



Greely Gardeners Group

Newsletter

November 2009

2009 CALENDAR

Wednesday, December 2: It is still not too late to join us – call Shelley at 613 821 1120

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. This year there will be special door prizes and plenty of additional fun. Spouses welcome. Don't miss it! But please remember; do not bring any alcoholic drinks to the dinner. A non-alcoholic punch will be available.

2010 CALENDAR

Thursday, January 7: Topic: VERMICOMPOSTING. 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. Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m.

Please note that the location for the February and March meetings is to be confirmed.

We will let you know as soon as possible where these meetings will be held.

Thursday, February 4: Topic: TO BE DETERMINED

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

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.



DID YOU KNOW? The poinsettia was named after Dr. Joel Roberts Poinsett, US ambassador to the newly independent Republic of Mexico from 1825 to 1829. He was also a keen botanist and gardener and he sent specimens of the poinsettia to America. The plant at that time was used in Mexico to decorate churches at Christmas and was called "flor de la noche Buena" or "Nativity Flower". In its native country, the plant can grow to a height of sixteen feet.

TIP OF THE MONTH...



One of the most beautiful blooms this time of the year is that of the **Christmas cactus**. With proper attention and the right environment, they will continue to bloom year after year. Their blooms are in various shades of pink, red, and white.

SOIL: They require soil containing rich, organic material. The recommended growing medium is one part potting soil, two parts peat and one part sand. It is important to choose a pot that allows for proper drainage and is of an appropriate size for the plant as these plants prefer to be root-bound rather than planted in a pot that is too large.

LIGHT AND WATERING: Moderate, filtered lighting is recommended as direct sunlight can be damaging, especially in the autumn, spring, and summer months. To promote blooms, it is suggested that Christmas cacti be placed in an area ranging between 50 and 55 degrees Fahrenheit beginning in November. In order to bloom, they need several hours per day of complete darkness beginning around the middle of October. While the buds are developing, the Christmas cactus should be placed in a location that receives filtered light. At this point, it should not be moved as moving the plant would encourage blooms that are not facing the light to turn. This could weaken the buds and cause them to drop off.

Christmas cacti will keep their blossoms longer in cooler temperatures. Keep the plant in a well-lit location away from drafts from heat vents, fireplaces or other sources of hot air. Drafts and temperature extremes can also cause the flower buds to drop from the plant before they have a chance to open. Proper watering is also important. Even though the Christmas cactus is considered a succulent plant, it does not tolerate drought conditions very well.

PRUNING AND FERTILIZING: After blooming, Christmas cactus can be pruned. Remove a few sections either by pinching or by cutting them off with a well-sharpened knife. Doing so will promote branching and new growth. Christmas cactus should be fertilized once a month after blooming up until autumn using a fertilizer with a high potassium content. Do not apply fertilizer during autumn and winter months.

A Christmas cactus can continue producing spectacular blooms for many years. A large, mature Christmas cactus will develop what appears to be bark, and is capable of producing hundreds of blooms. The extra care required by the Christmas cactus is well worth the effort. Its brilliant blooms are a wondrous gift to behold each holiday season.

NOTE: If you know of any upcoming gardening related events in our area that you think might interest other GGG members or if you have contributions or suggestions for articles for the Newsletter, let me know and I'll try to include them. Please contact Heather at (613) 821-7445 or haclemenson@sympatico.ca.

Greely Gardeners Group, 2009-10 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 - Heather Clemenson 821-7445; Website - Gary Hall 821-7445

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