



# Greely Gardeners Group

## *Newsletter*

February 2009

### GREELY GARDENERS 2009 CALENDAR

#### **Next meeting...Thursday, March 5:**

Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. Topic: EASY CARE ANNUALS. We all love perennials, but there's a place for annuals too in every garden. Guest speaker: Horticulturist, Mary-Anne Jackson-Hughes.

#### **Thursday, April 2:**

Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. Topic: SUMMER BULBS, CORMS AND TUBERS. Guest speaker: the ever popular and amazingly knowledgeable Darrell Kekanovich of Ritchie Feed and Seed.

#### **Wednesday, May 6:**

Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. Topic: PEONIES & PERENNIALS I KNOW & GROW. Guest speaker: Author and gardening guru, Marilyn Light.

#### **Saturday, May 23:**

Andrew Shields Park, Old Prescott Road, 9:00 a.m. GGG's ANNUAL SPRING PLANT SALE. When you're dividing your perennials this Spring, be sure to pot up some of the extras for the plant sale.

#### **Wednesday, June 3:**

Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. Topic: EVERYTHING YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BEES. Guest speaker: Greely beekeeper Brent Halsall.

#### **Saturday, June 20:**

ANNUAL MEMBERS GARDENS TOUR. The tour starts at 9:00 a.m. from the Community Centre parking lot and lasts about four hours. Details to be announced.

#### **Wednesday, September 2:**

Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. Topic: MUSHROOMS. Guest speaker: Michel Corbeil.

#### **Wednesday, October 7:**

Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. Topic: A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE. Guest speaker: John McKenzie.

#### **Wednesday, November 3:**

Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. NEW AND UNDERUSED PERENNIALS. Guest speaker Suzanne Patry of Whitehouse Perennials.

### OTHER GARDENING 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.

**Gardening Lecture Series** hosted by Friends of the Central Experimental Farm, presented by Master Gardeners of Ottawa Carleton. The topics are: Gardening with Climatic Change, April 7; Hemerocallis (Day-lilies), April 14; The 100 Mile Diet, April 21; Herbs, April 28. Cost for the series, \$40 FCEF members, \$50 non-members. For individual lectures, members \$12, non-members \$15. For details: 613-230-3276, info@friendsofthefarm.ca, or www.friendsofthefarm.ca

## TIP OF THE MONTH...



THE DAYS ARE GETTING LONGER and sometimes even warmer, or at least not quite so cold. This is a good time to prune many trees and shrubs while they are still dormant. Note that I said "many". This is not a good time to prune trees generally known as "bleeders" – including maple, birch, beech, oak, linden and elm. These should be pruned in summer after they leaf out if possible. During late winter and early spring the sap is rising, and will "bleed" from open wounds, providing a site for possible disease. Prune these in mid-to-late summer.

Trees that you should prune in winter or late winter include apples, flowering crabapples, mountain ash, hawthorn, and honey locust. These may get bacterial and other diseases if you prune them in summer.

When it comes to shrubs, the rule of thumb is to prune woody landscape plants that bloom on current season's wood while dormant, and those that bloom on the previous season's wood, prune after they bloom in late spring or early summer. For example, you should prune lilacs, forsythia, rhododendrons, and early viburnums right after they bloom, before they start forming flower buds for the following year. If your shrubs didn't bloom last year chances are you pruned them too late and cut off the buds that would have flowered next spring.

Which brings us to the ones you can prune now, while they are still dormant and resting for winter. Some of the common ones include glossy abelia, barberries, blue mist, summersweet, smokebush, spirea, cotoneasters, and late viburnums. Depending on how high you want these to grow, you can prune them all the way back to the first pair of buds above the soil. If you have to remove snow to do this, cover them up again once you've finished.

A drastic version of cutting back shrubs in winter is known as renewal pruning. This involves cutting a shrub back to about six inches above the ground, and only is suitable for some plants. This is a good practice for "tired" shrubs that don't bloom as well as they once did, or are overgrown and woody with many weak and straggly stems. Renewal pruning invigorates these shrubs, as drastic as it sounds and looks. Candidates for this treatment include glossy abelia, barberry, blue mist, forsythia, honeysuckle, ninebark, potentilla, hibiscus, lilac, spirea and weigela.

If this type of pruning is too drastic for you, or you don't want to see an empty spot in your garden for a year or two, cut back about a third of the shrub each year for three years to achieve the same effect. With some really aggressive growers, such as forsythia and ninebark, you may want to continue this method of pruning every year. You can do this even with shrubs such as lilacs, in order to keep them shorter and more compact.

A variation of renewal pruning is known as "coppicing". This means cutting the entire shrub to the ground every winter to stimulate vigorous new growth in the spring. In the case of shrubby dogwoods and some shrub willows, it can stimulate more brilliant stem colours. The trade-off is that you get no flowers or fruits, so you may want to coppice every other year. A favorite large tree to coppice is the princess tree (Paulownia), creating tall bushy plants with large leaves each year.

Pruning in late winter is good in the sense that diseases are not active to invade the open wounds. When the plants resume growth in the spring shortly after pruning, the wounds will heal rapidly. Keep in mind that severe winter pruning will stimulate the plant to replace leaves and shoots first, possibly at the expense of flowering.

---

### Greely Gardeners Group, Executive Committee:

President - Shelagh Heatlie 821-0816; Vice-President - Anita Snelgrove 821-0447; Treasurer – Melissa MacDonald 821-9680;  
Secretary – Melody Tomka 821-1985; Program coordinator -- Shelley Piercey 821-1120; June MacDonell 821-1949;  
Past-President - Gill Toll 821-6123; Newsletter Bob Stanley 821-1847

[www.greelygardeners.org](http://www.greelygardeners.org)