until late April to start an earnest cleanup isn't going to put you far behind on the garden schedule. So if you haven't really got started yet, don't feel bad. In fact it's a good idea to wait until the ground has dried up a fair bit before doing too much in your yard – and with the “showers” we've been getting lately the ground is still pretty soft.

Don't try to do everything all at once. Pick a task, such as cutting back perennials or raking back the mulch, and work through it all around your yard. Or pick a particular bed and clean it up in its entirety before moving on to another. Some parts of our yards dry up and are ready to be worked on sooner than other areas.

Take a leaf rake to the garden to carefully remove detritus from your beds, including the dead mush of leaves from last year's perennials. Pull out the dead annuals that you left in the ground, matted grass and leaves, broken twigs and other organic debris. If you put down a protective winter mulch to cover perennials and bulbs, remove it carefully to avoid disturbing newly emerging shoots.

You can add all this plant material to your compost heap (providing you didn't have disease such as rose blackspot in your garden), you'll be glad of it later in the season. Just remember that for good compost an equal ratio of greens (fresh plant material) to browns (dead material) is required, so you may want to hold some of this material to mix with grass clippings and weeds a little later in the season.

Often the first harbingers of green in the garden are perennial weeds, such as couchgrass, coltsfoot, dandelion and ground ivy. If you didn't have a chance to remove them last fall, get at them right away, before they get spreading in earnest. Sometimes, of course, it's hard to tell if that burst of green is a weed or a plant you paid for, so when in doubt let it grow until you can recognize it as friend or foe.

FIT FOR THE GARDEN

Given that it's almost the end of April, you've probably been out in the garden the past couple of weeks, raking, edging, cleaning up the beds, just like the article above suggests... and as a result your back is killing you and your muscles are sore! Before you do any more damage, you may want to pick up a set of tip sheets provided to Greely Gardeners by Chiromax of Manotick. They tell you how to stretch before you start, offer tips for a healthy back in the garden, and more. There are four sheets in the series, they're free, and they're still available. So help yourself, and have a happy healthy gardening season!

Greely Gardeners Group, Executive Committee:
President ~ Bob Stanley 821-1847
Events Director ~ Gill Toll 821-6123
Secretary/Treasurer ~ Heather Clemenson/Gary Hall 821-7445
Membership ~ Shelagh Heatlie 821-0816