



# Greely Gardeners Group

## *Newsletter*

June 2009

### GREELY GARDENERS 2009 CALENDAR

*It's summer and we're all busy with our gardens, so there are no evening meetings for the months of August and September. But that doesn't mean there's nothing happening for GGG members. Read on...*

**Saturday, July 25:** For our annual outing this summer we're suggesting the Heirloom Garden Tour at Upper Canada Village. If you've never visited the village this is a great opportunity to take in a unique historical site that will keep you coming back time and again. The cost is \$22 per person and in addition to the guided tour that includes a full day at the village and the adjacent Queen Elizabeth Gardens. However, we need between 20 and 25 people to make this work, and at the June meeting only 9 people signed up. Unless we can get a minimum of 20 we'll have to cancel. So if you're interested and haven't signed up yet, call Bob at 613-821-1847 or email [stanleyb@rogers.com](mailto:stanleyb@rogers.com). To learn more about Upper Canada Village and its gardens go to <http://www.uppercanadavillage.com/>

**Saturday, August 8, 1:00 p.m. The GGG's Annual Barbecue** – a tradition since 2008. This year the BBQ will be bigger and better than ever, and best of all, the food will be free! Once again Melody Tomka will be hosting the event at 6719 Bank Street. All GGG members are welcome, and you can bring a guest (spousal unit, friend, etc.) and your own children. There will *be* hamburgers, hot dogs, salads and desserts, Soft drinks and juices will be provided too. If you wish to bring wine or beer that's ok, but please remember that drinking and driving don't mix, so a designated driver is a good idea. Bring a chair or two, and anything else you'd normally bring to an outdoor event.

Now, we need to know how many people are coming so we can order enough food. So if you weren't able to sign up at the last meeting, please call Melody at 613-821-1985 or e-mail her at [mtomka@rogers.com](mailto:mtomka@rogers.com) and let her know you plan to come. Also please let her know if you have any food sensitivities or food allergies. And *please* do it now, don't wait until the day before the event! If your plans change later, you can always let Melody know.

#### **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, the always popular and very knowledgeable 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!

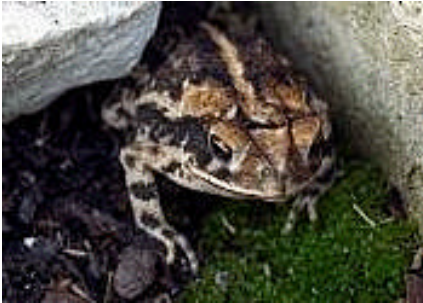
### OTHER GARDENING EVENTS

**Osgoode Garden Club** meets on the third Wednesday of the month in the Fred Alexander Room of the Osgoode Community Centre, 5660 Main Street. The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. There is a \$2.00 charge for non-members.

**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 at 7:30 in the RCMP Club House off Nicholl's Island Road (off River Road. For information contact Margot Belanger (President) at 613-692-1575.

## TIP OF THE MONTH...



DO YOU HAVE TOADS IN YOUR GARDEN? Perhaps you think they're slimy, ugly things that'll give you warts. Think again: a toad is a gardener's best friend. Toads feed on insects and other invertebrates. They're particularly fond of slugs, earwigs, cutworms, gypsy moths and beetles. In fact, nearly 90 per cent of a toad's diet consists of garden pests. In a single growing season that cute little fellow at left could easily consume more than 10,000 of these pesky pests. So next time you happen on a toad relaxing in a cool, shady corner of your garden, smile and make him welcome -- he eats earwigs! Here are a few tips on how to attract more toads to keep him company.

Unfortunately, toads and their froggy cousins are in decline around the world due to habitat loss and their extreme susceptibility to pollution. Frogs and toads breathe and drink through their skins, so both air and water pollution affect them directly. You can give frogs and toads a helping hand by providing a safe haven for them in your garden. One of the single most important things you can do to welcome toads into your yard is to go organic. Chemical pesticides, fertilizers, and herbicides are all poison to toads and frogs – and many other beneficial creatures. If you stop using pesticides, a host of other hungry wildlife, including birds and beneficial insects such as ladybugs and dragonflies, will also move in to the area, eager to munch on any pests that show up.

Toads are amphibious creatures, but unlike frogs – which live in the water – toads live on land, although they do enjoy a dip now and again (especially during their breeding season), and they thrive in a cool, moist environment. For frogs you need to have a pond, but all you need if you want to keep toads in your garden is to ensure that they always have access to moisture. This is especially important in the summer months, when a toad will smell out the nearest moist patch and will burrow down into the cool, damp earth to protect its body from the sun's heat.

Letting part of your garden grow a little wild – never a problem in my garden -- will create piles of leaves and other foliage will also offer sanctuary to toads. However, it's also important to remember to be very careful when gardening – and especially when mowing the lawn – to watch out for places where a toad may be resting. Strategically placed logs, rocks and plants in a shady garden corner make an inviting refuge for a toad or two seeking a home that offers refuge from the sun. And then at night they come out to enjoy the cool night air – and eat bugs!

Lee Valley Tools will sell you a toad house, but if you'd rather save money you can create your own inviting 'toad residence' by digging a shallow hole in a shaded area of your garden, ideally shaded by trees or shrubs, and then place an old 8-inch clay pot over the top of it, leaving a small entrance ramp in the earth on one side. Put a rock on top to keep it in place. Into that, you could periodically put in some well-rotted leaves that have been soaking in water. This would make an ideal refuge for toads. When you're out with the watering can, especially on really hot days, give your toad house a sprinkle to help keep it cool and damp in there.

If you're feeling really energetic you could even construct a toad hole like the one our little friend is emerging from in the picture above. It's not a big job. First dig a hole about 10 inches square and 3 inches deep. Level off the floor and cover it with about an inch of damp sand. Use flat stones to make sides and a ceiling, leaving about a 3-inch gap for a sloping entrance. As a finishing touch add a small plant to shade the entrance, and as with your flower pot toad house, make sure that the toad hole stays comfortably damp. The toads will thank you as they feast on slugs and earwigs.

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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)