



The Reader Rock Garden

www.ReaderRock.com



NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF READER ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

Reader Rock Ramblings

Blossoming Time

By Diane Dalkin

Blue sunny skies and Himalayan Blue Poppies ... summer is here! Blossoming time ... so much to see and do!!

But before you head on back to the garden, just a quick recap on what we've been up to:

In March, we attended Seedy Saturday at the Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Centre. April brought us to the Springbank Garden Club for a requested presentation; there we met a delightful group of enthusiastic gardeners; thanks for having us. Of course, we participated in the Calgary Horticultural Society's Garden Show at Spruce Meadows. The unusually mild and early spring made it ideal for all things gardening-related. It was also wonderful to reacquaint ourselves with you, our supporters, and to meet new friends. "Thank-you" to the many volunteers for making these events such a success.

On May 15th, our Annual General Meeting was held, with the election of two new Board members. We whole-heartedly welcome, *Liz Lunney*, who took on the position of Treasurer and *Leah Gayle*, who will continue the Researcher role. Thanks for coming on-board!

We are also very fortunate to have *Jacob Gryzenhout*, our new Webmaster, who recently completed a full re-vamp of our entire website. (Many thanks for all your diligent efforts Jacob!) Please take a moment to explore the new website and let us know what you think. Our email address remains unchanged at Info@ReaderRock.com; we look forward to your feedback.

Just recently, we were represented at the popular 4th Street Lilac Festival, handing out fliers and providing info about the Garden. Thank-you to our own *Susan Gryzenhout* and *Bob Lang* from the Cliff Bungalow Mission Community Association for helping us to profile the Garden to the public. The spectacular sunny skies brought out record crowds partaking in the merriment.

Back at the Garden ...

This year our ...

- ◆ **Annual Garden Stroll** has been moved to a month earlier, Saturday, **June 18th, 1:00-3:00 pm**; this allows us to highlight a different growing month at the Garden. Also, unique to this year, we're very pleased to be part of the *National Garden Days* celebration, see the Garden Days website - gardendays.ca - to find the coast-to-coast activities happening over the Garden Days weekend



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We hope you'll join us for this special event or make the Garden a destination at your convenience.

It has been said that "*Gardens are a form of autobiography*"; this one has a rich story to share with you.

See you soon and stay safe!

FoRRGS Team

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Water at Reader Rock Garden.

By Marilyn Mayall

Of the many attractions at Reader, the tumbling waterfall and stream are amongst the most photographed at the Gardens. Generations of bridal parties have celebrated their special occasion with photos taken on the Arts and Crafts-style bridge at the top of the naturalistic (but man-made) water run.



In Reader's day the water that ran down the channels of stone irrigated the rest of the garden, but during the restoration a recirculating pump was installed to help conserve water. Today, ten years after the re-opening of Reader, some repair work is necessary to improve pump function and water retention of the water course. Iqbal Hassan (City of Calgary Parks Senior Water Management Development Coordinator) indicated that the whole course will be sealed and the pump replaced. He was keenly aware of the challenges which the work presents: not only do the technical issues need to be addressed, but care needs to be taken to protect and preserve plants and the historical aspects of the Garden.

Many visitors to the waterfall are delighted by the cheerful and early marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris* Flore Plena) brightening the margins of the upper pond. Not a member of the marigold family (*Tagetes*) at all, the native *Caltha* is a member of the Buttercup family – obvious when you think of the glossy foliage and flowers and its need for a moist environment. I spent a happy hour or so distracting myself with the history of the common name (could be a reference to Mary's gold as the *Caltha* were early offerings to the Virgin Mary) and its many synonyms.....May Blobs, Molly Blobs, Kingcup and Cowslip (now that could

be really confusing !).

The double form – Flore Plena – (or Pleno...there seems to some confusion about the spelling) has been cultivated since the 17th Century, but in more recent times it has been the recipient of an RHS Award of Garden Merit.

Cultivation requirements of *Caltha* are relatively straightforward, the main challenge in Calgary being to provide it with a moist/wet environment. It is relatively disease free and is said to be deer resistant. Hardy to Zone 3 and it needs a rich soil. It will bloom in the shade which makes it a good choice for shady areas needing a colour boost.



I am hoping to see a return of *Sagittaria latifolia*, the Broadleaf Arrowhead in the upper pond. This native to Southern Canada (and into the USA) makes a



statement in a pond setting -growing between 30cm and 120cm tall. As the common name suggests, the tall leaves are shaped like an arrowhead. Its inflorescence of fragrant white flowers is arranged in threes around the stem with the male flowers (distinguishable by their yellow stamens)

generally occurring at the top of the raceme and the female flowers (distinguishable by their green carpels) generally occurring at the lower part of the inflorescence.

Like the Marsh Marigold, the Arrowhead is known by many common names....Duck Potato, Indian Potato and Wapato. These common names reference some of the characteristics and history of the plant. The edible tubers were extensively used by indigenous people; the tubers can be eaten raw, cooked or can be ground into a flour. The taste is said to be similar to potatoes or chestnuts. While the tubers are not generally eaten by ducks as they are buried too

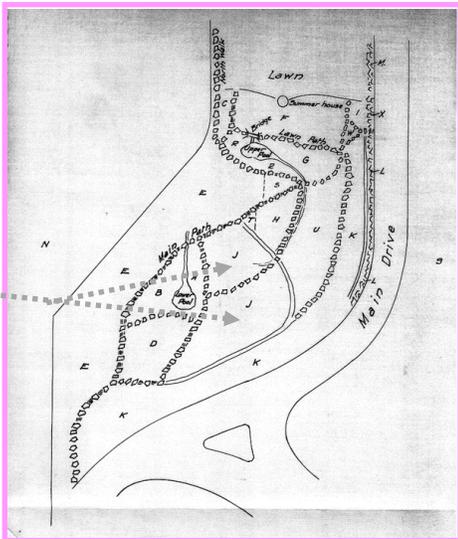
deep for ducks to access easily, the seeds are eaten by ducks. Beavers will eat the whole plant including the tubers.

Tubers can be planted approximately 15cm deep and, like many pond plants, Broadleaf Arrowhead prefers little or no current. One reference suggested that plants should be fertilized with manure, but I do wonder what that might do to water quality.

Broadleaf Arrowhead is not susceptible to many diseases, though spider mites and aphids are said to enjoy them.

An article about water in the Gardens would not be complete without some reference to Reader's Bog Garden. Many of us have heard the stories about the Bog Garden

being inadvertently created by leaving a hose turned on overnight. It was situated in **Bed J** but was one of the very early casualties of the cutbacks which plagued the Gardens in the 70s and beyond. The area was



grassed over and was not part of the restoration program in 2004-2006. Unfortunately, no photos appear to remain of the bog garden. However, looking over Reader's list of plants for Bed J, I note that most are not water-loving, so the reality of the Bog garden occupies a somewhat mythical status in my mind.

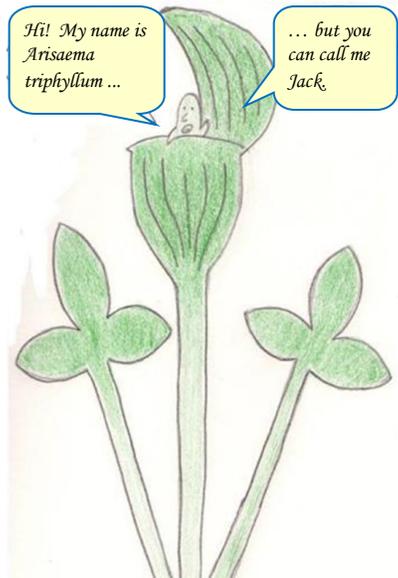


An exception to this is *Arisaema triphyllum*

(commonly known by a wide variety of names such as:

Jack-in-the-pulpit, American wake robin, Indian Turnip, Bog Onion or Brown Dragon). Although the common names of turnip and onion imply edibility, the corms require

cooking. Raw corms are poisonous. The “wake robin”, I assume references its early flowering time. Both the flower and the fruit (which appears only on mature plants) are showy. Jack is the spadix, i.e. the flowering component of the plant. Tiny green to purple flowers appear along the spadix and, like the Broadleaf Arrowhead, female flowers are found at the lower part of the spadix and male flowers on the upper part. The sheath-like spathe is the pulpit, the inside of which is striped purple and greenish-white.



This North American native is found in the woods of Eastern North America...its traditional range stopping abruptly, west of Manitoba. It is often found in conditions similar to *Trillium grandiflora* (which does consistently reappear at Reader). It likes a fertile soil, rich in organic matter and consistent moisture. It does not thrive in clay. This exotic is more attractive than its potted relative, the arum lily, which is sold at this time of the year in most garden centres. I've added it to my list of tantalizing plants with which Calgary gardeners love to challenge themselves. In conversation with Rod Shaver of Rundlewood Gardens, he mentioned that he has had more success with *A. amurense* than with *A. triphyllum*—something to keep in mind if you take up the challenge of growing Arisaema in Calgary. I'll certainly be on the lookout this Fall for corms. After all, we are Zone 4 these days.

As always, my thanks to the many folks who helped with this article:

To David Matthews for his suggestion to include *Caltha* in the article and his background notes on water loving plants.

To Janet Washburn for her always insightful knowledge of all things Reader and for the map of the Gardens.

To Michelle Reid for her helpful comments about the bog garden.

To Iqbal Hassan for information about the work to be done this year on the water feature.





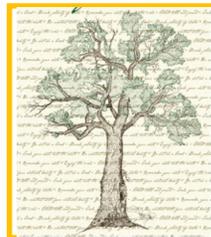
We're excited to unveil our new website ...

Same location
www.ReaderRock.com

But a new look & set-up.

All former data is retained, but we'll be adding further enhancements for your reading pleasure.

Making it THE resource for all things related to Reader Rock Garden.



Mark your calendars. Remember ...

◆ **June 18, 2016** (Saturday)—Join us at the FoRRGS **Annual Garden Stroll** when we welcome the public to the Garden, **1:00-3:00 pm**, onsite at Reader Rock Garden. This year we're pleased to be part of the *celebration with National Garden Days*:

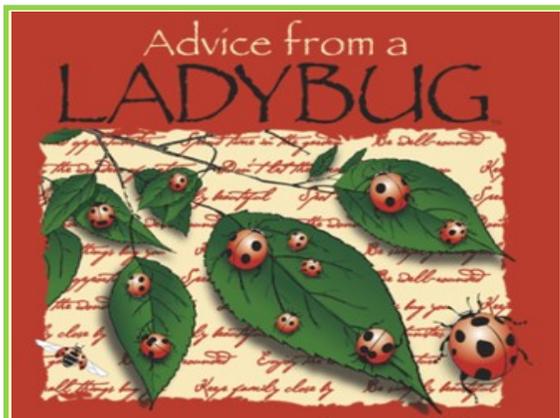
◆ Come by and check out this fun-filled afternoon:

- ◆ Free event & parking (across from Erlton C-train)
- ◆ Knowledgeable volunteers onsite to answer your questions
- ◆ Used **Book Sale**, downstairs in the Potato Room
- ◆ **Plein air painters** from the *Calgary Sketch Club* displaying their creative art
- ◆ **Draw prizes**
- ◆ Membership sales.



Garden Days
Les Journées du Jardin
Official Activity

See you there!



Spot new opportunities * Spend time in your garden
* Be well-rounded * Enjoy the wonders of nature
* Don't let the small things bug you * Keep family close by * Be simply beautiful and beneficial !!



The Calgary Rock and Alpine Garden Society (CRAGS)

2nd Thursday of each month
(Jan-June and Sept-Nov)

Lakeview Community Association Hall

6110 34th Street SW.

6:30 pm Social & Refreshments

7:00 pm Q&A

7:30 pm Presentation

◆ **Thursday, Sept. 15, 2016**

Speaker: Mike Kintgen
Senior Horticulturalist Denver
Topic: Alpines in Patagonia

See: www.crag.ca/events



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