



# Trowel Talk!

August 2018

## Off with their heads!!

The Queen of Hearts has nothing on me; part of my daily routine is a tour of my yard to "deadhead" or remove spent blooms. Annuals, perennials and shrubs all need my care and attention. This daily tour allows me to observe plants that are doing well and not so well and to watch for unwelcome visitors who might be devouring my garden, all while I nip off fading flowers and seed-heads.

People have said "What a lot of work!" This is not work for me, it is pure pleasure. There is something happening all the time in the garden: a new flower bud to open, a bird in the bird bath, a toad, a butterfly, a vole, even a skunk! The deadheading tour takes me front and centre to enjoy Mother Nature's masterpiece.

Deadheading keeps the garden looking tidy and discourages pests and diseases by getting rid of vegetation. Removing the dead flowers before seeds can form encourages the plant to continue blooming. If the faded flowers stay on the plant its energy goes into producing seeds rather than more flowers.

To deadhead, cut the fading bloom 1 cm above a developing bud. An-

nuals or perennials that have become leggy can be cut back by about a half to generate new growth and a new flush of flowers. Most perennials need deadheading occasionally, while annuals are more demanding, needing a snip quite often to keep them looking their best. A sharp pair of clean pruning shears makes this a light and pleasant task. Place the spent blooms in the composter.

If you are planning to use a fertilizer after deadheading apply one with a high middle number to promote more blossoms. This is especially important for annuals since it will carry them through until frost.

Deadheading is not necessary for all plants. You will know by looking at your garden which plants will benefit from a regular clean-up. Daylily (*Hemerocallis* spp.) blossoms tend to be mushy and unsightly as they cling to the new blooms, so a daily deadheading keeps the plants attractive. On the other hand, some plants are "self-cleaning". Yellow loosestrife (*Lysimachia punctata*) disposes of its debris by dropping its petals. Other perennials such as yarrow (*Achillea* spp.) and sedum (*Sedum spectabile*) have flower heads that remain ornamental for a long time even until the snow flies and are quite beautiful to see after a hard frost. Deadheading is not recommended for black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* spp.) and astilbe (*Astilbe* spp.) because their seed-heads offer winter interest in the garden and are a source of food for the birds.

Add the summer ritual of a regular "deadheading tour" to your routine. You'll be rewarded with more blooms and a renewed appreciation of your garden. After you've finished the daily clean-up, step back and take an admiring look at your handiwork. The garden will be looking fresh and healthy with lots of colourful blooms.

Before deheading



After deheading



*Hemerocallis* 'Siloam Bye Low'

Photos: Mary Ann Van Berlo

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Pat Stachon  
Master Gardener

## August To Do

- Deadhead regularly and cut back plants as needed, when they start looking shabby.
- Take note of which plants are doing well, and which may need to be moved or replaced.
- Keep birdbaths full of clean, fresh water.
- Deadhead weeds if you have no time to actually remove them.
- Overseed lawns.
- If you have extra produce, try preserving it, or share it with a food bank.
- Ask an MG if you have any gardening or plant ID questions

## Tip of the Month

Do your (or your neighbour's) pets like chewing on the plants in your garden? It's not a bad idea to know which plants are toxic to cats and dogs - some surprisingly common plants can have serious effects if ingested. If your pet is showing any symptoms of poisoning, take them and a sample of any suspected plant to the vet. The ASPCA maintains a list of toxic and non-toxic plants for pets (houseplants and tropicals included) for further reference.

**Autumn crocus** – can cause severe vomiting, gastrointestinal bleeding, liver and kidney damage, and respiratory failure.

**Azalea and rhododendron** – eating even a few leaves can cause vomiting, diarrhea, drooling, or lead to a coma.

**Lilies** – true lilies - *Lilium* spp. including Tiger, Asiatic, Oriental are highly toxic to cats and eating just a few leaves or petals can lead to severe kidney failure.

**Daffodils** – ingestion of any part of the plant or bulb can cause severe vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, cardiac arrhythmia, or respiratory depression.

**Lily of the valley** – *Convallaria majalis* - contains compounds which can cause vomiting, diarrhea, cardiac arrhythmia, drop in heart rate, and possibly seizures.

**Star of Bethlehem** – *Ornithogalum* spp.- Symptoms of ingestion range from

## 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](mailto:mgoc_helpline@yahoo.ca) - monitored daily

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

#### CLINICS:

**CARP MARKET:** Saturdays,

September 1<sup>st</sup> to September 15<sup>th</sup>, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 am-1:00 pm.

**CUMBERLAND MARKET** (1115 Dunning Rd):

September 8<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 am-1:00 pm

**MAIN MARKET:** August 25<sup>th</sup>, September 8<sup>th</sup>, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 9:00 am-1:00 pm

**NORTH GOWER FARMER'S MARKET:** September 15<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 am-1:00 pm

**OTTAWA FARMERS' MARKET** (Lansdowne Park):

Sundays, June 17<sup>th</sup> to September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 9:00 am-1:00 pm

**RICHMOND FAIR:** September 14<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 am-6:00 pm, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 am-5:00 pm, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am -5:00 pm

**RIVERSIDE SOUTH MARKET** (Riverview Park & Ride):

August 26<sup>th</sup>, September 9<sup>th</sup>, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am-2:00 pm

**WESTBORO FARMERS' MARKET** (Byron Linear Park): September 8<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 am-1:00 pm

#### SPEAKING EVENTS & WORKSHOPS:

Wednesday, September 5<sup>th</sup> - 7:30 pm

##### Fall, Final Garden Fling

Nancy McDonald, Master Gardener

Greely Community Centre, 1448 Meadow Drive, Greely

Greely Garden Club – guests \$3

Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup> - 7:30 pm

##### Understanding and Caring for Your Trees

Diane McClymont Peace, Master Gardener

Main Hall RCMP, Long Island Campground, 451 Nicolls Island Road, Manotick

Hosted by the Manotick Horticultural Society, guest fee \$5.

Tuesday, September 11<sup>th</sup> – 7:00 pm

##### Putting Your Garden to Bed

Diane McClymont Peace, Master Gardener

Carp Memorial Hall, 3739 Carp Road, Carp

Hosted by West Carleton Garden Club and Horticultural Society, guest fee \$5.

Tuesday, September 18<sup>th</sup> – 7:30 pm

##### Care of Indoor Orchids

Diane McClymont Peace, Master Gardener

Pretty Street Community Centre, 2 Pretty St., Stittsville

Hosted by Stittsville Goulbourn Horticultural Society, no guest fee

Wednesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7:30 pm

##### Winter Gardens In and Out

Edythe Falconer, Master Gardener

Greely Community Centre, 1448 Meadow Drive, Greely

Greely Garden Club – guest fee \$3

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vomiting and diarrhea to heart arrhythmia, weakness, seizures, and death.

**Tulips and hyacinths** – ingestion of the bulbs can produce drooling, vomiting, or diarrhea; larger consumption can affect heart rate and respiration.

Shrubs that are toxic: Burning bush, boxwood, yew.

Many plants toxic to humans are also dangerous to animals, including brugmansia/datura, castor bean, foxglove, and monkshood.

*Amanda Carrigan*  
*Master Gardener*

Note: Daylilies - *Hemerocallis* spp. are not toxic. Some varieties are edible.

Tuesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> - 7:00 pm

**That's Soil not Dirt**

Edythe Falconer, Master Gardener  
Old Fire hall, 260 Sunnyside Ave  
Old Ottawa South Garden Club, guest fee \$7



Tuesday October 9<sup>th</sup> - 7:30 pm

**How to prepare your gardens for winter**

Mary Reid, Master Gardener  
St Pauls United Church, 25 Gore Street W, Perth  
Hosted by the Perth and District Horticultural Society, guest fee \$5

Monday, October 15<sup>th</sup> – 7:00 pm

**Kitchen Vegetable Gardens**

Judith Cox, Master Gardener  
Russell Meadows Retirement Community, 475 Church Street, Russell  
Hosted by Russell Horticultural Society



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