



Greely Gardeners Group

Newsletter

February 2015

GREELY GARDENERS EVENTS

Please note that in February and March we meet on a Thursday night.

MONTHLY MEETING – Thursday February 5

Topic: “Garden Pests and Diseases”

Guest speaker: Diane McClymont Peace, Master Gardener
Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m.

If you want to know what insects and diseases are attacking your trees and plants and what you can do about them, you will enjoy Master Gardener Diane McClymont Peace’s presentation. Diane gardens in the Greely area and knows the challenges we face. She will cover the major insects, viruses and diseases that affect trees and plants from spring through to fall, including new ones that are just arriving in our area. Diane has practical ideas for preventing and dealing with everything from spruce bud worm to the sunflower moth. You will be amazed what you will learn.

MONTHLY MEETING – Thursday March 5

Topic: “The Selection and Care of Perennials”

Guest speaker: Robert Wolodarski
Greely Community Centre, 7:00 p.m.

GGG 2015 MEMBERSHIP FEES

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: Monday February 9th, “Fairchild Tropical Botanic Gardens south of Miami” (www.fairchildgarden.org), Joan Wyatt and Ron Arsenault, 7:30 p.m., Main Hall, RCMP Campground, Long Island Locks, Manotick.

Russell and District Horticultural Society: Monday, February 16, “Operating a Sugar Shack”, Frank Heerkens and Gary Gallinger of On the Bend Sugar Shack in Chesterfield, 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/>

Ottawa Horticultural Society, Tuesday February 24, “Mucking about” in the dirt!” Nancy McDonald’s presentation will reinforce the benefits of “mucking about” in the dirt as well as ways to stay healthy when gardening, 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Tom Brown Arena, 141 Bayview Road, Ottawa. Open to the public, free of charge.

JANUARY MEETING – MARCEL BEAUCHAMP

Marcel spoke to the members on the subject of “Secrets to Healthy, Beautiful Trees”. He started by telling us about his own garden at Morewood and two of his favourite trees; a ginkgo and a tulip tree. He noted that he would take questions as he spoke and immediately he received questions about his two favourite trees.



Marcel discussed the structure and physiology of a tree. A handout on “Pruning Trees” was provided for everyone who attended and this was the major focus of

the presentation (copy also sent with this Newsletter). Some of the other overheads that Marcel referred to in his talk will be posted on the GGG website (follow the link on the home page to "Last Monthly Meeting"). He described what happens to a tree when it is wounded (deliberately by pruning or accidentally) and how the tree will eventually repair itself by healing over the wound. He went over step-by-step how to properly cut off a branch so as to have the minimum impact on the tree and also noted the best time to prune a tree. As a general rule, for most trees, pruning would be best undertaken in the late fall or early winter when the tree has high reserves of stored energy. He did mention that there were exceptions to this rule. One exception was to remove any suckers or water shoots from a tree in the mid summer when the tree energy reserves are low. In this case the tree would be less likely to throw out new suckers or water shoots.

During the course of the evening there were many questions from members and the session largely became a question and answer period. For example, there was some discussion about the impact of drought on spruce trees and how to help a tree to get through winter. Marcel noted that spruce trees in particular are susceptible to drought and recommended mulching and moistening the mulch would help. He recommended mulching around trees, especially before the winter. In addition, especially for young trees, it is good to give them a good soak before winter. Also, he discussed wrapping the lower trunk of trees that might be susceptible to wind and sun damage in the winter, especially young trees. This also helps to protect against damage by rodents.

Marcel noted that he has never fertilized trees, but that is his own choice. He prefers a good mulch to assist. Another point made was not to plant a tree too deep. It was noted that developers often do this and the trees survive only a few years. Similarly when existing trees are heavily backfilled to raise the graded level around a new house, they will rarely survive.

There are a number of articles written by Marcel on the Russell and District Horticultural Society including: "When to Prune Trees"

<http://www.russellgardeners.ca/articles.html>

TERRARIUMS: GARDENS IN GLASS

By Dr. Leonard Perry, Extension Professor,
University of Vermont, Department of Plant and Soil Science (<http://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/articles/glass.htm>)

What do fish tanks, brandy snifters, and Mason jars have in common? They are all containers that can be used to make gardens in glass, or terrariums. Whether you put together a terrarium on a rainy summer day or for garden-relief in the dead of winter, this activity is suited for all ages. Terrariums are once again quite popular, perhaps due in part to the interest in fairy gardens — one possible theme for a terrarium.

Growing plants in clear containers dates back to at least 2,500 years ago in Greece. The terrariums we know today began with a 19th century London physician, N.B. Ward, and were named after him. These large, enclosed glass containers called “Wardian cases” were the original means of transporting newly discovered plants back to Europe from voyages around the world.

In America, the earliest terrariums were made by women settlers placing the native partridgeberry in hand-blown glass bowls. This is a woodland plant with dark green, small evergreen leaves and red berries. These simplest of terrariums we know as berry bowls.

If making a larger terrarium, many plants may be used — in fact any that are small, or grow slow and can be kept clipped to size. Keep in mind that, depending on the plants used, terrariums will need to be renovated every year or two as plants grow. You’ll need to remove any that die, or get too large, and replace with new, smaller plants. When doing so, take the opportunity to introduce some fresh soil. If the plants are too out of control, you may just want to start again with new and different small plants.

Low woodland plants which can be used include mosses, ferns, lichens, foamflower, wintergreen, and partridgeberry. Some taller plants include other ferns and violets. Just make sure if collecting such plants during the summer that they are not endangered (check with the state natural resources agency), and that you only collect a few plants from a native population.

Some common garden and house plants can be used such as aluminum plant, asparagus fern seedlings, creeping fig, English ivy, strawberry begonia, spider plants, nerve plant, selaginella moss, palm seedlings (which of course as they grow will need to be removed), and peperomias. There are many low perennial

plants you now can find for planting in walks and patios and stepping on, such as the herb thyme, which may be suitable in terrariums.

You may even want a theme of a specific ecological area. For a desert, use some of the many slower growing cactus seedlings and succulent plants such as echeveria, panda plant, or haworthia. For a bog, use mosses, ferns, and even carnivorous plants such as the Venus fly trap.

For a rock garden, consider perennials such as saxifrage, sedum, sempervivum (hens and chicks), erodium (alpine geranium), or low dianthus (pinks). Keep in mind, though, if using perennials that they may need some winter rest in a cool area. This may be an unheated, yet non-freezing garage, with indirect light.

Materials you'll need, beside plants, include proper soil (humus soil for woodlands, sandy for deserts, for instance), sand or fine gravel for drainage, and charcoal bits to keep the soil sweet. For desert themes, you may want to layer colored sands in the bottom. White or colored aquarium gravel, and miniature figures or fairy garden accessories (available at many garden and craft stores), can be used for accents. Sphagnum sheet moss is the usual liner for traditional and woodland terrariums.

Tools you'll need are scissors, a dowel rod, wire hooks or fork, water sprayer, funnel or tube, and brush or paper towels. Long-handled bamboo or similar tongs are useful for placing plants, pebbles, or accents. A small paint brush, as used in crafts, helps in cleaning leaves.

First, if using a moss liner, insert it green side out into the bottom quarter of the bowl. Then add a layer of gravel or sand. Sprinkle the charcoal bits on top. Finish with the soil, moistened. The container should now be about a quarter to third full. Add a little extra soil, as it will likely settle a half inch or so over the coming months.

Check your plants for pests before placing in the container. If foliage plants, it may be a good idea to dunk them in a mild, soapy bath and rinse before planting; this may help get rid of any lurking pests. Then check your terrarium frequently for pests, especially the undersides of leaves. If palm seedlings, check for mites, although mites prefer drier environments. Mealybugs may be the more commonly found, and if so, swab them with a cotton swab and rubbing alcohol.

Insert the plants, roots first, into holes made with a fork. Start with the largest plants first, filling in with those smaller. Use the dowel rod to place plants, and firm soil around them. Spray the plants with water (unless of course a dry garden), clean the inner sides of the container, then add your decorative accents.

Keep the terrarium in bright but indirect light. In direct light it can get too hot, cooking the plants. Since the moisture and humidity remains in the container much longer than with houseplants, take care not to overwater. Closed containers will remain moist much longer than those with open tops. If your container is closed with a lid, open and check it every few days to give it some fresh air, and to make sure mold isn't growing inside.

Most containers used for terrariums don't have drainage, so if you overwater you'll end up with a bog garden only suitable for specific plants. You can tell when to water if the plants wilt, of course, or if the soil looks dry and lighter in color. Not watering too much is probably the most important key to success. If in doubt, best is not to water. For a new terrarium, or one with young and small plants, you may need to water only a couple times a month. For those with well-grown plants, and little soil or sandy soil, you may need to water a couple times a week.

You may need to water cacti and succulents very seldom-- once or twice a month-- and during sunny days. If watering when cloudy, the soil may stay wet too long and these arid-loving plants can rot. When watering any terrarium plants in winter, make sure the water is room temperature and not icy cold. Avoid fertilizing, or do so very sparingly at very low rates, to keep plants smaller longer.

If a large container, such as large rectangular fish tank, you may want to put a layer of gravel on the bottom and very small pots of miniature plants on top, as in a greenhouse. Plant choices here might be miniature African violets, small seedlings of cacti and succulents, or rooted cuttings of small-leaved houseplants such as some gesneriads, peperomia and begonias.

There are many attractive containers you can purchase for terrariums, such as miniature greenhouses and Victorian-style large glass cases with many sides. Round glass "rose bowls" are available at many florist shops. Those with sides lower than the plants are used to make "dish gardens." Look around the kitchen for clear containers such as glass tea cups or mugs, large spice jars, gallon cider jars (the thin necks will be harder to work through), or the tops of plastic soda bottles cut off and placed over pots.

If you find a clear glass or plastic container, the size and shape of a Christmas ornament, this can be used for a one-plant hanging terrarium. I have one with a tillandsia air-plant which needs very little water, just an occasional misting. You also may find suitable and unique containers at craft stores, flea markets, yard sales, antique shops, and on the internet. The next time visiting any of these, think “terrarium containers.”

Greely Gardeners Group – 2014 Executive Committee

President:	Lee Nickerson	613-574-0214
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Treasurer:	Jane Rietze	613-699-6330
Secretary:	vacant	
Speaker Coordinator:	Elaine Routledge	613-692-9988
Past-President:	Gary Hall	613-821-7445
Member-at-Large:	Leslie Boomer	613-821-0101
Member-at-Large:	Josephine Shourie	613-240-1444
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Other Regular Volunteers

Treats Coordinator	Melody Tomka	613-821-1985
Gifts Coordinator	Phyllis Nickerson	613-574-0214
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