

The Reader Rock Garden

www.ReaderRock.com



NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF READER ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

Reader Rock Ramblings

Notes from the Board

By Diane M. Dalkin

Another challenging & somewhat overwhelming summer ... commencing with record breaking droughts, early season scorching temperatures, multiple wildfires, plus the fourth wave of Covid-19 doesn't seem to be slowing down either and other world crisis are devastating too. Yet despite all this, we can take some small comfort in the silver lining that Reader Rock Garden is still blooming profusely and looks awesome! *Daniel* (the Head Gardener), his team and the volunteers made commendable efforts to get this garden oasis looking healthy and fresh. A number of new plant additions have kept the momentum going to increase plant diversity. The Café had to inconveniently open and close several times because of pandemic restrictions, but still thankfully, patrons supported this small business. Our annual plant sale remained online once again. Although having the plant sale online is not ideal, being quite laborious with processes, fortunately keen gardeners participated nonetheless, helping us raise funds for the Garden. Successes, whether great or small, are to be celebrated.

We were also very lucky to have a new Board member take on the Treasurer role from our dedicated long-term colleague, *Liz Lunney*. We'll miss ya Liz and have appreciated absolutely everything you've done over the years - Many Thanks!! But we're also genuinely excited to welcome *Victoria Arling* to our team! We're hoping you'll get to meet Victoria in-person real soon.

Our affiliate, the *Calgary Horticultural Society (CHS)*, asked us to participate in their *Open Gardens* series. This public event is scheduled for Sunday, *September 12th* at Reader Rock Garden, *11:00 AM—3:00 PM*. The format will be different from previous occasions, with *self-guided tours only*. However, some of the FoRRGS & CHS teams will be at the Garden to answer your questions; we'll be located on the Main Lawn adjacent to the House (rain or shine). Everyone is encouraged to drop by for a chat, renew or buy a membership, or simply take in this unique peaceful setting. Late summer blooms, changing colours, unusual seed pods and migratory birds still await your discovery. Plus, there's less than one month left to enjoy some tasty goodness from the Café; the scheduled seasonal closing is October 3rd. Please remember to bring a face mask for indoors, if you need to enter the house, maintain physical distance practises and have appropriate shoes for the uneven terrain throughout the garden. We're staying optimistic that the pandemic conditions don't escalate again, requiring a cancellation of this public event, fingers-crossed. We'll keep you posted on our website and on social media. Stay tuned. Hope to see you there!

As we head into another Fall of unknowns, taking care of ourselves and others also continues to be a priority... *Please stay safe.*



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FoRRGS Team

President - Lindsey Boida
 Vice-President - *Vacant*
 Treasurer - Victoria Arling
 Membership - Karen Hogan
 Secretary & Webmaster - Lillian Kasa
 Directors - Bruce Dunlop, Leah Gayle, Susan Gryzenhout,
 Colleen McCracken, Lindsay Orr, Fabian Patino,
 John Percic,
 Social Media - Julie Ma
 Past President - Diane Dalkin



Another Featured Plant

By Diane M. Dalkin

As most of you are aware, Mr. Reader was a passionate plantsman, introducing a plethora of flora to his beloved home garden, way beyond the local native varieties. While the current plant inventory at the Garden is certainly not as extensive as it was during Reader’s lifetime, the Head Gardener is making concerted efforts to build and re-introduce the plant diversity back to this garden. FoRRGS is also supporting his goals with our fund-raising initiatives. Each year a few more special plants return after extensive research to locate these rare beauties. We’ll do our best to share these with you, from time to time, as they successfully re-establish and over-winter onsite.



For the past few years, I have admired the unusual **Cup Plants** (*Silphium perfoliatum*, pronounced *sil'fi-um per-fo-lia'tum*) – which are dotted throughout the Garden; some are specifically located along the Switchback Road, east of the 25th Avenue parking lot; they also tower in the Triangle Bed across from the 1944 CHS Memorial Plaque, at the base of the driveway.

While this daisy-like perennial plant from the Asteraceae Family may appear as “somewhat unspectacular” from a traditional showy, beauty perspective, its size can certainly impress. This tall perennial (~8-10 ft optimum conditions) has a square stem, yellow daisy-like conspicuous flowers at the top of the plant, stout large opposite leaves joined at the stem provide cup/pooling area for dew and/or rain (hence the name). I particularly like how nature provides a water reservoir in the form of this small cup, being beneficial to insects and small birds; also the nectar attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. Can’t argue against this meaningful value to wildlife.



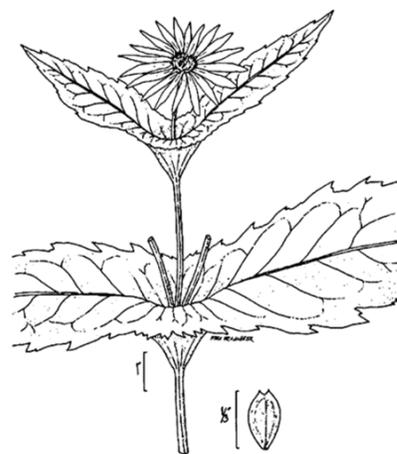
Nonetheless, the Cup Plant is considered invasive in some US states, even though it is native to North America.

It has a reputation for being aggressive due to numerous seedlings and possible spreading via rhizomes, but here in Calgary, that doesn’t seem too much of a problem. Indeed, it needs lots of space to grow, preferably at the back of a bed given its tall growing habit. Yet, no obvious pests nor diseases were noted; however, there was one mention of some potential susceptibility to the fungus *Sclerotinia*. Another consideration is hail destruction given its large size, making it a target for being pummelled.



Historically, Silphium was said to be used by the ancient Romans as a form of herbal birth control (proactive and reactive contraceptive properties), as a cure-all for various ailments, as well as a culinary delicacy. The resin from the stalk has a turpentine odor; the roots & stalks were used medicinally to treat nausea, fevers, chills and even corns on the feet. There are some unsubstantiated claims that the plant was eventually harvested to extinction by the end of the first century AD.

During the 1750s, the species was introduced to the United Kingdom and Russia, and has been prized as an ornamental plant since. It was named in 1759 by Carl Linnaeus. In the UK it has gained the Royal Horticultural Society’s Award of Garden Merit.



If you have ample space in your garden and enjoy quirky prairie plants that have extended blooming times, plus want to encourage wild-

life (bees, butterflies, etc.), I would give this sun-loving, bold plant a trial. I purchased my plant from the annual FoRRGS plant sale and haven’t been disappointed yet. The Cup Plant is hardy to our local zone, drought tolerant, grows in clay soil, appears to be deer resistant, and is also easily propagated by seed. Additionally, its distinct structure is noticeable in the garden, making for interesting conversations about its functional and aesthetic appeal.



Updates From Daniel : 

In a nutshell, here are some of this year's developments:

- ◆ Did you see the recent article in the **Canadian Rose Society's** newsletter, featuring the *Roses at Reader's*? It is posted on the FoRRGS website, in case you're interested.
- ◆ **Silver Springs Botanical Garden** allowed me to take cuttings from 3 named rose cultivars (Belle de Poitvine, FJ Grootendorst, Schneezwerg) and they also graciously gifted Reader Rock Garden with two roses. R. altaica and R. altika. *Thanks for sharing!*
- ◆ Plans for 2022 include bed renovations of U, 7 and 26 .
- ◆ Lots of shrubs are putting on a great berry and fruit fall show at the moment and the fall blooming Clematis virginiana on the Café wall is getting ready to open this week.
- ◆ This year, approximately 120 reintroductions were added to the plant inventory list, 7 named cultivars of Roses from Rogue Valley; plus Malus 'Wealthy' (Apple tree), Prunus 'Sapa' & P. Americana (Cherry-plum trees), Cotinus coggyria (Smoketree), Kolwitzia amabilis (Beauty bush), Forsythia suspensa (Spring flowering bush) and Rhus typhina (Staghorn Sumac) to name a few of the woody species.
- ◆ Hardy cacti grown from seed that have been growing in greenhouse since 2018, Escobaria viviparia, Opuntia humifusa.
- ◆ 17 species of spring blooming bulbs will be coming this fall from Phoenix perennials. These are being purchased with plant sale revenues.
- ◆ Really proud of the Adlumia fungosa (Climbing Bleeding Heart) in bed S, dainty leaves and a climbing/sprawling habit with bleeding heart type flowers.
- ◆ Daphne cneorum – Rock Daphne, evergreen shrub with intense spicy fragrant dusty rose pink flowers in late spring.





Calgary Horticultural Society's
Open Garden at Reader Rock Garden
Sunday, September 12th
 11:00 am—3:00 pm

Free Public Event, Self-Guided tours,
 however, ...

The CHS & FoRRGS will be on the Main
 Lawn to answer your questions.

Please remember to bring a facemask
 if you need to enter the house, other-
 wise we'll be safely outdoors in the
 fresh air.

Hope to see you there!





AUTUMN starts to chill the air
 Until the trees look sad and bare,
 Time for fire-side tales, you know,
 Underneath the lamplight's glow.
 Makes you feel you want to sigh,
 Now that the summer's stolen by.

Author Unknown
Taken from a vintage postcard





Annual Field Trip

By Diane M. Dalkin



On a lovely, warm summer July evening, FoRRGS had a tour of the **Beaulieu Gardens** at **Lougheed House** in SW Calgary. Head Gardener Jane provided us an in-depth view of the treasures that lie within. It's always a pleasure to connect with such a kindred spirit and passionate gardener!

Here are some of the discoveries ... *Established in 1891, the 2.8-acre estate included the residence, carriage house, stable and a formal garden with swan sculpture fountain. The house originally belonged to influential Calgarians, James & Isabella Lougheed. With their six children, their home served as a notable entertaining venue for state and royal visitors; it has its own unique and noteworthy history, separate from*

the exterior spaces which evolved too. Historically, garden parties at Lougheed House were grand occasions, particularly the 1919 visit of Edward, Prince of Wales. Over the course of 130 years, the house and gardens changed dramatically, witnessing many struggles along the way. The Lougheed House Conservation Society 1990 proposal resulted in today's Public Heritage Centre, ensuring a vibrant future for the house and gardens.

At the time of our visit, the garden was frequented by numerous locals and their pooches; plus friendly chats and laughter could be heard throughout. Clearly, *Beaulieu* Garden remains a popular meeting hub, living up to its French name "*beautiful place*".



These historic gardens on this estate contain heritage plants and have been beautifully recreated with an aura of historical accuracy. There are far too many fabulous plants to mention them all here; however, our photos captured some of the resplendent beauty!

The gorgeous roses were so fragrant; the tall Hollyhocks towered firmly announcing their presence; the Prairie Travellers' Joy clematis tumbled happily on the balustrades besides the steps; the enormous sunflowers were havens for pollinators and the veggie garden had an abundant harvest! Of course, this would definitely change with the seasons. Based on their online garden brochure, there are eight areas of interests highlighted in this garden. There's a large variety of things to see and experience: fragrant Meyer lilacs, vegetables, herbs, edible flowers, a cutting garden, a Memorial Rose Garden, the Dome Bed, Circle Beds, West & East Formal Beds. So, you shouldn't be disappointed by a visit at any time. The Beaulieu Garden 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, Covid-19 safety focus in-place) or online. Their website provides all the exciting details; see:

- ◆ <https://www.lougheedhouse.com/beaulieu-gardens/> or
- ◆ Email them at Info@lougheedhouse.com; & there's a restaurant onsite too, call 403-410-9288.

#lovelougheedgardens is their current fund raising campaign to keep the gardens healthy in these times of unprecedented cuts to funding and earned revenue as a result of Covid-19. We can all help by making a financial donation (*one-time gift or monthly; see their website for more info*). Alternatively, in lieu of money, support on Social Media is also welcomed too; post a photo with the hashtag **#lovelougheedgardens**. They even have draw prizes for these kind efforts.

This historical site & garden is located at **707—130 Avenue SW, Calgary, AB**. Free parking is available in lots off 14 Ave & 13 Ave; and accessibility via public transit is easy too. There's still time this year to take in Beaulieu Gardens as part of your expanded staycation. With Covid-19 safety considerations continuing to be paramount with the fourth wave of uncertainty growing, the outdoors usually minimizes exposure to the virus; physical distancing is easy in this garden. So, take the time to enjoy this beautiful place! *Highly recommend a visit!!*





Despite this ongoing nasty Covid-19 virus ...

We remain **thankful** for everyone's assistance & creativity over the summer. Stay safe everyone! Cheers to:

- ◆ Daniel W. & his crew @City Parks
- ◆ Bruce D. & his volunteer team, for all your work!
- ◆ The unstoppable *Board of Directors* for the caring & dedication, year after year! Plus the new members that have recently joined our team.
- ◆ *FoRRGS supporters* for staying connected to us!



More Thanks Again 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



Congratulations !!

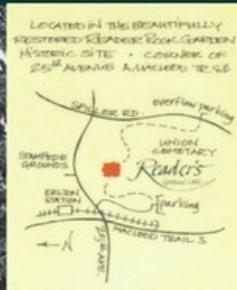
To our newlywed President,

Lindsey & her hubby.

♥ Much Happiness Always ♥

Reader's Garden Café is scheduled to close for the season on Sunday, October 3rd, 2021.

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



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
Monday, Tuesday Closed
.....

.....
Weddings & Functions
.....



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) meetings

Lakeview Community Association Hall
6110 34th Street SW.

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

See: www.crag.ca/events

