



Trowel Talk!

March, 2015

Rhapsody in blue

Because it creates a sense of depth and space, blue is perhaps one of the most sought-after flower colours. It blends well with light pink and purple flowers for a romantic look or can be used to tone down a fiery garden of hot reds, oranges and yellows.

Blue is on the cool side of the colour wheel. Cool colours impart feelings of coolness and tranquility. There are many blue perennials hardy to our Canadian growing zone 5. To add the subtle moods of blue to your garden, try some of these.

False indigo (*Baptisia*) and Russian sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*) reach a height of 1.3m and sometimes more. Colours range from lavender blue to dark purple, deepening as the season progresses. Because of their height, they are excellent as backdrops at the rear of borders. False indigo blooms in June; Russian sage starts blooming in July and the flowers last into August. Both of these plants like full sun and well-drained soil. They are long-lived, hardy, and pest free - two of the easiest perennials to grow. Delphiniums are even taller, often growing more than 2m and because of this they usually need to be supported. They come in several shades of rich blue, and prefer full sun with well-drained soil. These striking plants bloom from June into July. You can purchase them from a nursery, container grown, and plant them in spring or fall.

Balloon flower (*Platycodon*) reaches

a height of 1m and blooms in July and August. It does well in full sun or partial shade. It is a long-lived, easy to grow plant but because it is slow to appear in the spring you need to mark its place.

Monkshood (*Aconitum napellus*) grows 1 to 1.6m. It blooms from mid-summer to frost and likes partial shade or sun. The variety *Aconitum x cammarum* is bicolor, white and blue and the flower is quite striking. Mulch added around each plant in late spring will help retain the moisture that these plants need. **NOTE: all parts of monkshood are toxic, use caution in handling this plant.**

Lupins (*Lupinus*) grow to a height of 1 to 1.3m and bloom in early summer. The flower stems may need to be supported to protect them from wind. They too need mulch to keep the soil moist and cool. If you cut back spent flowers promptly, you may be rewarded with blooms in the fall.



Photo: Mary Ann Van Berlo

This showy member of the Aster family is called a thistle because of its spiny foliage. *Echinops* are a good addition to both the ornamental and the pollinator garden.

Globe thistle (*Echinops exaltatus*) is also tall, reaching a height of 1 to 1.3m. The flowers are various shades of blue and form bristly balls. Globe thistle blooms from July through August and prefers full sun. Siberian iris (*Iris sibirica*), pin cushion flower (*Scabiosa caucasica*), and perennial cornflower (*Centaurea*) are additional blue perennials to consider.



Photo: Mary Ann Van Berlo

Centaurea montana 'Gold Boullion' has golden foliage which makes the blue flowers even more intense.

However my favourite is blue flax (*Linum perenne*). Its clump of wispy foliage is covered with clear sky blue flowers, five petals around a heart of pure gold. The delicate flowers open at the first hint of sun and with regular deadheading, keep blooming from May to first frost. An added bonus is its habit of freely reseeding. This unassuming little beauty grows to 40cm.

You may want to complement your perennial blues with some blue annuals or grasses. Pansies, love-in-a-mist (*Nigella damascena*) and cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) are undemanding, easy to grow annuals. Blue oat grass and blue fescue are respectively steely blue and silvery blue grasses which are also gardener friendly.

If you have a hot, sunny site that you would like to cool down visually or a small garden that you would like to visually expand, the addition of blue perennials may be exactly what is needed. Blue can enhance the beauty of any or all of your flower beds.

Jean Bedford
Master Gardener (Deceased)

Trowel Talk!

- Newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton
- Volume 6, Number 3
- <http://mgottawa.ca>
- Editor: Mary Ann Van Berlo
- mgottawaeditor@gmail.com

Garden Design Workshop

Hosted by Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton

April 25, 2015

See page 4 for more info!

Over 50% sold!



Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton

Where to find us this month 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:

March 26-29, 2015 – Ottawa Home & Garden Show – EY Centre, 4899 Uplands Drive, Ottawa – Visit us at our booth. We'll be there all weekend at this annual spring show, to answer your gardening questions.

SPEAKING EVENTS & WORKSHOPS:

FRIENDS OF THE FARM LECTURE SERIES:

Individual Lectures: FCEF members \$12, non-members \$15

Lecture series (4 lectures) FCEF members \$40, non-members \$50

Building 72, Arboretum, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa

Register at: 613-230-3276 or by e-mail info@friendsofthefarm.ca

Plant for Incredible Edibles – April 7 – 7:00 pm

David Hinks, Master Gardener

Three mini-lectures in one evening – April 21 – 7:00 pm

Earthy Delights – Edythe Falconer, Master Gardener

Keeping the Garden Going Strong – Josie Pazdzior, Master Gardener

Trees and Shrubs for the Urban Garden – Laura Henderson, Master Gardener

Rejuvenating a Tired Garden – May 5 – 7:00 pm

Mary Shearman Reid, Master Gardener

Plant for Continuous Garden Joy – May 19 – 7:00 pm

Judith Cox, Master Gardener

10 Metre Diet: Backyard Organic Food Production – March 16 – 6:00 pm

Tom Marcantonio, Master Gardener & Woodpark Food Production Coordinator

Carlingwood Branch of the Ottawa Public Library

No charge, no registration needed

Bugs, Slugs and Other Thugs – March 17 – 7:00 pm

Mary Shearman Reid, Master Gardener

Athens District High School, Athens

Hosted by Athens Garden Club & Horticultural Society (Guest fee: \$3)

Makeovers for Tired Gardens and Tired Gardeners – March 18 – 7:30 pm

Mary Shearman Reid, Master Gardener

St Andrews United Church, Main St (Highway 29), Pakenham

Hosted by Pakenham Horticultural Society

Introduction to Permaculture – March 23 – 6:00 pm

Tom Marcantonio, Master Gardener & Woodpark

Food Production Coordinator

Carlingwood Branch of the Ottawa Public Library

No charge, no registration needed

Garden Pests and Diseases – March 23 – 7:30 pm

Diane McClymont Peace, Master Gardener

Cornerstone Community Church, 1728 Concession 11, Almonte

Hosted by the Almonte and District Horticultural Society (No guest fee)

Some Newer Perennials and Woodies: How do They Really Fare? – March 23 – 7:30 pm

Mary Shearman Reid, Master Gardener

St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church, 537 Highway 105, Gatineau

Hosted by Gatineau Valley Gardeners Club

March TO DO List

- Crops like tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers can be started from seed indoors now. Use grow lights and ensure the plants get 12-14 hours of light to ensure they don't get long and leggy.
- Grow lights should be under 2 inches away from the plants, so ensure the lights can be adjusted up as the plants grow.
- It's not too early to start your TO DO list for spring. That way, you can pick and choose jobs off your list depending on weather and/or time available.
- If you've overwintered annuals (geraniums, coleus, polka dot plant, etc.), now is a good time to start more plants by rooting cuttings.
- Watch for pests or diseases on houseplants so that you get them under control before they become a major problem.
- If you have a gardening or plant identification question, ask a Master Gardener (contact information to the right).

Tip of the Month

Continuing on the theme of adding plants of a specific colour to your garden, consider the visual impact of a monochromatic garden.



A view of the white garden at Sissinghurst Castle

There are many examples of gardens that feature only plants that are in one colour range. Probably the most famous example is Vita Sackville-West's white garden at Sissinghurst Castle (England). Sackville-West made monochromatic gardens very trendy in the 1930s. One area of her garden features continuous white

blooms from a wide variety of plants (perennials annuals, bulbs, shrubs, vines and trees) throughout the gardening season.

Many home gardeners have been inspired to start a white garden after a visit to Sissinghurst. Other gardeners have taken the monochromatic theme in another direction – choosing to have a garden bed with plants in their favourite colour.



Kensington Palace (England)

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (Scotland) features a rainbow border where plants are grouped by hue and transition through the colour wheel.



The colours transition from blue to mauve to pink to red in this rainbow border at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Colour in the garden can also be used to evoke feelings – our feature article mentioned that blue is cool and calming. Conversely, neon colours of orange and fuchsia can be hot and slightly jarring to the eye.



Annuals in 'hot' colours have a big impact

Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton



Continued ...

Using Stone in the Garden - March 26 - 7:30 pm

Josie Pazdzior, Master Gardener

Rockcliffe Park Community Centre, 380 Springfield Road, Ottawa

Hosted by the Rockcliffe Garden Club (Guest fee: \$7)

Native Plants for Town Gardens - April 1 - 7:00 pm

Josie Pazdzior, Master Gardener

St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, 39 Bridge Street, Carleton Place

Hosted by the Carleton Place & District Horticultural Society

The Beauty of Annuals – April 16 – 7:30pm

Diane McClymont Peace, Master Gardener

CityView United Church, 6 Epworth Ave., Nepean

Hosted by the Nepean Horticultural Society (Guest fee: \$4)

Making Scents of your Garden – April 20 – 7:30 pm

Judith Cox, Master Gardener

4373 Generation Court, Ottawa

Hosted by the Gloucester Horticultural Society (No guest fee)

Gardens of Cuba – April 30 – 7:30 pm

Mary Ann Van Berlo, Master Gardener

Rockcliffe Park Community Centre, 380 Springfield Road, Ottawa

Hosted by Rockcliffe Garden Club (Guest fee: \$7)

Amazing 'Must-Have' Annuals – May 6 – 7:00 pm

Mary Ann Van Berlo, Master Gardener

Greely Community Centre, 1448 Meadow Drive, Greely

Hosted by Greely Gardeners Club, (Guest fee: \$2)

The Tormented Gardener – May 11 – 7:00 pm

Diane McClymont Peace, Master Gardener

Ottawa South Community Centre (Old Firehall), 260 Sunnyside Ave., Ottawa

Hosted by the Old Ottawa South Garden Club (Guest fee: \$7)

Making Daylily Babies in the Backyard – May 12 – 7:00 pm

Kelly Noel, Master Gardener

Champlain Park Fieldhouse, 140 Cowley Ave., Ottawa

Champlain Park Garden Club (Guest fee: \$5)



For information on arranging a lecture for your group: mgottawaspeakers@gmail.com

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



A garden of pastel colours has a pleasing, almost gentle effect. A mass planting of one type of plant with varying shades makes for a harmonious appealing display.

Of course there is nothing wrong with having a symphony of colours in the garden, but sometimes, using a colour theme will add interest and impact to the landscape.



Cheiranthus (wallflowers) in shades of pastel pink, blue & white at Butchart Gardens



Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton One-Day Garden Design Workshop

Saturday, April 25th, 2015

Rideau Park United Church, 2203 Alta Vista Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario

Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton are pleased to present this day-long intensive garden design workshop. Intended for gardeners of all skill levels, this workshop will walk you through:

- Taking stock of your garden: assess your soil, sun, shade, wind and other environmental factors; and develop a working sketch of your garden. Identify your specific goals by defining your functional needs and your garden style.
- Creating the structural bones of your garden by defining areas for access paths, decks, fences, pergolas, patios, sheds and water features; choose the colour, size and shape of these garden features to match your garden style.
- Considering all the important factors when choosing large planting material: trees, shrubs, hedges, and vines.
- Appreciating good garden design principles and using them to create your personal vision, with all-season interest.
- Selecting perennials and using their best features to create beauty and that *Wow!* factor to make your garden a neighbourhood knockout.
- Understanding how your garden matures and what to do to keep it looking its best.
- One-on-one advice from experienced Master Gardeners will guide you through the practicalities of garden design.

Your \$60 registration fee covers all costs for the day, including refreshments and a lunch of sandwiches, fresh fruit and vegetables.

Seating is limited and early registration is recommended.

You can register on-line or by mail. For program and registration information go to our website: <http://mgottawa.ca>

Comments from past participants:

- *Excellent ... Valuable workshop*
- *Loved it ... Enjoyed the day*
- *Great, will come back*
- *Addressed individual needs*
- *Wealth of support ... Great value*
- *Lots of food for thought*
- *Relaxed, hands on approach*
- *Excellent speakers ... Individual consultations*

