



Percy W. Merry News

by Kim Pickering



The new executive of the School Council/Home & School for the 2001/2002 school year is: Chair: Karen Kutyniec; Vice: Kelly Baker; Secretary: Ruth Rae-Hunt; Member: Kim Pickering; Member: Penny Patterson; Treasurer: Julia Snow; Community Rep: Debi Turnball.

The new dress code policy has

been developed with input from staff, the parent council and community members. Statement of Principal: To provide a dress code policy that emphasizes safety, civility, self-worth and self-discipline, cleanliness and hygiene. The Learning environment: The dress code must meet the needs of the learning environment: comfortable

to wear, allow the child to focus on school activities, no headwear in class or hallways (Religious headwear excepted), no strapless or halter tops, or clothing that exposes the midriff or chest, no visible undergarments, appropriate footwear for outdoor and indoor activities.

The Minnow Book Fair was held in Room 8 from October 17 to 19. The many volunteers and the support of the Percy Merry families made this a big success.

The Percy Merry Home & School catered a luncheon that was put on at Terra Greenhouses for the Canadian Greenhouse Growers Association Tour. This fundraiser raised \$785.35.


The school cheese and poinsettia fundraisers are taking place. All money raised will go towards running school programs.

On November 9, the Remembrance Day assembly was held at Percy Merry. Every student was given a red or white tulip to

plant. These tulips symbolized love and peace.

The Reading Buddy Program has started. Each Grade 5/6 student is matched up with a JK/SK student and they read together and work on activities together.

Upcoming Events: The Annual Family Craft Night is planned for Wednesday, December 12, 5:45 to 8 p.m. The Annual Christmas Turkey Dinner is planned for Wednesday, December 19.



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Givin' you the dirt

by Sean James
The Compass

Winter is upon us

What does a gardener write about in December? The answer is obvious... Poinsettias and Christmas Cactus. Not this landscaper! I have very bad luck with houseplants and generally, they hate me. I do have a few tricks up my sleeves though. I know I'm a bit eccentric but I think the following stuff is pretty neat!

Biological controls. These are good predatory bugs, roughly speaking, which eat bad bugs. Now why would you want to bring MORE bugs into your house? (Sing...I know an old lady who swallowed a fly...) Firstly, you'll never see most of them. They tend to be very small and inconspicuous. Secondly, when the pest is gone, the predator bugs die off. Finally, biological controls are a much safer and more effective option than chemical controls. Let's work through some of the problems and solutions.

Pardon the technical terms. Often there are no common or English names for the predator insects. If you have whitefly, those annoying white specs which fly up when you jiggle the plant there is an interesting solution. There's a very small wasp, (don't worry ... it cannot sting,) by the name of Encarsia formosa. Encarsia parasitizes the eggs of the whitefly killing them. In fact, you buy them as infected whitefly eggs on small cards and hang them on your plants. They worked very well when we used them at the Milton Library. A reminder: when the

whitefly are gone, the wasps are gone. Easy.

Mealybug can be next to impossible to control. They appear as small bits of cotton in the heart of the plant, often where the leaf meets the stem. The best non-biological method of control is dabbing them with a Q-tip and rubbing alcohol. The biological control is a black ladybug from Australia called Cryptolemus that only feeds on mealybug. You purchase them as an adult and release them near the infected plant.

If your leaves are turning gray, search for very tiny whitish spots on the leaves and webs where the leaves meet the stems and where leaves curl over. You may have Two-spotted Spidermite. Mites are very difficult to control. You can order predatory mites that are very effective at cleaning up the problem. Most types of biological controls come with clear instructions and are very easy to apply. You'll need a magnifying glass to identify them for sure. Try blowing on them softly to make them move around so you can see them more easily.

There are even predators you can buy for outdoor pests such as Cedar Leaf Miner, Whitegrub, Aphids and Scale. You can also encourage larger predators to your garden. A clay toad house will shelter toads, which eat insects and even slugs. A bat house may provide some control for mosquitoes. Be patient. It takes time to get a guest in your hotel.

If you're not sure what pest

you have, there are traps you can buy to help you identify them and you may even need a magnifying glass. Books and the internet are also useful. Sometimes the business that sells the predator can answer your questions.

Biological controls are becoming more popular. Occasionally, you can find them at your local garden center. Plant Products is a company that offers a variety of predators. Natural Insect Control (905-382-2904 or e-mail nic@niagara.com) is my favorite with very knowledgeable staff. Check out www.naturalinsectcontrol.com.

Try solving one problem at a time. I figure if I can handle it, anyone can. After all, it's usually just a matter of hanging cards or opening vials. Don't be afraid. Think of how much better it is for the environment.

Tip of the Month

You went to the market and picked up those beautiful Chrysanthemums. What lovely colours and forms. The labels even read "hardy" so you'll be able to enjoy them year after year. Well... to get those lovely shades and forms the plant breeders crossed our hardy mums with showy Asian varieties. Unfortunately, this sacrificed much of the plants hardiness so they don't survive the winter. The label lied! There's still hope. Now that all chance of growth is finished for this year, go out and cut the plant to the ground and cover it with straw, leaves, or even soil. Do your hybrid tea roses now also by cutting them to knee height then mulching them. Cocoa mulch, soil or the nifty Styrofoam "Rose Hut" all work well. The rose huts are my favorite and most reliable. You'll do your fine pruning of roses next April.

Christmas is Coming!







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