



# The Reader Rock Garden

[www.ReaderRock.com](http://www.ReaderRock.com)



## 2018 - So Many Gifts

By Diane M. Dalkin

One of this year's biggest gifts was the *labour of love* and the *earnest sweat equity* from the increased number of volunteers at the Garden. The featured article will offer more details about this *generosity of spirit*. But, as President of this amazing volunteer group, I have to smile with heartfelt gratitude for ALL these efforts! *Bravo* to both energetic teams & their leaders (new fresh initiatives), Grace's *Project 25* and Marilyn's *Master Gardener Grads (MGs)*, who gave back to their community in meaningful ways. They regularly supported the Head Gardener's work onsite, with hundreds of volunteer hours of work. Understandably, this three-acres garden is labor-intensive due to the hillside topography, the extensive rare plant material and maintaining the historical standards of this unique place. Fortunately, our volunteers were able to augment the City's task of keeping up the high bar, especially since the **National Historic Designation** was awarded this past Spring. Hopefully you haven't become tired of hearing about this development (another gift of sorts), since we've referenced it in every issue this year. Clearly, our excitement has not waned and we encourage you to share this news with your family, friends and visitors too. And of course, come by the Garden to see for yourself!

We also had the opportunity to share this message with City Council on September 12<sup>th</sup>. I had *five minutes* to present how FoRRGS aligns with the City's priority of a Healthy and Green City, how we make that happen (with City Parks' collaboration) and what we believe the City should invest more in. This was part of the 4-year budgetary planning, since the City is in the midst of a new planning cycle. Let's hope my points resonated with City Councillors and the City's budgets will align with future services delivery (necessary for the Garden) & the City's five priorities. Budget cuts are inevitable, but will they be reasonable? If you'd like to view the above presentation online, just email us for more details.

You may also be interested in knowing about other site improvements, including: the added bike racks @the lower parking lot and a small one up by the cedar greenhouse; new signage is in the works; some of the excessive Caraganas have been removed & native grasses will be planted in this area next season; plus, rock renovations have taken place throughout.

A productive, busy year indeed! *Many Thanks* to everyone's goodwill and passionate endeavours, these plentiful offerings and good works have benefited the Garden in so many ways. Noteworthy too are our Tour Guides, sharing the interesting garden narratives with such flair. The City Parks' team remains commendable as ever. And, of course, the Board's tireless contributions have to be recognized undoubtedly. As the saying goes ... **Team Work is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.** Good Work Everyone!

On that positive note, may I leave you with **BEST Wishes** for the upcoming Holiday Season! Stay warm & safe, in the company of family & friends. *See you in 2019!*

### Inside this Issue

So Many Gifts 	1
Three Cheers For Volunteers!	2 & 3
Announcements & Gratitude	4

President - Diane Dalkin  
 Vice-President - *Vacant*  
 Secretary - Lindsey Boida  
 Treasurer - Liz Lunney  
 Membership - Karen Hogan  
 Newsletter - Marilyn Mayall  
 Social Media & Website - Leora Cohen  
 Communications - John Percic  
 Directors - Heather Ashdown, Leah Gayle, Sue Gryzenhout,  
 Helen Li, Lindsay Orr, Grace Satre, Barb Smith  
 Past President - Ev Keddie



## Three Cheers For Volunteers!

By Marilyn Mayall

This past summer saw the initiation of two new projects at Reader Rock Garden (RRG) - "Project 25" and "MGs at RRG".

It has been some years since volunteers have worked in the Garden, and the tasks they performed in the past were quite different from the current initiatives. During the renovation of the gardens, volunteers (many of them CRAGS volunteers) helped clear beds for the eventual re-emergence of the Garden and later, volunteers worked in pairs to record what was in bloom in the Garden and serve as a resource to garden visitors.

"Project 25" is the result of collaboration between FoRRGS and City of Calgary Parks to care for the garden bed situated at the entrance from 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue. As one of the first beds that the public sees, this bed is built for high impact. FoRRGS members undertook to renovate, plant and maintain this showcase bed.



"MGs at RRG" was a collaborative initiative between City of Calgary Parks, Calgary Horticultural Society and FoRRGS. As part of their training, Master Gardeners (MGs) undertake to volunteer their time for horticultural projects and some chose to volunteer their time at RRG. Their assignment was the Switchback Bed...also one of the beds first seen by the public as they make their way up to the Garden gates. Tasks included maintenance and planting in this area.

From the perspective of the volunteers I spoke to (or who were gracious enough to send written responses to me) the experience was a resounding success and there is excitement about continuing the momentum next season. Apologies to those I did not contact...I plead the time constraints of a newsletter deadline as my excuse for not doing so. So, from the mouths of the volunteers.....

### *Why do folks volunteer their time?*

The answers to this question are as individual as the volunteers themselves, but some common themes emerged. Most of the volunteers in these projects have a history of volunteering their time in a staggering variety of ways. I am in awe of the richness of experience and energy that the volunteers represent.

Alexandra commented that "I was just raised that way." Her mother was a strong advocate of "giving back" and nurtured the belief that your time is something you can always share.

All of the volunteers exemplify a huge generosity of spirit in sharing their time and giving back to the community.

Grace took on the lead role of coordinating the "Project 25" group. She saw this as an opportunity to use her work life skills in a different setting. She felt strongly that her time needed to be invested in a project that would be valuable and that would make a difference. And it was also a personal challenge to bring the project to fruition.

And should all of this sound very serious, everyone commented that they had fun and felt refreshed after sessions in the Garden. Good humour and laughs and a sense of playfulness were very evident on Garden Thursdays. "It was just good fun" said Bruce.

Laura noted "It makes my life fuller." Liz also commented on the reciprocity of volunteering - "We got as much as we gave."

### *Why choose to volunteer in a garden?*

For some, this volunteer experience aligns with their horticultural interests. Sharon's main hobby is gardening so volunteering in a garden complements her interests. There were many comments about the camaraderie that developed in the group as a result of being with and talking to like-minded individuals. Richard commented on the fact that he met a group of people whom he would not normally have met.

Some volunteers were keenly aware of the therapeutic value of being in a garden space....perhaps summed up best by Alexandra. "When we interact with plants, we impact them and they impact us."

Nearly all the volunteers commented that they wanted experiences from which they could learn. Sharon feels that "if you are not learning three new things daily, you are not living." As a recent retiree, Richard felt he didn't know much about gardening, but that this would be the place to learn. "I was trading my time for their expertise" he commented.

Laura appreciates the "hands-on" aspect of gardening which balances the "mostly computer and brainiac stuff" which constitutes her other charity work for UniWater Education. She finds "pulling weeds is therapeutic for all the frustrations in my life". Sue showed great pride in the edging she completed with her lethal Japanese edger. Grace learned things that she could apply in her own garden.

But it wasn't all weeding...all of us appreciated the variety of activities we participated in.

Highest accolades were given to Daniel and his team. Without exception, volunteers voiced their appreciation of the Parks Team. "They made us feel welcome" was not only voiced by Bruce, but by all of the volunteers. Liz feels "there is no better way to appreciate a volunteer than to be included in the team." The inclusive attitude and the opportunities to learn from professionals were key components in the success that everyone felt. And they were such great teachers! Their willingness to answer questions was extraordinary.



Bob, Brenda, Richard, Bruce, Grace & Rose

### *Why did you choose Reader Rock Garden?*



Grace, Bruce, Rose, Brenda, Gabriela, Richard & Bob

Bruce has always been a fan of the Garden. He worked nearby and enjoyed the breaks he took in the Garden. He took his children to the Garden which they called "The Secret Garden" and so he felt it was a natural fit for him to volunteer at RRG.

For others, Reader Rock Garden was a discovery.....an oasis where "there is an infinite amount to learn and the esthetics of this place are like no where else". (Sharon)

For plant nerds Reader Rock Garden offers some unique opportunities. The plants that grow there are unusual. Liz enjoyed the experience of seeing so many different species....some thriving where they would not normally be planted. Bruce noted that this is a place for serious gardeners who like to see the unusual and enjoy the challenge of trying some of these species in their own gardens. Laurra loves the fact that there are varieties of plants not normally seen in Calgary gardens.

And others were enthralled by the history of the gardens and the vision of William Reader:

"As I got into it I began to appreciate Reader's passion and determination." (Grace)

Liz also loved the vision of Reader and the historical aspects of the Garden.

**☞ Did you have any "aha" moments?**

For one of the MGs the practical experience of working in the Garden was the physical embodiment of the theoretical learning she had just completed. Both are important and are different parts of the whole.

Further insights included a deeper understanding of the geology of Calgary and how different areas of Calgary exhibit different characteristics as well as how Calgary has changed from the beginnings of the Garden to the present time.

Sharon loved the amazement of a Garden visitor who had just discovered a huge pile of coyote scat. There's not just plants at Reader....there's a whole ecosystem that the Gardens support!

Grace's "aha" moments were shaped by the role she played. She is sure that the collaborative model she saw in action amongst the volunteer crew is, in fact, a more productive way to work than the competitive model often seen in corporate settings.

And finally....

**☞ Is there anything that needs to be changed to improve these initiatives?**

A number of volunteers would like to see a larger pool of folks who wish to participate.

Richard would like to see some more integration of the two groups.

Alexandra recognized that although the hook for some MGs was to attain their target hours, other MGs wish to continue in the

program and extend the time period of the program. Liz added that a clear description of the parameters may attract a larger pool of MGs.

The last word goes to Richard...."My only disappointment was with myself. I did my shift and didn't spend enough time enjoying the fruits of my labour. Next time I intend to spend more time strolling into the Garden after my shift.....just enjoying it and maybe having coffee with the other volunteers."

The focus of this edition is to *celebrate the work of the volunteers* who tried something new this past summer. From their accounts, it was a great success and we are grateful for their achievement.

I would be remiss not to mention that many others spend many hours contributing in different ways.

**So ... Three Cheers for Volunteers ...  
in whatever way you choose to contribute.**



**FoRRGS Honor Role  
& Special Thanks!!  
To Our Volunteers**

**Marilyn Mayall & the Master Gardeners:**  
*Liz Cole, Kowin Lai, Alexandra MacKinnon, Laurra Olmsted, Sue Van Millingen, Sharon Ogilvie*

**Grace Satre & Team Project 25:**  
*Susan Brims, Bruce Dunlop, Sharon Gratton, Brenda Lennox, Bob Lipsett, Rose McKenna Bell, Gabriela Ostendorfer, Shari Pakti, Barb Smith, Joann Tessier, Richard Young,*

**Thank-you from FoRRGS - for helping  
@Reader's this summer 2018!!!**



**FoRRGS Honor Role  
& Special Thanks!!  
To Our  
Generous Helpers@ the Stroll**

**Gabrielle Arrizza, Heather Ashdown, Susan Blackwood, Lindsey Boida, Leora Cohen, Erin Davies, Leah Gayle, Scott Gedak, Sharon Gratton, Sue Gryzenhout, Karen Hogan, Ev Keddie, Helen Li, Liz Lunney, Marilyn Mayall, David Morrison, Lindsay Orr, Doug Roberts, Grace Satre, Barb Smith, John Percic, Ann Van De Reep, Sue Van Millingen, Daniel Walker, Glynn Wright & the City Parks Team!**

**Thank-you for assisting with the Stroll  
This summer 2018!!!**

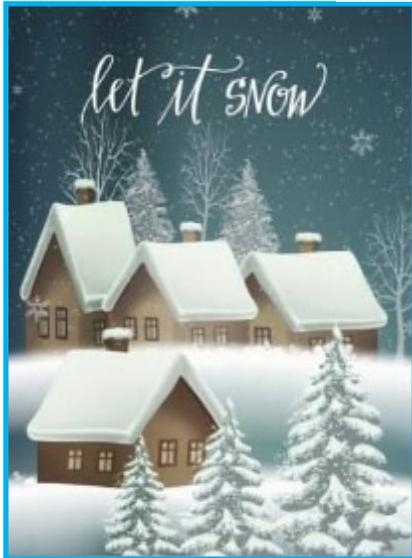




**FoRRGS Honor Role  
& Special Thanks!!  
To Our Tour Guides  
(& those in-training too):**

**Lindsey Boida, Susan Blackwood, Erin Davies,  
Scott Gedak, Sharon Gratton, Liz Lunney,  
Marilyn Mayall, David Morrison, Lindsay Orr,  
Jacqueline Pollard, & Glynn Wright**

*Thank-you for sharing  
@Reader's this summer 2018!!!*

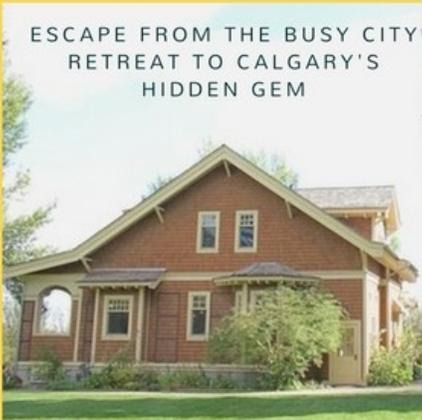


*Thank-you FoRRGS members & business affiliates  
for supporting us this year! Your contributions  
helped us with our continuing efforts at the Garden.  
With Heartfelt Gratitude!!*

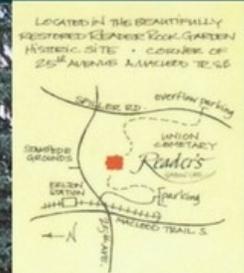
*from The FoRRGS Team*



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



LOCATED IN THE BEAUTIFULLY  
RESTORED EDWARDS ROCK GARDEN  
HISTORIC SITE - CONSISTING OF  
25+ ALPINE PLANTED TREES



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

Open from Mid April to mid October  
.....  
Wednesday to Sunday  
9:30 am to 3:00 pm

*Reader's*  
GARDEN CAFE

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

**Thursday, Jan 10, 2019  
Annual Potluck Supper and  
Newfoundland Report  
6:30 PM**

**Lakeview Community Association Hall  
6110 - 34 Street SW**

See their website for more  
details  
[www.crag.ca/events](http://www.crag.ca/events)



**Closed for the season, but private functions reservations are welcomed.**

Call 403-234-0065 or see the website: [www.readersgardencafe.ca](http://www.readersgardencafe.ca)