

The Reader Rock Garden

www.ReaderRock.com



Fall's Splendour ... Seize the Day

By Diane Dalkin



Do you have a favorite season? I would find it difficult to choose, with the special uniqueness each offers us. I'm more about making the best of the *time-at-hand* ... *Carpe Diem* ... *Seize the Day* ... *Enjoy the Moment!* After all, it's now a crisp reprieve from the heat of the summer.

The harvest is plentiful; time to gather up summer's bounty and relish her efforts. Over the years, countless artists have been moved to take their brushes to canvas in the hopes of capturing Fall's majestic tapestry. English poet John Keats was inspired by the changing season and wrote an "Ode To Autumn", considered to be one of his finest masterpieces. "*Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;*" ... He goes on to describe this glorious time with fanciful turns of phrase, unreeling so easily, line after line, touching upon all five senses.

Charismatic migratory birds are making their presence known along their journeys; listen for their calls or keep an eye out for their mass rest stops. Take time to observe this changing rhythm. Other animals are also preparing; almost everything is on the move. It is indeed a busy time!

Yes, nippy temperatures greet us at our doors, but that should not hold us back from experiencing the rich beauty that this new season brings. So, put on your cozy sweaters and stylish boots; there's still so much awaiting us outdoors.

At Reader Rock Garden, *the Café* will continue to operate until the snow flies. It's best to check their website for regular updates, as Calgary's unpredictable weather can swiftly change the best-laid plans. Last year's Snowtember event was a testament to that, right?

It's also usually a time to collect ripe seeds from the Garden. However, this year may be a challenging endeavor in this regard. The Head Gardener had noted that three very destructive hail storms over the summer have impacted plant cycles. We may not have as many seeds available as in previous years. As unfortunate as this is, Nature is resilient, and perhaps an extended Fall might help with this; we're hopeful for that.

It is no wonder that Thanksgiving coincides with this season. We have so much from Nature's abundance and also those that enrich our lives and community. It's the perfect time to thank the volunteers on our Board, who work tirelessly in the background nurturing our group's vision, in their own ways. Kudos go out to everyone that helped with our spring and summer events, your dedication makes it all happen. And of course, the generosity of your annual memberships support our initiatives for the Garden.



Whole-hearted thank-you; well-done team!

FoRRGS Team

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Natives for All Seasons

By Marilyn Mayall

Not only did Reader trial many new plants from other parts of the world to determine their hardiness in Calgary, he was interested in native plants and seeds and made many trips to the mountains to collect specimens for inclusion in the Garden.

Unlike many of the less scrupulous plant hunters of the time he was careful not to eliminate species through over collecting.

Currently a number of natives with a variety of cultural requirements can be seen at Reader Rock Garden (the Garden).

On the north side of the lawn area there is a thriving clump of pearly everlasting – *Anaphalis margaritacea*. Although not boasting a stunning inflorescence the combination of silvery-grey foliage topped by clusters of yellow centred white blooms can make an eye catching grouping at front or middle of the border. In addition, the pearly everlasting has much to recommend it in this summer of hot, dry conditions. It enjoys dry, sandy conditions and will tolerate nutrient deficient soils.

It has a long bloom time – from mid-summer to early fall – and after that it can be used in dried flower arrangements.



Photo by Marilyn Mayall



Photo by Marilyn Mayall

More recently it has been used to prepare an insecticide.

I find this interesting for the following reason....will its toxicity protect it from the ravages of the lily beetle. It is, after all, a member of the LILIACEAE family. Or will it also become a victim of this pest?

The towering inflorescence (up to 2m) is as arresting as the foliage. Numerous flowers with six green-yellow tepals spill from a central stem.

Two woodland dwellers can also be seen at the Garden near the Fern Walk.

Both are now setting fruit which is just as interesting as the white flowers they produce in spring. The rough fruited fairybell (*Disporum trachycarpum* or *Prosartes trachycarpa*) and the red baneberry (*Actaea rubra*) both produce white flowers and red or orange fruit in late summer.



Disporum trachycarpum; spring blooms

Photo by Rachel Oggy



For those interested in attracting butterflies, it is a host plant for painted lady butterflies.

At the other end of the spectrum is the exotic false hellebore – *Veratrum viride*. If you have ever walked in the mountains in spring or summer, you cannot fail to have noticed this stunning specimen with its heavily pleated, parallel veined leaves.

Photo by Marilyn Mayall

Its preferred habitat is in wet soils in meadows, by stream banks and in open forests. Its position at the base of a steep slope at the Garden probably helps with its high water needs.

A caution about this specimen is that it is toxic and consequently farmers with livestock do not appreciate this plant on their land.

Both fairy bells and baneberry prefer full to partial shade, moist fertile soil and are suitable in leaf-littered woodland gardens where the vibrant red of their fruit contrasts with the green of the foliage and lights up the understory.



Photo by Rachel Oggy

Disporum trachycarpum; late summer fruit

Although the baneberry is a poisonous native, it is very attractive to robins and for this reason the fruit does not persist through winter



Actaea rubra; late summer fruit

Photos by Allison King



The white form of the *Actaea* is often referred to as *Actaea alba*

The baneberry is a good native substitute for astilbe. Its compound leaves are as attractive as those of astilbe.... and it is generally a lot less fussy than astilbe.

If, like Reader, you become interested in seed collecting, the following are some simplified guidelines for ethical seed collection.

TIMING

- * Observe the selected species over time.
- * Seeds will generally change colour when mature.
- * Ripe seed is generally hard and heavy.
- * Delay deadheading to ensure ripe seed.

HARVESTING

- ◇ Avoid unnecessary damage to the plant and its surroundings.
- ◇ Collect only as much seed as you require.
- ◇ Remove no more than 20% of the fruit of any one plant.
- ◇ Select seeds from healthy plants.

CLEANING

- * Discard any mouldy seeds
- * Dry seeds for a few days (prevents later grief with mould)
- * Remove chaff and any debris from the seeds
- * Place in containers or paper bags (not plastic bags). Label and date bags
- * Store in a cool, dry and dark environment

PLEASE REMEMBER: Collecting seeds in National, Provincial and City Parks is not permitted.

If collecting on private property obtain the permission of the owner to collect seed.

Seeds from Reader Rock Garden are usually available at Seedy Saturday... generally held in mid-March. Although hail damage has affected seed collection this year, we still hope to have seeds available for those who enjoy the challenge of starting their own seeds.



UPDATE ON LILY BEETLE CONTROLS AT READER ROCK GARDEN

A number of parasitoidal wasps have been released at Reader's to determine their effectiveness in the control of the lily beetle.

Staff from Olds College will collect pupae to determine the rate of parasitisation of the pupae.

Meanwhile, no matter how much it breaks our hearts to see the damage to the lilies, we have been asked not to hand-pick beetles or larvae at the Garden.



Photo by Diane Dalkin



Advice from a
PUMPKIN



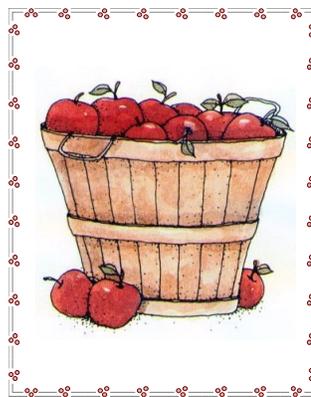
*Be well-rounded. Get plenty of sunshine.
Give thanks for life's bounty. Have a thick
skin. Keep growing. Be outstanding in
your field!*

Calgary Horticultural Society's AGM, including:

"Ken Fry, PhD , guest speaker"

Thursday, **September 24** 7:00–9:30 PM at Christ Church,
3602 - 8th Street SW.

See <http://www.calhort.org> for all the details.



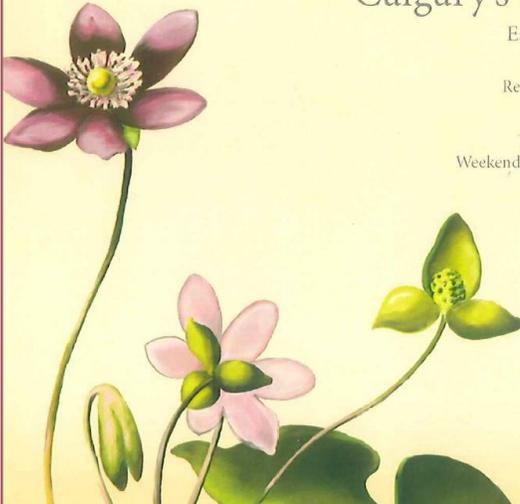
MANY THANKS to our generous supporter,
Shawnessy Home Depot

*For supplying stunning planters for our
booth at the Calgary Horticultural Garden
Show and for the door prizes at our Stroll.*



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The Calgary Rock and Alpine Garden Society (CRAGS) upcoming meetings:

Thursday, October 15, 2015 (7:00 PM)
Topic: *Rocking with Plants*
Speaker : Jerry Kral

Thursday, Nov 12, 2015 (7:00 PM)
AGM & presentation - the *Chelsea Flower Show*

Lakeview Community Association Hall
6110 - 34 Street SW

See their website for more details

www.crag.ca/events



Call 403-263-0210 or see the website: www.readersgardencafe.ca