



Greely Gardeners Group

Newsletter

June/July 2005

GREELY GARDENERS CALENDAR:

Saturday, July 16, GGG's annual field trip to the Rideau Woodland Ramble and Down-to-Earth Gardens in Burritt's Rapids. If you haven't registered for this event, please phone Gill Toll at 821-6123 or email her at gilltoll@sympatico.ca.

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

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.

With the destruction of the Manotick Legion by fire, the **Manotick Horticultural Society** will be looking for a new home for their meetings. We'll keep you posted when we have news.

Summer News

Summer is short, and even with the longer days there never seems to be enough time to do everything that has to be done – and take a little time to stop and smell the roses. That's my excuse for combining the June and July newsletters into one. Hope you're all enjoying the summer in spite of the heat and humidity. Any time it starts getting to you, just think about January!

The Members' Gardens Tour in June was a great success, with so many members taking part that we had to split into two groups, meeting up at the end of the tour in Joan and Brad's beautiful garden on Mitch Owens. Thanks to all those who invited us into their gardens, and to Shelagh for laying on mid-tour coffee and snacks.

Next event is this weekend's outing to Burritt's Rapids for a visit to the Rideau Woodland Ramble and Down-to-Earth Gardens – two very different garden centres just around the corner from each other. See above for details.

Finally a special word of thanks to Alison Whitlock who volunteered her time and brought her crew along to tidy up the flower bed in front of the Greely Community Centre just in time for the July 1st celebrations. We need to organize some volunteers to maintain this garden on a regular basis – just routine weeding and clean up. If you're willing to help out, please contact any member of the executive.

Tip of the Month



WEEDS GETTING YOU DOWN? In weather like this they almost seem to spring up overnight. But weeds can be beaten – or at least controlled – if you know what kind of weeds you’re dealing with and what conditions they prefer. Change the growing conditions, and you will go a long way to preventing future weeds without backache or herbicides. So the first step to winning the war on weeds is to find out what weeds you have. Many are wildflowers, so can be identified from wildflower books or websites.

Once you know what you have for weeds, you need to know what conditions they prefer in order to know what may be wrong. Moss is one of the more common “problems” we hear about with lawns. Actually this is not necessarily a problem, as moss gardening has become quite popular. So if you have a healthy crop of moss, perhaps you should consider taking advantage of what are obviously ideal conditions and start a moss garden!

The presence of moss may indicate that you’re mowing too low. It may also mean low pH (acidity), excess soil moisture, or too much shade. Chickweed may also indicate too low mowing, and mouse-ear chickweed may indicate substantial shade. Annual bluegrass may indicate too low mowing, but may also appear in compacted soils, or those with excess moisture. Creeping speedwell may indicate too low mowing, excess shade, or drought conditions. If you think low mowing may be the problem, simply raise the height of mower blades. Most lawns should be mowed around two inches high, and with no more than one-third of the grass blade cut off at any one time.

Prostrate spurge may also indicate compaction or drought. If you think soils are compacted, you can rent or buy an aerator for you lawn to help break up the surface and allow water and air to enter – hence the name. At Lee Valley Tools you can even buy shoe attachments with spikes to wear while mowing, aerating the soil as you walk. Maybe it’s time to give up the lawn tractor, your lawn will be less compacted and you’ll benefit from the exercise!

Clover species may indicate low nitrogen. Rabbit's foot clover may indicate drought or low pH. Hop clover, on the other hand, indicates possible high pH. We actually like some clover in our lawns, as in drought it remains green. It is also a legume – a type of plant whose roots take nitrogen from the air and turn it into forms plants can use. Having clover in your lawn means you won't need to add as much nitrogen fertilizer.

Birdsfoot trefoil and vetch, similar to the clovers, also indicate low nitrogen. Docks, mullein, hawkweed, sheep sorrel, and wild strawberry may indicate low pH. Mullein may indicate low fertility in general, as can wild carrot, wild parsnip, wild radish, foxtail grass, or mallow. In addition to creeping speedwell and spurge, dry soils may be indicated by the presence of crabgrass, pigweed, yarrow, yellow woodsorrel, and curly dock. Mulching can help to control weeds and keep moisture in the soil.

So before you rush out to spend money on herbicides or a lawn care service, look at your weeds more closely. Let them be your guide on what corrective measures to take before you start spraying chemicals on your garden. You may only need to aerate a compacted soil, add some lime to increase the soil pH, cut a few tree limbs to allow more light, or improve watering practices and add organic matter and mulch for dry soils.