



# Greely Gardeners Group

## *Newsletter*

March 2009

### **GREELY GARDENERS 2009 CALENDAR**

#### **Next meeting... 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 4:**

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

#### **Wednesday, December 2:**

Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. ANNUAL CHRISTMAS POT-LUCK DINNER, where our members show that they are not just great gardeners but great cooks too. Don't miss it!

### **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...



WITH THE BAN ON THE USE OF MANY PESTICIDES and the increased emphasis on organic gardening what are you going to do to keep all those creepy crawly insects from chewing up your flowers and veggies? As it turns out, you don't need those banned chemical concoctions to keep most insect pests off your plants.

Here are a few environmentally friendly remedies – home made and store bought – that you can use to keep those bugs under control.

Diatomaceous earth (DE) is a naturally occurring substance made from water plant fossils that are ground into an abrasive powder. It is available from your neighbourhood garden centre. Any bugs that come into contact with it will have their skeletal structure cut, causing them to die of dehydration. To use, simply spread a thin layer of DE in areas where insect pests such as earwigs hang out. For ants, sprinkle DE in, on, and around the ant hills to make sure they have to walk through it. Any insects that come into contact with it, or ingest it, die within 48 hours. Note that DE works best when humidity is low and the soil is dry. The moister DE becomes the less effective it becomes.

**A word of warning:** DE can be harmful to anything, including humans, that breathes it in. So when you use it wear a protective mask to cover your mouth and nose to avoid inhaling it and safety glasses to protect your eyes. And keep pets well away.

If you don't like the sound of DE, try this homemade solution that will control many insects including earwigs, aphids and whiteflies, plus some common fungal diseases like leaf spot and mildew. Mince about 3 ounces of garlic and combine it with 2 tsp of mineral oil. After 24 hours strain the mixture to remove the garlic, then add the oil to 600 ml of water and a teaspoon of liquid dish soap. Mix well then transfer to a spray bottle. It's advisable to test it on one or two leaves of your plant first -- you never know what kind of reaction some plants will have. Better to be safe than sorry.

Always spray this or any other solution first thing in the morning while the wind is down and temperatures are cooler. Avoid spraying in full sun, because you can run the risk of burning your plants.

Don't have the time (or the inclination) to make your own solution? Try a commercial insecticidal soap such as Safer's, also available from your neighbourhood garden centre. Soap has been used for centuries as an all-purpose pesticide, but while all soaps are long-chain fatty acids, not all soaps have insecticidal properties. Today's insecticidal soaps are specifically formulated to have high insect-killing properties, while being safe for most plant species. When sprayed on insects insecticidal soap breaks down the insect's protective coating, and causes it to dehydrate and die. Insecticidal soap is a safe and natural product proven to solve insect problems. It is approved for organic use, and made from naturally occurring plant oils and animal fats. It will control a wide variety of insects.

Insecticidal soap can be used on flowers, vegetables, fruits, ornamentals, shrubs and trees as well as houseplants – but again remember to test spray first. Good coverage is essential for good results. Spray it directly onto the insects when they are first sighted on buds, shoots, stems, bark and the underside of leaves. Make sure to wet both sides of the leaves and growing points of the plants.

Do you have your own organic pest control solutions? Send us your tips and we'll include them in future newsletters.

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### 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)