

REAL *update*

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL)

A P R I L 2025

Beware of Invasive Plants in Your Garden

Inside this issue:

<i>Invasive Plants in the Garden (cont'd)</i>	2
<i>REAL Deal by the Numbers</i>	3
<i>Rain Barrel and Native Plant Sale June 7</i>	4
<i>Greening Your Easter Celebration</i>	5
<i>Monarch Garden Seeds Available</i>	
<i>REAL Deal News</i>	6
<i>Event Dates to Keep in Mind</i>	6
<i>In REAL Life</i>	7
<i>Pitch In and Shoreline Cleanups</i>	8

Gardeners beware! Most plants are a great addition to a garden and are not a problem. But there are plants out there that are considered invasive and should be avoided and removed if you already have them. They can spread quickly, out-compete native species and alter local environmental conditions. When they out-compete native species, they cause the loss of food for birds, pollinators and other animals. Some plants, such as garlic mustard can affect the soil in a way that is detrimental to trees. Not all varieties of a plant may be invasive, so it may take some research to see what you have.

“An invasive plant is an alien species whose introduction or spread negatively impacts native biodiversity, the economy and/or society, including human health.” (Ontario Invasive Plants Council). Outside of your garden, an invasive plant can affect range-lands, forests, recreation, water quality and quantity, as well as ecosystems.

“A native plant is simply a plant that occurs naturally or has existed for many years in an area and is connected in an ecological sense to other plants and animals found there. This vegetation may also be referred to as indigenous.” (Ontario Invasive Plant Council)

You have likely heard about invasive species like strangling dog vine, garlic mustard, giant hogweed and common reed.

A few plants you may be surprised to learn are considered invasive are: goutweed, creeping bellflower, periwinkle, lily of the valley, bugleweed and English ivy.

If you find you have an invasive plant in your garden, prevent it's spread. Find out how best to remove it and the best time of year to remove it. Do not dump it in natural areas. Do not dispose of the plant material in your compost, either, as the plants can still spread seed, grow roots, and regenerate there.



Gout Weed, also known as snow on the mountain or Bishop's weed, is a very common shade tolerant groundcover. It reproduces by seed and underground rhizomes, and is so aggressive it is considered an invasive plant.



Invasive Plants in the Garden (continued)

Put the invasive plant matter in a garbage bag, leave the bag in the sun for five days, then put it out for garbage collection by your municipality.

A few other suggestions that will help prevent the spread of invasive plants:

- Do not relocate plants from your home to your cottage or vice versa.
- Be cautious about receiving plants from other people. Make sure an invasive plant has not hitched a ride with it.
- Do not give away or sell plants that are considered invasive.
- Do not transplant unknown plants.
- Stay on trails and keep pets leashed in natural areas.
- Volunteer at removal events in your area.

You may want to replace the invasive plants you have removed with non-invasive or native plants. Look for native plants grown from seed collected from your region. This will lead to healthier plants that are more resistant to heat, winterkill and frost damage, and are less susceptible to disease and insect problems. Note that REAL will have a variety of native plants available for sale at our June 7 Rain Barrel and Native Plant Fundraiser (see page 4).

The Ontario Invasive Plants Council has published “Grow Me Instead” guides which will help you identify invasive plants, and also suggest native and non native plants that you can plant instead. It is organized by categories: groundcovers, grasses, trees and shrubs, vines, ornamentals and aquatics. There are two guides, one for [Southern Ontario](#) and one for [Northern Ontario](#).

For example, the guide describes Japanese Knotweed, an ornamental species introduced from Asia. It is an aggressive plant with shoots and roots that can grow through asphalt and concrete, displacing native species and threatening habitats. So the guide suggests several native plants that have a similar look and could be planted instead: Red Osier Dogwood, Saskatoon Berry, and Common Elderberry.

If you live or cottage on a waterway, there is a whole list of invasive aquatic and shoreline plants you should be aware of, and boating and fishing practices that will minimize the spread of both plants and other animal life.

The Invasive Species Act of Ontario supports the prevention, early detection, response to and eradication of invasive species in Ontario. Some species are prohibited, such as Water Soldier, and some are restricted, for example, Dog-strangling Vine and Phragmites.

There is lots of information on invasive plants out there including the Invasive Species Centre, the Ontario Invasive Plant Council, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.



Japanese Knotweed and other knotweed species grow very quickly, becoming dense patches, and displacing native plant and animal species. New populations can form from very small root or stem fragments.

Dog-Strangling Vine forms dense mats, crowding out native plants and trees and are difficult to walk through. Monarch butterflies mistake it for milkweed, lay their eggs on it, and then the hatched eggs cannot feed and die.



Lily of the Valley spreads via underground rhizomes, and out completes native groundcovers. Try native plant Starry Solomon's Seal instead.

REAL Deal by the Numbers

Buyers	9568
Materials donated	45 tonnes
Ewaste collected	29 tonnes
Batteries	630 kg

**Top five donor municipalities (by weight)**

1. Smiths Falls
2. Rideau Lakes
3. DNE
4. Montague
5. Other

**Top five buyer municipalities (by weight)**

1. Smiths Falls
2. Other
3. Rideau Lakes
4. Perth
5. DNE

**Top sales departments (by revenue)**

1. Art and Collectibles (11.8%)
2. Décor (11.4%)
3. Housewares (10.5%)
4. Renovation (10.4%)
5. Furniture (9.8%)

**Top sales department (number of sales): Housewares (23.4%)****Sales Over the Week**

Wednesdays	22.6%
Thursdays	22.2%
Fridays	21.6%
Saturdays	33.9%

Volunteer Hours: 1949



REAL's financial year runs from February 1 to January 31. We appear to be reaching a plateau, as it was not our best year. Sales increased by about \$5,000 but we had hoped to do better than that. The total number of buyers has gone down marginally.

We diverted 45 tonnes of materials, which is a typical figure. Ewaste collected was up slightly to 29 tonnes, which is great as we earn money for that, as well as for scrap metal. We have a total for batteries collected also: 630 tonnes.

When we record the municipality a donor or buyer is from, we note anyone from outside of Leeds and Grenville as other (so Ottawa, Kingston, Kanata, out of province etc.)

The relative rankings of the municipalities by weights donated and purchased have not changed much, except that buyers from outside of Leeds and Grenville are moving up the list and are pretty much equal to Rideau Lakes now. Correspondingly, the proportion of our sales to people from outside Leeds and Grenville has increased from 12 to 13%.

Antiques and collectibles are doing well, and are now the top selling department at 11.8% (but not by much). There are many higher priced items in this vintage category, so they only account for 4.6% of our sales by quantity.

Saturdays are becoming an even bigger part of our week, with 34% of our sales happening then. This also corresponds to the day we see more new faces and people from outside of LL and G.

We also record the volunteer hours that go into running the store. The total for the year was 1949 hours. This does not include the hours put into REAL by Board members or those volunteering for other projects such as gardens, tree planting, displays, Pitch In and so on.



Native plants support local butterflies, bees and birds and are easy to care for!

Rain Barrel and Native Plant Sale

June 7th, 2025 10 am - 2 pm

Preorder and pay for barrels online at rainbarrel.ca/REALDeal for pickup June 7

Native plants from Natural Themes, Frankford

Mushroom compost sale by Trinity United Church

Please bring cash!

REAL Deal Store
85 William St. W. Smiths Falls
www.REALaction.ca

Made with PosterMyWall.com



Proceeds to REAL's Monarch Gardens

P.S. If you are anxious to get started in your garden and want a rain barrel right now, we do have some black rain barrels left over from last year. They are \$65. We'll give you the bag of parts when you come into the cash to pay. Feel free to call the store at 283-7999 to check availability. We are doing our sale later in the season this year so that the native plants will be further along in their development.

Greening Your Easter Celebration

Here are a few ideas for greening your Easter celebrations.

Serving the feast. Stay away from the disposables. Our store sells tablecloths and cloth napkins, if you are looking for those. We always have lots of plates, glassware, cutlery, serving bowls, trays etc that you might need.

The feast. Reduce your emphasis on meat, look for local and organic foods. Try to avoid food waste, and send some leftovers home with your guests if necessary.

Baskets. Avoid the plastic baskets if you aren't going to be able to keep them to use them again. Natural material baskets, including ones you already have are good. Bowls, buckets, gift bags will at least get used again. If you have the energy, you can make your own.

Egg Dying. Older children will get a kick out of making their own egg dyes with foods such as berries, coffee, carrots, spinach, purple cabbage, turmeric, and onion skins.

Easter Grass. No need to go with decorative plastic grass, there is shredded paper out there for purchase, or make your own by running tissue paper, or construction paper or junk mail through the shredder. Dried moss you buy in the crafts aisle looks nice too, or maybe wood shavings.

Easter Goodies. Look for local, organic or fair trade treats, or consider baking something special like decorated cookies or cupcakes, hot cross buns, truffles etc.

Hostess Gifts. A local edible product (maple syrup, mustard, cheese) is a thoughtful choice. Or a plant that will last or can be transplanted into the garden.

Entertainment. A special outing like a hike, bike ride, movie night, trip to a petting farm, museum or any other quality time pursuits like movie night, board game night or crafts are good alternatives to stuff.



Monarch Garden Seeds Available

This is what we have left from the seeds collected from the garden at the REAL Deal. They are on the REAL Deal cash counter for \$2.50 a package. For further description see our [February 2025 newsletter](#), page 3.

Purple Coneflower—*Echinacea purpurea*

False Blue Indigo—*Baptista*

Butterfly Weed—*Asclepius tuberosa*

Zinnia—State Fair Mixed

REAL Deal News

Spring has sprung so store donations are starting to pick up again. We are happy as bad weather is less likely to keep shoppers away. Sat. March 29 was the first time we have been closed for the entire day because of the weather. An unfortunate result of that storm was some flooding in the store, which kept us busy with the shop vacs. Thanks to Donna, Margot, Dave, Chester and Barb for dealing with the mess. We had had two smaller floods in March as well.

Promotions the past couple of months have included windows, large photo frames, unframed artistic prints, bowls and jewellery (a first for us). We featured Canadian things on our front table for a few weeks to show our patriotism.

Thanks to the Town of Smiths Falls for fixing one of the gate arms, so now both gate arms can be closed across the entrance.

We have had more interest lately from high school students looking to earn their community service hours, which is very helpful. Students can help inside the store or in the yard, typically Saturdays.

We continue to have some security issues inside and outside the store. It is very discouraging to have people stealing from our non profit organization. It is not fair to those donating, makes our store less viable, and is bad for staff and volunteer morale, among other things. We work hard to make this store work! It is unfortunate that the thoughtless actions of a few can waste so much effort. We sincerely appreciate the wonderful support we get from the vast majority of people, which likely includes you!



Dates to Keep in Mind

Saturday, Apr. 19 – Saturday, May 3

Pitch In Smiths Falls

Various locations

Tuesday, April 22, evening

Mississippi Mills Earth Day—several presentations including one on our Smiths Falls Mini Forest
Almonte Town Hall

Tuesday, April 22, evening, 7 p.m.

Rideau Roundtable AGM

via Zoom

Sunday, April 27, 10 am – 3 pm

Sustainable North Grenville Sustainability Fair and EV Show, North Grenville Municipal Centre, Kemptville

Saturday, Sat. May 3, 10 am—3 pm

3rd Annual EarthFest

Market Square, Beckwith St, Carleton Place

Saturday, May 3

Shoreline Cleanup Smiths Falls

Meet at Bascule Bridge 10 a.m., or Jasper Rd 1 p.m.

Saturday, May 10 and onward

TUC Mushroom Compost Fundraiser

REAL Deal Parking Lot

Saturday, June 7, 10 am – 2 pm

Rain Barrel and Native Plant Sale

REAL Deal Store, 85 William St. W.

Saturday, June 7

Rideau Paddlefest

Lower Reach Park

Sunday, June 8, 2 pm – 4 pm

Evergreen Dedication and Environmental

Awards Presentation, Legion Br 95, Smiths Falls

Wednesday, June 18, 6:30 p.m.

REAL Annual General Meeting

Tina Bye on Roundtable EcoLiteracy program
Location to be established

In REAL Life



Membership Renewal. It is never too late to renew or take out a REAL Membership. The simplest way to pay your fee is by e-transfer, but there are many other options described on our “Join” page. Individual memberships are \$15, family memberships are \$20 and students pay just \$5. With your support REAL can do even more for our community. If you are unsure of your membership status, or just want to update your address and phone number, email Karen at membership@REALaction.ca.



Pill Bottles and Milk Bags. We are no longer accepting pill bottles at the REAL Deal Store for recycling. The organization we directed them to, Earthhub Ottawa, does not want them anymore. We will be keeping some of the larger ones for packaging screws, nails, beads, buttons etc., but we have plenty, so please do not bring us any more pill bottles. We have learned, however, that Earthhub is now accepting milk bags once again, so we have passed a large quantity on that organization. A church in Greely is making sleeping mats with them.



Mini Forest or Pocket Forest. REAL has been working with the Town of Smiths Falls to find a suitable location for another mini forest or a pocket forest. Pocket forests are similar to mini forests. They are densely planted, diverse forests of native species but with a much smaller footprint, as little as 200 square feet. We might even plant two or three pocket forests to demonstrate the different compositions possible. Because they are so small, pocket forests may be an option for residential lots.



Donations from our Store. Usually we are on the receiving end of donations, but we do like to help other non-profit organizations if we can. We donated a typewriter to the Smiths Falls Legion for use in the student Public Speaking Contest. The Smiths Falls Community Band borrowed some skis and snowshoes to use on their 2024 Santa Claus Parade float. More recently the REAL Deal was also able to assist the Rideau Roundtable's new EcoLiteracy with the use of a projector, screen, display boards and photo developing equipment.



Community Garden. As of now we have several community garden plots on the REAL Deal site available to rent for the 2025 garden season. Cost is \$25. If interested, please contact Ginny as soon as possible: virginiaoffanello@gmail.com, or leave a message at the store.



Reducing Runoff. The RVCA has resources to help residents improve drainage and prevent erosion on their properties with techniques to slow, store or soak stormwater runoff before it reaches the water system. The RVCA has a new 50-page workbook, *The Property Owner's Guide to Reducing Runoff*, as well as fact sheets on the most common and cost-effective techniques: rain barrels, rain gardens, swales, permeable pavement and downspout redirection. Don't forget that REAL has inexpensive rain barrels at the store, and you can order other styles for June 7 pick up.

RIDEAU ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE

Box 1061
Smiths Falls ON
K7A 5A5
info@REALaction.ca

www.REALaction.ca

**REAL Deal Store &
Environment Centre**

85 William St. W.
Smiths Falls ON
613-283-7999

Open Wednesday
through Saturdays
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Ask about our
Tool Library**

For Home Energy Audits,
contact Alan Leonard at:
alanleonard9@gmail.com

Find us on
Facebook and
Instagram

Send contributions to the
July issue by June 15 to
dhicks11@cogeco.ca
or call Barb at (613) 283-9966

REAL people taking REAL action to protect our environment

PITCH IN SMITHS FALLS

**SAT. APR 19
TO SAT. MAY 3, 2025**

Work alone or as a group to pick
up litter. Bags at REAL Deal Store
starting Apr. 9. Submit followup
survey to be entered in a draw for
participation prizes.



SHORELINE CLEANUP SAT. MAY 3, 2025

Work as a group that day. Choose 10
a.m. at Bascule Bridge and/or 1 p.m. at
Jasper Rd boat launch. Pre-register at
PitchInSF@REALaction.ca. We'll bring
the bags!



**RIDEAU
ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION LEAGUE**

www.REALAction.ca

MORE DETAILS

PitchinSF@REALaction.ca
Cathryn (613) 283-9819

REAL Deal Store :
85 William St. W. SF
Wed - Sat 10 - 5
(613) 283-7999

REAL Facebook Page
#PitchInSF

Make a REAL Difference

Please return this form to:
REAL
Box 1061
Smiths Falls, ON
K7A 5A5

Or bring to
The REAL Deal

Make a Donation

☐ I would like to make
a donation of

\$ _____

A charitable receipt for
income tax purposes will
be issued. To donate by
credit card, go to
www.Canadahelps.org.

Volunteer

☐ I want to help

Become a Member

I would like to become a member

- ☐ Individual membership \$15
☐ Family membership \$20
☐ Student membership \$5
☐ Corporate membership \$50

Join our Email List

Use the green signup button on the
bottom of our homepage.

Contact Information

Name

Street/RR Address

Town, Province

Postal Code

Home Phone

Work Phone

Best time to reach me

Email address