



Greely Gardeners Group

Newsletter

November 2006

GREELY GARDENERS CALENDAR:

Wednesday, December 6, 7:00 p.m. Greely Community Centre. *GG's Christmas Supper...*

Plans are well in hand for the annual Christmas pot-luck supper. So far almost 40 members and guests have indicated they will be coming, so it should be a great night. There's going to be lots of food. Dishes and cutlery will be provided. Christmas music, great company and door prizes. Remember the event starts at 7:00, and it wouldn't hurt to be there a few minutes early.

Reminder! If by any chance you are planning to attend but you forgot to sign up, it's not too late. Give Shelagh a call right away at 613-821-0816 and she can let you know what she'd like you to bring.

Thursday, January 4, 7:00 p.m. Greely Community Centre. 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. Greely Community Centre. 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. Greely Community Centre. 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: Our first three meetings of 2007 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.

Wednesday, April 4, 7:00 p.m. Greely Community Centre. ORNAMENTAL GRASSES. Guest speaker: Phil Reilly, from Reilly's Country Gardens. Phil is an expert on this topic, and his illustrated talk is one you won't want to miss.

Wednesday, May 2, 7:00 p.m. Greely Community Centre. THE FLETCHER WILDLIFE GARDEN. Guest speaker: Sandra Garland. An introduction to this unique Ottawa attraction right next door to the Arboretum. Sandy will take us on a virtual tour of the garden and give some tips on how to attract wildlife to your own garden. She's also offered us a live tour of the garden in June. More about that later.

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 Nicholl's Island Road. For information contact Mary Kealey at 823-1658.

TIP OF THE MONTH.

HOUSEPLANTS ARE GOOD FOR YOUR INDOOR SPACES AND OUTER SPACE TOO!



In the late 1980s, a study by the American space agency NASA and the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) concluded that common houseplants such as bamboo palms and spider plants not only make indoor spaces more attractive, they also help to purify the air by removing polluting chemicals!

While it was originally intended to find ways to purify the air for extended stays in orbiting space stations, the study proved to have implications for us down here on Earth as well.

Newer homes and buildings, designed for energy efficiency, are often tightly sealed to avoid energy loss from heating and air conditioning systems. While it's a well known fact that plants convert carbon dioxide into oxygen through photosynthesis, the NASA/ALCA study showed that many houseplants also remove harmful elements from the air. NASA and ALCA spent two years testing 19 common houseplants for their ability to remove common pollutants from the air.

Most houseplants are adapted to tropical areas, where they grow beneath dense leafy canopies. So they are ultra-efficient at capturing light and in processing the gases necessary for photosynthesis. They can also absorb other gases, including potentially harmful ones. The NASA study tested primarily for three chemicals: *Formaldehyde* is used in many building materials including particle board and foam insulations. Additionally, many cleaning products contain this chemical. *Benzene* is a common solvent found in oils and paints. *Trichloroethylene* is used in paints, adhesives, inks, and varnishes.

While NASA found that some of the plants were better than others for absorbing these common pollutants, all of the plants had properties that were useful in improving overall indoor air quality. NASA also noted that some plants are better than others in treating certain chemicals. For example, peace lily and bamboo palm were effective at treating all three chemicals, as was gerbera daisy, although it is not a true houseplant. Mother-in-law's tongue, the dracaenas *warneckeii* and *marginata*, golden pathos and green spider plant worked well for filtering formaldehyde. Here is NASA's list of the most effective plants for treating indoor air pollution:

◇ Peace lily (*spathiphyllum 'Mauna Loa'*). ◇ Bamboo or reed palm (*chamaedorea sefritzii*). ◇ Gerbera daisy (*gerbera jamesonii*). ◇ Heartleaf philodendron (*philodendron scandens 'oxycardium'*). ◇ Elephant ear philodendron (*philodendron domesticum*). ◇ Cornstalk dracaena (*dracaena fragrans 'Massangeana'*). ◇ English ivy (*hedera helix*). ◇ Spider plant (*chlorophytum comosum*). ◇ Janet Craig dracaena (*dracaena deremensis Janet Craig*). ◇ Warneck dracaena (*dracaena deremensis Warneckii*). ◇ Weeping fig (*ficus benjamina*). ◇ Golden pathos (*epipremnum aureum*). ◇ Selloum philodendron (*philodendron selloum*). ◇ Chinese evergreen (*aglaonema modestum*). ◇ Snake plant (*sansevieria trifasciata*). ◇ Red-edged dracaena (*dracaena marginata*).

For an average home of under 2,000 square feet, the NASA study recommends using at least 15 samples of a good variety of these common houseplants to help improve air quality. They also recommend that the plants be grown in six-inch containers or larger.

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