



# Greely Gardeners Group

## Newsletter

October 2006

### GREELY GARDENERS 2006-2007 CALENDAR:

**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. Shelagh Heatlie is once again master-minding the planning for this annual event. There will be sign-up sheets at the November 1 meeting and Shelagh will provide details of what will be needed. Be sure to mark this date on your calendar.

**Thursday, January 4, 7:00 p.m.** GARDENING Q&A WITH PETER AND JOAN KNIPPEL, of Peter Knippel Nursery on Bank Street. If you have gardening questions (and who doesn't?) now is your chance to get answers from the knowledgeable Knippels, so come prepared.

**Thursday, February 8, 7:00 p.m.** USING SHRUBS IN GARDEN DESIGN. Most of us have at least a few shrubs in our gardens. But making full use of them to enhance the design of your garden requires both art and science. Our own Alison Whitlock, of Flower Buds Nursery, will give tips on how to choose and position shrubs for maximum effect, and how to maintain them so that they don't take over your beds.

**Thursday, March 8, 7:00.** Spring is coming and soon it will be time to do something about those overgrown trees and shrubs that you meant to tackle last Fall. Help is at hand as the ever-popular Lee Boltwood, Master Gardener, returns to give us a hands-on demonstration of pruning techniques.

**NOTE:** All three of these meetings are on Thursday nights, not the usual first Wednesday. This is to avoid having to compete with the joyful sounds of The Greely Players, who rehearse in the hall next to ours on Wednesday nights.

Your Executive Committee is still pinning down speakers for the remaining dates of the 2007 season. Look for details in future newsletters. Meanwhile, news of a "bonus" event: Landscape designer Mary-Anne Schmitz was unable to fit in with our schedule for a talk on shade gardening, but has invited interested members to visit her home in Kenmore on the evening of Wednesday June 27 to see her own shade garden and get some ideas and advice. Details to come.

### 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, 7:00 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 Nichols Island Road. For information contact Mary Kealey at 823-1658.

## Tip of the Month...

IF YOU BRING ONLY ONE HERB INDOORS FOR THE WINTER, it should be the rosemary, or, as Brad would say, *Rosmarinus officinalis*. The basil, geraniums, and so on can be restarted in the spring from seed or cuttings, or bought in pots. The thymes, sages, lavenders, and mints, will survive outdoors in most winters. But rosemary, the piny and invigorating tender perennial shrub, is prized in its home Mediterranean climes, and will not survive a Canadian winter (although attempts are underway to develop a winter-hardy strain). It must be brought indoors.

Rosemary is the perfect herb for wintering indoors. First, its Christmas associations are timely. It is said that the colour of the rosemary blossoms turned from white to blue, because the Virgin Mary hung her cloak on rosemary bushes to dry in her flight from Herod's soldiers. Its appearance and fragrance are Christmas-tree like. With the addition of a red ribbon and perhaps a few small gold ornaments, the upright rosemary really does look like a Christmas tree. Snip finely about a teaspoonful of its fresh leaves and add to a recipe for shortbread, and prepare to be surprised at the distinctive blending of aromatic and sweet flavours.

Rosemary is also wonderful as a house plant because it doesn't readily shed its leaves (although be prepared for some leaf drop as the plant acclimatizes itself to the indoors). It requires little care other than good light, regular watering and perhaps occasional misting of its leaves, to compensate for the dry indoor air. When cutting rosemary for use in cooking, it is better to cut a sprig two or three inches long instead of just pulling off some leaves. If you do this, the plant will reward you with improved bushiness and new growth. The blooms of the rosemary are a covering of tiny blue, pink, or white flowers. Best of all, pests don't care much for rosemary — probably its protective, resinous, oils are off-putting to most insects.

Crafting with rosemary is an aromatic pleasure. Depending upon whether you are bringing one plant or ten into the house, you can tie sprigs of rosemary onto your holiday packages, arranged as a small wreath around a candle base, or sewn into sachets for use as bath-bags. A craft that has been practised since Elizabethan times is that of gilding rosemary sprigs for use in Christmas decorations. Try spraying a sprig with gold paint...it might shrivel a little, but should probably last well through the holidays.

So pot up a rosemary from your garden: water well before digging, choose a pot of sufficient size to accommodate the roots, and don't allow it to dry out for the first few days. Because rosemary, although classified as a tender perennial, can withstand some freezing temperatures, there is no great rush to dig them from your garden in the fall. You can usually leave your rosemaries until after all the other garden clean-up is done — but don't wait too long! And in the spring, you can return your rosemary to its spot in the herb garden, already a good-sized plant, not a little seedling or rooted cutting.

### Greely Gardeners Group, Executive Committee:

President ~ Gill Toll 821-6123; Vice-President ~ Anita Snelgrove 821-0447; Secretary ~ Heather Clemenson 821-7445; Treasurer ~ Gary Hall 821-7445; Social ~ Shelagh Heatlie 821-3611; Past President/Newsletter ~ Bob Stanley 821-1847