

The Reader Rock Garden

www.ReaderRock.com



Spring Tidings By Diane Dalkin

Ok, ... I'm not going to lament about all the heaps of snow and incessant cold temps that are still here. Yes, we're all winter-weary, but we just have to focus on better, warmer times to come, right? *Plus* ... there is some recent good news that should take priority ... On March 27th, the Government of Canada announced that Reader Rock Garden now holds the honor of **National Historic Designation**. The link to the original press release is on our website, yet such noteworthy developments deserve added attention! Mr. Reader's extended families in Ontario and BC were elated to hear this news and expressed heartfelt appreciation. David Peacock, Reader's great grandson reminisced:

"I immediately thought of my father, the late Bill Peacock (grandson of William Reader); and of my father's stories of living with, and carefully collecting flowers and seed specimens while on hikes with 'Granddaddy Reader'. My father had tremendous respect for this pioneering Parks Superintendent and I can imagine the immense pride Bill Peacock would be feeling upon this wonderful recognition of Canadian heritage."

We should all be grateful to have this significant, special public place in our midst. Perhaps this ought to be the year to visit or re-discover **Reader Rock Garden**. Come by the Garden at your convenience, drop by our planned events (below) and check-out our website for what's in-store:

- ◇ **April 14 & 15** - We'll be at the **Calgary Horticultural Society's Garden Show** at Spruce Meadows. Look for our booth and pop in to say "Hello", support our initiatives and become a member, or simply enter your name for a generous draw prizes. This year, we'll also have a plant sale!
- ◇ **May 5th** - (Saturday) **Jane's Walk**, 11:00 am—noon, in conjunction with the Calgary Foundation
- ◇ **May 6th** - (Sunday) **Annual General Meeting**, held at Reader's Garden Café, lower classroom a.k.a. Potato Room, noon–2:00 pm. Meet the team in-person and find out what we've been up to. All welcomed.
- ◇ **June 10th** - (Sunday) **Annual Garden Stroll**, Our tour guides will be stationed throughout the Garden to answer all your questions and provide insights, 1:00-3:00 pm. Expect to have fun and check-out the silent auction, plant sale, prizes, book sale, entertainment, light refreshments, botanical artists and lots more!

Besides the above, please note that **Reader's Garden Café** is re-opening **April 25th**. New this year are several High Teas planned throughout the season. Dust off your best finery (dress to impress) and treat yourself, family & friends to one of these posh events. Should be grand!



NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF READER ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

Reader Rock Ramblings

Inside this Issue

Spring Tidings	1
A Picture is Worth A Thousand Words	2 & 3
Announcements	4

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A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

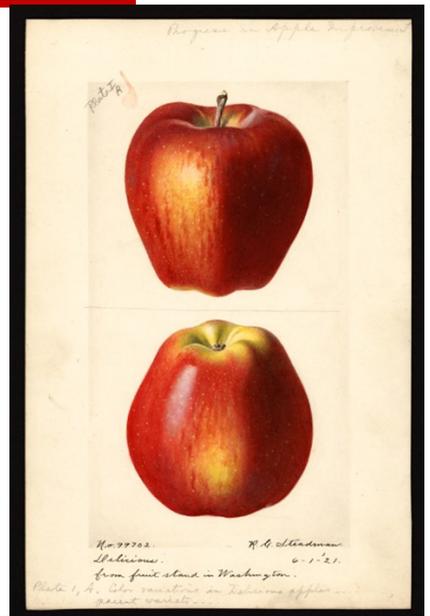
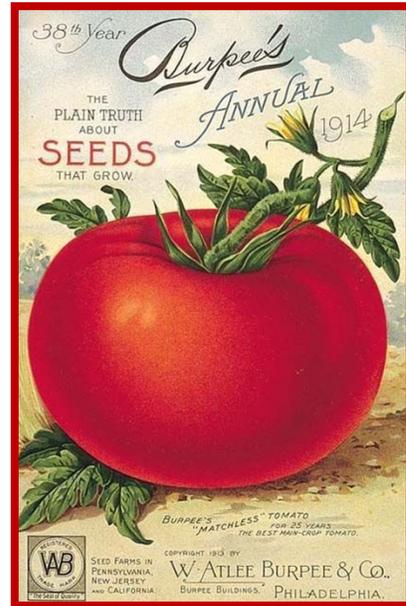
By Marilyn Mayall

This article celebrates the *art of the plant* in its many and varied forms.

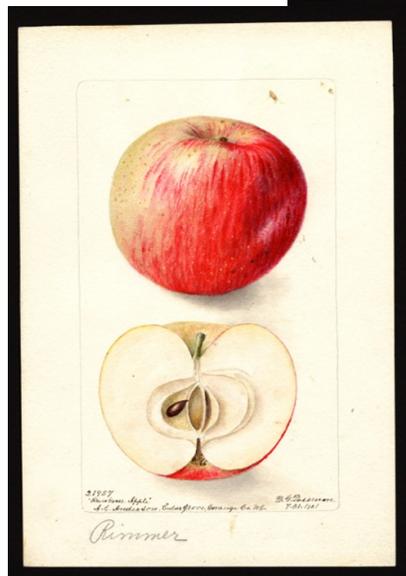
During the late 19th and early 20th centuries it was common practice to illustrate seed packets and catalogues with artist drawn renditions of the products that could be expected when the contents were grown.

Some of the packages were undoubtedly idealized, but nonetheless they are generally botanically accurate of their depiction leaves, flowers and fruit.

Mr. Reader would have been very familiar with these types of seed packages and catalogues.



Red Delicious apple, painted by R. Steadman, 1921.



Rimmer apple, painted by D. Passmore, 1901.

Not only seed companies were interested in depicting plants. In the first decades of the 20th century the USDA employed artists to draw the vast variety of apples that were then currently available to growers. Sadly, many of these varieties no longer exist.

In medieval times the depiction of plant life was often suffused with the fantastical. Early manuscripts depicting the mandrake—a narcotic and hallucinogenic root of the *Mandragora* genus—show the root in the form of a human. This depiction was based on the fact that mandrake roots sometimes resembled (loosely) a human body, but the magical qualities of the root undoubtedly contributed to the extraordinary depictions of this plant. Elaborate rituals were necessary when harvesting the plant, which was said to scream when removed from the ground.



Yale Medical Library MS 18, f.49v. *Herbarium Apuleii and other works*. Lombardy, c.1400

Botanical illustration in medieval times was largely associated with the healing (or harmful) effects of plants. Prior to the development of the printing press, depictions of plants varied greatly in their accuracy.

By the late 1700s and 1800s the accurate botanical representation of fruits and vegetables had become an art form. Vilmorin’s fruit and vegetable illustrations show how far botanical illustration had come since the days of wood block prints and hand copied manuscripts.

Some botanical artists were supported by wealthy patrons. Redoute was first patronised by Marie Antoi-



Savoy Cabbage and Kidney Beans, Vilmorin, 1870

nette and he painted many specimens at Malmaison.

Later his patroness was Josephine, the first wife of Napoleon Bonaparte. Although justly famous for his roses, other works demonstrate his mastery of a wide range of botanical subjects.



Botanical art is currently enjoying a renaissance. This year there will be exhibitions in a number of countries around the world celebrating the art of the plant. Native plants are the focus of these exhibi-

tions. Ottawa will be host to the Canadian exhibition.

As well as this national exhibition, there will also be a number of local exhibitions.

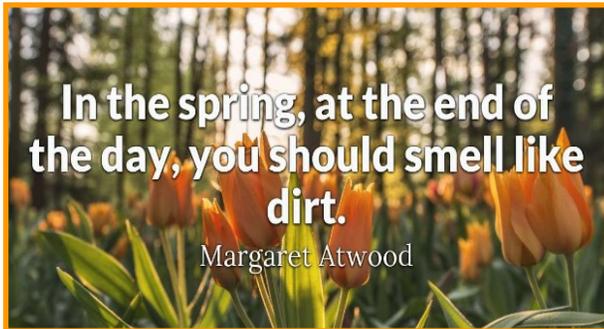
In Calgary, Loughheed House will hold an exhibition of small works featuring the botanical art of local artists between May 9th and June 10th.



And, some of these artists will be at our Annual Garden Stroll on June 10th too. Why not drop by to see modern examples of this very ancient art form?



*Spring has Sprung
Begin Anew!*



- Hope to see you at our upcoming events:**
- * **April 14th & 15th** - CHS Garden Show @ Spruce Meadows. Come visit us at our booth.
 - * **May 5th (Saturday)** - Jane's Walk 11:00 am-Noon
 - * **May 6th (Sunday)** - FoRRGS AGM - lower classroom @Reader's Garden Café Noon-2:00 pm
 - * **June 10th (Sunday)**- 1:00-3:00 pm Annual Garden Stroll @ the Garden,



ESCAPE FROM THE BUSY CITY
RETREAT TO CALGARY'S
HIDDEN GEM

LOCATED IN THE BEAUTIFULLY
RESTORED 1890S ROCK GARDEN
HISTORIC SITE - CORNER OF
20th AVENUE & ALBERTA TRLS

Coffee & Tea Specialties
Pastries, Sweets & Sundaes
Lunch Specials
Brunch

Café Re-Opening April 25th 2018

Open from Mid April to mid October
.....
Wednesday to Sunday
9:30 am to 3:00 pm
Monday, Tuesday Closed
.....
Weddings & Functions

Reader's
GARDEN CAFE

Reservations (403) 263-0210
readergardencafe@telus.net

The **Calgary Rock and Alpine Garden Society (CRAGS)**

- ◆ **Sunday April 22** - Propagation Methods Workshop
- ◆ **Thursday May 10** - Speaker Series on Western Cordillera Plants

More details on their website
www.crag.ca/events

Lakeview Community Association Hall
6110 - 34 Street SW