

The Reader Rock Garden

www.ReaderRock.com



NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF READER ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

Reader Rock Ramblings



President's Message

By Lindsey Boida

It certainly feels like summer time, with the warm sun shine and blue skies, how wonderful! This season elevates everyone's spirits. Yet, we recognize that we're still in a pandemic and continue to move forward optimistically, but cautiously. Our plans at the Garden remain curtailed and modified until public health officials indicate otherwise. However, we encourage you to come and stroll through the Garden nonetheless; beautiful things happen in this place even with physical distancing.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of you that have renewed your annual membership despite our limited activities as noted above. This greatly supports our initiatives at the Garden, like the recent online plant sale. Hope you're enjoying the unique plants you purchased and now you have a little piece of Reader Rock Garden at your home. Special acknowledgement to the dedicated Board of Directors that made this plant sale possible, especially: *Daniel, Fabian, Liz, Karen & Sue*— good work! Once again, *Market Wines* generously supplied us with cardboard trays to facilitate transporting the precious cargo to their new homes. We're much-obliged for this community support!

Another well-deserved expression of gratitude also goes out to *Lillian* for taking on the huge task of revamping and upgrading our website. This process is ongoing and should you encounter any technical difficulties, please don't hesitate to provide us feedback via our website email. Besides the website, *Julie* continues to promote the Garden via Social Media. If you are so inclined or may be considering to do so, stay informed with our timely Twitter and Facebook online presence.

In April, we participated in the Calgary Horticultural Society's online garden show. While it was good to reach out virtually to passionate plant people, we miss not being able to reconnect with you in-person. Hopefully next year the situation will be resolved and we'll get to do just that. Fingers-crossed!

A lot goes on in the background and we appreciate all these efforts. Yet there's always room for more volunteers to take on other tasks which haven't yet flowered ... like they say, *many hands lighten the load*. We still have a call out for a new *Treasurer*; Liz has graciously offered to mentor her replacement; so the transition would be nice and smooth. We'd love to hear from you about this important role or any other point of discussion. Our email is info@readerrock.com. Until next time have a safe and most enjoyable summer!



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FoRRGS Team

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

Some Spring Ephemerals

By Diane M. Dalkin

After what seemed like a very long winter and with the pandemic continuing to test our mettle, gardens offer us all a refreshing, safe retreat and welcome respite. In fact, recent studies have clearly shown the healing power of *being with Nature*, especially now as we deal with Covid restrictions. Many cultures have historically noted Nature's harmonious influence on our well-being. As far back as the 16th century, Sir Thomas More recognized that "*The soul cannot thrive in the absence of a garden*". Not surprisingly garden centres are currently experiencing increased sales, parks' attendance has grown, hiking and biking are hugely popular too. Essentially, all activities related to the outdoors have made a resurgence. Just like the rest of nature, we've brushed off the dust and emerged from semi-hibernation, eager to get outside. Whether you're enjoying your own home garden, other local favorites or coming by to visit **Reader Rock Garden**, take time to absorb all the sensory pleasures that abound. Sunlight encourages everything: fragrant blossoms, happy song birds, busy bugs, vibrant colors, interesting textures and gentle breezes have arrived for this seasonal performance. The earth is bursting with energy and life.

No doubt we are starting to think in summer mode, yet we can still enjoy the remnants of the early bloomers. The spring-flowering ephemerals are plants that only last a brief time; they don't die, but they go dormant and disappear from view shortly after they stop flowering. Retreating underground lies a bulb, corm, or other storage organ that patiently waits for next year to start the process over again. Some familiar spring ephemerals are the classic Eurasian species: iris, daffodils, tulips, crocuses, hyacinths, and snow drops. Yet, there are also other unique ones that are perhaps lesser known. Fortunately, **Reader Rock Garden** has many unusual specimens. It's a challenge to pick an all-time favorite among these beauties, but for present purposes let's briefly celebrate the stalwart Hepaticas, Bloodroots, and Mayapples.

Hepatica (aka Liverwort or Liverleaf) – Some botanists include Hepatica within a wider interpretation of Anemone. It is an herbaceous perennial in the Buttercup Family (Ranunculaceae). This awesome plant was featured in our Spring 2017



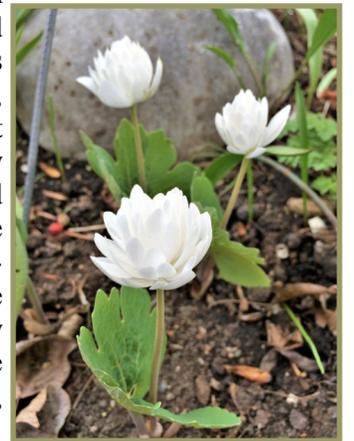
newsletter as "An Iconic Reader Symbol"; *clearly, we luv it!*

These diminutive, yet hardy delicate flowers are one of the earliest delightful bloomers. Depending on the type of weather, the flowers can appear as early as March or April and continue to bloom right into May. Once the



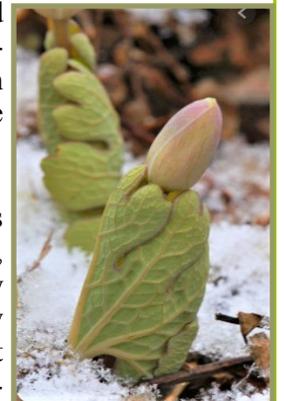
flowers are spent, the tidy clumps of attractive lobed leaves offer nice backgrounds to any flower bed. Although Hepatica isn't usually readily available from most big box stores, it is occasionally found commercially in some garden centres. Alternatively, specialty growers like *Rundle Wood Gardens** and our own annual plant sale can bring this reliable, enduring beauty into your garden. Hepatica is definitely a worthy specimen to add to your must-have list! Or, you can always enjoy its presence throughout Reader's.

Sanguinaria canadensis (aka Bloodroot) – is part of the Poppy Family (Papaveraceae). Its Latin name, sanguinarius (meaning bleeding), alludes to the red/orange liquid which resembles blood and resides in the roots and stems. This red sap was used by early settlers as dye for clothing, baskets, paint and was used as insect repellent. All parts, especially the rhizomes are poisonous and may be an irritant, thus handle with care (gloves recommended). Nonetheless, the elegant blooms are noteworthy and can be single or double whites with yellow centers, similar to garden anemones.



The double-flowered cultivar *S. canadensis* f. *multiplex* 'Plena' has gained the Royal Horticultural Society's Award of Garden Merit, which speaks volumes about this exquisite plant.

Its leaf complexity is simple, yet bears an intriguing shape with rounded, deep lobes. What is particularly charming about these leaves is how they seem to wrap around, almost swaddling the flower &/or bud, offer-



ing shelter on chilly Spring days.

Bloodroot is also one of many plants whose seeds are collected and dispersed by ants, a process called myrmecochory. This ecologically significant ant-



plant interaction might allow us to reconsider our tolerance/frustration with this often lamented “pest”. Hhhmm, the jury is still out on this ant relationship. Anyhow, ...

When this plant is happy in its location, it will colonize and provide many years of flowering. There are several such gleeful spots dotted throughout Reader.

Bloodroot in Sydenham Edwards' The Botanical Magazine, 1791



Podophyllum peltatum (aka Mayapple, Ground Lemon, Wild Mandrake) is another rhizomatous woodland ephemeral, which is in the Barberry Family (Berberidaceae). It can spread to form large colonies in moist, shaded areas. Mayapple stems stand upright ~12 inches, have deeply lobed, palmate, glossy leaves and white showy blooms under their umbrella like leaves that lead way to a small fruit like a tiny apple/lemon. These fruits start off green and are well disguised below the foliage; as they ripen, the fruit turns a conspicuous bright orange-red, ready for the



picking. All parts of this plant, except the edible ripe fruit, contain podophyllotoxin which is highly toxic if consumed. Nonetheless, podophyllotoxin has medicinal purposes and is an ingredient in prescription drugs.

The Mayapple specimens at Reader, located between the lower and upper ponds, had fairly large fruits in the past two years. A

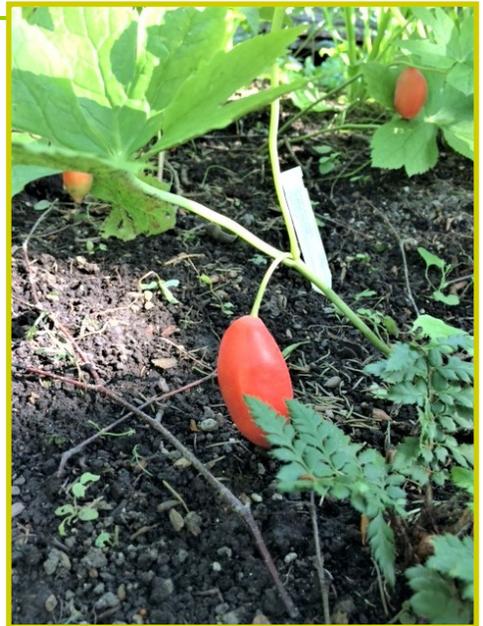
variety of wildlife can feed on the ripe fruit, including some human-foragers. I came across several recipes for syrups, jellies and baking which utilized the fruit. However, none of us have been adventurous enough to taste the fruit yet, but it is reported online to have a mild citrusy, apple flavour. Furthermore, the fruit's laxative and purgative properties call for caution. The fruit's alkaloids were also used in pesticides and herbicides.

These three Spring Ephemerals are interesting in form and folklore. Thankfully, we can continue to learn about these plants and a host of many more, just like Mr. Reader intended in his living classroom.



- ♦ see rundlewoodgardens.ab.ca, located in Altadore
- ♦ Botanical drawings are from the public online domain

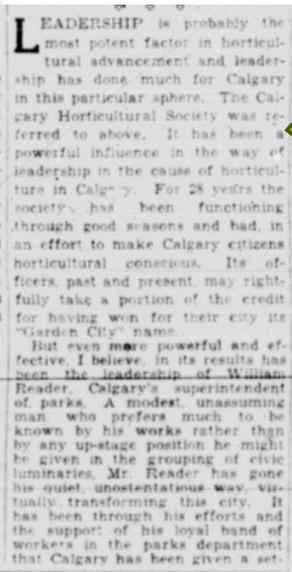
Special thanks to Daniel, Head Gardener, for proactively re-introducing the diversity of plant material back to the Garden; and, much gratitude to his entire team for their excellent safe efforts, particularly under the current trying health restrictions.



LEADERSHIP

Research by Diane M. Dalkin

On one of my research quests into the archives, I discovered this *September 21, 1935 Calgary Herald* article (albeit quite faded). It offers good historical context, and still is very relevant for present times. Once you read my transcription below, I'm sure you'd agree with me about being grateful for these steadfast efforts demonstrated over many decades and especially since the legacy continues on!



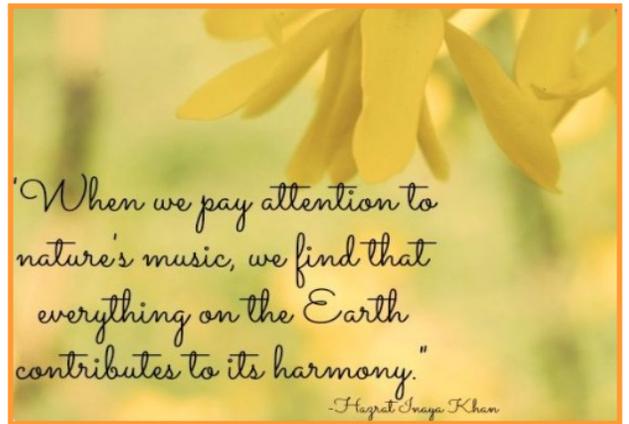
Leadership is probably the most potent factor in horticultural advancement and leadership has done much for Calgary in this particular sphere. The Calgary Horticultural Society was referred to above. It has been a powerful influence in the way of leadership in the cause of horticulture in Calgary. For 28 years the society has been functioning through good seasons and bad, in an effort to make Calgary citizens horticultural conscious. Its officers, past and present, may rightfully take a portion of the credit for having won for their city its "Garden City" name.

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*But even more powerful and effective, I believe, in its results has been the leadership of **William Reader**, Calgary's superintendent of parks. A modest, unassuming man who prefers much to be known by his works rather than by any up-stage position he might be given in the grouping of civic luminaries. Mr. Reader has gone his quiet, unostentatious way, virtually transforming this city. It has been through his efforts and support of his loyal band of workers in the parks department that Calgary has been given a setting in parks, cemeteries and boulevards such as not only astonishes but calls forth unbounded praise from all visitors.*

Thankfully, there are still many passionate folks that keep this legacy protected at **Reader Rock Garden!**



Songs of Summer

by Paige McNeil

Crickets begin their magical tune.
 Ladybugs jig for the joy of June.
 Dragonflies dance as they dart by.
 Their whirring wings sing a lullaby.
 Bumblebees buzz a melody sweet.
 Caterpillars tap their many feet.
 Oh, happy hearts beat just like drummers
 As June brings on the songs of summer.



Reader's Garden Café is being optimistic and plans to re-open again on Wednesday, June 2nd. But, ... everyone knows by now that even with the best intentions, Covid-19 can change things quickly. Best to check their website for daily updates.

<https://www.readersgardencafe.ca/>

With stringent safety practices followed and everyone's cooperation, we might just have the unique pleasure of enjoying the Cafe this summer. Definitely worthy to check out!



Some guests are already lining up to take in the awesome views from the verandah!

BUSINESS HOURS
REOPENING ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2ND

PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR UPDATES

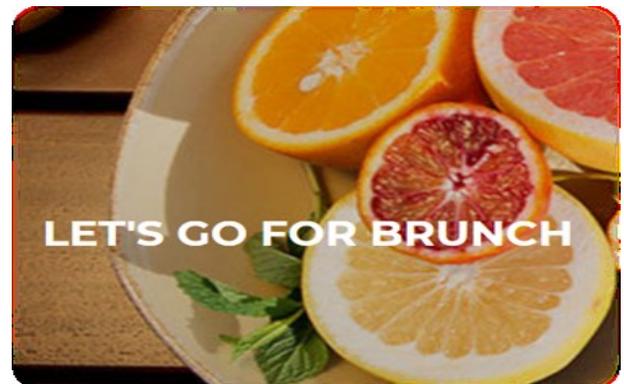
WED / THU / FRI 10:30 TO 3:00 PM
 SAT / SUN 9:30 TO 3:00 PM
 MON / TUE CLOSED!

—————

We are available for events during our season!

OUR DAILY UPDATE:

Welcome to our restart of
 the season on
 Wednesday, June 2
 (patio-only)



Reader's
GARDEN CAFE

SUNDAES

ASSORTED ICE CREAM	8.25
2 SCOOPS WITH WHIPPED CREAM	
KID'S CUP (1 SCOOP & WHIPPED CREAM)	4.75
COUP DANMARK	9.75
VANILLA ICE CREAM, CHOCOLATE SAUCE, ALMOND SLICES, WHIPPED CREAM	
VIENNA ICE COFFEE	10.75
VANILLA ICE CREAM, ICED ESPRESSO, WHIPPED CREAM	
ADD 1 OZ BAILEY'S 3.50	
BANANA SPLIT	10.75
STRACCIATELLA & VANILLA ICE CREAM, BANANA, CHOCOLATE SAUCE, TOASTED ALMOND SLICES, WHIPPED CREAM	
STRAWBERRY SUNDAE	12.75
VANILLA & STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM, MARINATED STRAWBERRIES, WHIPPED CREAM	
CREPES WITH ICE CREAM	14.50
2 CREPES, VANILLA ICE CREAM, CHOCOLATE SAUCE, TOASTED ALMOND SLICES, WHIPPED CREAM	

PRICES DO NOT INCLUDE 5% GST. GROUPS OF 6 OR MORE ARE SUBJECT TO 18% GRATUITY.




Advice from a BOBCAT

Walk softly in nature
Spot opportunities
Pounce on possibilities
Take some time alone
Stay on track
Be at home in the woods
Enjoy the nightlife!



37 Silver Springs Dr. NW
www.bgss.ca



*"I was just sittin' here enjoyin' the company. Plants got a lot to say, if you take the time to listen."
~Eeyore~*



Sincere THANKS to

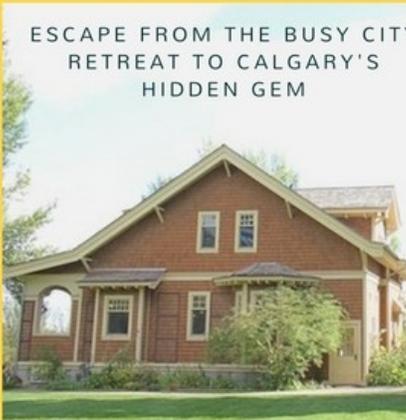


For graciously providing us numerous cardboard trays for our recent online plant sale.

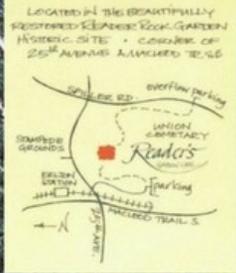
See: www.marketwines.ca



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



LOCATED IN THE BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED ELIZABETH ROCK GARDEN HISTORIC SITE - CORNER OF 25th AVENUE & ALBERTA TRAIL S.



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)

See their website for up-to-date Online Zoom happenings:

- ♦ June 10 - Janet Melrose on Rewilding the Urban Garden
- ♦ June 28 - ID Wildflowers

www.crag.ca/events



Re-Opening , again, June 2021 for the Season.

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