



Greely Gardeners Group Newsletter

March 2007

GREELY GARDENERS CALENDAR:

NEXT MEETING **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 16 MEMBERS FIELD TRIP to the Montreal Botanical Gardens. Details and costs will be available at the April meeting — be ready to sign up!

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.

Wednesday, September 5, Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. **IRISES IN BLOOM FROM SPRING TO SEPTEMBER.** Guest speaker: Iris expert and judge Sandy Ives of the Canadian Iris Society.

Wednesday, October 3, Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. Topic: **WINTERIZING YOUR GARDEN.** Guest speaker: Bob Stanley.

Wednesday, November 7, Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. Topic: **SUCCESS WITH AFRICAN VIOLETS.** Guest speaker: Owen Munn of the Ottawa Horticultural Society.

Wednesday, December 5, **GARDENERS' CHRISTMAS SUPPER,** Greely Community Centre. Members and their guests.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Manotick Horticultural Society usually meets on the second Monday of the month in the RCMP Club House off Nichol's Island Road. NOTE: This month's meeting is on April 2. 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 meets on the third Monday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at the Legion Hall, corner of First Street and Legion Lane.

Garden lecture series hosted by Friends of the Farm and presented by Master Gardeners on Tuesdays, April 3, 10, 17, 24, from 7 to 9 p.m., in building 72, Arboretum, Central Experimental Farm. Topics are water gardening, ground covers, shade gardening and colours throughout the seasons. Cost for series is \$40 for FCEF members, \$50 for non members. Individual lectures \$12 for members, \$15 for non members. For information or to register 613-230-3276, or email info@friendsofthefarm.ca.

TIP OF THE MONTH

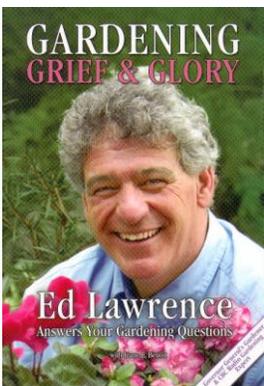
IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR when many of us have already received the seeds we ordered from our favourite catalogues and we can hardly wait to get started. The question is: when is the right time to start? The instructions on the seed packet are sometimes helpful, but often not, so here are some tips gathered from various sources that may help you produce a bumper crop of healthy seedlings this Spring.

Seed starting instructions often refer to the "frost-free date". According to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture the frost-free date in our region is May 16. But hold on a minute, "frost-free" doesn't mean what you think. It actually means there is only a 50-50 chance of frost! So don't rush to put your little tender seedlings in the ground on the 16th. By all means put them outside in a sheltered spot to harden off, but listen to the weather reports and be prepared to bring them in at night.

The consensus among the experts is that to be on the safe side warm-season plants should be transplanted outside – after hardening-off – two to three weeks after the frost-free date. Flowers and vegetables that are not frost-tolerant are classified as warm-season plants, and those are the ones we typically grow from seed... tomatoes, peppers, petunias, marigolds, and so on. So forget that old rule about Victoria Day weekend, and wait until the end of the month.

Another handy rule of thumb is that transplants should be at least four to six inches tall. Most of the plants we grow need about six weeks growing time to reach this height. So to determine when to start your seeds, check on the packet to see how long they need to germinate, and add six weeks. Now back up that number of days from the date you plan to transplant your seedlings into the garden. For example, if your seeds need 10 days to germinate, you're looking at a total of 52 days. For a May 31 transplant date that means you need to start your seedlings around April 10.

Seedlings that are started too early tend to get "leggy" and weak, and may not survive when you transplant them. To help plants grow compact and strong, grow them at cooler temperatures, between 16 and 19 degrees, and try shaking them for a few seconds several times each day. The shaking causes a similar reaction in the plant that wind does outside and makes plants shorter, bushier, and stronger. At least, that's what the experts say!



WIN A SIGNED COPY OF ED'S BOOK!

Even if you don't usually buy a ticket for our monthly draw you'll want to get one (or several) this time. Thanks to some quick thinking by our intrepid treasurer Gary we have a copy of Ed Lawrence's new book "Gardening Grief and Glory" as a bonus prize this month, and it's signed by Ed himself.

We have tried in the past to get Ed to come to Greely as our guest speaker. He's a man who is very much in demand and we've had no luck so far, but we haven't given up. We'll keep you posted.

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 Coordinator - Shelagh Heatlie 821-0816; June MacDonell - 821-1949;
Melody Tomka 821-1985; Melissa MacDonald — 821-9680; Past-President/Newsletter — Bob Stanley 821-1847