



Greely Gardeners Group Newsletter

February 2007

GREELY GARDENERS CALENDAR:

NEXT MEETING 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 Lee Boltwood, Master Gardener, returns to give us a hands-on demonstration of pruning techniques.

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.

Saturday, May 26, 9:00 a.m. to noon the GGG's Annual Spring Plant Sale, Andrew Shields Park.

Wednesday, June 6, 7:00 p.m. Greely Community Centre. *CONTAINER GARDENING WITH PERENNIALS.* Guest speaker: Darrell Kekanovich from Ritchie's Feed and Seed.

Saturday June 23, 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.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

6th Annual Gigantic Greely Garage Sale, Saturday March 17, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Greely Community Centre. Admission \$1. All proceeds to the CHEO Foundation to help children in their fight against cancer. OK, so it's not exactly a gardening event, but it's being organized this year by our own Anita Snelgrove, and who knows what gardening implements or ornaments you might find at the sale! Donated items can be dropped off on Friday March 16 from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Call Anita or Michael at 821-0447 for more information.

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

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 Saturday, March 10, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. A workshop on grafting given by Yvette and Germain of Les Plantons A et P Inc. of Ste. Christine, Quebec, known for their collection of rare and unusual dwarf conifers, landscaped troughs and clematis. Cost is \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members. Please bring your lunch. All tools will be provided. You will graft a larch, a pine and a spruce which you will be able to take home. Numbers are limited so contact lindley_mcphail@hotmail.com as soon as possible.

Friends of the Farm Saturday, March 3, from 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. A workshop 'Herbalism 101: Understanding how to use herbs.' Presented by Kathleen Leeson RH. The lecture will be held in building 72, in the Arboretum of the C.E.F. The cost is \$30 for FCEF members and \$40 for non members. For information or to register call 613-230-3276 or email info@friendsofthefarm.ca

TIP OF THE MONTH



ITALY IS SAID TO HAVE SOME OF THE BEST CUISINE IN THE WORLD, and at the heart of that cuisine are their famous herbs. You're probably already familiar with some Italian herbs — basil, fennel, rosemary, oregano, and parsley are all household names in Italy and around the world. These herbs can make excellent companion plants in your vegetable or flower garden or in pots to give your patio a Mediterranean air. Here are some tips on how to grow these herbs successfully.

BASIL is an annual warm-season herb that is sensitive to cold weather. It is relatively easy to grow and makes a great addition to your vegetable garden. Growing basil next to your peppers or tomatoes is said to improve their flavour. Basil is also said to repel flies and mosquitoes! Start seeds inside and transplant when a few inches tall. Basil needs full sun and well drained soil, and can also be planted in pots. Basil's most common enemies are the Japanese beetle, slugs and snails. Pinch back your basil as it begins to flower or it will lose its flavour. This will also encourage it to grow bushier. The best time to cut basil leaves is in the morning after the dew has dried.

FENNEL has a wide range of uses. Fennel seeds are used in Italian sausage or chewed with candy after an Indian meal. Fennel stalks are also edible. Fennel has long been believed to have numerous medicinal benefits, and is often made into herbal teas and tinctures. Fennel is a perennial, but should be divided and re-planted every few years as older plants tend to lose flavour. Propagate from seed and plant in full sun, well-drained soil. Water sparingly. The carrot rust fly is a pest on fennel, but can be avoided by planting in a windy location.

PARSLEY is relatively difficult to grow because its seeds actually contain a chemical that prevents germination. To overcome this, soak the seeds for two days, changing the water after one day, then refrigerate them for a day before planting. Because parsley is difficult to transplant, it should be sown directly into the ground in full sun or partial shade, or into large, well-drained pots. Though parsley is technically a perennial, it usually goes to seed in its second year and so is grown as an annual. In a vegetable garden, plant near asparagus, corn, peppers and tomatoes. Nematodes are common pests where parsley is grown. If you do have a nematode problem, try introducing ladybugs and predatory nematodes into your garden.

OREGANO can be started from seed, but the easiest way is to get a cutting from an existing plant. Choose a plant with strong flavour to guarantee the quality of your own crop. Oregano is decorative as well as delicious, sprouting little purple flowers at maturity. Unlike basil, oregano should be allowed to flower, as this is when its flavour of the leaves is strongest. Oregano prefers full sun and matures best in hot weather. Oregano is a perennial and can spread very rapidly, something you may want to consider when deciding whether to plant in pots or in the garden.

ROSEMARY is a tough evergreen that can grow into a large shrub under the right conditions. Although it is a perennial and does well in many climates, rosemary is sensitive to frost so is treated as an annual in our region. However it can be wintered over indoors and taken back outside for the summer. Rosemary does well in the ground or in pots and grows pretty little blue flowers which, can be used in salads or as a garnish. Rosemary also makes an excellent hedge and is great for attracting bees.

GGG'S SPRING FLIER In March you can expect to see a flier advertising the complete Greely Gardeners' Group programme for 2007 in the mail. This flier is prepared by your executive, and the cost of printing and mailing to all homes in the Greely area is offset by the ads on the inside, so please support these local businesses. In past years this flier has always brought in many new members, so talk it up with your neighbours and let's see if we can set another new record for membership this year!

Greely Gardeners Group, Executive Committee:

President ~ Gill Toll 821-6123; Vice-President ~ Anita Snelgrove 821-0447; Events Director ~ Natasha Robb-Burrows 821-1037;
Secretary/Treasurer ~ Heather Clemenson/Gary Hall 821-7445; Past President/Newsletter ~ Bob Stanley 821-1847