



Greely Gardeners Group

Newsletter

October 2009

2009 CALENDAR

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. Note: Lindley replaces our previously advertised speaker, Suzanne Patry of Whitehouse Perennials, who was unable to make the November date. Thanks Lindley! 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.

Website Woes

We have had a number of problems with our website this year – such as the site simply disappearing for days or weeks at a time. Most of these problems can be traced back to the company that hosts the site for us, and we will be looking for a new hosting service when our current contract expires at the end of this year! Meanwhile, do take a look at the site and let us have your suggestions for improvements. Gary Hall will be taking over as webmaster when Bob moves to Merrickville next month, and he'll be looking for your suggestions on what you'd like to see on the site in future.

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.

TIP OF THE MONTH...



WE'VE ALREADY HAD A FEW FROSTY NIGHTS, and that means an end to colour in the garden – unless of course you've planted some *brassica oleracea*, better known to you and me as cabbage and kale. No, we're not talking about the kind of cabbage you turn into cole slaw, these are ornamental cabbages. They are colourful, hardy and versatile, and they're becoming increasingly popular as a plant that will keep on adding colour to your garden right up until the snow covers them. These showy ornamental cabbages come in a range of colours from whites to pinks, purples and reds. Once acclimatized, they can survive temperatures as low as 15C below, and they thrive on cold weather. Those early frosts actually make their colours more vivid.

Although they are often called flowering cabbage, it is in fact the leaves, not the flowers, that provide all the colour. And in recent years many new hybrids have been developed specifically to provide more and better colours. Although they are all in the same family, cabbages and kales show their colours differently. The cabbage varieties come in a wide range of sizes and all develop colourful flower-like rosettes. The kales on the other hand don't develop rosettes, but display their colours through their frilly, ruffled leaves. While it may be too late for this fall/winter season (unless you can find some at garden centres), here are some tips to get you started on growing ornamental cabbage for next year.

Both ornamental cabbages and kales can be started from seed. Sow the seeds in late summer so that the plants will be fully developed a few weeks before the first hard frost. Early August should be soon enough. Plant them in a sunny location with moderately good soil conditions – add a little well-rotted compost if you have some to give them a good start, and make sure the soil remains moist but not wet. Space the seeds about six inches apart, and remember that cabbage seeds requires light to germinate, so press them firmly into the soil but don't cover them. They should germinate in a couple of weeks, and when they are a few inches tall you can thin them or transplant them. Allow about two feet between plants – they're going to get much bigger! Watch out for pests like cabbage loopers that like to chew on the leaves, and be sure to keep the soil moist. Remember, you won't see much colour until that first frost.

You can also start your brassicas in pots on your deck or porch. Make sure you use a large enough pot – at least 6 to 8 inches – and remember that they need that touch of frost to bring out the colour. In a really large pot combined with other plants such as geraniums, your cabbages can also make a great display as houseplants. You can even dig up some of your brassicas, put them in pots and bring them indoors to brighten up the house in late fall and early winter.

If you prefer, you can buy plants from a garden centre (I even saw some on sale in the supermarket this year). Look for sturdy, compact plants that have already begun to show plenty of colour. If you're buying plants to transfer into your garden, be warned that store-bought plants are most likely pot bound, and pot bound plants will not likely increase in size even after being planted in the garden, so buy plants that are the size you want.

Note: Next month GGG's former secretary Heather Clemenson takes over as editor of this newsletter as Carol and I will have moved to Merrickville. If you have contributions or suggestions for articles, you can reach Heather at (613) 821-7445 or by email at haclemenson@sympatico.ca.

Greely Gardeners Group, 2008-09 Executive Committee:

President - Shelley Piercey 821-1120; Vice-President - Anita Snelgrove 821-0447; Treasurer - Melissa MacDonald 821-9680;
Past-President - Shelagh Heatlie 821-0816; Newsletter - Bob Stanley 821-1847

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