

Spring 2015

Issue 1

Email: Info@readerrock.com

The Reader Rock Garden

www.ReaderRock.com



Coming of Spring

By Diana Pommen

*The skies are dawning a new blue,
To welcome her whose dancing feet
Thro' cloudland hasten from afar,
Guided by sun, and moon, and star,
Her waiting friends once more to greet*

*The timid violets lift their heads,
And heavenward turn their gentle eyes,
And catch the fragrance newly born
Which cometh with the Spring's glad dawn,
And steal their color from the skies.*

*The merry birds on twig and branch
Trill out the news with fluttering wings,
While Robin seeks the early fruit,
Impatient watching the green shoot,
And the glad tidings gaily sings.*



Hepatica nobilis

Excerpt from: The Coming of Spring by: Mary Dow Brine

We look to spring with anticipation, waiting for the first buds to appear on the trees, and the color of the early spring flowers to peek out of the fertile soil. Optimism blooms early as gardeners search for the signs of new growth, taking in the warm spring winds.

At Reader Rock Garden ("Garden"), spring brings a beautiful blanket of color and greenery as the plants at the Garden awaken from their winter sleep. Each season brings different flowers, and the trees and shrubs provide a spectacular backdrop year-round. It offers wonderful spaces to stroll or sit and enjoy the views of the plants.

We have been planning for our year of activities and wanted to share some of the upcoming dates with you. Please stop by and visit us at any of the events:

- ◆ Booth at the Calgary Horticultural Society's Garden Show at Spruce Meadows on **April 11th** and **12th**.
- ◆ Annual General Meeting of the Society scheduled for Sunday, **May 24th** at the Garden. All members are encouraged to attend and we're always looking to expand our team.
- ◆ Annual Garden Stroll is Sunday, **July 26th**; the Garden will be showing off colorful summer blooms.

As the seasons change, we hope you have the opportunity to come to the Garden and enjoy the beauty you will discover there.

Happy gardening!

FoRRGS Team

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President - Diane Dalkin
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NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF READER ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

Reader Rock Ramblings

Research at Reader's.

By Marilyn Mayall

In the summer of 2014, lilies at Reader Rock Garden, along with the lilies of many other Calgary gardens, experienced the deprivations of the beautiful, but destructive lily beetle (*Lilioceris lili*).

And in a very short time (around mid-April and about the same time as the *Lilium* family arise from winter dormancy), the next generation of lily beetles will also emerge from their winter shelter to begin another cycle of destruction.

Lilioceris lili is a fairly recent arrival in Calgary, but its steady progress west has been inevitable for many years.



Photos courtesy of Carol Huggler

The distinctive red body of this 6-9 mm. insect sports black antennae, legs and underbody which make it particularly difficult to discern on soil if you are unsuccessful in capturing it as it defoliates your lily leaves.

After mating, the female lays 200-400 yellow-orange eggs in an irregular line on the underside of the lily leaves.

These will hatch in the surprisingly short time of 7-10 days .

The larvae are voracious feeders. I often found last summer that they started munching at the outer tip of the leaves and made their way toward the stem of the lily. Flattened tips of leaves became an indicator of the presence of larvae on the underside of the leaves, though I am not sure if this is an infallible indicator.



The larval stage is the most destructive to lily plants. The larvae will continue to feed for 16-24 days so it is not surprising that entire plants are left stripped of foliage and blooms. Three days is often sufficient to strip a plant of foliage, depending on the level of infestation.

The larvae are a yellow-orange colour, but they cover themselves in their own feces, which makes hand-picking just that much more challenging ... not to mention downright disgusting.

After pupating, another generation emerges from mid-July / mid-August. In some years there may even be three generations.

Although there have been a number of accounts published about the lily beetle, I found many of my neighbours still unaware of this pest. And as the beetles are strong fliers, I have a vested interest in seeing just how infested my neighbours' lilies are.



To date, the most effective methods of control have been labour intensive. Hand picking the beetles and the larvae (a daily activity), examining the undersides of leaves for eggs and larvae and clearing the base of the plants to reduce shelter for the cocoons are the most effective controls to date. Chemical controls include the use of pyrethrum-based insecticides.

Recent work by Dr. Ken Fry of Olds College has suggested the use of a parasitic wasp as a method of control. Studies in Eastern Canada and Europe suggest that this may be an effective method of limiting the damage of the lily beetle. In late June of 2015, Reader Rock Garden (with Dr. Ken Fry as lead) will be participating in a study to ascertain the effectiveness of the use of a parasitic wasp in the control of the red lily beetle. All of the 10 species of *Lilium* in the Gardens will be part of the study as all species of *Lilium* (Asiatics, Martagons, fritillaria and species such as *pardilinum*) have been found to be susceptible to attack.

Unfortunately, there will be damage (probably a lot on-site) to the lilies from both adult beetles and larvae as the study progresses. Over the time of the multi-year study, samples will be collected to check on the level of parasitized specimens i.e. to check the effectiveness of the parasites. Let's hope that they do not, like released ladybugs, fly off to someone else's garden.

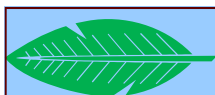
And although it may be tempting to help the gardeners by picking beetles or larvae, the head gardener *strongly requests that visitors to the Garden do not help out in this way.*

Depressing as the sight of defoliated lilies may be, you will at least know that it is not through neglect that they look that way, but that they are part of an ongoing study to help in the control of the lily beetle.

I for one, hope the experiment is a resounding success. If a wasp can help me out in the garden to control the lily beetle, I'll be a pretty happy gardener!

It is also exciting to think that Calgary's historic Reader Garden will be participating in research. And I think Reader would be delighted too!

Special thanks to Carol Huggler for sharing her photos and to Janet Washburn for sharing the information about the Lily Beetle Project at Reader Rock Garden.



*In memory of
Peter James Savage
Founding Member &
Longtime Supporter of
FoRRGS,
Who recently passed away*

Sept. 5, 1927 – Feb. 5, 2015.

Gone, but never forgotten.

Full Obituary available online,
Calgary Herald



SPRING



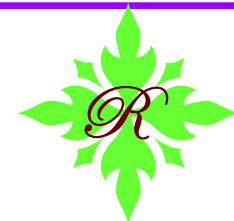
Remember **doing**
reminders
remember
don't forget **to do**

Remember ... It's time to **renew your membership**. We hope we can count on you again for 2015?

Your membership supports our activities and initiatives at the Garden.

Membership forms are available online at our website or please call Helen Li at (403) 630-6717.

Thank-you!



Mark your calendars. Here's what is in store:

- ◆ **April 11 & 12, 2015**—Spring arrives at the **Calgary Horticultural Garden Show**, once again at **Spruce Meadows** on Saturday and Sunday. *Come get the dirt on Calgary Gardening.* We'll have a booth there, drop by for a visit, see & do so much more! Additional details at <http://calhort.org/garden-show.aspx>
- ◆ **May 24, 2015**—FoRRGS **AGM**, lower classroom at Reader's House, 1:00-3:00 pm; stay informed, meet the team, give us your feedback ~ all invited to attend.
- ◆ **July 26, 2015**—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 Historic Week focus with our affiliate, the Chinook Historical Society.



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
7:30 pm Presentation

◆ **Thursday, April 9, 2015**

Speaker: Margaret Fong
Topic: Santa Fe NARGS AGM

◆ **Saturday, May 9, 2015**
Annual Plant Sale !!


See: www.crag.ca/events



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