



# Greely Gardeners Group

## Newsletter

September 2009

### 2009 CALENDAR

#### Wednesday, October 7:

Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. Topic: A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE. Guest speaker: John McKenzie. Worried about coyotes? Deer munching on your trees and perennials? John will describe the changes that have occurred in our relationship with wildlife and offer realistic solutions to some of the issues we're facing with respect to wild animals -- especially predators -- in our "backyard".

#### Wednesday, November 4:

Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m. Our "guest" speaker will be Lindley McPhail, who will show us how a group of volunteers -- with a little professional help -- built a beautiful dry stone bridge in a park in the town of Russell. We'll also be voting on your executive for 2009-2010. Note: Lindley replaces our previously advertised speaker, Suzanne Patry of Whitehouse Perennials, who was unable to make the November date. We hope to be able to bring Suzanne back later in the season.

#### 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. As always there will be door prizes and plenty of fun. Spouses welcome. Don't miss it!

### 2010 CALENDAR

**Thursday, January 7:** Topic: VERICOMPOSTING. Guest speaker, Andrew Aitkens. That's a fancy word for composting with worms. Not as yukky as you're probably thinking, as Andrew will explain how you can learn to love those little red wrigglers.

**Thursday, February 4:** Topic: WEEDS – IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THEM, EAT THEM! "Guest" speaker, Bob Stanley. This presentation (complete with recipes) will make you think about those pesky weeds in a whole new way.

**Thursday, March 4:** Topic: JAPANESE FLOWER ARRANGING. Guest speaker, Wendy Batson of the Ohara School of Ikebana.

### OTHER GARDENING EVENTS

**Tree planting at Shields Creek, Wednesday, October 14 from 10:30 to 1:00 p.m.** South Nation Conservation is seeking volunteers to help plant trees and shrubs along the banks of the creek in Andy Shields park as part of the SNC's "Cool streams" programme. Lunch will be provided! For full details please see the PDF flier emailed with this newsletter

**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.

## TIP OF THE MONTH...



In January our guest speaker will tell us all about the benefits of vermicomposting – or composting with worms, little red wrigglers that can turn your food scraps into lovely compost. This month here's a tip about your garden's best friend, the earthworm.

As every good gardener knows, a healthy population of earthworms in your soil means better soil fertility, better soil structure, and better drainage. The more worms the better. If you think you don't have enough earthworms in your garden, you could possibly find somewhere that sells worms, but that's really not the best solution, for a number of reasons.

Apart from the cost factor, there is another problem with buying worms: the kind of earthworms most often sold in stores or catalogues have been raised, and do best in, extremely nutrient-rich soil. This poses a problem because when you get home and release your store-bought earthworms into your soil, they tend to leave in search of greener pastures. So what we want to do is encourage earthworms, by luring them into our garden. So how is that done? The secret is to modify some of your soil to create the kind of habitat that earthworms love -- in other words, make them an earthworm hotel! Here's how:

- ? First, pick an area in your garden that is about 3 feet x 3 feet.
- ? Adjust the soil pH in that area to 7.0 or neutral. Add some of organic matter like compost to that area. Keep tilling to a minimum, especially during the warmer weather when earthworms are most active, but do work in the organic matter a little bit.
- ? Plant a cover crop like clover, buckwheat, or hairy vetch. Let the crop grow for a while and then gently work it into the soil. Periodically check the site, in a very short time you will see a lot more earthworm activity.
- ? Once you see a thriving community of worms, now you can use them around your garden. Carefully dig out cubic blocks of earthworm-rich soil, how much is up to you, and replace them with cubic blocks of regular soil.
- ? Make sure you give the worms some good organic matter in their new home so they don't leave. Keep replanting your hotel area with cover crops to maintain a good organic matter supply for them.

This works better than store-bought worms because they are being attracted to, and raised in, soil that is similar to yours so when they are released they won't leave. In time, you will have tons of earthworms all over your garden, and you will have improved your soil a little at a time, which is much easier than tackling a large area all at once.

*This tip is based on an article found on the website [weekendgardener.net](http://weekendgardener.net). This is a great website with tons of tips on every aspect of gardening, including video tips, tutorials, contests, and a lot more. Highly recommended.*

---

### Greely Gardeners Group, 2008-09 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)