



Greely Gardeners Group

Newsletter

August 2005

GREELY GARDENERS CALENDAR:

Welcome back everyone!

Wednesday, September 7, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre. Monthly meeting. Topic: "New Plant Trends." Guest speaker: Mary-Anne Schmitz, of Gardening by Design. Note that this meeting will *not* be held at Mary-Anne's property as was announced earlier, but will be at the Community Centre.

Wednesday, October 5, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre. Monthly meeting and AGM. Topic: "Pruning and Protection of Plants." Guest speaker: Mary-Anne Riley. The AGM, with reports from your Executive and election of officers for the year ahead will take place first, followed by the presentation from our guest speaker.

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

Hands on Workshop: Create a spectacular display of spring flowering bulbs. Learn how to plant and over-winter a stunning container, brimming over with much needed colour, to enjoy as spring arrives. Saturday September 10 and Sunday September 11, 2005 from 10 a.m. to noon or 1-3 p.m. Each two-hour session costs \$10 plus cost of bulbs. Bring your own container or choose one of ours. Taught by container expert Karen Lange at Green Bard Gardens – 1946 Manotick Station Road, Greely. Call Karen at 290-5703 or e-mail karen@greenbard.com now to register as space is limited.

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

BBQ Bust

Our only scheduled event for the month of August – a midday barbecue – was cancelled for lack of interest. Only ten members responded to our email invitation, and only three of those indicated that they could attend. This was the first time we'd proposed such an event, and obviously it's not one that interests many members. Of course a lot of people are away on vacation in August, so maybe timing was the problem. Something for discussion at the September meeting. Remember, your executive is always looking for feedback and programming ideas from you, the members. So if you have comments or suggestions, let's hear them – please!

Volunteers wanted

The GGG has committed to creating a small flower bed at the entrance to the Community Centre, around the newly repaired brick entrance sign. We'll be looking for some volunteers to help with this project, so if you think you can spare a few hours later in September or October, please talk to any member of the executive. More details at the September meeting.

Tip of the Month



SAVING SEEDS from annual flowering plants is a good way to save money, as well as grow your favourites again the following year. It also allows you to grow non-hybrid heirloom plants that may be hard to obtain through seed catalogues or nurseries. Many gardeners also save seeds in order to swap them with others for varieties, often unusual or difficult to find, to try in their garden. Let us know if you're interested in arranging a seed swap for GGG members.

Before you start collecting seeds, here are a few things to keep in mind. The first is that plants grown from hybrid seed will not produce exact replicas of the plant from which you are taking the seed, so it may not be worth the effort to save these seeds. Also, if you grew more than one variety of the same plant, chances are good that the plants cross-pollinated, which again, produces plants don't resemble the parents. If you want to see what you will get, however, this may be a fun experiment! Finally, if you want to collect seeds from perennials, do so only from wildflower species. Most of the perennials you grow in your garden are cultivated varieties, and this means you will only get true "duplicates" from vegetative means, such as cuttings and divisions.

Collect seeds only from the healthiest plants. Wait until the flower has stopped blooming and the seed heads or pods are fully developed and have begun to dry. Picking off the pods too early will not produce viable seed. Use scissors to carefully remove the dried flower heads or pods. A good method is to tie several stalks together and hang them upside down in a brown paper bag in a dry location for several days. As the seed heads dry, the seeds will drop to the bottom of the bag.

The next step is to separate the debris or chaff from the actual seeds. This important because the chaff may contain moisture, which will cause mildew or mould that can infect and kill the seed. Before storing, make sure the seeds are completely dry. Spread the seeds on waxed paper, don't use paper towels or paper plates as the seeds may stick. The top of your fridge is a good warm place to store seeds for drying. The process could take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks.

Once dry, sort your seeds according to variety and place in individual envelopes or small paper bags. You might want to jot a quick description on each, including variety name, colour, height, and other characteristics that will help you when you plan next year's flower garden. Or place seeds in clean, airtight containers such as baby food jars or film canisters. Adding an anti-dessicant material, such as corn meal, will help reduce any moisture in the jars.

Store in your refrigerator, if there's room, or in a cool, dark, dry location. If stored improperly, warmth and moisture may cause the seeds to sprout prematurely or encourage the growth of mould. For best results, keep the container closed until you are ready to plant or swap the seeds. Properly stored, seeds will remain viable for up to several years, depending on the variety. Before planting, you can test your seeds for germination by placing a few between two sheets of wet paper towel. Roll up the towel and place inside a plastic bag so it won't dry out. Keep in a warm place, and check after a few days to see if the seeds have sprouted.

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