

NEPEAN GARDEN ASSOCIATION

Members' Bulletin ~ Spring 1994



GARDENING SEASON EXTENDED!

Your board of directors has extended the 1994 gardening season to October 31, which will allow you to keep some of those vegetables that can tolerate, or, in fact, benefit from, a bit of frost in the gardens a little longer.

With warmer weather seeming to extend longer into the fall season, this should still leave time to clean up and till the plots after November 1.

From the Chairman

Now that we are almost ready to begin a new gardening season, I wish to extend a warm welcome to the Nepean Garden Association to all new gardeners, as well as to the familiar faces from years past. It is encouraging to once again see so many eager to pursue their interest in gardening, and I am sure that many of you have plants started at home and are enthusiastic to get out onto the plots.

This year there will be 114 annual plots under cultivation as well as 38 perennial plots and the herb garden. As soon as the weather has permitted, the plots will have been rototilled and staked out. Help is needed to measure and stake out the plots, so if you can volunteer some time to assist in this chore, please call Ian Reid at 225-4510 or Keith Hird at 225-1863. The goal is to have the plots ready for gardening no later than May 15, weather permitting.

The appearance of the garden plots will be enhanced if each gardener does his or her part to

keep the pathways free of rocks and debris, and keeps the weeds under control in his or her own plot. Granted, pulling weeds is not as much fun as planting or picking, but it is an essential part of successful gardening and it's much easier if done before the weeds get too big. All gardeners must realize that you cannot just plant in May and come back in September for your harvest. This year, your Board of Directors will be closely monitoring the care of the individual plots, and members who do not keep weeds under reasonable control will be denied membership next year.

If you have any questions throughout the gardening season, please do not hesitate to contact any of the directors of the association, whose names and phone numbers appear elsewhere in this bulletin. I wish to thank all of the directors who have volunteered their time again this year, and on their behalf:
HAPPY GARDENING IN 1994!

Sincerely,
Ron Black

Compost and Rock Piles

As many of you know, a compost pile was started last year. This pile will be turned and then covered for the summer to complete the composting process. A new pile will be started for all compostable refuse from the gardens this year, and all gardeners are encouraged to put plant refuse on this pile rather than in the garbage barrels, unless the plants are diseased, in which case the garbage is preferable.

I have personally found that if young weeds are buried within my own plot, they decompose very quickly, and thus add organic matter to the soil during the growing season. I just choose a spot between rows or in an area that has been left bare to allow plants such as squash to spread later in the season, and bury the weeds there.

The rock pile is located near the compost pile. As you gather rocks which work up in the soil in your plots, you are asked to deposit them on this pile rather than leaving them in the pathways where they interfere with the grass cutting. Anyone is free to take rocks from the pile if you have use for any of them.



Looking for Mushroom Compost or Manure?

If you are interested in obtaining mushroom compost, delivered to the garden site, please contact Lila Hird at 225-1863 as soon as possible to place your order or to obtain more information. Many of the gardeners have purchased this compost in the past, and we thank Lila for coordinating the ordering this year.

Mushroom compost and soil mixes are also available from Greeley Sand and Gravel Inc. (821-3003).

If manure is your preference, it can be obtained from the National Capital Equestrian Park, operated by Nepean Parks and Recreation, on Corkstown Road (adjacent to the Moodie Drive exit from the Queensway). There is manure available in various stages of decomposition. The manure is free, but you are asked to check with the office at the Equestrian Park first before proceeding to the storage area.

The type of soil that is found in the Viewmount plots is much enhanced for gardening by adding significant quantities of organic matter, whether it be mushroom compost, manure, or compost from your home composter. Adding organic matter creates humus, which allows water and air to circulate more freely in the soil, and also helps to retain moisture better during dry spells. Organic matter also feeds the millions of soil micro-organisms, which through their digestive processes, make soil elements more readily available to plants for absorption through the roots. Organic matter adds significant amounts of nitrogen and potassium to the soil as well as trace elements such as manganese, iron, copper, zinc and iodine, and also helps to balance soil acidity or pH. Your plants will definitely do better if you have enriched the soil with organic matter, rather than just with chemical fertilizers, and you will be gardening in a more environmentally friendly and natural way also.

New Sign at Viewmount Allotment Gardens

This year, when you arrive at the gardens, you will find the site identified by a nice new sign, which is being erected by Nepean Parks and Recreation. The sign, in Nepean's familiar green and white colours, identifies the site as "Viewmount

Allotment Gardens, operated by the Nepean Garden Association". We certainly extend a big vote of thanks to Parks and Recreation staff for designing, constructing and erecting this attractive addition to our gardening area.



Grass Cutting

While you are out there attacking those nasty weeds in your plot, how about giving a hand to cut the grass around the plots and along the pathways for a period of time this summer? If you can help out, please contact Ian Reid to indicate the week(s) that you will be responsible for cutting the grass. If many do a little, no one will have to do a lot. At the annual meeting on March 29, after considerable discussion on the possible purchase of a riding lawn mower for the Association, it was decided to proceed with having the grass cut by volunteers using the present push power mower this year, and to set aside the money budgeted for the purchase this year, which with a similar or slightly larger allocation in 1995 will permit purchase of a riding mower with no financing involved at that time.

Water, But Water Wisely

Providing plants with enough water is certainly one of the keys to a successful garden. In peak growing season, about one inch of water per week is required for best results. Giving the soil a good soaking every few days is preferable to a light sprinkling more frequently, especially once plants

get established and have started to develop roots. If the soil surface is always wet, the root system will not develop downward into the soil in search of moisture, and then if for some reason, the surface does dry out, the plants with their shallow root systems wilt and do not perform as well as those that have developed deeper root systems.



Water is one of the major expenses for the Association, and therefore, all members are reminded that watering is to be done with a hand-held hose only. Automatic sprinklers, soaker hoses, etc. are not allowed. Also, if you see outsiders washing their cars at the garden plots, as has happened, you are asked to speak to them and politely ask them to leave.

In short, use the water you need for your garden, but use it wisely and productively.

A Russian was visiting the United States to get a first hand look at capitalism. He was taken into a supermarket, where he saw milk powder with the instructions to just add water, then he saw orange juice powder with the same instructions. In a nearby aisle, he saw baby powder and exclaimed
"What a country!"

Nepean Garden Association Board of Directors, 1994 - '95

Chairperson

Ron Black
7B Hadley Circle
Nepean, ON K2H 6P1 (820-3689)

Vice Chairperson

Roy Casorso
255 Compton Ave.
Ottawa, ON K2B 5A8 (722-7113)

Secretary & City of Nepean Liaison

Nancy Rooyakkers
101 Centrepointe Drive
Nepean, ON K2G 5K7 (727-6640)

Treasurer

Marjorie Harris
807-1356 Meadowlands Dr.
Nepean, ON K2E 6K6 (225-7094)

Registrar

Wendy Millar
91 Benlea Drive
Nepean, ON K2G 4A3
225-6760 (H) 992-4427 (W)

Directors:

Wallace Clark
35 Solva Drive
Nepean, ON K2H 5R7 (828-8627)

Keith Hird
66D Chesterton Drive
Nepean, ON K2E 5S1 (225-1863)

Lila Hird
66D Chesterton Drive
Nepean, ON K2E 5S1
225-1863

Maintenance Director

Ian Reid
919-20 Chesterton Drive
Nepean, ON K2E 6Z7 (225-4510)

We expect to have the following annual herbs in the herb garden this year:

Anise - characterized by lacy leaves and heads of white flowers that mature into seed. These seeds are used mostly in baked goods, candies and applesauce, while the fresh leaves can be used for salads or steeped into a fragrant tea.

Basil - Basil leaves have a spicy flavour which makes salads, tomato and cheese dishes, soups and omelets extra delicious. It is also the main ingredient for Italian "pesto".

Borage - A rough stemmed plant with clusters of blue flowers and a faint flavour of cucumber. The flowers and young leaves are used in salads and beverages for a refreshing flavour. Flowers are also dried for use in soups.

Catnip - This plant is of the mint family. It takes its name because of its particular attraction to cats. Young leaves and shoots also impart a lemony mintness to everyday cooking and to catnip tea.

Dill - Green and dried seed clusters are used primarily in making dill pickles. Fresh young leaves are used in flavouring salads, soups, meat and fish. The plant is highly aromatic and bears large yellow flower heads.

Marjoram - Plants produce aromatic, pungently-flavoured leaves which are used either fresh or dried to flavour soups, egg and cheese dishes, lamb, pork and veal. A pinch of fresh leaves adds a subtle, appetizing aroma and taste to fresh garden salads.

Parsley - Used as a flavouring for soups and stew. Its flavour improves with successive cutting. Can be used as a garnish. Can also be chewed for a mouth freshener.

Sage - The most popular of all herbs for seasoning because of its mildly pungent flavour and pleasant aroma. May be used fresh or dried in stuffing and in pork or cheese dishes.

Savory - The leaves of this aromatic plant have a peppery somewhat mint like flavour and are much used for seasoning soups, beans, meat dishes and salads. Also makes a nice garnish. Add to vinegar for use in salad dressings.

There will be an initial planting of restarted plants, followed by at least one summer planting to ensure fresh herbs.

Help yourself to the herbs but please do not pull or otherwise destroy the plants since regrowth will produce additional crops to be enjoyed by others.

In addition there are several perennial herbs, ie. three to four different types of mint. It is unknown which of the perennials survived the winter at this time. Please check the plot this spring to find out. Each herb will have marker/name stakes.

The Herb Plot is in the middle of perennial plots on the road at the southwest corner of the garden.

If you have surplus herbs from your own garden consider donating them to the herb garden and I will plant them in their definitive spot.

If further information is required contact D. Roy Casorso, 727-7113.