

The Reader Rock Garden

www.ReaderRock.com



NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF READER ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

Reader Rock Ramblings

President's Message

Lindsey Boida

Hello FoRRGS members & supporters!

I wanted to take some time to introduce myself as President (since May 2020) and the newest FoRRGS Board members so that you become familiar with the people who champion the events & initiatives around the Reader Rock Garden.

There are 5 new faces on the Board this year:

Bruce Dunlop - Bruce has been a tour guide & volunteer with the Society for a few years now but has now officially become a Director this year. He has a passion for roses (member of the Rose Society) leading to historical rose research. He also likes to directly partake in many other gardening tasks such as planting, weeding, supporting the germination, propagation, & seedlings for the plant sales, just to mention a few.

Lillian Kasa - Lillian is new to FoRRGS but has taken to gardening & perfecting her house plants over the last few years. Her diligence & organization are much appreciated as she steps into the Secretary role.

Julie Ma - Julie is new to FoRRGS as well with an affinity for plants and has dived right into the Social Media platforms. There is new content weekly including updates on the changing Covid restrictions, café menu suggestions, the missing Reader memorial plaque, and other interesting garden facts.

Fabian Patino - Over the last five years or so, vegetable gardening has grabbed Fabian's interest and has lured him into the gardening world. Learning about plants fascinates him and we are lucky to have him supporting Richard's hands-on volunteering group as well as becoming a Director-At-Large focused on Webmail.

Richard Young - Richard has been volunteering with the garden for a few years now focused on garden photography. He has worked closely with Daniel, the Head Gardener, creating informative plant ID cards for plant sales. This year he has become the Volunteer Gardener Lead for the hands-on group supporting seasonal garden activities.

As for me, I've always had an attraction to plants. Initially garden vegetables, likely due to my Ukrainian farming heritage, but over time the interest has grown to include flowers, medicinal plants, and now heritage gardens, which also touches on the civic duty as a Calgarian. A close friend introduced me to the Garden and I was blown away by the beauty, diversity & lushness as Calgary is known to be arid in the summer, but also the challenges that Chinooks bring. I initially joined FoRRGS in 2017 as an event volunteer, progressed to becoming a Tour Guide (2018), and then filled a couple of Board positions, Secretary (2018), VP (2019), & now President (2020). I'm excited to be taking on this new role & look forward to supporting the garden's conservation and upholding William Reader's vision. Please feel free to reach out to me directly if you any questions, ideas or suggestions for the Garden or for the Friends of Reader Rock Garden Society.



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FoRRGS Team

President - Lindsey Boida
Vice-President - *Vacant*
Treasurer - Liz Lunney
Membership - Karen Hogan
Secretary - Lillian Kasa
Directors - Bruce Dunlop, Leah Gayle, Susan Gryzenhout, Lindsay Orr, Fabian Patino, John Percic, Richard Young
Social Media - Julie Ma
Past President - Diane Dalkin

Old & New Roses at Reader's

By Diane Dalkin & Joan Altenhof

It's not surprising that roses are afforded majestic names from royalty, historically significant persons and noble pursuits. These fabulous plants have adorned gardens for centuries and many rituals, symbols, mythologies and legends have references to their beauty. Roses transcend cultural divides and geographic barriers. Large formal rose gardens were and are the hallmark of gardening excellence throughout the world. The sheer vast variety of colors, shapes, sizes and intoxicating scents surely appeals to everyone. Although some gardeners may be daunted by the prospect of growing roses, the local *Calgary Rose Society* can steer novices in the right direction in terms of what possible hardy varieties will thrive here and dispel myths. See their website at calgaryrosesociety.ca or pick up their resourceful book.

William Reader was also enthralled with roses and archival data suggests that he had ~ 80 types of roses on trial. Since he originally came from England, which is known for rose gardens, bringing a bit of his former roots back to his new homeland is understandable. The trick for him was to assess the strengths that nature provided here in Calgary and the challenging elements of sun, wind, rain, soil, frost and time.

Our former newsletter Editor and soon to be President of the Rose Society, *Joan Altenhof*, wrote about roses at Reader Rock Garden in our past 2012 Summer issue. Here is an excerpt from Joan's previous publication to provide a good contextual background for the current rose update:

Most of Reader's roses were Species roses or Hybrid Rugosas. The rose family, Rosaceae, comprises many genera. The group of true roses is known as the genus Rosa, which has about 140 species; 95 of Asian origin, 18 from North American and the remainder from Europe and Northwest Africa.

Species roses are those roses that appear in nature. They are the species of the genus Rosa found growing naturally throughout the Northern Hemisphere. These roses are an enormously varied group of plants that are very vigorous, thrive on minimal maintenance, and are extremely hardy and disease-resistant. Species roses range in size from ground cover types to very large upright growers and climbers. Their flowers can be very large and single or small and in clusters. Colors range from white to pink to crimson. Species roses often have relatively simple, 5-petaled flowers followed by very colorful hips. Almost all are once-blooming in early summer. Perhaps the most familiar species is Rosa rugosa because of its superior hardiness, disease resistance, and extremely easy maintenance. The species has been widely hybridized. Species roses may not be for everyone but some rose enthusiasts like to include them into their collection for historical purposes as well as ease of maintenance.

Hybrid Rugosas are large shrub roses and are related to the species R. rugosa. The use of rugosa roses in breeding programs resulted in a rose with exceptional cold tolerance and disease resistance, handsomely wrinkled foliage of the rugosa parents, but with a wider variety of flower form and color and a plant habit that ranges from compact shrubs to vigorous climbers.

Rugosas make perhaps the ideal low-maintenance landscape rose. In fact, applying fungicides often results in very severe leaf injury and loss. Rugosa roses can tolerate drier conditions without much reduction in bloom and can be grown in light shade. Add to this their ability to produce an exceptional display of hips in the fall and attractive fall color and you have a rose that most home gardeners welcome. Some of our newer rugosa hybrids are the Morden and Explorer series developed by Agriculture Canada. One of the known species roses in Reader's garden was Rosa foetida or 'Austrian Briar'. This shrub can grow to a height of 1.5 m (5 ft). Its dark green stems are overlaid with mahogany-brown covered with many large, light-green prickles. The foliage is smooth and bright deep green with five to nine leaflets. The single yellow flowers are produced on short stalks in early summer and have an unpleasant scent. Rosa foetida bicolor is a popular sport of Rosa foetida. This rose is similar to Rosa foetida in all respects except for the colour of its flowers which are bright orange-red. All R. foetida roses are susceptible to black spot, which is partly responsible for many Modern Roses being subject to this disease; it was R. f. Persiana or 'Persian Yellow' that was used as a pollen parent by French breeder Pernet-Ducher in the late nineteenth century to breed the first yellow and orange large flowered Rose called 'Soleil d'Or'. That was a significant event, which sadly had its downside because black spot is an inherent affliction of many of its progeny even to this day. Among the better-known Hybrid Rugosa roses in the Reader Rock Garden are 'Blanc double de Coubert', and 'Schneezweg'. 'Blanc Double de Coubert' is a repeat flowering hybrid Rugosa that was introduced in 1892. It bears clusters of large fragrant semi-double white flowers with crumpled petals. This rose sometimes produces orange-scarlet hips. The foliage is light green and very rugose. The tall arching canes are armed with prickles. This rose can grow to 120 to 215 cm (4-7 ft) tall. 'Schneezweg' another one of Reader's Hybrid Rugosas that was introduced in 1912. It produces snow white, semi-double flowers with golden stamens. It blooms all season long in small clusters of 3-10 blooms on strong stems. The foliage is glossy and rugose and the bush can grow to 1 m (3ft) in height. If the dead blooms are not removed during the growing season 'Schneezweg' produces large orange hips.

Once again, the Upper Garden (aka Nana's) is one of the special places to take in these lovely blooms. Recently, Head Gardener, Daniel, re-introduced the following to Nana's garden:

Harrison's Yellow, Rosa 'Fimbriata', Rosa 'Austrian Copper', Rosa 'Sarah Van Fleet', & Rosa 'Delicata' rugosa.



These identification photos from the internet serve to illustrate what you might expect to see in the future, once the roses mature at Reader's.



Checking out their exquisite fragrance is your task.



Next year the plan is to procure others, more Rosa ‘Fimbriata’ and Rosa ‘Souvenir de Philemon Cochet’. These will be going in the newly renovation beds along the Main Lawn. As well, hopefully more roses from the original plant list will come from vendors in the US and Canada. Sounds promising & exciting indeed; the “queen of flowers” is always welcomed!



Special Thanks to *Daniel Walker* – City of Calgary Parks, Head Gardener @ Reader Rock Garden for sharing his insights.

A Recent Discovery at Reader’s

By *Diane Dalkin*

Given that this Garden has been around for 100+years, sometimes an old hidden treasure reveals itself – and I’m not talking about the gardeners onsite (tee hee). This summer, Daniel, the Head Gardener uncovered a “lead plant tag” with the inscription “*Lychnis miqueliana*” (photo below). The tag was found in the High Rockery (Bed 17) under some *Primula veris* along the steps. It had slight remnants of whitewash paint to accentuate the lettering. How amazing that this tag lay undisturbed for so many decades! Such a cool connection to the garden’s past legacy and the workers onsite.



Additionally, this plant tag identified a *Campion* (Catchfly). However, *Lychnis* species are quite variable. The one in question may have been an Alpine form since it was located in the High Rockery. Usually, the flowers are simple 5-petaled structures & brightly colored; this is what the flower may have looked like. *Lychnis miqueliana* is the only species having entire petals while lacking appendages on the petals. All other traits are the same as other *Lychnis* species including five petals, fruit capsules, five stigmas, 10 anthers, connate sepals, etc.



Field Trip

By Diane Dalkin

FoRRGS recently took a tour of *The Botanical Gardens of Silver Springs* (BGSS) in NW Calgary. Duncan, Teresa & David provided an in-depth view of the treasures that lie within. It's always a pleasure to connect with kindred spirits that are passionate gardeners! In the future, we're hoping to share some resources and experiences in order to support each other's goals between the two gardens, cross-pollinate if you will.



Here are some of the discoveries ... The BGSS was wholly created and is maintained by community volunteers. This large garden (~40,000 sq. ft) boasts 19 distinct areas, including a labyrinth, fruit grove, water-wise low H2O, alpine, rose, peony areas, just to mention a few of the specialties. There are far too many fabulous plants to mention them all here; but the espalier fruit trees and statuesque sunflowers were truly noteworthy at the time of our visit! Of course, this would definitely change with the seasons, yet there seems to be a large variety of things to see. So, you shouldn't be disappointed by a visit at any time. The BGSS team offers private garden tours for a nominal fee or you can simply drop by to this unique place in-person (open to the public year-round) or online. Their website provides all the exciting details; see: <https://www.bgss.ca/> or email them at Info@bgss.ca

This hidden, one-of-a-kind garden is located at 37 Silver Springs Drive NW, Calgary, AB. There is ample free parking and accessibility via public transit too. There's still time this year to take in BGSS as part of your expanded staycation. With Covid-19 safety considerations continuing to be paramount, the outdoors usually minimizes exposure to the virus; physical distancing is easy in this garden. So, take the time to enjoy this beautiful place! *We highly recommend it.*



∞ *The soul cannot thrive in the absence of a garden* – Thomas Moore (1478 -1535) ∞



Despite this nasty Covid-19 virus ... We are trying to adapt safely ... Volunteers were eventually allowed back in the Garden. Even though it was a late start ... we remain thankful for their assistance & creativity. Stay safe everyone! *Cheers to:*

- ◆ *Richard & his team, for all your work!*
- ◆ *The unstoppable Board of Directors for the caring & dedication, year after year!*
- ◆ *Daniel & his team @City Parks* 😊
- ◆ *FoRRGS supporters for staying connected to us!*



Sincere Thanks to

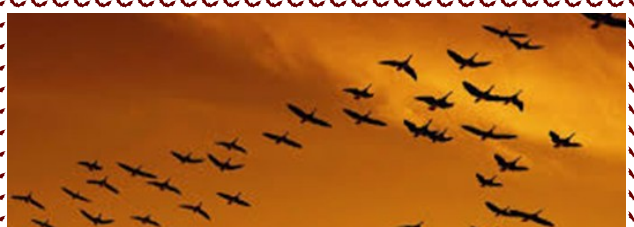


For providing us with numerous cardboard trays which were so useful for our online plant sale earlier this summer.

These kind folks now have 2 locations: SE & NW.

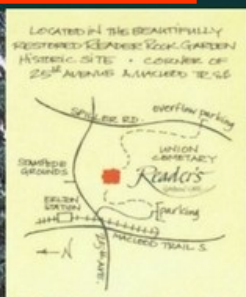
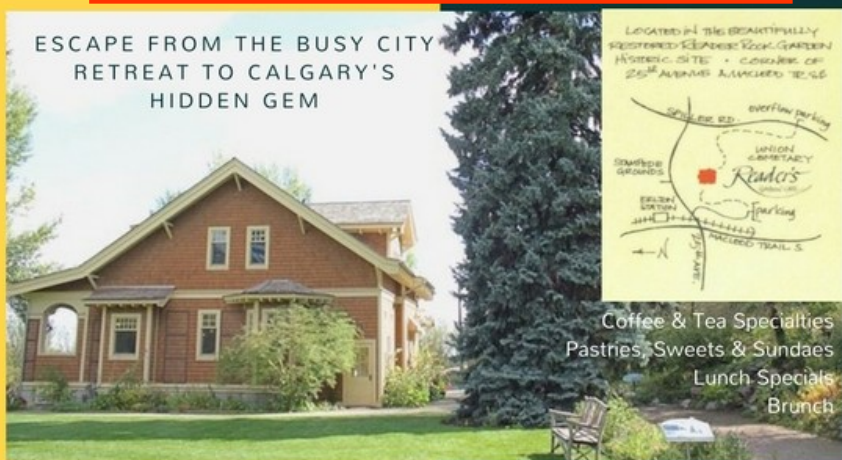
See: www.marketwines.ca

Update on the missing plaque coming soon ... stay tuned.



Reader's Garden Café is scheduled to close for the season on Sunday, September 27, 2020.

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Call 403-234-0065 or see the website:
www.readersgardencafe.ca

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

Best to check their website for an up-to-date listing of events during the current pandemic

See: www.crag.ca/events

