



Greely Gardeners Group Newsletter

June 2007

GREELY GARDENERS CALENDAR:

NEW! Saturday, July 14, 10:00 a.m. CONDUCTED TOUR OF THE FLETCHER WILDLIFE GARDEN with Sandy Garland, who was our guest speaker in May and gave us a great overview of the FWG. The garden is open to the public at any time, of course, but it's not often you get the chance for a guided tour with someone who's been closely involved with the development of the garden for many years. The tour should take about two hours. The FWG is off Prince of Wales Drive, adjacent to the Arboretum. There's plenty of free parking, and the tour is free, but donations to support the garden are always welcome. If you're coming, please plan to be there about 15 minutes early. **NOTE:** If it's raining we'll try again the following Saturday, July 21.

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 GARDENING EVENTS...

Russell and District Horticultural Society: Garden Tour, Saturday, July 7 from 1 to 4 p.m. The tour covers six local gardens. There will be refreshments and door prizes at the last garden. There is a \$5 fee, and proceeds will be donated to the Legion/Lions Hall building fund. **Workshop on Building Split Rail Fences,** Saturday July 21 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Learn how to build a split rail fence with Scott and Cindy Cluett at their home, just outside of Morewood. There will be a potluck lunch. Cost \$15. Pre-registration is a must. For more information or to sign up for either of these events, contact Lindley at 613-445-0754 or lindley_mcphail@hotmail.com.

Canada Day Strawberry Social --July 1 from 10:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. in Memory Park, Canada Agriculture Museum, Central Experimental Farm. Cost \$5.50 includes admission to the museum. Come and enjoy a delicious strawberry treat while taking part in the Agriculture Museum's holiday activities. Information 613-230-3276, or info@friendsofthefarm.ca.

Manotick Horticultural Society usually 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.

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.

GARDENS GALORE!

MEMBERS' GARDENS COMPARED TO MONTREAL BOTANICAL

June may be one of the busiest months in the garden, but that didn't prevent many Greely Gardeners from finding time away from tending their own plots to visit lots of other gardens this month. On Saturday the 16th a full bus load headed off to Montreal for the long-awaited visit to the Botanical Gardens.

On arrival we split into smaller groups and volunteer guides gave us a quick "orientation tour". After that we were free to roam until it was time to board the bus for the trip home. Thankfully the bus was air-conditioned - the day was hot and humid - and kudos to Heather and Gary for bringing two coolers full of bottled water!

If you missed the trip, these gardens in the heart of the city are well worth a visit, or even several visits as there's a lot to see in one day. The variety is remarkable, ranging from formal display beds to shade gardens, rock gardens, and the beautiful Japanese and Chinese gardens. And if you take the kids they will love the Insectarium, where they can see big hairy spiders, giant cockroaches and a host of other creepy critters (all safely under glass). Here's a tip though: stay away from the restaurant - the food is bad and over-priced. Either bring a picnic or treat yourself to dinner at one of the many great eateries in Montreal.



Some of the 30 members who joined the tour pause to admire a colourful display and take a few notes.

There was wine too, provided by President Gill. If you missed the tour you missed a treat! Thanks to Gill, Heather and Gary, Kris, Joan, Alison and Melody for inviting us into their gardens (and no doubt spending many, many hours making sure that they were in perfect condition for us to admire). And a special thankyou to Melody for the magnificent lunch!

Thanks are also due to Heather and Gary, Shelagh, Melissa, and Melody for organizing the trip to the Montreal Botanical Gardens. And while we're at it, now is as good a time as any to say thanks to all the members of the Executive Committee for putting in the time to provide our members with such an interesting and varied programme throughout the year.

The following Saturday was the GGG's annual Members' Gardens Tour. The weather was perfect - sunny but not too hot or humid. This year we visited six gardens, including four that have not been on the tour before. They were all truly amazing. In fact several members who had been on the bus trip to Montreal commented that this was better than the Botanical Gardens. Now that is some compliment! The final stop on the three-hour tour was at Melody Tomka's, where we not only got to admire the ponds and rock gardens, but were served a sumptuous lunch prepared by Melody.

TIP OF THE MONTH...

ALL PLANTS NEED WATER IN ORDER TO LIVE. Here are a few tips to help you water your plants more efficiently. As with any job, it really helps to have the right tools. If you have a very small job, any old hose will do. However, if you need a hose of any real length, you need a good one. The smaller diameter of hose, the lower the water pressure will be at the business end of the hose. I avoid any hose less than 5/8" diameter for decent pressure from end-to-end.

If you're watering by hand, you need to consider what you have on the end of your hose. Pistol-grip trigger systems work well for small areas and multi-functions, but can be awkward when watering large areas. Water wands are necessary for reaching high areas of far into your garden. Some new water wands have a squeeze-type trigger similar to those on pistol-grip tools and can work quite well. Those triggers are very handy but can also reduce pressure and can sometimes create too much back-pressure for a syphon to work properly. Hose-end shut-offs are very handy things. When looking for a traditional ball-valve type shut-off, one made of brass lasts the longest, but at the highest cost. Plastic units do a great job, but be prepared to replace them more often.

If you want to fertilize when you water, there are many options available. The degree of accuracy of various fertilizer units can often leave something to be desired. My favourite type is the good old-fashioned brass syphon unit. They're small, accurate, and last nearly forever. The only drawback is you can't use them with a sprinkler system or anything that creates back-pressure.

Make sure the plants are properly watered. Water needs to soak into the soil and get to the roots of the plant. In the case of lawns, that's not very deep, but trees and shrubs need deeper soaking. Planters and hanging baskets need to be watered until water runs through the drain holes in the bottom. Since you want to get lots of water on, but gently, you need to have a water breaker or rain breaker on the end of your hose.

When using a sprinkler, you'll find that different sprinklers have different levels of efficiency. Sprinklers with a fine mist are less efficient since more water evaporates before it hits the ground. The good old-fashioned impact sprinklers are the best overall. Soaker hoses and drip lines are by far the most efficient way of watering but are somewhat less versatile. Always try and use your sprinklers first thing in the morning. Use a water timer if you won't be around to turn it off. It's a great way to make sure your garden gets the correct amount of water even if you aren't around. The time of day is also quite important when it comes to watering. Ideally, any water on the leaves of your plants should be dry by the time night rolls around. Watering in the morning is the best time since the cooler temperatures reduce evaporation, so more water gets down to the roots.

There are many myths about watering in the middle of the day. For years growers have watered at any time a plant needed water. In our berry field, we will often turn water on during the hottest part of the day to give our plants a bit of cooling and relieve the stress. It's not the best time to water by far, but if a plant is dry or suffering, watering it is better than potentially letting it die.

And the most important rule about watering: If it's dry, water it. If it's wet, don't.

This article by Peter Rofner of Richmond Nursery is one of many available online at www.richmondnursery.com.

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