



!!Sunday July 25th from 10 am to 1 pm – the Millbrook Farmers' Market at the Old Millbrook School !!

There is such a variety of vendors at this local market offering fresh local produce, dairy products, baked products, beverages and more. There are also artisans offering unique items. There will also be live entertainment by guitarist Douglas MacKenzie. Parking near the school sometimes can be problematic. Instead, consider parking at the old Millbrook arena where there is a lot of available parking, then take a short scenic walk across the dam and across the back lawn of the school.

The Millbrook Chapter of Trout Unlimited will be in the community booth at the July 25th market from 10-1pm. Stop by to learn more about how all can help protect natural waterways in the community.

Delphiniums Locally Available!

One of the long-time Millbrook farmers' market vendors is Woodleigh Farms located at 528 Sharpe Line in Cavan. In response to last week's newsletter Lucy, the manager of a new greenhouse at the farm, sent a note that if anyone still looking for delphiniums this season, **dozens of Delphinium Pacific Giants (mixed colours) for \$10 each are available at the farm.**

Lucy has also noted that delphiniums and some other perennials and annuals will be available to the Millbrook farmers' market on the 25th, as well as some other annuals and perennials.

Woodleigh Farms also participates in the Cavan/Millbrook REKO network. Questions can be directed to: woodleighfarms@gmail.com

For more information visit their site at:

<http://www.cavanfresh.ca/>

LDD (gypsy moths) have pupated and one might notice numerous small greyish brown moths flying around erratically. Unlike many other moths, the adult LDD (gypsy) moths both male and female do not feed at all – not even plant nectar. The adults live for about one to two weeks for the sole purpose of reproducing. The males are relentless in pursuit of females and have feathery antennae that pick up the scent of the pheromones released by the females.

These small male moths will mate with several different female moths. Though they cannot fly, the larger white adult females have wings. Females are easy to identify because they are much larger and whitish with darker zigzag marks (photo below). The female dies shortly after laying her eggs.

Female moths are the ones to be concerned about and to be on the look-out for because they will lay hundreds of eggs. Since they do not fly, they tend to stay near where they have pupated. While usually they can be found near on lower parts of tree trunks, they will also hatch and stay frustratingly high up in a tree. They will also climb into birdhouses, outhouses, on sides of buildings, under vehicles etc. etc.

A Millbrook resident took this recent photo of many female egg-laying LDD (gypsy) moths on a Norway maple trunk in Millbrook and noted it is like this in patches all the way up the tree! This is not a good sign for next year since it seems some populations of this pest in parts of Millbrook might not have been affected by the NP virus. In other areas, and even here in the Moraine garden which was badly hit especially the loss of majestic 50 spruce trees planted in 1982 by a former owner that have been completely defoliated, not too many female moths have been found. The close-up photo shows the female LDD moth in the process of laying an egg mass containing anywhere from 100 to 500 eggs. If, after dispatching the white moths, it is noted they have already laid their egg masses, scrape the eggs into soapy water. Simply scraping the egg masses off the tree is not enough unless the eggs are completely crushed. The eggs will survive and overwinter where they fell on the ground. Some experts note that the size of the egg masses can be predictors of next year's caterpillar population. If small as a dime, one might breathe a

sigh of relief; if the egg masses are quite large and in great numbers, then next year could be a repeat of this year's infestation.



Some garlic notes:

A gardener expressed concerns about garlic being grown in a raised bed where the top stem and leaves had fallen over. Upon inspection, instead of being ready to harvest, the bulbs and cloves were simply not forming. According to online sources the problem might be a lack of water or too much water. This area was in a drought situation for weeks followed by numerous and ongoing heavy downpours. There are several local garlic growers who might have had this same experience and know the cause of what is ailing this gardener's crop, so please share through our communications coordinator.

Although garlic seems like an easy crop to grow, it can face numerous challenges. Some years ago, garlic in this area was hit hard by the new introduced pest- **the leek moth**. Leek moth is an invasive pest of European and Asian origin first detected in the Ottawa area in 1993. Since then, the leek moth has spread in all directions - to western parts of Southern Ontario, the Maritime provinces and southward in Vermont.

The larvae can cause significant damage to garlic, leeks, onions, shallots and chives. All parts of the plant including leaves, stems, flower stalks, scapes, and bulbs can be affected. Larvae mine through folded leaves of garlic and can then bore into the scapes and into the cloves. Infested bulbs attract bacteria and fungi which then turn the cloves into mush.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) has a fact sheet on this pest (with photos)

[Leek Moth - A Pest of Allium Crops \(gov.on.ca\)](http://gov.on.ca)

Other problems that can impact garlic can be found in this link:

[Top Problems Growing Garlic and How to Fix It - Ready To DIY](#)

Around this time of year, **some garlic varieties are ready or almost ready to be harvested.** It can be tricky, because if left too long, the garlic bulb of cloves will not be tight. The trick is to let the plants begin to die back somewhat, but harvest (dug up) **before all the leaves have turned brown. When the lower two thirds of leaves have dried up and turned brown, the garlic bulbs will be at their best.** When harvested, leave the foliage to dry completely before cutting the bulbs off – this will help extend the storage time of the garlic.

!Super Shasta Daisies!



Shasta daisy cultivars “Esther Reed” and “Banana Cream” – photo by author

The Shasta daisy was first introduced to the commercial garden world in 1901. Shasta daisy (*Leucanthemum ×superbum*) was bred by the noted American horticulturist Luther Burbank and is a hybrid combination of the local common weedy oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), English field daisy (*Leucanthemum maximum*) and Portuguese field daisy (*Leucanthemum lacustre*). Burbank named his creation after the snow-capped Mount Shasta near his home in northern California. Since then, breeders have developed many cultivars such as the two in the above photos.

Like many other members of the Asteraceae plant family to which it belongs, Shasta daisy plants produce classic daisy-shaped blooms. They have a core of hundreds of tiny yellow flowers (called disk flowers) that are collected together to form the center of the bloom. These central disk flowers are then surrounded by white petals (called ray flowers). So actually, each “flower” is actually not a flower at all, but is really a collection of many flowers organized together into an inflorescence (a cluster of flowers)!

Shasta daisies are perennials and bring a welcome bright touch to July gardens. These daisies prefer full sun to light shade in well-drained soil rich in organic matter. As with most perennials, good soil drainage is especially important in winter because damp and soggy soil around the root crown of the plant can lead to rot.

Varieties vary in height from only perhaps 30 cm (12 inches) to a metre (3 feet) or even taller. All varieties have low-growing foliage which create habitat for beneficial predatory bugs, like assassin bugs, big eyed bugs, and spined soldier bugs. The nectar and pollen from the flowers are preferred by some species of pest-eating parasitic wasps, minute pirate bugs, lacewings, soldier beetles, ladybugs, and syrphid flies. Butterflies, native bees, beetles, flies, and other pollinators also enjoy these dazzling flowers. Four-lined plant bugs discussed in the June 14th Gossip and Glee newsletter sometimes can be problematic leaving the leaves pockmarked but this is cosmetic damage and does not impact the overall health of the plant.

There are many cultivars now – some bear double petals, fringed petals, pompom arrangements, or blooms that start out yellow then turn ivory or white. Some examples

include: *Daisy Mae*, *Banana Cream*, *Becky*, *Alaska*, *Snowcap*, *Crazy Daisy*, *Snow Lady*, *Fiona Coghill*, *Sunnyside Up*, *Goldfinch*, *Christine Hagemann*, *Ice Star*, *Aglaia*, and *Esther Reed*
Shasta Daisy is not to be confused with Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), the native from Europe, where the spreading nature and drought tolerance of the plants make them sometimes both plant and pasture pests. These short-lived perennials are considered invasive.

.... And Super Stachys!



Lamb's ears (*Stachys byzantina*) and close-up of its silvery fuzzy foliage and relatives *Stachys officinalis* now-called *Betonica officinalis* with purple flowers and long stems and a pink flowering *Stachys macrantha* (now *Betonica macrantha*) with its larger flowers and shorter stems (photos by author)

Stachys comes from the Greek “stacys” meaning “ear of corn” in reference to the flower head although one really has to use one’s imagination to see the resemblance of the flower heads to ears of corn.

This perennial is native to Eastern Europe and Western Asia. It is a species of flowering plant in the mint family Lamiaceae. It is commonly known as “lamb’s ear” in this area but is also commonly known as bear's ear, rabbit's ear and woolly betony in other parts of the world. The resemblance of the leaves to the ears of a young sheep's ear resulted in the leaves made into an oil to relieve ear pain (otitis) as a traditional herbal treatment. The thick leaves apparently have also been used for centuries as bandages to help heal the wounds of the soldiers on the battlefield because of its absorbent properties and they also contain antibacterial, antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties.

Lamb’s ears (*Stachys byzantina*) is a super plant for any garden because of its thick, soft, silvery, felted long leaves which create a soft groundcover. The leaves range from 15 to 18 cm (6 to 8 inches) in length. Velvety four-sided stems can extend upwards from 30 to 61 cm (12 to 24 inches) and bear tiny-lipped tubular pinkish- purple flowers in clusters along the stem. If pollinated, flowers may be followed by oblong, hairless, brown nutlets. However, many gardeners prefer to remove any flower spikes that spoil the effect of the leaves as a silver carpet and because the stems tend to fall over - but many pollinators do enjoy the flowers as a food source.

There are cultivars with much larger leaves under the names ‘*Big Ears*’, ‘*Countess Helen von Stein*’ or ‘*Helene von Stein*’ – all which also produce very few if any blooms.

Lamb's ear can withstand poor soil conditions and drought. One thing it will not tolerate, however, is soggy soil. This plant performs best in full-sun conditions, but it can withstand some shade. In shade, the plant will look greener, because it will produce fewer dense hairs. If constantly wet, the leaves can succumb to rot.

It spreads by creeping stems that root as they go along the ground and can be mildly aggressive in rich soils.

Stachys officinalis, now called *Betonica officinalis* is commonly called wood betony or bishop's wort. It was used by ancient healers for nearly everything from curing coughs to deworming. It is an old remedy for arthritis and gout and claimed to be effective against snake and dog bites. Like lamb’s ears it was and is still used as an ointment for cuts and sores.

Betonica officinalis is also a perennial. However, it looks much different than lamb's ears. Instead of soft thick velvety silver leaves, it bears oval green leaves with a heart-shaped base and with a somewhat wrinkled texture and toothed margins. It produces long tall straight stems that do not flop over with each stem bearing whorls of intense purplish-pink two-lipped tubular flowers. In the Moraine garden, if not dead-headed, it will self-seed.

Stachys macrantha, now called *Betonica macrantha* also synonymous with *Stachys grandiflora* and *Betonica grandiflora* is commonly called big betony and is similar to *Betonica officinalis*. It forms a wide, bushy mound of foliage, with but has much shorter flowering stems that extend slightly above the foliage and the individual flowers are larger. Latin specific epithet *macrantha* means "large-flowered". The cultivars 'Robusta', 'Superba', and 'Violacea' have gained the Royal Horticultural Society's Award of Garden Merit.

There are cultivars of these two *Betonicas* – some that produce pink and even white flowers. Like lamb's ears, they are sun-lovers and are drought tolerant. They also attract many pollinators.

Queen of the Prairie



Several Queen of the Prairie plants create a striking backdrop to the yellow daylily border at the Millbrook Community garden (photo by author) and close-up of the amazing flower head from a spectacular Port Hope garden (photo credit Don Pritchard)

One cannot say this striking native plant is 'boring'. *Filipendula rubra*, commonly called "queen of the prairie" is a North American native perennial. This plant in the Rose family (Rosaceae) is native to the northeastern and central United States and parts of southeastern Ontario.

The genus name comes from the Latin words *filum* meaning "a thread" and *pendulus* meaning "hanging" because the root tubers hang together with threads. Rubra means 'red' although the blooms are actually hot pink.

And queenly it is, because when happy it can reach heights from 1.2 to 2.4 metres (4 to 8 feet) or taller with a spread of 90 to 120 cm (3 to 4 feet). It enjoys swampy and wet areas preferring constantly, wet, moist, fertile soils, but will also thrive in most garden beds. Here in the usually dry Moraine garden it fares well, but does not reach the extreme heights it would if in a continually moist soil. It tolerates drier soil in a shadier location – not constant direct sunlight. The leaves may scorch in full sun if the soil dries out.

It is terrific plant for the back of the border or as a central specimen plant because it is so tall and the flower plumes average about 30 cm (12 inches) long or longer. It features astilbe-like flowers above deeply cut, compound-pinnate, bright green leaves. One gardener recently commented the blooms look like 'cotton candy'. The big plus is although they grow quite tall, this sturdy plant usually does not need staking. They are not fragrant, have no nectar, but provide pollen for pollinators. However, some sites claim the flowers are fragrant smelling like lilacs which contradicts other sites. The ones in the Moraine garden are not fragrant.

White blooming relatives include *Filipendula ulmaria* commonly called 'queen of the meadow' or "meadowsweet" and *Filipendula vulgaris* commonly called 'dropwort'. Both are non-native shorter clump-forming perennials native to dry limestone grasslands in Europe and Asia.

Filipendula ulmaria can reach greater heights of 1 m to 1.2 m (3 to 4 feet) and bears white flowers, leaves similar to 'queen of the prairie' and blooms the same time as the native plant. The white flowers are fragrant and the mature leaves smell of oil of wintergreen when crushed. *Filipendula vulgaris* is a much smaller plant typically grow only .6 to 1 m (2 to 3 feet tall) with ferny compound leaves and produces white fragrant blooms in the spring/early summer. These European perennials are more tolerant of drought.

Filipendulas can be easily propagated by dividing clumps in the spring and have been offered at past Millbrook garden club plant sales. They can self-seed and form large colonies under optimum growing conditions. In parts of the United States the European filipendulas are considered to be invasive.

If you have any tips, photos, garden stories, questions or information you wish to share or topics you would like covered - please contact our Communications Coordinator.