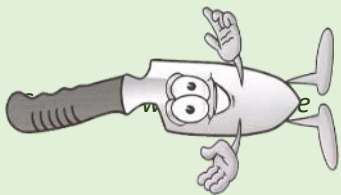


Trowel Talk!

July, 2017



- Newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton
- Volume 8, Number 7
- <http://mgottawa.ca>
- Editor: M.A. Van Berlo
- newsletter@mgottawa.ca

Perfect spot to enjoy the view – the backyard bench

Your backyard oasis can be made even more enjoyable by adding a special place to relax. A garden bench is a design element that creates comfort, adds atmosphere, and sends out an invitation to come and appreciate a beautiful view.



Photo: Monique Paré

Your garden bench can be decorative and functional and should be placed where you have a good view of the garden.

The wide scope of furniture design today makes it possible to find a bench that best suits any style of garden. Wooden benches add a natural accent to your garden and blend in well with plantings. They can be left to age naturally as in the case of cedar, or painted to complement the colour palette of your home or garden. Resin benches are low maintenance, durable, and lightweight; wrought iron suits a more romantic or formal garden. Don't forget to add comfy colourful cushions to soften the setting. If space is at a premium, a bench can be built into a pergola, or around a tree. Adirondack or canvas styles lend a cottage feeling to your yard, while a stone bench suits a traditional setting. Adding motion with glider or swing benches really promotes relaxation as the motion calms and encourages you to focus on more than one specific spot in your garden.

When you have decided on the type of bench you like, placement is the next important aspect of the garden design.

Take a stroll around your garden, and decide on the view you wish to enjoy. You may want to sit in a private secluded spot in your garden as a way of getting away from the rest of the world for a while.

Placing a bench in a cozy spot that is sheltered and shaded from the heat of the day can give relief to a weary gardener. Another option is to choose a site along a garden path. Having a place to sit for a moment may entice a visitor to explore along the entire pathway. You may want to place your bench across from a focal point in your garden such as a fountain, pond, or bird bath. The sound of splashing water is calming to the spirit.

Once you have chosen the vista to enjoy, it is most important to site your bench against a backdrop. The presence of a structural background gives one a sense of comfort and security while you sit and collect your thoughts. The backdrop can be a fence or a hedge, a planting of shrubs or tall perennials, or even a lattice screen. Making sure to place your bench on a solid level surface is another important factor to consider. A crooked bench is unattractive and unsafe. Try to ensure that the platform your bench sits upon remains relatively dry. Perhaps a cement pad or a patio of large decorative stones will help to keep the water and creatures away from your feet as you enjoy a respite in your garden.



Photo: Mike vander Tol

A bench can be an invitation to pause and relax along a pathway.

It is important to take the time to relax and watch your garden grow. A garden bench offers a comfortable spot to do so and is the perfect addition to complete your landscape creation.

*Cindy vander Tol
Retired Master Gardener*



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:

Westboro Market: Saturdays, July 15, Aug. 12 (9am-1pm)

Cumberland Market: August 12, Sept. 9, 9am-1pm

North Gower Farmers Market: Sept. 16, 8:30am-1pm

Main St. Market: July 22, August 12 & 26, Sept. 9 & 23, 10am-2pm

Ottawa Farmers Market: (Lansdowne) Sundays, June 18 to Sept. 24, 9am-1pm

SPEAKING EVENTS & WORKSHOPS:

Makeovers for tired gardens & tired gardeners – August 10 – 7:00 pm

Mary Reid, Master Gardener

14391 Highway 41, Cloyne

Hosted by the Land o' Lakes Garden Club (Guest fee: N/A)

What's new in perennials and woodies– August 15 – 7:30 pm

Mary Reid, Master Gardener

St James Church, 642 Main Road, Hudson

Hosted by the Hudson Garden Club (Guest fee: \$5)



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



July TO DO List

- German or bearded irises can be cut back to about 7-8cm to tidy them up. The rhizome should be exposed to the sun as they need that warmth to form next year's flower cells.
- Consider a second seeding of crops like lettuce, radishes and beans.
- Lettuce and radishes are cool weather crops so a crop planted now may benefit from the shade of a floating row cover to keep them cool.
- If you have gardening or plant ID questions, ask a Master Gardener (contact information to the right).

Tip of the Month

We are often told it takes three years for a plant to mature – as the saying goes: the first year they weep, the second year they creep and the third year they leap. This is a good generalization but plants do not all have the same vigour – some will establish and mature quickly; others take longer.

Hostas are no exception to this rule. Often the plant label will indicate that this hosta has a “slow, medium or fast growth rate”, giving you a good idea of what to expect.

The question of when to divide a hosta comes up frequently.

“Never“ or “after seven years“ is what one hosta expert told me.

There is no set rule on this as they mature at different rates.

Since the colour, texture and leaf size of some hostas change as

they mature, you don't want to divide it and set it back to a young plant again. Let it mature to show its full characteristics – the photos below illustrate why it's worth the wait.



Photos: Dave Dunn, Rideau Woodland Rambler

On the left is a young *Hosta* “Baby Blue” in its nursery pot, and on the right, is a close up of the mature leaf of the same cultivar.