



Greely Gardeners Group Newsletter

March 2006

GREELY GARDENERS CALENDAR:

Wednesday, April 5, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre. Topic: "PROVOCATIVE CONIFERS". Guest speaker Dave Dunn of the Rideau Woodland Ramble in Burritt's Rapids.

Wednesday, May 3, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre. Topic: "DAY LILIES". Guest speaker Suzanne Patry of Whiteside Gardens in Almonte.

Saturday, May 27, 9:00 a.m. to noon Annual Spring Plant Sale, Andrew Shields Park.

Wednesday, June 7, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre. Topic: "GROWING, HARVESTING AND STORING HERBS". Guest speakers Gerry Bedard and Denise George from the Herb Garden in Almonte.

Saturday June 17, ANNUAL MEMBERS' GARDENS TOUR. Open to members and guests. Leaves the Greely Community Centre at 10:00 a.m. The tour takes approximately three hours. Refreshments will be provided.

Saturday, July 15 GGG's ANNUAL FIELD TRIP. Details to be announced.

Wednesday, September 6, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre. Monthly meeting and AGM. Topic: "BULBS AND FALL PLANTING". Guest speaker: Neill Ritchie of Ritchie's Feed and Seed.

Wednesday, October 4, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre. Topic: "IMPROVING YOUR GARDEN WITH COMPOST AND MULCH". Guest speaker: Lindley McPhail, Master Gardener.

Wednesday, November 1, 7:15 p.m. Greely Community Centre. Topic: "KEEPING YOUR INDOOR PLANTS HAPPY AND HEALTHY THROUGH THE WINTER". Guest speaker: houseplant expert Roger Gunthorpe.

Wednesday, December 6, 7:00 p.m. Greely Community Centre. GARDENERS' CHRISTMAS SUPPER. Members and their guests. Details to be announced.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Ritchie's Feed & Seed, Thursday March 30 — free seminar 'How to Start Bulbs and Seeds Indoors' with Tony Haydon, 'The Plant Doctor'. This event starts at 7:00 p.m. at the 1390 Windmill Lane location. There is no charge, but seating is limited. To reserve a spot, either call 741-4430 or email expert@ritchiefeed.com.

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, 7:00 p.m. at the Legion Hall, corner of First Street and Legion Lane.

Manotick Horticultural Society meets on the second Monday of the month in the RCMP Club House off Nicholl's Island Road. For information contact Mary Kealey at 823-1658.

TIP OF THE MONTH

A ROSE IS A ROSE - OR IS IT? ASKS WENDY DOWNING, PAST PRESIDENT OF THE CANADIAN ROSE SOCIETY.



Most Canadian gardeners have spent the last couple of months or more looking through seed catalogues and plant lists in anticipation of finally getting outside and working in our gardens. Most gardeners I know have at least one rose bush in their gardens. Finding good quality plants is becoming increasingly difficult. You can imagine my delight when I recently received brochures from Canadian suppliers (Veseys and Botanus) with many roses offered for sale. I practically swooned to receive the David Austin catalogue from the U.S. with the notice advising that we no longer were required to obtain costly sanitary certificates in order to obtain a multitude of fragrant roses from south of the border. Much to my chagrin after reading the fine print, I realized that most of these roses are grafted on Dr. Huey root stock.

"Who or what is Dr. Huey?", you may well ask. Dr. Huey is a type of rose found in abundance in the United States. It came into widespread use as root stock after many of the states decided that *Rosa multiflora* was a noxious weed — so hardy that it became a nuisance and growers were no longer able to use it.

Most roses grafted to Dr. Huey will not survive the winters in Canada. If you purchase these plants, be prepared to replace them next year. If you are lucky, and the winter mild with adequate snow cover, you may get another year or two out of them.

When looking to purchase roses, might I suggest that you search out growers in Canada who are producing root roses or roses grafted to *R. multiflora* rootstock? Several suppliers that come to mind are Pickering Nurseries, Gardenimport, Hortico, J.C. Bakker, and Enderlein Nurseries in Ontario. Gardenimport sells roses from David Austin nurseries in Great Britain which are grafted to *Rosa laxa* which will survive in Southern Ontario as well as other areas of Canada.. There are a number of other nurseries throughout the country that sell roses by mail order. Information with respect to suppliers in your area can be found on the Canadian Rose Society website at www.canadianrosesociety.org.

A word to the wise before you buy — read the catalogue to see which hardiness zone the plants are recommended for. Ask the salespeople at your local nursery where their roses came from and what root stock was used. Know your zone and your garden. If you have a fenced or walled garden, the micro climate created by the sheltering walls will allow you to try plants that are slightly "out of zone". Plant the rose in well drained soil with the bud union several inches below grade in an area of your garden that gets six to eight hours of sun per day. Roses like lots of water, but do not like wet feet.

I hope this doesn't discourage you from trying roses in your garden. For those in colder climates, try the winter hardy roses introduced by Agriculture Canada. The Parkland and Explorer Series roses have been tested in zones 2 and 3 and will survive in most areas of the country with minimal or no winter protection.

ANOTHER TIP: MAKE IT EASY ON YOURSELF

The snow has almost gone, and in a week or so we'll finally be able to get out in the garden. Chances are, if you're like me, you'll overdo it and end up with a sore back and aching muscles. Well, not this year... I'm taking the advice of occupational therapist Gwen Berdan and physiotherapist Judy Cline. Here are their tips for making gardening easier, especially if hours of bending is getting too hard on your knees and back...

"Think about what kind of things you want to plant," Gwen says. You might want to switch from annuals to perennials (if you haven't already) because they require less up-front work.

"You have to make sure the tools you are using fit you," says Judy. If the handle on that shovel or rake is so short that you have to stoop to use it, donate it to a more diminutive friend, or save it for your yard sale. Says Gwen: "You should use the size of the shovel rather than bending over at the waist."

And she adds that tools are getting lighter as manufacturers use newer materials, so even if your oak handled rake is the right length, think about replacing it with something more modern. While you're at it, consider replacing that unwieldy wheelbarrow with a wagon. "Wheelbarrows do get tippy, and we tend to overfill them because there's such a lot of room in there," Gwen says. "So you're using a lot of stabilizing muscles to control a wheelbarrow, versus a wagon."

If bending is a problem, consider building some raised flowerbeds. "Or learn to use a stool or a bench," suggests Judy. "There are some lovely ones now with wheels. My daughter bought me one for Christmas because I have two partial knee replacements," she adds. "Some units even double as storage with room for your trowel and other tools on the side."

Finally, if you didn't oil and hone your cutting tools at the end of last season, do it now says Gwen.

"Sharp loppers require about half the force of dull ones."

DON'T FORGET THE PLANT SALE

Spring in the garden is a time for dividing perennials and rooting out some of those self-seeding annuals that have sprung up where they're not wanted. Some of us also start far more seedlings than we actually need so have lots of left-overs. Don't throw out any of these orphaned plants! The Greely Gardeners' annual plant sale is scheduled for May 27 and your unwanted plants are just what we need to stock the tables.

So please, don't put them in the compost. Pot up all your extras and unwanted orphans, put them in a safe corner and don't forget to water them once in a while. The plant sale is our major fundraising event of the year. It's what enables us to bring in good speakers and helps offset some of our other costs - your \$10 a year doesn't cover everything.

Closer to the event we'll talk about what to do if you need extra containers for your plants, or need help getting plants to the sale. Meanwhile, keep the plant sale in mind, and maybe put a few dollars aside just in case you happen to find that rare perennial you've always wanted for your garden on one of our tables.

Greely Gardeners Group, Executive Committee:

President ~ Gill Toll 821-6123; Vice-President ~ Anita Snelgrove 821-0447; Secretary ~ Heather Clemenson;
Treasurer ~ Gary Hall 821-7445; Social ~ Shelagh Heatlie 821-0816; Past President/Newsletter ~ Bob Stanley 821-1847