



Greely Gardeners Group Newsletter

July 2007

GREELY GARDENERS CALENDAR:

Saturday, August 18, Hyper-tufa workshop. If you didn't already sign up for this workshop, you're too late, it's full. If you did sign up and you need information, contact Melody at 821-1985 or Anita at 821-0447

Wednesday, September 5, Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. Our first meeting of the Fall season, and the topic is *IRISES IN BLOOM FROM SPRING TO SEPTEMBER*, Guest speaker: Iris expert and judge Sandy Ives of the Canadian Iris Society. Don't miss it.

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...

Sunday, August 12 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Victorian Tea, hosted by the Friends of the Farm in the arboretum of the Central Experimental Farm, (if rain, Sir John Carling Building). Classic tea will be served on the lawns of the Arboretum. Bring a patio chair and listen to the music. Enter the best hat contest and don period costume (not required). Admission is free, formal tea \$6.00.

Saturday, August 18, (rain date August 19) Art on the Farm, in the Arboretum, from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Admission is FREE. Artists working in various media will display and sell original works under the trees of the arboretum.

For information on either of these events, call 613-230-3276, info@friendsofthefarm.ca, www.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.

FLETCHER WILDLIFE GARDEN TOUR

There was a small turnout for the tour of the FWG on July 14 -- a fine Saturday morning as it turned out. Those who did come were treated to an insider's look at this unique garden by our host, Sandy Garland. If you've never visited this garden on Prince of Wales Drive, next to the Arboretum, you've missed a treat. The garden and its interpretive centre are open to the public, and it's free! For information visit the FWG website at www.ofnc.ca/fletcher.php. Thanks Sandy for the informative tour.

TIP OF THE MONTH...



HAVE YOU EVER WISHED you could enjoy the beauty of summer flowers year-round? You can, if you preserve garden flowers now while they're at their peak of bloom. Flowers that are easy to preserve include baby's breath, celosia, yarrow, statice, globe amaranth, strawflowers, xeranthemum, and artemisia. But because flowers and plant parts respond differently to drying and preserving methods, you may need to experiment for best results.

The first rule is to start with top quality plants. Choose fresh, unwilted, undamaged flowers and foliage. Collect plant materials on a warm, sunny day after the dew has dried. Dampness encourages mould and slows the drying process. Try to cut flowers just before they are fully opened. And always gather more material than you think you'll need!

Air drying is the easiest method of drying flowers, and is generally the best method to use for small flowers in clusters such as baby's breath, as well as dock, goldenrod, grasses, sedges, and cattails. Simply strip the foliage from the stems, tie them in small bunches and hang them upside down for several weeks in a warm, dry place with good air circulation, such as an attic or old barn. Flowers such as hydrangea and yarrow dry best when placed upright in a jar filled with one-half inch water that is then allowed to evaporate.

Another traditional method to preserve summer flowers is to press them between layers of paper towels or waxed paper (best for fine or delicate flowers) between heavy books or in a wooden flower press. Select only perfect specimens, and keep in mind that, while orange and yellow blossoms will retain their vivid colour, most blues, purples, and pinks will fade, and reds may turn a muddy brown. Leave your flowers in the press for four to six weeks.

To dry zinnias, roses, and other flowers with thick heads, use a drying agent such as borax, white cornmeal, or silica gel (available at crafts shops). These materials draw the moisture out of plant tissues while still retaining flower colour. Spread the drying agent about an inch thick in the bottom of an airtight container. Select blooms of similar size and type, and remove the foliage and most of the stem. Place the blooms on top of the layer, and cover completely with more drying agent. Seal the container, and place in a cool, dark place. In about a week the flower petals will be dry and crisp. Gently pour off the agent, and remove the dried flowers.

To preserve woody stems of leaves and fruit, cut the ends and place the bottom four to five inches of basal stem in a glycerine mixture until the plant has a glossy appearance and a leathery feel to all its leaves. To make the mixture, combine two parts water with one part glycerine (available at most drug stores), and blend thoroughly.

If you want instant results, you can microwave the flowers with silica gel in an oven-proof or glass container. Preheat one inch of the silica gel on high for one minute or until crystals turn blue. Place a flower on the warm crystals, and cover completely with silica gel. Cook for one to three minutes, then let stand for up to 25 minutes. Standing time will vary depending on flower type. Alternatively, Lee Valley Tools sells a specially designed flower press for use with the microwave.

Based on an article published on icangarden.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