



Trowel Talk!

May 2019

Toughen up Transplants for Outdoor Living

As spring arrives, we dream of planting our gardens. Plants are started from seeds or purchased at garden centers. My garden is created entirely from seeds and cuttings. For me that is the only way to garden!

I share my surplus plants with friends or donate to plant sales. Often I hear that their plants, including the ones from garden centers, did not take. Transplanting stresses the plants. It is essential to transplant and nurture the plants properly so that you don't lose any of those precious and expensive plants.

Seedlings grown indoors usually have to be transplanted when they are large enough to handle. If plants are too crowded in the container thin them by snipping off some with small scissors. Fill individual pots, cell packs or flats with moist growing mixture up to 1cm. below the top. Make planting holes using a popsicle stick. Using the stick remove a small clump from the seedling container. Tease and loosen the individual seedlings from the clump. Holding the plant by the leaves, ease the seedling into the planting hole. Firm the soil around

it. Water and keep away from direct sunlight for a few days. Keep plants consistently moist but not wet. Feed with a balanced, diluted liquid fertilizer every ten days. To skip this first transplanting operation, I plant seeds directly into disinfected cell packs.

All plants require a period of adjustment called "hardening off", before they are transplanted out in the garden. The reason is that outdoor conditions of light, intensity and temperature are quite different than those indoors or in a commercial greenhouse. Outdoors they have to get used to sun, wind and cool nights. About ten days before transplanting move plants to a cool sheltered area away from wind and direct sunlight. Expose them to morning sun for 1- 2 hours at first. Gradually increase the time of exposure everyday. Take the plants indoors if the night temperature falls below



Seedlings in green house

Photo: Kelly Noel

pare the beds. Loosen the soil with a fork and enrich it with compost. Remove weeds, sticks and stones. Scatter a complete fertilizer e.g. 5-10 -15. Plant out after the danger of frost is past. I prefer to wait a few more days. Start planting perennials first, annuals a few days later and tomatoes and peppers when the soil has warmed up.

With a trowel dig a hole large enough to accommodate the root ball. Gently remove the plant and place it in the planting hole at the same depth as it was growing. Firm the soil around it and water. Shade the plants from the hot sun for a few days. Allow recommended space between plants. Ideally transplanting should be done on a calm cloudy evening. For the first ten days water the plants thoroughly to establish.

Good luck and happy planting!



Hardening-off daylily seedlings

Photo: Kelly Noel

10° C. Outdoor plants dry out quickly. Water them frequently. If not hardened-off plants will suffer a setback. A cold frame is very useful to harden off plants.

A few days before planting out pre-



Pricking out

Photo: MaryAnn Van Berlo

Susheela Godbole
Master Gardener

May To Do

- Harden off seedlings before planting them outside.
- Add compost and/or composted manure to your garden. Use some to top-dress the lawn as well.
- Plant cool-season crops (e.g. lettuce, peas) early, wait until it warms up for other vegetables.
- Apply corn gluten to lawns to prevent weed germination as well as provide some nutrients.
- Plan to attend a plant sale; note any bare spots in the garden beforehand so you can look for things to fill them.
- Ask an MG if you have any gardening or plant ID questions.

Tip of the Month

Ottawa is aiming to become a Bee City and a City of Gardens. We like our green spaces and our pollinators, it seems, and that's terrific. Want to help everyone - the birds, the bees, and the ecosystem, and decrease the amount of maintenance your garden needs? Plant native species, leave some debris and bare ground - and don't squash (or spray) the bugs! No, really, it's true - especially about native plants.



Bumble bee on aster

Photo: Amanda Carrigan

Although many flowers offer nectar and pollen to insects and pollinators, many native insect species have evolved to need native plants for laying eggs and raising young. Some of these plants are used by hundreds of species of insects and animals where a similar exotic ornamental may be used by only a few. Native bees may nest in holes in the ground, dead wood, and plant stems - they benefit from a little neglect in a garden. Songbirds need lots of caterpillars, insect larvae, and adult insects to

Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton



Where to find us for free gardening advice!

ONGOING:

Telephone Help Line: 613-236-0034—Wednesday and Thursday 1–3 pm (all year)

E-mail Help Line: mgoc_helpline@yahoo.ca - monitored daily

Send photos of garden pests, diseases or plants for ID.

CLINICS:

BEECHWOOD FARMERS' MARKET, June 15th, September 14th, 9 am-2 pm

BYWARD MARKET, Saturdays, May 4th-25th, June 1st & 8th, 9 am-1 pm

CARP MARKET Saturdays, May 11th-June 15th, June 29th, August 31st, September 7th, 14th, 28th, 8 am-1 pm

HERB EVENT, (Carp Market) June 22nd

CUMBERLAND MARKET (1115 Dunning Rd), June 8th & 22nd, July 6th, August 10th, September 7th, 9 am-1 pm

KEMPTVILLE FARMERS' MARKET, Sundays, May 26th, June 16th, July 14th, August 18th, noon-4 pm

MAIN MARKET, July 13th & 27th, August 10th & 24th, September 14th & 28th, 9 am-1 pm

NORTH GOWER FARMERS' MARKET, May 25th, June 1st & 15th, July 13th, August 17th, September 14th, 8:30 am-1 pm

OTTAWA FARMERS' MARKET (Lansdowne Park), Sundays, May 26th to September 22nd, 9 am-1 pm

RICHMOND FAIR, September 19th-22nd

RIVERSIDE SOUTH MARKET (Riverview Park & Ride), June 9th & 23rd, July 7th, 21st & 28th, August 11th & 25th, September 8th, 22nd & 29th, 10 am-2 pm

WESTBORO FARMERS' MARKET (Byron Linear Park), Saturdays, May 18th-June 22nd, July 6th & 20th, August 10th, 9:30 am-1 pm

SPEAKING EVENTS & WORKSHOPS:

Wednesday, May 15th -7:00 pm -9:30 pm

Designing your Water Garden: Elements and Principles of Design

Edythe Falconer, Master Gardener

Greenboro Community Centre, 363 Lorry Greenberg Drive

Greater Ottawa Water Garden Horticultural Society,

guest fee free 1st visit, \$5 2nd visit

Monday, May 20th- 7:30 pm

Into the Night Garden

Judith Cox, Master Gardener

Royal Canadian Legion, 57 Legion Way, Eganville

Eganville Horticultural Society, guest fee \$5

Tuesday, June 18th-7:30 pm,

Culinary Herbs

Rebecca Last, Master Gardener & Richard Guenette

Stittsville Community Centre, 2 Pretty Street, Stittsville.

Stittsville-Goulbourn Horticultural Society,

Continued

feed their babies. Some beneficial insects need other bugs for food or for egg laying. A bit of caterpillar damage on your leaves isn't so bad if those caterpillars later become someone's dinner. (However, it's still wise to squash invasive bugs like Japanese beetles that have few predators and do lots of damage)

Then, of course, native plants are adapted to their local environment. That means less watering, fertilizing and coddling plants for the gardener. And there's no worry about them escaping to become invasive problems in wild spaces (like kudzu did).

Having native plants in the garden is a great thing, but there are a couple of caveats to consider when acquiring them. Make sure the plants you are getting are the right ones for your location, and that they are not from vulnerable wild populations. Nursery stock should be nursery-grown, seeds should not be taken from more than 10% of a wild patch, and wild-collected plants should only be taken (with the permission of the owner) if the site is slated for clearing for farmland or development.

*Amanda Carrigan
Master Gardener*

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- newsletter@mgottawa.ca



Tuesday June 18th-7:15 pm
Small Water Features and Ponds
Diane McClymont Peace, Master Gardener
Royal Canadian Legion, 7 Main St. East, Smith Falls,
Smith Falls Horticultural Society, Guest Fee \$3



Saturday, June 22nd-10:00 am to noon
Plant Guilds – Taking Companion Planting to the Next Level
Rebecca Last, Master Gardener
190 Gore Street East, Perth, Ontario
The Table Community Food Centre,

Friends of the Farm Lecture Series -7:00 pm –9:00 pm
Building 72 just east of the Prince of Wales roundabout. Free parking
Tuesday September 10th - **Cooking with Edible Flowers and Herbs**
Nancy McDonald – Master Gardener
\$12 members and \$15 non-members, per lecture



For more information on Master Gardeners, visit us at: <http://mgottawa.ca>



Crocus

Photo: Judith Cox