

The Watering Can



WEST CARLETON GARDEN CLUB
P.O. BOX 326, CARP, ONT, K0A 1L0

APRIL, 2010

West Carleton Garden Club On line <http://sites.google.com/site/westcarletongardenclub/>

Executive Committee

President – Donna Caldwell – 839-2079
Vice President – David Hinks – 839-2248
Treasurer – Ted Barnicoat – 839-0615
Secretary – Sharry Featherston – 839-9944
Newsletter – Denise Burnham – 839-7316
Program – Cristina Zehaluk – 832-3526
Plant Sale – Mary Reynolds – 832-0408
Hospitality – Mary and Roy Reynolds
Flower Show – Anne Crosley – 470-0079
Membership – Adeline Alkan – 839-0611
– Anne Crosley
Yearbook – Sharry Featherston
– Christina Zehaluk
Members at Large – Nancy Argue 831-0576
Past President – Anne Gadbois – 256-7161

Goodies and door-prizes for the April meeting are kindly requested from members with Surnames starting with B and C.

Wise Words

In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.

Margaret Atwood

Upcoming Flower Shows

The WCGC holds a Spring Bulb Show in May and in June we have our Annual Spring Flower Show. These are open to all of our members. Consider entering some of your prize specimens for all to enjoy. Flower Show guidelines will be in the Year Book.

Annual WCGC Plant Sale

Carp Farmers Market
Saturday June 5 2010

While you're cleaning up your beds why not do your perennial divisions now. The earlier you pot them up, the better they will look come sale day.

"Soils, Composting and Microbes"



with
Horticulturist
Mary Anne Jackson Hughes

Mary Anne Jackson Hughes is an Instructor and Faculty Member of the Horticulture Program at Algonquin College. She is proprietor of a landscape maintenance company and leads the City of Ottawa Pesticide-Free Education Campaign. She will present a slide show and share her knowledge of soil composition

Future Events

May 11, 2010

Annual Bulb Show
and

Tips/Tricks and
Techniques for Gardeners

with
Mary Anne Van Berlo

June 8th, 2010

Annual Spring Flower Show
and

"Gardening with
Drought in Mind:
Xeriscaping Principles and
Waterwise Gardening Tips"

with
Phil Reilly

Local Summer Garden Tours

Due to the great success of our tours last summer, we have decided to plan some more adventures for you to enjoy.

Some of the tours planned are as follows:

Bird Walk - A tour of the Bill Mason Outdoor Education Centre A tour of the trail in Dunrobin. with Bruce DiLabio who will point out birds and talk about the kinds of habitat that they prefer.

The Mer Bleue Conservation Area - June 26th – 1:30 p.m

The Mer Bleue Conservation Area is a 12.9 sq. mile protected area east of Ottawa. Its main feature is a sphagnum bog which is situated in an ancient channel of the Ottawa River and is a remarkable boreal-like ecosystem normally not found this far south. Stunted black spruce, tamarack, bog rosemary, blueberry, sundew, pitcher plant, at least 9 species of orchids, Labrador tea, several species of cotton grass, and a variety of low heath shrubs, are some of the unusual species that have adapted to the acidic waters of the bog. .

Blueberry Mountain and Pikes Peak – The natural beauty extending below Blueberry Mountain and Pike's Peak lies within the 500 hectares of wilderness owned and operated by the Clifford family. They are conserving and restoring the natural forest and wetland, where are found countless species of flora and fauna, many of them rare.

Good Garden Soil: How Does Yours Stack Up?

By Phil Reilly – Reilly Country Gardens

Gardening success hinges on understanding the limitations of your existing soils. Is there a "right" soil? That's a hard question. Most soils will grow something.

Knowing some history of your property can be helpful. If it was very recently a woodlot, then your soil will likely have a fair bit of organic matter in it, be quite light and airy, and with a shade tree or two, be able to grow a wide range of plants. If it was an open field, you'll have different conditions. This shouldn't be a problem, but your plant selection will be those which are primarily sun lovers. If it has been a long-time residence with no established gardens, then your soils are likely in need of structural (to provide better drainage) and nutrient rejuvenation to produce a successful garden no matter what their origin. In newer subdivisions, expect disappointments in your property's soil. Bedrock or rock fill is likely only inches away from the surface.

Before investing good money on pretty plants, you should do some exploratory digging around your property to learn about your soils. Don't assume that the soil on your property is uniform. Next to the house foundation and along fence lines are prime garden areas. On bigger properties, dig in the middle of your property too as you may want central island beds as part of your landscape design. When digging, keep the holes small and try to go two feet (60 cm.) deep – perennial plant roots generally need deep soil. If digging in lawn areas, carefully lift the sod for reuse. When you replace the sod, keep it uniformly moist for a couple of weeks to get the grass roots re-established.

Start a gardening notebook – it's worth it. In it, record the location, depth, and texture /composition of soil at each hole. Draw a simple map of your property to identify hole locations. While you're at it, draw in shade trees, utility services (especially buried hydro and waterlines), pathways and driveways. These obstacles should ultimately guide where you place your gardens. You don't want to dig up a successful garden to repair a utility problem!

Using an old-timer's trick can give a quick clue to soil composition. Simply spit on a pinch of dry soil sample (to moisten it) held in your hand. Rub the soil between your thumb and forefinger. Clay soils will feel slippery, sandy soils will feel gritty. You'd like it to be mostly gritty and somewhat slippery – gritty from sand, slippery from clay.

To get better information about your soil composition, collect a cup of soil, with portions from various depths of your diggings, from each hole. Place each sample in a tall jar with a screw-on lid and add twice the amount of water. Add one drop of dishwashing detergent to help the soil particles separate from each other. Shake the jar vigorously for a couple of minutes and let it stand overnight or as long as it takes for definite layers to form. Measure the resulting layers: sand at the bottom, silt in the middle, and clay on top. Calculate the percentage of sand, clay and silt in your soil samples. Sand, the heaviest will be at the bottom, then silt, with finer clay particles on top. Divide the thickness of each layer by the total height of settled soil and multiply x 100. (E.g. 2.5" of sand divided by 7.2" total height of solids)

Sign Up for Reilly's Gardening Tips e-letter

Our weekly (more or less) e-letter provides gardening tips suited to Ottawa's climate and growing conditions. We also announce our events, workshops, and periodic sales in our emails. By receiving our e-letters you are the first, and often the only, people to know about our weekly specials. Contact reilly@magma.ca. **For lots more information go to www.rcgardens.ca.**

Ottawa
is
Blooming

11TH ANNUAL KANATA GARDEN & LANDSCAPE SHOW

Kanata Garden & Landscape Show - April 23-25, 2010
At the Kanata Recreational Centre

Show Hours: Friday noon - 8pm
Saturday 10am - 5pm
Sunday 10am - 4pm

Admission: \$7 - Show your OHA membership card for \$2 off
Children under 12 – FREE

2010 Garden Seminar Series

WIN A ONE-HOUR GARDEN CONSULTATION WITH MARK CULLEN



Friday April 23

- 1 pm Mark Cullen (Canada AM / HGTV)
Escape to Reality
- 2 pm To be Announced
- 3 pm Kelly Noel (*The Master Gardeners*) *Daylilies*
- 4 pm Mark Cullen (Canada AM / HGTV)
Respect Your Mother
- 7 pm Mark Cullen (Canada AM / HGTV)
Escape to Reality

Saturday April 24

- 11 am Mark Cullen (Canada AM / HGTV)
Escape to Reality
- 12 pm Kent Peddie (Precision Landscape Group)
Yes, You Can Build your own Patio!
- 1 pm Suzanne Patry (Whitehouse Perennials)
- 2 pm Julianne Labreche (The Master Gardeners)
Making a Monarch Butterfly Weigh Station
- 3 pm Sue Dyer (Kings Creek Trees and Ornamentals)
Ornamental Grasses in the Landscape
- 4 pm Gillian Boyd (The Master Gardeners)
Ornamental Plants for Pollinators

Sunday April 25

- 11 am Cynthia Sutcliffe (Inviting Occasions)
Container Gardening
- 12 pm To be Announced
- 1 pm Judy Wall (Rock Wall Gardens)
Hypertufa Container Gardening
- 2 pm To be Announced
- 3 pm Polly McColl (The Master Gardeners)
Ten Unusual Easy Perennials

Attention:

We are still looking for West Carleton Garden Club members to help man the booth for an hour or two. Please sign up at the April meeting.