



Greely Gardeners Group

Newsletter

April 2009

GREELY GARDENERS 2009 CALENDAR

Next meeting... Wednesday, May 6:

Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. Topic: PEONIES & PERENNIALS I KNOW & GROW. Guest speaker: Author and gardening guru, Marilyn Light – don't miss this one!

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 (If you need extra pots, give me a call at 821-1847.) Bring your plants to the pavilion at the park on the morning of the sale between 8:00 and 8:30. *Please* make sure that all plants are clearly identified – popsicle sticks make good markers, or you can label pots with masking tape.

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.

Rare and Unusual Plant Sale. Looking for fabulous ideas for your garden? You'll find plenty at this annual event put on by the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm and specialty growers and nurseries. May 10, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the parking lot of the Neatby Building, Carling & Maple Drive, Central Experimental Farm. Admission is a donation to the Food Bank or \$5. For information, 613-230-3276, info@friendsofthefarm.ca or www.friendsofthefarm.ca.

TIP OF THE MONTH...This month provided by May's guest speaker, Marilyn Light



SEEDS MAY BE SMALL BUT THEY CARRY ALL THE FIXINGS for a brand new plant. Seeds may have different germination requirements but, more importantly for adventurous gardeners, seeds from one fruit may produce quite different seedlings in terms of form, flower colour, foliage texture or vigour. We have become accustomed to expecting all the seeds in a packet to produce the same quality of bean or zinnia, and garden cultivars most often behave as we expect because they have been carefully selected for uniformity. Each seed is an individual and as such is a treasure to be explored in a garden situation.

I am presently experimenting with species Peonies from seeds. Many species are tolerant of high overhead shade or semi-shade and most require good drainage. Seeds can be requested from the Canadian Peony Society seed exchange where the public can request seeds after members have made their choice. Fees apply. Raising peonies from seed is relatively easy but it takes 4-to-5 years to produce a flowering size plant. The first method I tried was staged germination. The seeds were placed in plastic bags with moist vermiculite and left at room temperature for three months when the seeds began sprouting. Once the roots of most seeds were about an inch long, the bags went into the refrigerator for another 3-to-4 months during which time the roots extended and new shoots appeared. Some of these have since flowered but I have now changed my method entirely. I now simply plant the seeds in a large plastic or peat pot, dig a hole in the prepared seed bed, and bury the pot up to the rim. The pot size is determined by the number of seeds and I place the seeds to give space for each seedling to grow. Each pot has two markers. One is buried in the pot and beneath the soil surface while the other can be spotted above ground. I mulch the seeded area and leave it be. Seeds I sowed last spring are now just showing their first shoot which is exactly the stage I would expect if I had used the vermiculite/bag method. I leave the seedlings in the pots for two years (peat pots can be left three years) when the pot can be lifted in autumn after the plants have become dormant. Nicely rooted seedlings can then be planted in their final location while any smaller seedlings can be located in a seedling plot. I can already see variations in foliage colour and shape so am looking forward to seeing the variation in flower quality that will come with this season's first time bloomers. Always something to learn with seeds and always a pleasure to see the first bloom of a unique individual plant.

Daylilies are equally easy to raise from seeds. To get seeds, pollinate flowers when they first open on a morning. Not all plants are fertile parents, so you will have to try various combinations. Generally speaking, small-flowered kinds are reluctant seed producers when pollinated by larger-flowered plants, or vice versa. Collect the shiny black seeds in August when the pods begin to split. Sow immediately in a bed set aside for the purpose. Baby daylilies will emerge the following spring and these can be transplanted a year later in early spring. Expect flowers within 4 years.

Resources:

Canadian Peony Society

<http://www.peony.ca/>

Email: membership@peony.ca (\$15/year)

Peonies by Jane Fearnley-Whittingstall

Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999

ISBN 0 297 82424 4

Where to see peonies:

- ☞ Canadian Peony Society 12th Annual Show, Montréal Botanical Garden, June 13–14, 2009
- ☞ Algonquin College and the Experimental Farm, Ottawa
- ☞ La Pivoinerie D 'Aoust, Hudson Heights QC J0P 1J0. Email: lindsay.daoust@peonia.com. www.paeonia.com

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

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