

# Roots and Shoots

The Newsletter of the Community Garden Network  
of Edmonton and Area



OF EDMONTON AND AREA

## Lets Talk About Pest Management



Ladybug or  
*Coccinella Septempunctata*

What is Organic Pest Management of OPM? To state it is in its most simplest terms, is an approach to controlling pests combining cultural, biological, physical, and yes certain chemical controls to keep pests in check. This month, I will cover what we can do biologically to control some of our more common garden pests. Biological controls use living organisms to fight off other different living organisms. Some common practices are releasing, attracting or simply protecting natural insect predators and parasites in our garden.

Lets talk about one of our most obvious and most loved garden visitors –the

lady bug. Not only is she incredibly cute, she is incredibly voracious in her appetite for such pests as Aphids. A single Ladybug can et 5000 Aphids in a lifetime. Isn't that incredible?? Not only that but unlike some insects, both the adult and the larvae eat Aphids!! How great is that. I ask you? Obviously, we want to keep our little Ladybug's happy. What can we do you prevent them from fling off to juicer pastures? We can plant some flowers and herbs that these little spotted beauties enjoy. Some suggestions I have are cosmos, morning glory, scented geraniums and some wonderful culinary herbs. Try growing fennel, dill, cilantro, and angelica. Not

only will your food taste better, your garden will be cleaner as a result. You can also buy or make a ladybug house. A small box filled with peat or compost will encourage ladybugs to roost, lay eggs and call your yard home.

We can also get handy in the kitchen and make some real good natural pest control products on our own. No more going to the local greenhouse or Canadian Tire and buying toxic chemicals, for us. Let get out a pot and "cook" up a batch of "Death to Aphids"

## Death to Aphids : Garlic Pepper Spray

- 3 cayenne or jalapeno peppers.
- Make sure you include the seeds.
- 1 large onion
- 1 whole bulb of garlic

Put all this in a blender with a bit of water. Puree till smooth and the consistency is of a good paste. Move this mash over to a bucket and cover with a gallon of water. Let it stand for 24 hours and then strain it. Place the liquid in a spray bottle and give those Aphids a good shower. Repeat as necessary.



Crocus

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## Favorite Garden Plants: Humble Crocus

The name, crocus, is derived from the ancient Greek word "krokus" meaning saffron. Saffron is the orange-coloured filaments found on the saffron Crocus. It is highly prized for its culinary uses, as a dye for clothing and food, and in some cultures, it is thought to have powerful health benefits. It takes approximately 4400 filaments to make an ounce of saffron. No wonder saffron is so expensive! Legend suggests Crocus was a handsome young man. He lived a humble life, toiling on the plains. All was well in his world until he fell in love with a hill-dwelling shepherd girl named Smilax. Alas, the two were not allowed to marry, so they prayed to the goddess Flora for help. She transformed them into plants. This way, they could spend eternity together. Today, Smilax, a briar vine, wraps bouquets of Crocus in her tendrils, never letting go of her great love.

The Crocus has been much admired through history for her bravery, bursting forth even through the snow!! Late in the 17th century, Mathew Prior wrote this cheerful poem. To the Crocus. Ah spring... what is it without colourful little Crocus, lifting our souls after a long, white winter? Next month, I'll be talking about lilacs.

"To the Crocus"  
Dainty young thing  
Of life! though venturous flower,  
Who grows through the hard cold bower  
Of wintry spring.  
Though various hued,  
Soft, voiceless bell, whose spire  
Rocks in the grassy leaves, like wire  
In solitude.



## Ten Tips for Living Green

Here are some pretty painless ideas for reducing carbon dioxide in our environment. Some of these suggestions are not only good for our Planet, but our hearts and bodies too! How great is that? Helping us and “Mom” a the same time!

- 1) Use that bike: for every mile you ride a bike instead of driving a car, you stop about 1 pound of carbon dioxide from going into our atmosphere.
- 2) Save water by using powder detergent: laundry liquid is about 80% water.
- 3) Get tough on tissues: by using just one box of 100% recycled tissues, we could save 87,700 trees, 226,000 cubic feet of landfill space, 31 million gallons of water and avoid 53,000 pounds of pollution.
- 4) Check your water heater: keep it no higher than 120 F and save 550 lbs of carbon dioxide emissions.
- 5) Change those light bulbs: replace just 3 frequently used bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs and save about 300lbs of carbon dioxide per year.
- 6) Change how you mow the lawn: use a reel mower instead. Burn calories and stop as much as air pollution as taking a 350 mile drive in your car.
- 7) Change your thermostat: turn down the heat at night and when you are away OR install a programmable thermostat.
- 8) Reduce your garbage: chose products with less packaging. Recycle paper, plastic and glass. You can save about 1000 lbs of carbon dioxide per year by reducing, reusing and recycling.
- 9) Use recycled paper: try to use 100% post-consumer recycled papers when printing. You can save 5lbs of carbon dioxide per ream of paper doing this. When wrapping gifts, remember you can recycle and reuse. Get creative!
- 10) Fill that dishwasher before you set it off: save about 100lbs of carbon dioxide per year running only a full load.



## Homemade Green Recipes for Household Cleaning

### Window & Glass Cleaner

Glass surfaces & mirrors: Add equal parts vinegar, and water to spray bottle. Use old newspaper for a streak free finish.

For Windows: Add one drop of liquid dish soap to 3 litre pail of warm water. Apply to windows and remove excess water with squeegee.

### All Purpose Cleaner

In a 32oz spray bottle, add the following:

- 1/4 cup white vinegar
- 2 teaspoons borax
- 3-1/2 cups of hot water
- 20 drops of your favourite essential oil
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil based soap

### Soft Scrub

#### For Kitchen & Bathroom

Spray surface with all purpose cleaner solution and sprinkle baking soda over the area to be cleaned. This paste creates a great scouring power for heavily soiled surfaces.

### Floor Cleaner

- 1/8 cup liquid soap (liquid castile soap is best)
  - 1/4 to 1/2 cup white vinegar or lemon juice
  - 1/2 cup peppermint tea (it has anti bacterial properties)
- Add this to your bucket of warm water.

## Why Do We Garden?

This is a question I am asked frequently... "You garden?" "Why? It's so much work. I don't get it." I think that's a very good question. Why DO I garden? Why does anyone garden? I garden for many reasons. I feel a connection to my family when I work the soil. I grew up "in a garden". My grandparents, whom I spent almost as much time with as my own parents, were, to put it mildly, avid gardeners. They had a huge vegetable patch, a small orchard, a strawberry and raspberry field and a big plot dedicated to asparagus. Not only that, but they loved flowers. I was surrounded

by vases of flowers!! My grandpa used to say "a house is not a home without flowers." I loved it!! Being in my own garden reminds me of these wonderful, much loved people. We had so many happy times together, because of the garden. I can't help but feel a certain amount of warm nostalgia when I work the soil. I can feel my grandparents smiling down on me and it lifts my soul. I garden to feel closer to our "Mother Earth". I take great pleasure in making Her a little cleaner, a little greener. I garden to reduce stress and move a little slower through life. We

speed through it so fast, it seems we never really take time to enjoy the world we live in. It's a shame, really. In a garden, we have no choice but to move slowly. Plants don't grow in an instant. Weeds are not gone in a blink of an eye. Life goes slower in a garden and I like it. It gives me a chance to listen to the birds, smell the soil and touch the grass. I come away from the garden tired, but yet so much more at peace and strangely exhilarated. Lastly, I garden for pure and selfish joy! Nothing gives me more of thrill than to put a tiny seed into the soft soil, stand back and watch the show.

"Earth Laughs  
in Flowers."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Let's Talk About Honey Bees: the interesting and truly frightening facts about our garden friends

### Part 1: The Frightening Facts:

I love Honey Bees. I think they're very cute. Who hasn't broken into a huge smile over the sight of our busy little friends covered in golden pollen dust, carrying their sweet treasure back to the hive? Not me. It always lifts my heart to see them going about their business. However interesting and important this business may be, Honey Bees are in trouble. Over the last several winters, 25% of the Western Honey Bee population has simply disappeared. Where and why, no one seems to really know for sure. One popular theory is a phenomenon called Colony Collapse Disorder, or CCD. What happens when CCD hits a colony is peculiar, to say the least. The Honey Bees seem to suddenly abandon their hives and go off to die. If that wasn't disheartening enough. None has figured out a solid reason as to why they do this. Theories abound. Is it a virus? Mites perhaps? Chemical exposure could play a part. Scientists are even contemplating a "simple" explanation: poor nutrition. Only time will tell if any of these theories proves to be true.

In the meantime, we can do something to help our little friends out. Lets all plant some "Honey Bee Must Haves" in our yard. They really love

the following plants: lavender, rosemary, thyme, cone flowers, coreopsis, violets, bluebells, sunflowers and cosmos. I'm sure we can all find a place in our gardens for at least one of these treats. Our bees are worth it. We can also help our Bee populations by supporting local Honey Bee and Hive products. One good local source to buy honey from is Lola Canola. You can go on line at [www.lolacanola.com](http://www.lolacanola.com) or check out your local Farmers Markets. Buy Beeswax candles instead of wax

or soy candles. Use honey in place of sugar. I know it doesn't sound like a lot, but small things can and do make a big impact.

### Part 2: The Interesting Facts: Did You Know??

Now that I've got your attention, let's talk about why the Honey Bee is so special. One out of every 3 bites of food Americans eat is directly related to a healthy Honey Bee population. This is 1/3 of the available food supply. If the Honey Bee is in trouble, we are in trouble. Honey Bees provide 80% of the pollinating services we need in order to harvest fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds. Think about the impact this would have on our food supply if there were no Honey Bees. Shocking isn't it? Economically, Honey Bees are

solely responsible for \$15 Billion US in agricultural crop pollination services each year. Imagine the devastation to the economy if the Honey Bee was no more.

On a lighter note, did you know that the Honey Bee must visit 2 million flowers and fly 55,000 miles to make us a pound of Honey? If a Honey Bee flies between 10 and 15 miles per hour and visits around 50 and 100 flowers per trip, can you imagine how much work goes into that pound of honey? It's pretty precious stuff!! Have you ever wondered how the humble Honey Bee lets everyone in her hive know she's found a treasure trove of pollen? I did and what I found out is pretty darn fascinating. When she returns to the hive after finding some good pollen, she gives out little samples of the nectar to her hive mates. After they've all had a good taste, she starts to dance. The dance tells her fellow Bees what's out there, the distance and the direction. Not only that, but the quality and the quantity of the food supply is also part of her dance. The best part of her dance, in my humble opinion, has to be this: the better the food source, the longer and more elaborate the dance is! Isn't nature wonderful? I love it!!

“... the voice that promotes and supports community gardens.”

# Edmonton Community Garden Network

Suite 101  
15334 123 Ave  
Edmonton Alberta T5V 1K8

Phone: (780)447-9600 or (780)221-1128  
Fax: (780)488-2513 E-mail: info@edcommunitygardens.org  
Check out our new Website @ www.edcommunitygardens.org



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## Edmonton Community Garden T-Shirts

We have “Lets Get Dirty” and “Blissful Beet”

These great T-shirts sell individually for \$25 each. Does your garden need to do some fundraising? T-Shirts can be purchased from the ECGN in bulk at \$15 Each.

### Free Seeds

Are you a member of the ECGN?

Then you have access to free seeds for your garden.

Contact the office for more information.



## Recipe of the Month

### Curried Fresh Pea Soup

- 3 TBSP of butter
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 sweet onions, copped fine
- 2 stalks of celery, chopped
- 2 potatoes, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 2-1/2 Cups of fresh shelled peas
- 1/4 TSP sugar
- 2 TSP curry powder, mild, medium or hot
- 3-4 Cups organic or homemade chicken stock
- 2 Cups half and half or light crème
- Salt & pepper
- Garnish:** crisp bacon or chopped chives

In a sauce pan, melt and add the garlic, onion, celery, potato and carrots. Sauté until softened. Add peas, sugar, curry and 2 Cups of broth. Cover and simmer until vegetables are soft. About 15-20 minutes. Puree mixture with a blender of hand blender. Add remaining stock and crème until it's a thickness you prefer. Simmer gently until heated through. Do not boil. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve in bowls with garnish and a good baguette.

“ Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s needs, but not every man’s greed. “

Mahatma Gandhi

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Edmonton Horticultural Society

Hi everyone I am Nicole, the new writer for the ECGN newsletter.

If you wish to submit articles or notices for the upcoming edition of Roots & Shoots, the next deadline is May 31, 2008. You can contact me at flowergirl67@gmail.com