

# Communities in Bloom

*Olds People, Plants & Pride, growing together!*

This year Olds Communities in Bloom in conjunction with the Town of Olds is registered in the "Circle of Excellence" program within the national edition (thus receiving all benefits as such), but Olds will not be evaluated by a jury. Olds will still be expected to continue local Communities in Bloom initiatives in order to maintain our bloom rating. Olds will be required to be evaluated at least once every three years, i.e. a community that remains non-evaluated for two years in a row must be evaluated the third year. Your local committee will be continuing on with all existing programs. Watch for new initiatives!

## Kick-off Party Tuesday, June 14th

Join us for our annual Kick-Off Party and Barrel Planting Contest at Town Office on **Tuesday, June 14. Town of Olds Council and staff will plant half-barrels** in a friendly competition and maintain them throughout the summer. The barrels will be numbered (for anonymity), and you can vote on your favourite barrel by August 15. Cheer on our gardeners. In case of rain, the event will be held in Council Chambers. Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m.

## Shades of Purple

The 2011 colours for this year are Shades of Purple. Some ideas for purple flowers are: ageratum, alyssum, aquilegia, aster, bachelor's buttons, borage, brachycome, candytuft, clarkia, comfrey, delphinium, dianthus, fuschia, geranium, heliotrope, hosta, ice plant, impatiens, larkspur, lobelia, malva, monkshood, morning glory, nigella, pansy, petunia, phacelia, salpiglossis, salvia, scabiosa, statice, stocks, sweet pea, torenia, verbena, viola. Also consider the bright ornamental kale, chives, purple tomatoes, rutabaga or purple climbing beans for flashes of purple and something different in your garden.

## National Tree Day

In March, a motion was passed in the House of Commons to declare a National Tree Day. Royal Galipeau, a member of Parliament, initiated the motion, said by passing this motion, "the House is asking Canadians to spend just one day, reflecting on the link between their lives and trees." The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2011 the International Year of Forests. Our first National Tree Day will be Wednesday, September 21, 2011. Go out and celebrate your trees or learn about a tree, plant a tree, and appreciate the historical impact the tree has had on Canada's economic success as a nation.

## Facebook & Twitter

Check out our new Olds Communities in Bloom facebook page. See the Bloomer of the Week. Look for information about the group and events. Feel free to contact us, volunteer with us or send us questions. Also coming soon Tweets about our town in the realms of Landscaping, Urban Forestry, Turf, Heritage, Floral, Tidiness, and Community Involvement. These are eight categories every Communities in Bloom place is judged on when they compete.

## Pesticides

Weeds, weeds everywhere! Maybe you are feeling swamped by the sheer amount of dandelions or other weeds that keep popping up. Sure, you can get lots of weed killers at the local hardware or even from a farmer friend of yours. BUT, be mindful of what is on the other side of your fence. You can easily kill or damage shrubs or trees on the other side of the fence. Remember to always read the directions on the bottle labels and wear safety gear. Agricultural grade pesticides should not be used in town simply for the safety of you and your neighbors.

## Love Flowers?

### IDEAS FOR FLORAL DISPLAYS?

Nothing adds as much color to the landscape as annual flowers. Annuals come virtually every color and heights, ranging from two inches (5 cm) to six feet (2 M). There are varieties of annuals that will grow and bloom in the hottest sun while others will thrive in the deepest shade. With such a wide variety to work with it is easy to design beautiful flower beds.

Annual flower borders will add color and interest to your landscape and provide a great transition between your lawn and foundation planting, shrub border, fence, hedge, vegetable garden or patio. A border using one variety may be a narrow edging one foot (30 cm) wide or less, or a wide bed of three feet (1 M) or more with several rows and varieties of annuals. It is usually best to keep the number of colors to two or three unless it covers a large area. For larger areas, grouping colors of annuals creates a dramatic display with lots of visual impact. For wider borders select lower varieties for the front and medium to tall varieties for the back. For a narrow border, keep the height in scale with the background.

Good soil preparation is essential for success with annuals. Till or spade the soil deeply and add a granular flower garden fertilizer at this time. A slow release fertilizer with a high phosphorous content is a good choice to encourage good, fast root growth in newly planted annuals. If drainage is poor, you should consider raising the bed and improving drainage by adding compost, peat moss or other organic matter. Good topsoil may also be used. After planting, a mulch will help control weeds and keep the soil more uniformly moist and cool.



June 2011

# Pruning Tips-Do's & Don'ts

We live in a difficult climate, sometimes, short wet summers, and long winters, sometimes dry cool winters and hot dry summers. The chinook winds are something special that we must consider when it comes to gardening and our trees. Some things to remember when it comes to pruning:

- ⊗ Do be gentle when you are pruning. Remove damaged, dead and diseased branches. Remove crossing and rubbing branches.
- ⊗ Do spread out pruning over a few years. Taking too much in one year will cause your tree to be weaker and more prone to diseases and insects.
- ⊗ Don't overprune. Be wary of Lionstailing - this involves cutting all branches up to the end and leaving a mass of smaller branches at the end of a larger branch. This will weaken the branches leaving them more prone to wind and snow damage.
- ⊗ Don't Q-tip your tree. This usually happens to pines and spruce. It involves cutting branches way up the trunk. It takes away from the usefulness of this kind of tree as a sheltering tree or a screen. It will also slow the growth and weaken the tree as the skirt they normally sport helps keep moisture in the ground for them to use. It also leaves the trunk open to damage and weed whipper damage.
- ⊗ Don't take more than a quarter of the tree's branches when pruning, be conservative when cutting out branches.
- ⊗ Don't leave long stubs or flush cut too close to the stem of a tree. Never top a tree, as this will shorten the life of your tree and leave it open to diseases and insect damage.
- ⊗ Do prune at the right times. Before the trees bud out, in the summer when in full leaf or in winter are the best times. In the spring a tree is putting all its energy into blooming and leafing out so it is not a good time to prune. In the autumn, a tree is putting on wood, so again, not a good time to prune as it will weaken a tree.
- ⊗ Do hire a certified arborist to do the best for your trees.

# Water Wise Gardening

As the growing season approaches, here are a few things to consider for the dry areas of the garden for general conservation:

- ⊗ Grow drought-tolerant plants like grasses, yarrow, rudebeckia, artemesia, daylily, coneflower, and sedum - native plants are often a good choice.
- ⊗ Consider these drought-tolerant annuals: ganzia, cosmos, zinnia, ageratum, celosia, lavatera, osteospermum, salvia.
- ⊗ Cut back on fertilizing when dry.
- ⊗ When you water your garden, water deeply - giving a good deep watering once a week is better than several light waterings.
- ⊗ To help keep moisture in the soil, add organic matter (compost, peat moss, etc.).
- ⊗ Spread a couple inches of mulch over exposed ground to help keep moisture in and roots cool. The added bonus is that mulch helps control weeds.

# Soils

Is your soil tired, are your plants looking lackluster? Perhaps what you need is a boost. Of course you can always use artificial fertilizers but there is no guarantee that these will reach your plants, shrubs and trees. The best thing you can do for your soil is add a well rotted compost to enrich it and make all your plants happy and healthy.

# Gardening Tips

## **Want a low-stress, high appeal yard?**

You can have a distinctive front yard without a lot of work by using low maintenance perennials. You'll spend less time weeding and use less water to maintain them. Try these suggested varieties:

- |                 |                      |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| ⊗ Cransbill     | ⊗ Asiatic Lily       |
| ⊗ Nepeta        | ⊗ Coneflower         |
| ⊗ Allium        | ⊗ Speedwell          |
| ⊗ Siberian Iris | ⊗ Sedum (Autumn Joy) |

## **You can grow roses!**

The "Explorer" series are hardy, often highly scented, and need a little attention. If you dead-head (remove old blossoms) from annuals, perennials and roses, you will encourage new blossoms and have attractive-looking plants.

## **Do you have perennials that are tall and lanky by the end of summer?**

Try this tip: cut back one third to one half of the plant (don't be afraid!) before the 15th of June, and you have a terrific plant that is under control!

## **Do you have a SHADY SPOT?**

Ferns, astilbes, and hostas are your best friends - you get texture, covers a variety of foliage and they look great all season.

## **Do you have LIMITED SPACE?**

Container gardening is perfect for flowers and vegetables, plus you use less water to maintain them. However, do water daily and make sure your container has drainage holes.

For a bold, beautiful statemet of color in a container, plant red geraniums, yellow ganzia and blue/mauve ageratum.

# Caught You...!

Businesses and industries displaying the "Caught You...Doing a Good Job" certificate have been recognized by their colleagues and community as having done a good job in beautifying their places of business. The "Nominate Your Neighbour" program is an opportunity to honour those residents who exhibit hard work and talent in making their homes and yards more attractive and tidy. If you see or know any business or home that you think should be recognized, contact Lorraine at Town Office, 403.507.4811.

