



Trowel Talk!

September, 2013

Echinacea – a cure for drab gardens

Some people may only be familiar with Echinacea in the form of a pill to boost the immune system. But long before Echinacea took up a full shelf at the "herbal health" store, it was a staple of the late-summer garden.

Echinacea purpurea, or purple cone flower, is a native plant, indigenous to central and eastern North America, and found mainly in dry prairie or woodland habitats. Its drought tolerance, long bloom period and ability to attract butterflies and bees, make it a worthwhile addition to any garden. The brownish-orange central disk of the bloom (commonly referred to as the cone) is surrounded by drooping petals that make the flower easy to recognize.



Photo: Mary Ann Van Berlo

Echinacea purpurea 'Doppel ganger'

Every year plant breeders introduce "hot" new plants for the season. This year, many new forms of Echinacea were introduced and became the plants that gardeners

"had to have". Instead of the simple choice of purple/pink ('Magnus' is a popular cultivar due to its large 15cm blooms) or white (such as 'White Swan'), now we can choose from shades of orange, yellow and crimson blooms. There are even double forms of Echinacea.



Photo: Mary Ann Van Berlo

E. purpurea 'Mango Meadowbrite'

E. purpurea 'Mango Meadowbrite' is, just as the name implies, a bright mango-coloured variety. Other new cultivars include 'Big Sky Sunrise', a citron yellow, and its counterpart, 'Big Sky Sunset' which has an orange bloom. 'Art's Pride' (aka. 'Orange Meadowbrite') is another orange form while 'Vintage Wine' is a deep raspberry-red. 'Doppelganger' and 'Double Decker' are two cultivars that have double layers of petals - sometimes arranged in a "bad hair day" pattern on the flower. 'Razzamatazz' is another double form, but the middle petals are smaller and look like a pom-pom in the centre of the outer petals. 'Jade' is described as having a unique cone colour - a jade green - with non-drooping white petals. There are also cultivars with variegated foliage - 'Sparkler' has white speckles on its leaves and the leaves of 'Prairie Frost' have a white edge.

Echinacea prefer full sun and well-drained fertile soil, but will tolerate some shade and even poor sandy or gravelly soils. The stalks are sturdy so the plant will

rarely require staking. The older cultivars are easy to grow from seed. However, the newer cultivars are produced "in vitro", so they must be purchased as potted nursery stock. Mature Echinacea are extremely drought tolerant, but, like any transplant, they need to be watered regularly until established. Echinacea are very hardy (to zone 3) and not prone to many pests or diseases.



Photo: Mary Ann Van Berlo

E. purpurea 'Jade'

The different cultivars offer a wide range of heights (from approximately 30cm to 120cm) and bloom from July to September. They make an excellent addition to a mixed border or to a wildflower garden and they are a long-lasting cut flower.

Although you may be tempted to clean these plants up in the fall, leave the stalks standing through the winter. The birds, particularly goldfinches, will eat the seeds from the seed heads and the dried cones are attractive poking through the snow.

Mary Ann Van Berlo
Master Gardener

Trowel Talk!

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Announcing our upcoming workshop: Growing a Modern Day Victory Garden.

Go to page 2 for more details!

September TO DO List

- Buy your fall bulbs now to ensure good selection even if you don't have time to plant yet; but get them in the ground by mid-October.
- Divide and transplant perennials (if needed).
- If you have a gardening or plant identification question, ask a Master Gardener (contact information to the right).

Tip of the Month:

Try growing some of the minor bulbs like *Scilla*, *Chionodoxa*, *Leucojum*, *Fritillaria*, *Erythronium*, *Muscari*, etc. They bloom early and spread quickly.

Avoid planting bulbs in straight lines; instead plant in clusters of at least 10 for large bulbs and 25-50 for smaller bulbs. The display will have much more impact than a single flower here and there.

Plant bulbs towards the back of the garden bed – they appear before the perennials, and later on their dying foliage will be hidden as other plants emerge.

Growing a Modern Day Victory Garden

Growing A Modern Day Victory Garden

Please reserve this date on your calendar: October 26, 2013

A one day technical update on breaking ground to grow a small space sustainable garden



Saturday,
October 26, 2013
Carleton Place, ON

Click here: [For full details](#)



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:

Ottawa Farmers Market (Brewer Park): Sundays, July - September (9 am - 1 pm)

Main Street Farmer's Market: September 21 (10 am - 2 pm)

Richmond Fair: September 19-22

Carp Fair: September 27 (noon-8pm), 28 (9am-9pm), & 29 (noon-4pm)

SPEAKING EVENTS & WORKSHOPS:

Spring Bulbs – A Must for Every Garden – September 16 – 7:30 pm

Mary Ann Van Berlo, Master Gardener

Top Generation Club Hall, 4373 Generation Court, Ramsayville (Ottawa)

Hosted by the Gloucester Horticultural Society (guests welcome)

Water Food Shelter: wildlife in our backyards – September 18 – 7:00 pm

Elythe Falconer, Master Gardener

Greenboro Community Centre, 363 Lorry Greenberg Drive, Ottawa

Hosted by the Greater Ottawa Water Garden & Horticultural Society (guests welcome – \$5 entry fee)

Fall Final Garden Fling: activities to beautify, nourish and protect your garden! –

September 19 – 7:00 pm

Nancy McDonald, Master Gardener

Orleans Branch, City of Ottawa Public Library, 1705 Orleans Blvd, Ottawa

Hosted by the City of Ottawa Public Library (free – register at 613-824-1962)

Fall gardening and putting one's garden to bed for the winter – Sept. 23 – 7:30 pm

Mary Shearman Reid, Master Gardener

Cornerstone Community Church, 1728 Concession 11, Almonte

Hosted by the Almonte and District Horticultural Society (guests welcome)

To Everything There is a Season – Phenology 101 – September 25 – 6:30 pm

Rebecca Last, Master Gardener

Ottawa Public Library Emerald Plaza Branch, 1547 Merivale Road, Ottawa

Hosted by the Ottawa Public Library (free – register at 613-224-7874)

Continuous Colour – September 30 – 7:30 pm

Mary Shearman Reid, Master Gardener

Char-Lan Recreation Centre, 19740 John Street, Williamstown

Hosted by the Williamstown Green Thumb Horticultural Society (guests welcome)

Seed Saving – October 3 – 6:30 pm

Rebecca Last, Master Gardener

Ottawa Public Library Centennial Branch, 3870 Old Richmond, Ottawa

Hosted by the Ottawa Public Library (free – register at 613-828-5142)

Lessons from My Big Fat Garden Reno – October 7 – 6:30 pm

Rebecca Last, Master Gardener

Ottawa Public Library Carlingwood Branch, 281 Woodroffe Ave., Ottawa

Hosted by the Ottawa Public Library (free – register at 613-725-2449)

Need better dirt? Soil management and Composting – October 8 – 7:00 pm

Mary Shearman Reid, Master Gardener

Ottawa South Community Centre, 260 Sunnyside Ave., Ottawa

Hosted by the Old Ottawa South Garden Club (guests welcome – fee charged to non-members)

Soll – October 9 – 7:30 pm

Mary Shearman Reid, Master Gardener

Larkin House, 76 Larkin Drive, Nepean

Hosted by the Barrhaven Garden Club (guests welcome – \$3 fee for non-members)



For information on arranging a lecture for your group: speakers@mgottawa.mgoi.ca

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