



# Greely Gardeners Group

## *Newsletter*

November 2012

### GREELY GARDENERS EVENTS

#### MONTHLY MEETING -- Wednesday November 7

Topic: **"Seasonal Planters"**

Guest speaker: Catherine Disley

Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m.

#### MONTHLY MEETING -- Wednesday December 5 Annual Christmas Pot-Luck Diner ... mark your calendar an event not to be missed!

Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m.

### GGG Executive for 2013

This year the slate is a good mix of returning members along with a number of new faces.

President	<i>Vacant</i>	Vice President	Lee Nickerson
Treasurer	Jane Rietze	Secretary	Denyse Becker
Events Coordinator	Geoff Voyce	Past President	Gary Hall
Member at Large	Sue Young	Member at Large	Phyllis Nickerson
Newsletter	Heather Clemenson		

We remain in the search for a President and request any interested individual to please contact Lee Nickerson for further details (613-574-0214). In the interim, Lee will perform the functions normally associated with the President.

### OTHER GARDENING EVENTS

**Manotick Horticultural Society**, "Fresh Flowers for the Holidays", speaker Joanne Plummer, Mill Street Florist, Monday November 12, 7:30 p.m., Main Hall, RCMP Campground, Long Island Locks, Manotick.

**Ottawa Horticultural Society**, “Landscaping with Labyrinths”, speaker Kathryn Lindsay, Tuesday November 27, 7:30 p.m., Tom Brown arena 141 Bayview Avenue (at Scott).

**Osgoode Garden Club** meets on the third Wednesday of the month; from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Osgoode Library on Osgoode Main Street.

**Kanata-March Horticultural Society**, “Wreaths and Winter Arrangements from Natural Materials”, speakers Sue and Tim Dyer, 7:00 p.m. social, 7:30-9:00 p.m. program, Old March Town Hall, 821 March Road.

**Russell and District Horticultural Society**, third Monday of the month 7:00 p.m., Royal Canadian Legion/Lion's Hall at 24 Legion Lane in Russell. Details of upcoming events are posted on their website: <http://www.russellgardeners.ca/>

## MONTHLY REPORT – “THE MONARCH BUTTERFLY: A PHENOMENON OF NATURE”



Report by: Lee Nickerson

In our October meeting the Greely Gardeners Group had the pleasure of hearing Jean Lauriault talk about the incredible lives of a summer visitor to Canada – “The Monarch Butterfly”. He brought the monarchs to us through a number of brilliant pictures showing the various stages of their lives and a graphic representation of their migratory route.

Monarchs are found in many places throughout the world, but they probably originated in the Americas, and were spread either with the help of humans or on their own to other places. They are found in Australia and New Zealand, and many islands east of these countries (most islands between Australia and Tahiti have monarchs). They are also found in Hawaii, most islands in the Caribbean, and even sometimes in Western Europe. Monarchs weigh, on average, about half a gram. This can vary from about .27 grams (a very small monarch!) to about .75 grams (a very big monarch!).

Males have a small spot on the inside surface of their hind wings that is not present in females. Adult monarch butterflies sip nectar from flowering plants using a sucking tube, which resembles a soda straw while the monarch caterpillar



eats exclusively the milkweed plant. Monarchs go through 4 or 5 generations each year, and only one of these migrates. The migratory generation is the last one of a year.

Jean informed us that it is true that monarchs are poisonous. They store a poison called cardenolides, or cardiac glycosides that they get from the plants they eat. The potency of monarchs depends on the potency of the plants they ate when they were caterpillars. Some kinds of milkweed have higher levels of cardiac glycosides than others. The effect of the toxin depends on the amount of toxin that the predator eats, and what kind of animal the predator is. The two bird species that eat monarchs in the Mexican overwintering colonies have probably evolved to be able to tolerate the toxins. They possess an innate ability to gage just how many butterflies they can ingest before going too far!

## USING LEAVES IN YOUR GARDEN

When we returned home after a few weeks of holiday in Europe, our lawns were covered in leaves. Most households along our street bag their leaves and put them out for the city to pick up; but there are other options. I found this useful article on an organic gardening website.

### **Don't Just Throw Them Away! Use Autumn Leaves to Improve Your Garden**

By Colleen Vanderlinden

<http://organicgardening.about.com/od/organicgardenmaintenance/a/autumnleaves.htm>

#### **1. Compost Them**

Autumn leaves, especially those that have been chopped or shredded (you can use a chipper/shredder, a leaf vac, or a lawn mower to shred leaves) are dream additions to the compost pile. Leaves are a great source of "brown," high-carbon material for the compost. Simply alternate layers of shredded leaves with the regular green materials you'd add to your compost pile (such as vegetable and fruit scraps, weeds, grass clippings, and plants that you pull out in your fall garden clean-up) and let it sit over the winter. Aerate or turn the pile when you think of it, and by planting time you'll have finished compost.

## 2. **Make Leaf Mold**

Leaf mold is a wonderful soil amendment that is made from nothing more than fall leaves with the occasional layer of garden soil or finished compost added. The pile sits for about a year, and when it's finished you have the perfect amendment for vegetable and flower gardens, as well as a fantastic addition to potting soils.

## 3. **Mulch**

Once you've shredded your leaves, they can be used as an organic mulch in flower beds, vegetable gardens, under trees and shrubs, or in container gardens. Simply apply a two to three inch layer of shredded leaves to your beds, keeping the mulch from directly touching the stems and trunks of your plants. The mulch will help the soil retain moisture, stay cool, and limit weed seed germination. As a bonus, the leaves will add nutrients to the soil as they break down, and the worms and soil micro-organisms will work on them as well, resulting in lighter, fluffier soil over time.

## 4. **Hoard Them**

You may think that once all of the leaf clean-up is finished, you'll never want to see another leaf again. But just wait! What about when spring rolls around, and you're out there weeding and deadheading and pruning again, adding all of those "greens" to the compost pile? Brown materials can be hard to come by in spring and summer. But, if you've thought ahead and hoarded a garbage bag or two in your garage over the winter, you won't have any problem making perfect compost in spring. It's much easier to dump a bag of leaves on the compost pile than to stand there shredding newspaper in an attempt to dry out a soggy compost pile!

## 5. **Mow Them**

This one may be the easiest solution, as it involves no raking whatsoever. There really is no scientific reason to rake all of the leaves off of your lawn. If you simply run over them with a mower (with the wheels set at their highest setting) they'll break down over the winter, providing your soil with nutrients and shading the soil, which will result in fewer lawn weeds to worry about next year. If you do this once a week until the leaves are finished falling, you won't have to rake a single leaf, and your lawn will look better for it next spring and summer.

So, there you have them: five easy ways to deal with autumn leaves. Use one, or a combination, but don't be surprised to find yourself eyeing your neighbour's leaves once you see the benefits autumn leaves bring to your garden.

---

## **Greely Gardeners Group – 2012 Executive Committee**

**President** - *vacant*

**Treasurer** - Jane Rietze 613-699-6330

**Events Co-ordinator** - Geoff Voyce 613-692-5384

**Member-at-Large** - Sue Young 613-574-0098

**Newsletter** - Heather Clemenson 613-821-7445

**Vice-President** - Lee Nickerson 613-574-0214

**Secretary** - Denyse Becker 613-425-1157

**Past-President** - Gary Hall 613-821-7445

**Member-at-Large** - Phyllis Nickerson 613-574-0214

**Website Updates** - Gary Hall 613-821-7445