

Wrap yourself in the flag

There has been a commercial playing on the radio lately that has caught my attention.

It didn't only catch my attention, it bugged me.

The scenario is a young kid talking to his mother about the July 1 weekend.

The mom blathers on—it's all about vacations, swimming, camping, barbecuing, parties, etc.

The kid interrupts his mom with, "But our history teacher says it's about celebrating the signing of the British North America Act on July 1, 1867, when the Dominion of Canada was created."

The floozy mom stops for a moment and says, "Oh yeah, that too," then continues prattling on about the neat things she can do July 1 weekend.

The commercial is meant to be funny (and to sell camping, barbecue and swimming gear) but unfortunately, I think it hits too close to the mark.

July 1 is all about Canada, about the forming of the Dominion of Canada (I know, an outdated term, but still significant) and too often I think Canadians fail to think about that fact enough.

Why we must wait until July 1 to express this patriotism? Why don't we show our flag all year round? Do we take our patriotism for granted?

Our American neighbours can show us how it's done. They're so proud of their country and their flag, they go to the extreme, pledging allegiance to it in the classroom every day. And for July 4, Independence Day, they pull out all the stops.

But it seems straight-laced Canadians must wait until the time is right; until fashion dictates we can put up our beautiful Canadian flags for all to see, in preparation for Canada Day.

When I was a kid, Dominion Day (as it was called then) almost passed by without any recognition.

But as the years have passed, we've come to observe Canada Day in our conservative Canadian way, almost

Ted Brown



going hog-wild at our parties. (Okay, hog-wild for Canadians.)

Canada's a great country, and at times we don't appreciate the great life we enjoy. The United Nations voted Canada as the number one place in the world to live, and by the number of immigrants willing to take the gamble to settle here, we must have lots to offer.

My family has deep Canadian roots. My kids are eighth generation Canadians, all because my great, great, great grandfather, John Brown made the trip from the village of Coran, County Down in Northern Ireland, to fight with Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham in 1759.

I'm damn proud of that heritage.

But do we ever consider what our forefathers endured to settle here? Think about it. They sailed for weeks on uncertain seas, to fight for a country that was no more than a name in their homeland.

And they did it because they fell in love with a land called Canada.

It's still the same today, as immigrants take an equally traumatic step, pull up roots in some distant country, and land here to start a new life.

Canada is the best country to live in. We enjoy great social programs, a high standard of living and a low crime rate. We have diverse cultures, in a country steeped in history and tradition. We come and go as we please and have few justifiable complaints (except perhaps the gas prices...)

So observe the day, attend a Canada Day celebration, watch a parade, and join in the fun.

Attend a fireworks display, or the numerous activities at local parks around the country.

But above all, wrap yourself in the flag.

Because dammit, we are Canadians!

And best of all— we're proud of it!

(Ted Brown can be reached at tbrown@independentfreepress.com)

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The Elegant Maple

It has great leaves, wonderful texture, stunning spring and fall colour and fits in all gardens? This week's TERRA Trend focuses on the Japanese Maple!

Japanese maples come in a variety of different shapes, sizes, textures and colours and can be used in many different garden settings.

Plant these versatile beauties along the edge of a pond, in a container or as a small tree or shrub. Some Japanese Maples have large leaves others are as delicate as lace and their colour can vary from lime green to red and anywhere in between.

The one thing that all Japanese Maples have in common is that they prefer a moist well drained soil, a layer of mulch 2-3 inches thick to prevent drying out and a little bit of protection from the summer sun. Visit your garden centre today discover the wide range of Japanese Maple available.

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