



Greely Gardeners Group

Newsletter

April 2010

GREELY GARDENERS EVENTS

Wednesday, May 5 – Topic: **Growing and Using Gourds**. Guest Speaker: Claudette Hart.

Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 29 – **Annual Spring Plant Sale**, Andrew Shields Park, Old Prescott Road, opens 9:00 a.m.

As we have had an early spring perhaps there will be plenty of time to take cuttings and to divide plants for the Plant Sale. Whether donating or buying we look forward to seeing you there.

Wednesday, June 2 – Topic: **Wild Flowers**. Guest Speaker: Phillip Fry.

Old Field Habitat Garden and Wild-flower Nursery; visit www.oldfieldgarden.on.ca for a preview.
Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m.

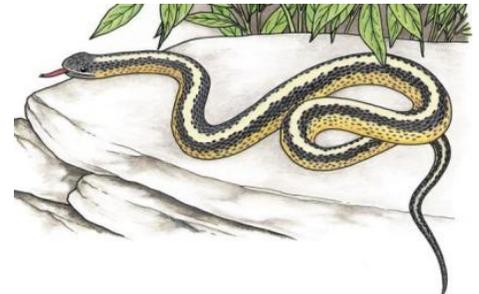
OTHER GARDENING EVENTS

- **“Ottawa is Blooming”**, 10th Annual Garden and Landscape Show, April 23-25, 2010, Kanata Recreation Complex, 100 Walter Baker Place, Kanata. For details see: <http://www.ottawaisblooming.com/8.html>
- **Ottawa Botanical Garden Society (OBGS)** presents *“From Parking Lot to Paradise: The Making of an Urban Garden”* Monday, April 26, 2010, The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson. The Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington Street. Cost: \$20 individual members of the OBGS; \$23 group members of the OBGS; \$25 general public. For details see: <http://www.ottawagarden.ca/>
- **Ottawa Orchid Show**, April 24 & 25, Nepean Sportsplex, 1701 Woodroffe Avenue, 12:00 to 5:00 on Saturday; 9:00 to 5:00 on Sunday. Regular admission: \$10; Seniors (60 or over): \$8; Children 8-12: \$8; (under 8 - free) <http://www.ottawaorchidsociety.com/2010show.html>
- **Manotick Horticultural Society**, May 10, “From the Garden to the Table” with Gay Cook, Ottawa Citizen Food Editor. RCMP Club House off Nicholl’s Island Road. For information contact Margot Belanger, (613) 692-1575.
- **Russell and District Horticultural Society** meetings are held at 7:00 pm, the third Monday of each month at the Royal Canadian Legion/Lion’s Hall at 24 Legion Lane in Russell. Monday, April 19 “Garden Water Features”, speaker, Daryl Kekanovitch of Ritchie Feed & Seed. For further information: info@russellgardeners.ca
- **Osgoode Garden Club** meets on the third Wednesday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at the Osgoode Library on Osgoode Main Street. For information call Louise Boudreau 826-0385.

TIP OF THE MONTH...GARDEN GOOD GUYS: SNAKES, TOADS, AND SPIDERS

With all the talk of wildlife gardening these days, most attention goes to birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects. But an equally compelling case can be made for enticing reptiles, amphibians and arachnids into your garden. While the snake, the toad and the spider can improve almost any garden, each is burdened with an unsavory reputation. Secretive and reclusive in habit, all are, or have been, objects of human fear, loathing and superstition. But all of these creatures are superb pest suppressants.

Snakes love eating slugs, a pest we can happily see consumed. Shy and retiring creatures, most snakes don't fare well where humans congregate. Dogs and cats are a menace to them as are gardeners; lawn mowers are a particular menace, especially for grass-dwelling snakes like the garters. Shelter is the prime requisite for a snake-friendly garden. Snakes need lots of crannies into which they can quickly retreat. Rock piles and dry stone walls with crevices are invaluable, as are undisturbed banks, ditches, and other wild areas. Garter snakes overwinter in subterranean dens called hibernacula. Their favourite location is deep under big tree stumps, or rock piles. Once active, snakes need to raise their body temperature by basking, for which they require safe and sunny exposed spots with shelter close by. Large flat rocks with southern exposure are ideal.



Toads especially are good pest predators. In one night, a toad may gobble up as many as 100 cutworms, snails or slugs. Like snakes, toads need shelter if they are to survive, for they are hunted by skunks, snakes, and predatory birds. Dogs and cats are less of a problem, as they quickly learn to leave a toad alone after a taste of it. Daytime shelter is essential, and toads will squat in a cool spot under old boards or rocks. A toad hole must be situated so the toad can emerge into a sheltered area. As with snakes, swaths of uncut grass or other undisturbed patches are ideal.

Spiders don't need much encouragement to live in the garden—other than keeping the pesticide sprayer in the shed. A number of spiders have a chameleon quality for blending into different backgrounds. These are primarily hunting spiders that catch their prey by either stalking it or by lying in ambush and suddenly rushing out upon it. They comprise about 40 percent of all spider species, the web spinners about 60 percent. A thick mulch of grass clippings is a very good way to encourage hunting spiders in the vegetable garden. The mulch recreates the hunting and hiding opportunities spiders would naturally find in a meadow. One census taken in an English meadow in late summer found that each hectare contained about 5 million spiders. In such concentrations, spiders consume many times the number of insects eaten by birds. The spiders that spin webs to trap their prey are equally adept at insect control. Their webs—space webs, sheet webs, orb webs, cobwebs, or funnel webs—form structures of great beauty that enhance the texture of a well-formed garden. And never more so than when tiny beads of dew are strung along the silken strands, creating tapestries as gorgeous as anything the garden has to offer.

Greely Gardeners Group – 2009-10 Executive Committee

President - Shelley Piercey 821-1120; **Vice-President** - vacant;

Treasurer - Melissa MacDonald 821-9680; **Past-President** - Shelagh Heatlie 821-0816; **Secretary** – Sue Young 821-9108;

Events Co-ordinator - vacant; **Newsletter** – Heather Clemenson 821-7445; **Website** – Gary Hall 821-7445; Gill Toll 821-6123

www.greelygardeners.org