



# Greely Gardeners Group

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## Newsletter

September 2005

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### GREELY GARDENERS CALENDAR:

**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.

Look for news on speakers and events for 2006 in the October newsletter.

### OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

**Manotick Horticultural Society** is back in business. When the old Legion Hall in Manotick burned down this summer the MHS lost their home. However, they have now found a new home in the RCMP Club House off Nicholl's Island Road. To get there take River Road towards the city, turn left onto Nicholl's Island Road as if you were going to the locks, and then take the first right. The society's next meeting and flower show will be on **Monday, October 10 at 7:30.**

**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.

### VOLUNTEERS WANTED

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, 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 a few volunteers to help with this project, so if you think you can spare a few hours in October, please talk to any member of the executive.

We'll also be looking for some help co-ordinating the annual Christmas Pot-Luck Supper. (I know, it's still only late September, but the next meeting is October and then there's only one more meeting before December, and it takes time to organize these things.) Again, please talk to any member of the executive if you'd like to help out.

### FREE SEEDS!

If you joined the GGG Members Garden Tour in June you'll remember Lester and Joan Bradley's remarkable garden where we ended the tour. Now you can have some of those plants for your own garden – Brad has been collecting seeds and will bring them to the meeting on October 5. They include Scotch thistle, primula japonica, Jack-in-the-pulpit, Hungarian poppy, columbine (aquilegia) alpine blue, malope (malvaceae), and teasel. If you'd like some they're free, but you must bring your own containers. Brad warns that there are limited quantities of some seeds, and it's first come, first served.

## Tip of the Month



Some tips on how to handle Fall cleanup chores this month from Patti Pokorchak, who we visited in July at her beautiful Down to Earth Gardens. The gardens and walking trails are still open, by the way, but call ahead to make sure (613-269-2687). The fall sale is now on with perennials for as little as \$2. Patti says now is a great time to be planting as it gives you a big head start over next year – plants keep growing until the ground freezes which is usually mid-November or later. So if you didn't get everything planted in the spring, now is the time to do it. Also see #2 below. Here are Patti's tips...

1. Once a heavy frost has killed off all the annuals, pull them up and compost them, but leave the majority of the perennials standing. This gives them extra protection in the winter by capturing the snow over their vulnerable crowns. Plus it's nice to have some vertical interest when everything is flat on the ground and white. And this way you know in the spring that all the annuals are gone and only perennials are left to cleanup. The new garden theory is to leave most of the old leaves on the ground to turn into rich compost. Do this with only healthy leaves, not any leaves with any disease like powdery mildew, that white powder that can appear now on lilacs, beebalm, phlox and other plants.
2. From now to about mid-October is the time to be digging up and dividing or moving spring and summer flowering perennials, like phlox, purple coneflower, grasses that have outgrown their space or you want to move. Leave the late flowering perennials like asters and mums to move in the spring...this is the conventional garden advice but if you really want to move something now, just do it. Plants are remarkably robust and will survive nicely contrary to common theory. Break a few rules, it feels good!
3. Once the cooler temperatures and a bit of rain arrive, it's time to overseed the lawn. The key to a chemical and weed free lawn is lots of grass seed sown with a dash of compost. You can aerate the lawn first, add about 1/2" of top soil or compost, then seed. Keep the seed well watered daily if no rain falls. The last cut should be fairly short – about 2" high – to keep the mice from eating the grass over winter.
4. Pot up any annuals that you want to overwinter and take indoor plants back inside before the first frost. Check that no insects are coming inside by spraying with soapy water first.
5. Dig up dahlia and canna lily tubers and glad bulbs after the foliage has died down. Cut off their leaves, let them dry them out for a day in the shade, knock off the dirt and store in paper bags, wood shavings or peat moss. The goal is to have them not dry out nor get too wet and mouldy. A cool basement or attached garage is usually ideal. Or you can just treat them all like annuals and save yourself all this work.
6. Consider looking at your yard 'work' as yard 'fun' instead. It's an attitude adjustment. I used to sit in my little gazebo thinking I'm in the middle of my 'to-do' pile, until I decided that life is too short to not take time out to enjoy the flowers, and who cares if that weed lives for another day, so I now treat the gazebo as my office and meeting place for friends and I too enjoy the beauty of the gardens....whoever coined that phrase 'take time to smell the roses' was right on. Winter is long, enjoy the best season of the year now. Take a fall walk and kick some leaves.

Patti says she's happy to answer your gardening questions any time. Contact her by email, [patti@storm.ca](mailto:patti@storm.ca), or by phone at the number above. You can also visit her website at [www.downtoearthgardens.ca](http://www.downtoearthgardens.ca).

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