

Fleeting flowers add lasting beauty!

Remember that old margarine commercial with the slogan "It's not nice to fool Mother Nature!" – so instead of trying to fool her, try to mimic her. Many people complain about the challenges of gardening in the shade of mature trees, yet if we take a clue from nature we can see that there are many plants that thrive in these conditions. A walk in the spring forest will reveal many woodland treasures – some only visible for the spring season; some more permanent and present throughout the growing season.



Erythronium americanum

The "ephemerals" are fleeting plants that sprout, bloom, set seed and die back all in spring, often before the trees leaf out. For instance, the trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*) is a delightful little plant, easily recognizable by green leaves that are mottled with brown and purple. In fact, this mottling is thought to resemble the scales on a trout, and is what has given the

plant its common name. It also sports a cheery yellow, lily-like bloom. Another local forest plant that makes a brief spring appearance is squirrel corn (*Dicentra canadensis*). This native plant has foliage and flowers that are very similar to many of the garden cultivars of bleeding heart. Again, its common name is very descriptive of the plant's traits. The bulb or corm looks like a kernel of corn that a squirrel has left on the forest floor.



Dicentra canadensis

There are also woodland plants that put on a fine spring show but then continue to provide interest throughout the season with their foliage, fruits and seed heads. Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum pubescens*) has arching stems lined with leaves in pairs, with small clusters of nodding bell shaped flowers underneath. The foliage remains handsome all season and small blue fruits take the place of the spent blooms.



Polygonatum pubescens

Another good woodland performer is blue cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*). Its spring growth, both leaves and flowers, are a distinct blue/purple. The flowers open as the leaves unfurl. The mature foliage is dark green, with clusters of blue, berry-like seeds adding a splash of colour.



Caulophyllum thalictroides

These are just four of my favourite woodland treasures. There are so many more, good, native plants such as blood-root (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), liverleaf (*Hepatica americana*) and wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) that would thrive in our shade gardens. The ephemerals would give an early display in a bed of hostas and ferns which will take over once the fleeting woodland plants have completed their cycle and are dormant. The woodland plants whose foliage remains for the season, can add texture and colour.

If you choose to add woodland plants to your garden, always buy them from a reputable nursery that has grown them from seed or tissue culture. Native plants should never be removed from the wild. When planting, try to recreate their native growing conditions. The addition of shredded leaves to the bed prior to planting, and an annual application as a mulch will simulate the humus-rich forest floor, or easier yet, don't rake the leaves off in the fall.

Trowel Talk!

- Newsletter of the Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton
- Volume 2, Number 5
- <http://mgottawa.mgoi.ca>
- Editor: Mary Ann Van Berlo
- trowel_talk_editor@rogers.com

May TO DO List

- Harden off seedlings or greenhouse grown plants by gradually acclimatizing them to the sun and wind over a few days.
- Edge beds and set up a schedule to stay ahead of the weeds this year! Weeds are still relatively easy to pull at this time of year.
- Check out one of the many plant sales hosted by local garden clubs. This is a great way to find well-priced plants for your garden.
- Explore the garden centre and try something new this year – whether it's a vegetable, annual bedding plant, perennial flower, shrub or tree. New and interesting hybrids are always being developed – and you may be pleasantly surprised.
- Have a gardening question or need to identify a plant or pest, ask a Master Gardener (contact information to the right).

Tip of the Month:

Use a floating row cover to stop moths and flies from laying their eggs in your vegetables. This is an effective way to control onion maggots, carrot rust flies, Colorado potato beetles, cabbage moths and a number of other pests. The spun bond fabric allows sunlight and rain through, but stops the moth or fly from laying its eggs among your plants. No eggs means no larvae to munch on your plants later in the season.



Floating row cover in place

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)
- Saturdays 7-8 pm (April through September ONLY)

E-mail Help Line: mgoc_helpline@yahoo.ca

- monitored daily
- send photos of garden pests, diseases or plants for ID

CLINICS:

Byward Market: Saturdays, May through June (9 a.m. – 5 p.m.)

Parkdale Market: Saturdays, May through June (9 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

Carp Market: Saturdays, May through June (8 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

Lansdowne Market: Sundays, July through September (9 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

SPEAKING EVENTS:

Culinary Herbs – May 17, 2011 – 7:30 p.m.

Speaker: Rebecca Last, Master Gardener & Richard Guenette, Foodie Pretty Street Community Centre, Stittsville, Ontario

Hosted by the Stittsville Goulbourn Horticultural Society (guests welcome)

Climbers & Vines – June 1, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Mary Shearman-Reid, Master Gardener

Greely Community Centre, 1448 Meadow Drive, Greely, Ontario

Hosted by the Greely Gardeners Group (guests welcome)

Gardening During a Water Shortage: Solutions – June 21, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Edythe Falconer, Master Gardener

Ruth E. Dickinson Branch, Ottawa Public Library, 100 Malvern, Barrhaven, Ontario

Hosted by the Ottawa Public Library (guests welcome)

More Gardening with Less Water: Long Term Approaches – June 25, 2011 – 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Edythe Falconer, Master Gardener

Ruth E. Dickinson Branch, Ottawa Public Library, 100 Malvern, Barrhaven, Ontario

Hosted by the Ottawa Public Library (guests welcome)



For information on arranging a lecture for your group: 613-836-1491

For more information on Master Gardeners, visit our website:

<http://mgottawa.mgoi.ca>

It is important to put the cover on immediately after planting and to weigh down the edges.

An important caveat – if the plant you are growing needs to be pollinated by insects to produce a crop, you need to lift the cover when the plant is in bloom. Hopefully that will be long after the adult has laid its eggs for the season.

Identifying pests at all stages of their life-cycle is an important part of pest control. If you can identify their eggs or larvae, you can take action before much damage is done. For instance, the Colorado potato beetle lays her eggs on the underside of a lower leaf. Lift the

leaves and look for a cluster of 10-30 yellow-orange eggs, it is much easier to destroy them at this stage. Take the time to learn more about garden pests – that knowledge will make controlling them easier.



Colorado potato beetles (adult, larvae, & eggs)

LOCAL AREA PLANT SALES – 2011 (hosted by some of our MG partners)

Organization	Date & Time	Place
Almonte & District Horticultural Society	May 14 9 am – noon	Almonte Public Library parking lot, Almonte
Gloucester Horticultural Society	May 14 10 am – 2 pm	North Gloucester Branch of the City of Ottawa Library, 2036 Ogilvie Road, Ottawa
Kemptville Horticultural Society	May 14 8:30 am – noon	Ferguson Forestry Centre Highway 44, Kemptville
Manotick Horticultural Society Plant & Bake Sale	May 14 9 am – noon	Watson's Mill Dickinson Square, Manotick
Petawawa Horticultural Society	May 14 8:00 am	6 Violet Street, Petawawa
Nepean Horticultural Society	May 19 6:30 – 8:30 pm	Cityview United Church 6 Epworth Ave., Nepean
Pakenham Horticultural Society	May 21 8 am – 11 am	Beside 5 Span Feed & Seed County Rd 29, Pakenham
Smiths Falls & District Horticultural Society	May 21 9 am – noon	Royal Canadian Legion 7 Main Street East, Smiths Falls
Beachburg Horticultural Society	May 21 9 am – noon	Beachburg Inn 1793 Beachburg Road, Beachburg
Perth Horticultural Society	May 21 8 am – 11 am	Stewart School Sunset Blvd., Perth
Madawaska Valley Horticultural Society	May 21 8 am	Craft Cabin, Highway 62 Combermere
Ottawa Horticultural Society	May 24 7:30 pm	Tom Brown Arena 141 Bayview Drive, Ottawa
Carleton Place Horticultural Society	May 28 8:30 am – 10:30 am	Victoria School Museum Gardens 267 Edmund Street, Carleton Place
Greely Gardeners Group	May 28 9 am – 11 am	Andrew Shields Park 1145 Old Prescott Road, Greely
Stittsville-Goulbourn Horticultural Society	May 28 9 am – 1 pm	Bradley Insurance Parking Lot Main Street, Stittsville
Ottawa Horticultural Society	May 28	Great Glebe Garage Sale (Bank St & First Ave) St. Giles Presbyterian Church, Ottawa
Fletcher Wildlife Garden Native Plant Sale	June 4 9:30 am – 12:30 pm	Fletcher Wildlife Garden Prince of Wales Drive, Ottawa
Manotick Horticultural Society Sue Slade Daylily Sale	July 11 9 am – noon	Carriage House Dickinson Square, Manotick
Ottawa Horticultural Society	September 10	Old Ottawa South Plant Sale Old Firehall, 260 Sunnyside Avenue, Ottawa