



Greely Gardeners Group

Newsletter

February 2013

GREELY GARDENERS EVENTS

Note: Our meetings in February and March are the first Thursday of the month.

MONTHLY MEETING – Thursday February 7

Topic: “Lawn Maintenance”

Guest speaker: Neill Ritchie, Ritchie Feed and Seed
Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m.

MONTHLY MEETING – Thursday March 7

Topic: “Fruit Trees”

Guest speaker: Doug King, Make It Green Garden Centre
Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m.

Reminder GGG 2012 Membership Fees Are Now Due:

If you are intending to renew your annual membership at our next meeting, please consider printing a membership form from our website www.greelygardeners.ca and filling it in ahead of time. At only \$10 for the year, we are still the best bargain in town!

OTHER GARDENING EVENTS

Manotick Horticultural Society: Guest speaker Gerry Baker who will be speaking on “Vermiculture”; Monday February 11, 7:30 p.m., Main Hall, RCMP Campground, Long Island Locks, Manotick.

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

Russell and District Horticultural Society meets 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 – DOUGLAS VYE “ORCHIDS”

Douglas began his talk by describing his other home in Costa Rica and the profusion of orchids that grow wild in that country. He noted that his interest in orchids really began after a trip to Costa Rica and that it led to his joining the Ottawa Orchid Society. He has since served as the President of the Ottawa Orchid



Society for two terms. At one time, he had a personal collection of roughly 200 orchids, though he subsequently downsized his collection.

His talk dealt primarily with three of the most popular orchids available through various retail stores; the Cattleya, Dendrobium and Phalaenopsis orchids. He described for each of them the growing conditions; their light, temperature and water requirements. He explained, with samples, the various mediums in which orchids can be grown and the different requirements for the three types that he was focusing on.

He also provided a very good handout for those attending the presentation, which has been scanned and is available on the GGG website: www.greelygardeners.ca

To view this handout, go to the GGG home page, scroll down to the section titled "**Events for 2013 and Previous Years**"; then click on "*meetings, events and activities*" which will take you to a page on which you will see a history of our meetings. Click on "Orchids" under the "Monthly Meetings 2013" heading.

One sheet of the handouts, copied on the next page, is a general tip sheet on watering orchids published by the American Orchid Society.

Novice Culture Sheet



Watering Know-how

More orchids are killed by incorrect watering than by any other reason. There are two separate components to proper watering; when and how. The vast majority of orchids grown by hobby growers are naturally found on trees above the ground where the light is more plentiful. These plants (epiphytes) are adapted to having their roots exposed to light and air so in addition to water, orchid roots need air.

When do I water? Orchids should be watered just as they begin to dry out. This rule applies to all orchids with slight variations depending on whether your plant has the ability to store water or not. Orchids such as cattleyas and oncidiums should be allowed to dry completely between waterings while orchids such as phalaenopsis and paphiopedilums that have no water storage organs should be watered before dryness occurs.

There's is no magic formula for how often to water. This is because your growing area is different from anyone else's. Temperature, humidity, air movement, potting mix (type and age), and light levels all play a role. There are several ways to determine when a potted orchid is almost dry: 1) the surface of the potting mix will appear dry when the potting mix is moss; 2) dry pots will feel lighter when lifted. After a few watering, you will be able to tell by the weight of the pot whether or not it is time to water again. If in doubt, wait a day. 3) clay pots feel dry; 4) a pencil or wooden skewer inserted into the potting mix will come out almost dry. If in doubt, a finger inserted into the potting mix is perhaps the best tool to determine the moisture content of the potting mix; it causes no harm to the plant. A bark mix dries out faster than a moss potting mix.

It is best to water your plant in the morning to give the moisture on the leaves time to dry during the day. If any water remains in the crown (where the leaves join in the center) use a paper towel to blot the water to avoid crown rot.

You should water more frequently when the temperatures are warm and decrease watering

when temperatures are cool. Keep in mind that temperatures close to the window on a windowsill will be colder or hotter than your general house temperature. Avoid having the plant in the direct line of the heat or air conditioning ducts.

How do I water? When orchids are watered, they should be watered copiously. Place your plant into the sink and let the water run freely from the drainage holes for about a minute. Do not use salt-softened or distilled water. Allow the plant to drain completely. This is an opportunity to examine how the potting mix behaves. If you cannot pour water rapidly through the pot, the potting mix is too dense and you run the risk of starving the roots for air. If you see finely divided material that looks like coffee grounds in the water coming from the drainage holes, your potting mix is breaking down and it's time to repot into fresh mix.

Finally a couple of notes about mounted plants and plants grown in baskets without additional potting mix. Avoid dunking the plants in buckets of water. This practice very easily spreads diseases. Two short waterings a few minutes apart are much more effective than one long watering. Once water runs off the plant, the roots will have absorbed essentially all they can at that time and excess water simply runs off to the ground. Water your plants and then a few minutes later water them again, always beginning with the first plant you watered. This allows time for the roots of the last plant watered to finish absorbing water before you wet them again. Roots that are completely saturated will be a solid color while those that are not will appear mottled.

You will find lots of specific information regarding growing orchids at the American Orchid Society's website at www.aos.org.

The American Orchid Society is the world's leading provider of information about and related to orchids. We invite you to join us and learn about the world's most fascinating flowers and plants. Your membership entitles you to our monthly award-winning magazine, *Orchids*, 10 percent discount on items purchased at The AOS online store, free and discounted admission to more than 200 botanical gardens and arboreta and exclusive members-only online content.

American Orchid Society
at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
10901 Old Cutler Road,
Coral Gables, FL 33156
www.aos.org

Greely Gardeners Group – 2013 Executive Committee

President - Lee Nickerson 613-574-0214

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 - *vacant*

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

Website URL

www.greelygardeners.ca