



Trowel Talk

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Daylilies: More Colour in the Garden

Judith Cox

We are a busy bunch. With the price of produce, many of us are concentrating on growing vegetables. We often spend a lot of time weeding around lettuce and tomato plants while our flower beds are neglected.

One of the most common gardening questions I get is this one: *“What can I grow that doesn’t need a lot of fuss, comes back every year and gives me lots of colour?”*

There is a plant and it is often passed over: the daylily. Now many of you may be shaking your heads as you think ditch lily – those orange flowers that spread a little too easily and only bloom for about three weeks. But those ditch lilies have many hybrid cousins that come in all colours and sizes. Most bloom for about a month but some will bloom for a much longer period – they are called re-bloomers.

The first and still most popular re-blooming daylily is ‘Stella de Oro’ – a sweet little butter-yellow daylily that regularly blooms throughout the summer in our climate. This one is used extensively in commercial landscapes but it fits just as well in the home garden. The popularity of ‘Stella de Oro’ has encouraged growers to develop other re-blooming daylilies in a range of colours.

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Eucomis bicolor—pineapple lily
Susan Bicket

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'Stella de Oro'
Kelly Noel

Small-flowered daylilies have the added advantage of being 'self-cleaning'. Each daylily blossom lasts only one day and it can take a few days for the withered flowers to fall off. A clump of large-flowered daylilies will look much better if you remove these large 'deadheads'. But the faded blossoms on a small-flowered plant are less noticeable and fall off sooner, so deadheading is not needed to keep the clump looking tidy.

You can find interesting daylilies at most nurseries and through mail order catalogues. Remember to look for 're-bloomer' in the description. Not every daylily so described will re-bloom reliably in Ottawa where our summer season is relatively short. But if you have an area that gets full sun, that would be a great location for several small re-blooming daylilies. When we have a long, hot summer they will bloom

Ask a Master Gardener

Compiled by Amanda Carrigan and Ann McQuillan

Master Gardeners answer helpline questions

Help! The gypsy moth caterpillars are really bad this year. I'm sure I read something in a previous Trowel Talk about them. Can you tell me where I can find that information, or give me some pointers on what I can do about them

We've been hearing a lot about how awful they are this year. The population does tend to peak every 7-10 years, so maybe this is one of the peak years – although some sources think it could be worse next year, which makes it all the more important to control them now. MG Gail Labrosse wrote an article on gypsy moths which was published in the [October 2020 Trowel Talk](#). You can always access past articles through the MGOC website.

Note: As the word gypsy is considered a culturally offensive slur, the use of the common name "gypsy moth" is now being replaced by "LDD moth" (for the moth's scientific name, *Lymantria dispar dispar*).

LDD moth adults are white to beige (female) or light brown (male), with wavy markings horizontally across the wings. Males have a 2.5 cm wingspan, females twice that. The caterpillars are hairy, with pairs of red and blue dots down their backs. They prefer hardwood trees but will also attack other trees and shrubs, and are known to feed on over 300 species of host plants. Some favoured species include oak, maple, birch, alder, and hawthorn.

Summer is a great time to take action against the LDD moth population. Handpick caterpillars if you can (wearing gloves, as their hairs can cause irritation). Burlap traps (made by wrapping a length of burlap around the trunk, tying it in the middle with a rope, and folding the top half down) can be put at chest height to capture caterpillars, and, later in the season, lower on the trunk to trap the flightless female moths. These traps need to be checked daily and captured moths and caterpillars destroyed (you

and bloom and bloom! 🌱



'Stella's Ruffled Fingers' – a reliable re-bloomer in an Ottawa garden

Kelly Noel

can drown them in a bucket of soapy water). Sticky traps wrapped around the tree trunk can also be used. You can make your own by wrapping the tree trunk with duct tape in a wide band (silver side out) and applying a stripe of sticky substance like Tanglefoot or petroleum jelly to the tape, leaving at least 5 cm of bare tape below the band. Pheromone traps can be used to catch male moths. Later on (late August to mid-May), look for egg masses, which will be fuzzy, tan-coloured ovals found on trees, rocks, or structures. Using a sharp knife and gloves, crush the masses or scrape them into a bucket of soapy water. Dormant oil and lime sulphur can be applied to trees in late winter to smother eggs.

As well, take good care of your trees, and keep them well watered and mulched, since healthy trees are better able to survive and recover from insects and diseases. Providing habitat for birds and animals who eat insects is also a good idea. 🌱

Ontario Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Twelve Years Later

Dale Odorizzi

On April 22, 2009, Earth Day, the Province of Ontario enacted the Ontario Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Act. More recently, this law was modified to bring it more in line with the federal government. Ontario continues to ban the cosmetic use of pesticides to protect Ontarians from unnecessary risk by only allowing certain, low-risk pesticides for controlling weeds and pests on lawns and gardens. Pesticides can only be used for cosmetic purposes if the use is permitted under an exception to the ban or the active ingredient in the pesticide is included on the Allowable List. The list of allowable ingredients changes from time to time.

When the act was introduced, there was much hue and cry especially about the home remedy ban. The question most often asked about the home

remedy ban was: *"I can use these products in my home, why can't I use them in my garden? My grandmother has used these products for years and she is a great gardener"*

Homemade pesticides are strongly discouraged by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). The ingredients or combination of ingredients have not been tested for particular applications or combinations and their impacts on non-target species and public health has not been evaluated. Technically, a product cannot be legally used as a pesticide if it has not been evaluated by Health Canada and registered with appropriate labelling for that purpose.

The best answer to the home remedy question is

they do not work and can also be harmful to your plants. One commonly recommended solution to bugs on plants is a mixture of liquid soap, vinegar, and water. The problem with this is that the liquid “soap” in most of our homes is actually liquid detergent. Liquid soap will penetrate the body of pests such as aphids while liquid detergent will not, and liquid detergent can damage your plants. Insecticidal soap sold at virtually all garden centres is an approved product and is indeed soap and is effective on your plants. The other problem with home remedies is people often feel if one tablespoon is good, two or three would be even better. Back before the ban was in place, I remember telling my mom about this specific home remedy. She was never one to do things by halves and used a lot more liquid “soap” and did damage to her plants.

Any kind of spray that is used against these pests on your plants, is not “one and done”. They only work on contact with the pest. It is often easier (and more satisfying) to simply squish the pest than it is to get your bottle of insecticidal soap and go back and spray the little critter.

Another home remedy you hear about is vinegar as an herbicide. Sometimes it is vinegar and salt. While this combination will in fact kill the weed above the ground, it does nothing to kill the roots of the plant. But that is not the worst part. The worst part is the damage either salt or vinegar does to your soil, killing the microorganisms and beneficial insects that work so hard to make your soil healthy. The Romans did not salt Carthage to get rid of weeds but to prevent Carthage from re-inhabitation.

Before reaching for pesticides:

Make the habitat unfavourable for pests and diseases.

- Support beneficial organisms (bees, butterflies, dragonflies and other pollinators, toads and frogs (eat slugs), ladybugs and their larvae (eat aphids)).
- Exclude pests where feasible (barriers, traps, hand removal).
- Use proper sanitation (remove diseased material, eggs, overwintering adults, larvae).

- Monitor the infestation level (accepting cosmetic damage) and treat only when appropriate.
- Properly identify the pest or pathogen to ensure proper selection of pesticide and timing of treatment.



Dragonfly helping with insect removal

Dale Odorizzi



Bullfrog delighted with Ontario Pesticide Ban

Dale Odorizzi

Before you determine that pesticides are necessary:

- Consider the potential for non-target impacts, such as killing beneficial insects.
- Remember that there are often restrictions near bodies of water.
- Be aware of temperature and wind restrictions and the need for repeat applications.

- Pesticides can be phytotoxic (cause harm to the plant) and should be tested before use.
- Before using a pesticide: Read and follow all label directions.
- Wear appropriate protective equipment, such as gloves, eye protection, long sleeves, shoes or boots, socks and maybe even breathing apparatus, as per label directions.

Note: Adverse reactions in humans, animals or the environment are recorded by Health Canada.

Pesticides in Ontario are organized into classes. In the original law, the products were listed in numerical classes and were not so directly tied to the Federal regulations. This, too, has recently changed and the following table demonstrates the relationship.

Products continuously change so check the [MECP website](#) or visit your local garden centre. Garden centres will not sell products that the Ministry does not allow. If you become a Certified Pesticide Applicator (pass the Pesticide Applicators Training Course) you can purchase and apply pesticides such as Roundup. Without seeing an Applicator Licence, the salesclerk should not unlock the glass showcase doors.

There are exceptions made for dangerous or invasive plants. If there are only a few, treat by cutting, digging, and smothering. If you have a large infestation, apply to the Ministry to obtain a permit that allows you to use products that are banned from cosmetic use.

Master Gardeners in Ontario are trained horticulturists. When answering questions, we do not recommend or support the use of home remedies and follow all provincial and federal regulations. ♻️

Federal Product Class	Provincial Class	Description
Manufacturing	Class A	The pesticide is only used to manufacture a pest control product
Restricted	Class B	The pesticide is restricted by the federal government out of concern of environmental risk or human health. Additional information must be shown on the label regarding essential conditions for display, distribution, and limitations on use. Specific qualifications may be required for a person to use this product.
Commercial	Class C	The pesticide can only be used by trained persons including certified farmers, licensed exterminators, and permit holders
Domestic	Class D	The pesticide is primarily used by the general public for personal use in and around their homes.
N/A	Class E	Corn and soybean seeds that are treated with neonicotinoids are restricted for use by certified persons in Ontario.

“One year's seeding makes seven years' weeding”
Preventing weeds from setting seed by removing the flowering stems is an effective weed preventative measure. Seeds once scattered may persist in the soil for many years as they wait for the right conditions to germinate.

Many perennial weeds have tap roots or extensive root systems which can survive smothering or even systemic weed killers. When a weed is dug up pieces of root are often left in the soil. These will resprout. Continual frequent beheading will eventually exhaust the residual roots.

Growing Ginger Root

Penka Matanska

Testing the boundaries of what can be grown in Ottawa, Canadian climate Zone 5a, brings a thrill of excitement – especially when the attempt is successful. I would like to share my experience with growing ginger plant (*Zingiber officinale*), while providing a few tips of what worked well for me.



Ginger root

Penka Matanska

Three factors play a key role. These are: selecting a plump ginger root with several 'eyes', using good quality soil, and providing plenty of warmth and sunlight. The first step of the growing process is to find an organic ginger root in the store with 'eyes' (circled in red in the picture). Some ginger roots are treated with root inhibitor, so it is important to see signs of sprouting when selecting the starting root. Beginning this process in early March is crucial if you are planning to grow the plant in the garden during the summer months. Once you have the ginger rhizome, the root flesh with 'eyes' can be sev-

ered into pieces of approximately 5 cm (2 inches)

The second step is planting the ginger 'eyes' in a loose soil amended with organic matter, such as manure or compost. Pre-mixed options are readily available. Three to five 'eyes' can be planted in a large pot, one inch apart. Each ginger segment should be completely covered with a few centimetres of soil.

The soil should be kept moist, but it is important



Ginger leaves

Penka Matanska

that it not be soggy. The root will rot if there is too much moisture. I keep my pot in a warm place with some sun exposure. Sprouting is a long process; it will take three to four weeks before new shoots emerge. Not all 'eyes' will take, but a few will.

Since the plants like high humidity, once the leaves start growing, they must be misted every day. The new growth will have narrow fibrous leaves resembling tall grass. A slow-release organic fertilizer, like fish emulsion, can be applied every two weeks.

Once the soil has warmed up outdoors (around the same planting time for peppers), the plants can be transplanted into the garden in a bed with lots of organic matter and protection from the midday sun. In a couple of months, the roots will plump up and will be ready for harvest. The ginger plant must be removed from the garden before the weather becomes colder and frost threatens. At this time, the ginger root can be harvested or transferred to a pot to continue growing indoors.

My experience has been better with harvesting the ginger root after several months in the vegetable

garden and restarting a new growing cycle the following year. It is possible to keep the ginger plant in its pot during the summer and to bring it indoors in September and let it grow more. I have not had any luck with moving the plants indoors for continuous growth; my plants lost their leaves soon after bringing them indoors. All that said, it does not mean it isn't possible.

Ginger is a versatile spice for many types of food and drink. It is wonderful to explore the possibility of growing it in your own garden. Fresh ginger root is much juicier and milder in flavour than a store bought one. ♻️

Nasturtiums – An Incredible Edible

Nancy McDonald



Nasturtiums

Nancy McDonald

Nasturtiums (*Tropaeolum majus*) are wonderful flowers for both our gardens and kitchens. This vibrant annual comes from South America, brought to Europe in the 1550s and was found in Thomas Jefferson's Monticello Virginia garden in the late 1700s. Some nasturtiums grow as climbers (3 m), others as trailers or semi-trailers. There are many hybrids available in colours other than bright orange.

They all grow easily from seed and can either be started inside in early spring or as I do, direct sown when all danger of frost has passed. The large seeds are easy for young fingers and were among the first seeds my grandchildren planted with the germination in 7-10 days adding a quick gratification for their efforts. Since I use nasturtiums as edible flowers, I prefer to grow my own. Late in summer, you can collect the mature dropped seeds, dry them on a cotton tea towel and store in a paper bag or envelope for next year's planting. I find the squirrels or chipmunks plant a few around my garden and I am always happy they do when some survive winter and appear in unexpected places.

Nasturtiums are one of the best-known edible flowers and they come with nutritional value as excellent sources of vitamin C, plus essential nutrients such as iron, potassium, manganese and zinc. With their vibrant colours they also provide beta-carotene and the antioxidant lutein.

Almost every part of this plant is edible. Nasturtium leaves have a spicy, peppery flavour. I will let your taste buds decide if it is closer in flavour to watercress or radish. I find the flowers are both zesty and sweet. Be encouraged to pick flowers as they appear, so more will follow.

I gather nasturtium blossoms and leaves fresh from the garden and add them to salads. I particularly enjoy the flowers in salads with greens from my garden such as baby kale, mesclun and arugula. Flowers can be the finishing ingredient on flatbread just out of the oven, adding presentation flair to your table. I make an apple cider vinegar infusion with nasturtium flowers, rosemary sprigs and peppercorns that is delightfully used all winter in marinades and salad dressings.



Nasturtium jelly
Nancy McDonald

In 2020, nasturtium jelly became a grandson's favourite. I have also added nasturtium petals to my parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme jelly to give it a pretty colour. The petals can be a colourful addition to sandwiches or quesadillas. I have also used the

flowers and petals in frittata when I did not have other greens available and found I quite enjoyed them.

Covid has certainly taught me to use what I have on hand. Pesto made from nasturtium flowers and leaves gave an earthy flavour that I brightened by adding lemon juice. At the end of the 2020 gardening season, I froze nasturtium leaves for the first time to add to winter soups - then asked myself why I had not done this before! My plan this year is to pickle some of the buds as they resemble capers in taste and texture.

Nasturtium flowers are colourful when frozen in ice cubes and then floated in a summer beverage. They look beautiful as decoration on cakes and cupcakes. I tend to pick the flowers as needed but they also can be stored in the refrigerator for a couple of days, if placed loosely in a plastic bag with paper towel.

Now you can see why I call nasturtiums an incredible edible. There are many online recipes, plus books on edible flowers available at the library. It is not too late to try some nasturtium recipes. Please do! ♻️

Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton present:

Late Season Colour – Aug 17 Beware Wild Parsnip - Aug 24
Plant Propagation - Aug 31 Overwinter Annuals - Sep 7



Click [here](#) to register for the meetings

A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows. —Doug Larson, columnist



Gardeners Beware: Periwinkle—*Vinca minor*

Gail Labrosse



Vinca spreading in a wooded area
Candace Dressler



Vinca invading forest
Candace Dressler

Vinca minor, or periwinkle, is a common non-native plant often used as ground cover. Native to the Mediterranean basin and introduced to North America as an ornamental plant, it easily escapes cultivation and is considered to be highly invasive. It reproduces from rooting stems. Because it can cover large areas if not controlled, it is a threat to biodiversity.

Periwinkle will grow in a variety of conditions. However, it thrives in shade, making it very detrimental to native woodland species by competing with and suppressing them to become the dominant plant.

It is still sold in some locations across Ontario, thus providing a source for continual possible invasion of native habitats. Gardeners buy this highly invasive plant because it is a useful evergreen perennial ground cover in the fight against weeds. It also provides good erosion control and grows quickly. But periwinkle should never be planted close to woodland areas.

If you must have periwinkle in your garden, prune back or hand pull the rooting stems during the growing season to keep it from spreading beyond your property. The very best way to prevent the spread of invasive plants is don't plant them. Instead, plant one of the many native alternatives, such as:

Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*) – is a woodland groundcover with beautiful white to greenish flowers. It produces red berries.

Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*) – is a groundcover that will form dense colonies in shady locations. It produces maroon flowers under its leaves in late spring.

Barren Strawberry (*Waldsteinia fragarioides*) – is a low spreading plant with showy yellow flowers that appears in early spring. 🌱

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Send questions and photos of garden pests, diseases or plants for Identification.

Trowel Talk can be found on the [Lanark County Master Gardener's blogsite](#) and [Ottawa Carleton Master Gardener's Website](#)



Talks and Events

For information on gardening in and around the Ottawa valley:

<https://gardeningcalendar.ca/>

Talks are given by Master Gardeners for garden clubs and horticultural societies using Zoom or other virtual meeting software: If you wish to attend please contact the host organization.

Wednesday, August 18, 12:00 pm

Odette McIntyre

Après la récolte

[Ottawa Public Library](#)

Article suggestions box

This is your chance, as a reader, to suggest an idea for an article you would like to see in Trowel Talk. Click on the button.



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Banner Photograph: Black-eyed Susans—Rudbeckia hirta, Susan Bicket .

Wednesday, September 8, 7 pm

Judith Cox

Into the Night Garden

[Gananoque Horticultural Society](#)

Tuesday, September 14, 7 pm

Julianne Labreche

A Garden for the Birds

[Perth & District Horticultural Society](#)

Tuesday, September 14, 7:30 pm

Nancy McDonald

Paint with Blooms!

[West Carleton Horticultural Society](#)

Wednesday, September 15, 12:00 pm

Sheila Currie

Propagating Native Perennials

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