



The Reader Rock Garden

www.ReaderRock.com



Notes From The Board

By Diane M. Dalkin

Hello FoRRGS members & supporters!

For the most part 2022 was a good year! This was mainly due to having some sense of normalcy return to our lives. Covid-19 restrictions were eased, allowing in-person events and keen volunteers were reinstated back at the Garden. Everyone was eager to get outside, to come together at the Garden and also to enjoy the Café. Attendance numbers reflect this enthusiasm; *thank-you for all your support!!*

In June, our first ever “Members-only” Plant Sale was a resounding hit; so we’re going to keep it that way - *a private, exclusive event - just for you, our supporters*. Next *June 10, 2023* we’ll have another plant sale, so mark your calendars to join us on this extra special day - with more exciting details to come. And, make sure your membership remains current and up-to-date. Additionally, perhaps buy a membership for your family & friends - after all - it’s *the season of giving*.

A lot was accomplished this year too. *Daniel Walker*, the Head Gardener, finally managed to travel to Ottawa on his much-delayed trip to secure heritage lilacs from the Central Experimental Farm. He promises to share this experience with us in the Spring newsletter. Besides this, Daniel summarizes some of the goings-on from his team and the volunteers - see Page 4.

A big shout-out of *THANKS* to *Glynn & Alex Wright* for diligently completing our mapping project. Often these types of projects are worked on quietly, in the background, but certainly deserve some fanfare! These maps will be a great resource for our team and we hope to share more once the copyright process is finalized.

All our volunteers contribute whole-heartedly in so many ways, along side the dedicated City Parks staff. Yet, it’s also great when we can welcome our newest Board members, *Lena Cordell* and *Mackenzie Clemens*; thanks for joining the Team! We’re looking forward to working together ... fresh ideas, diverse skills, & fun times always gratefully received.

Merci, Mucho Gracias, Thank-You Everyone; Good Work! Stay warm, safe and well; enjoy the coming winter, a bit of hibernating now and then, and of course the Holidays ahead, however you celebrate, may you find ...

Peace & Joy, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Yuletide Winter Solstice, etc. ... See you in 2023 !!!



Inside this Issue	
Notes From The Board	1
Lady Byng By The Numbers	2 & 3
Updates From Daniel Thanks	4
Honoring The Legacy Gratitude	5 & 6



FoRRGS Team

President - Diane Dalkin
 Vice-President - Sue Gryzenhout
 Treasurer - Victoria Arling
 Membership - Fabian Patino
 Secretary - Catherine Ranger
 Webmaster - Lillian Kasa
 Directors - Mackenzie Clemens, Lena Cordell, Bruce Dunlop, Colleen McCracken, Lindsay Orr, John Percic,
 Social Media - Julie Ma
 Past President - Lindsey Boida

Viscountess Byng of VimyBy *Linda Wolfe*

Calgary's **Reader Rock Garden** has welcomed numerous high-profile visitors over the last century, but one of the most celebrated guests from the early years was Lady Byng, the wife of Lord Byng, Canada's Governor-General from 1921 to 1926. Many Canadians recognize her name because of its connection with the Lady Byng Memorial Trophy, but her place in Canada's story goes well beyond her love of hockey. She was a successful vice-regal consort, writer, and plantswoman whose enthusiasm for regional flora was exceptional.

Early Life

Marie Evelyn Moreton, born 1870 in London England, was the only child of Sir Richard Charles Reynolds-Moreton and his wife, Janie Ralli. Evelyn made her first trip to Canada when she was a young girl, travelling to Ottawa with her parents, who served in the household of Governor-General Lord Lorne. When their time at Rideau Hall was done, the Moretons returned to England, where Evelyn spent the rest of her growing-up years.

In 1897, Evelyn met the Honourable Julian Byng, who by then was well-established in his military career. They were married in 1902, after Julian returned from fighting in the South African War. In 1913, after years of foreign postings, the Byngs bought Thorpe Hall in Essex as a place to finally settle down and create a garden. Mrs. Byng, as she was then, was particularly interested in rock gardens, and that passion remained with her for the rest of her life.

The Byngs' plans were interrupted by the outbreak of war in 1914. For the next four years, General Byng served in Europe, perhaps most notably as commander of the Canadian Corps at Vimy. When the war ended, General Byng was elevated to the peerage, and took the title Baron Byng of Vimy. As Lady Byng explained, "He had chosen a name associated for all time with Canadian heroism."

Life in Canada

The war was over, but Lord Byng's days of service were not. In 1921, Byng was offered the position of Governor-General of Canada. His appointment met with approval throughout the Dominion, especially among the many servicemembers who remembered the commander with respect. That summer, Lord and Lady Byng moved to Ottawa and plunged into Canadian public life.

Travel was a large part of that life, and Lady Byng relished her trips through Canada's vast landscapes. Smitten by the botanical diversity she saw around her, Lady Byng resolved to preserve her wilderness memories by planting Canadian flowers in her English garden. That decision led to a flurry of plant collecting as she journeyed from coast to coast. Many of her hard-won specimens were destined

for England, but others found a home at Rideau Hall, where Lady Byng created a rock garden to showcase her collection of native plants.



Lady Byng of Vimy 1925 – Courtesy Library & Archives Canada

William Reader

The vice-regal couple made several visits to Calgary, where Lady Byng became acquainted with William Reader. His rock garden was already becoming well known, and in 1925, Lady Byng brought her gardener over from England so that he, too, could meet Reader and see his work. When the Byngs – soon to be Viscount and Viscountess - moved back to Thorpe Hall, Lady Byng asked Reader if he would come to England and take charge of her garden. Fortunately for Calgary, Reader chose to stay in Canada. He did, however, tour Lady Byng's beloved rock garden when he and his wife travelled to England in 1939.

World War II and Beyond

When war broke out again in Europe, Lady Byng, now widowed, was urged to leave England and seek refuge abroad. She heeded the advice and returned to Canada in 1940. She spent the war years writing her memoirs, renewing old friendships, and contributing in modest ways to the war effort. She also visited Mr. Reader, whose garden had matured, as hers had, over the twenty years they had known each other.

Both gardeners left enduring legacies. After the war, Lady Byng returned to Thorpe Hall, where she died in 1949. Her home was later demolished to make way for a hotel, but the bones of her garden remain, and the grounds are listed as a heritage resource. Her gardening contribution at Rideau Hall is also recognized.

William Reader died in 1943, a month after his retirement. His garden suffered long years of neglect, until *FoRRGS et al* lobbied for its restoration. Today, the **Reader Rock Garden** is a **National Historic Site**.

Late in life, Lady Byng wrote, "It's amazing how plants can carry one back 'up the stream of time'." Most garden-lovers would agree. A hundred years of memories linger in Mr. Reader's Garden, and one special daylily connects modern-day visitors with the long-ago Lady Byng. Its name is *Hemerocallis* "Viscountess Byng" - a floral trophy, one might say, and a fitting tribute to a most distinguished guest.



Photo By: Daniel Walker, Reader Rock Garden

Head Gardener's update: This Daylily, *Hemerocallis* "Viscountess Byng" is currently located in Bed 25, but it's going to be moved to the 2023 renovated Bed F by the gazebo on the Main Lawn. We're hoping it will surely perform better and increase in vigor. This has proven to be "rare" in cultivation, at least from my findings. We're planning to grow this cultivar on and share it with other botanic gardens and gardens in general so that it is not lost. The blush-like "thumbprints" on the petals are so unique and attractive.

Linda Wolfe is a long-time Calgary resident with an interest in local history, cultural landscapes and is a FoRRGS Tour Guide.

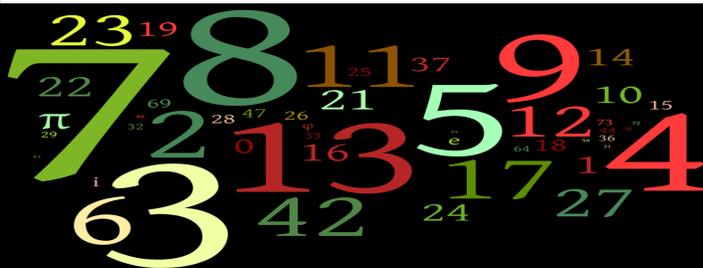
*Lady Byng Photo credits:
www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/lady-byng-of-vimy. Accessed November 2022.*

By the Numbers

By Victoria Arling

As FoRRGS Treasurer, I find that numbers tell their own stories ... Here are some stats that illustrate the Garden's narratives:

Reader Rock Garden



By the Numbers

Spp* added to the garden per year - goal	~80-90
Spp* added to the garden per year - 2021	~120-150
% of Reader's plants added to date, post restoration	~32%
Researched plants & trialled by Reader	~3500-4100
Plants grown by Reader	?
Plants grown at Reader - currently	~3000-3500
Species on Reader's lists	~2800-3000
Plants marked as retained from his era	~32
Known heritage trees	5
Acres of park ~4.0	~1.65 ha

* Spp = several species

By the Years

Arts & Craft style House / cottage built	1912
Longest serving City Superintendent	1913-42
Blue Spruce heritage tree planted Main Lawn	1918
House demolished	1944
Site becomes a public park	1944
Maintenance reduced/neglect noted	1960s
Civic greenhouses demolished - for LRT	1970s
FoRRGS "officially" established	2003
Park closed - Renovation & house rebuilt	2004-05
Site reopened to public	2006
Receives Provincial Historic Resource status	2006
Designated a National Historic Site	2018



Updates From Daniel:

By **Daniel Walker**

Another successful busy year has come and gone and *I couldn't be happier with the 2022 season*. The volunteer season was able to start early with much anticipated seedling transplanting, I know this is always a fun activity for the volunteers. Over 300 species were grown from seed or ordered this year, and of that number, 191 were reintroductions to the garden. This large undertaking was in part due to two new seed companies out of the United States and many new species offered through the seed exchanges. New mail order Canadian companies added some rare woody plant material to the roster. The Central Experimental Farm trip connected the two gardens in a hopeful new future collaboration that I'm confident will bring dozens of species and cultivars back to the garden. The trip proved to be fruitful with 11 different species or cultivars collected and brought back this early summer, more on this in the next 2023 FoRRGS newsletter. This was a very important historical connection and I'm ever so thankful for the dual support of FoRRGS and the City of Calgary to make this trip successful.

We saw the return of the cutest red squirrel that spent most of his days exercising his voice from the treetops and raining down spruce cones this fall. Keep your eyes and ears open for this adorable creature in the Garden.

Volunteer groups were created to help ID some of the larger plant collections in the gardens i.e. roses, peonies, lilacs and the new iris group. This is a massive project that will connect with the FoRRGS map that everyone has worked so hard on, as well the side photography/*What's in Bloom* project that a couple other volunteers are working on. I can't express enough on how much I appreciate all of the hard work and dedication the volunteers put into the garden, it definitely shows throughout the beds and behind the scenes. *Thank you!*

I was very happy to see the return of the plant sale in-person this year, that we made exclusive to members-only. It was amazing to see all the volunteers and happy members faces as they perused the many choices of perennials.

You'll surely see a difference next year in the High Rockery, two large spruce trees were removed as their roots were eroding the integrity of the rocks in the area. These removals will also bring in some precious light to the High Rockery as well as Bed L across the inner road/driveway. Three beds were replanted with many of the new reintroductions from this year and in the holding beds, Beds 26, 7, U. Continued additions to the High Rockery Beds A, B and L. Next year will see some much needed bed upgrades to Beds F, 1, 4 and 14.

Planning is already well under way for 2023, seeds are arriving and the CLICK button is being pressed on many plant orders. I can't wait to show you what is growing for the seasons to come.

Thank you again for a wonderful season! **Head Gardener**



With Much Gratitude ... Sincerest *thanks* for the heritage plant donations from the **Bakgaard Family**. Their long-time family acreage made way for new development, which is now Aspen Estates. Thanks for thinking about us and for giving us the opportunity to rescue some of these plants prior to construction. Rest assured that these plants will now live on at Reader Rock Garden, ... a fitting tribute to your family's efforts:

☞ *Evelyn's Garden, supplemented, experimented and sustained by Tim & Wendy & Stan.* ☞

HONORING THE LEGACY

By *Diane M. Dalkin*

Long before **Reader Rock Garden** became a **National Historic Site**, it was the heart of a family home for 30+ years. Although Mr. Reader spent decades developing and transforming this challenging landscape - a barren, windswept hillside - into a living classroom, the garden & house were strategically perched overlooking the growing city. Yes, this coveted location offered unique vantage points and a myriad of Nature's lessons just steps from their front door; but more importantly, it was also the Reader Family's home base, a place to gather and share their daily living.

Historical photographs illustrate that many family milestones were also shared at the Garden: celebrations of all sorts, partaking in group recreation, learning opportunities, children playing in their new-found home, marriages took place, grandchildren's first steps, memories were made as life soldiered on.

Furthermore, the Readers artistically created this resplendent backdrop by encouraging Nature to bloom in abundance. The Garden was & is a perfect spot for photographers. Following in this long-standing legacy, a heart-warming tribute took place this past summer. Honoring her roots, *Tish Harrington*, the *great, great granddaughter* of William Roland & Rose Martha Reader [nee Wright], and her new hubby *Steven Nuttgens* surprised their families by having their wedding photos taken at the Garden.

B/W picture on the left: June 4, 1931 nuptials *George Maxwell Peacock & Doris Edna* [nee Reader], Great Grandparents to *Tish Harrington*.

Their daughter, Betty-Rose Harrington [nee Peacock] Tish's Nana, was thrilled with this thoughtful gesture and proudly shared this lovely story.

Thank you for sharing this very special occasion with us. *So very nice to see the Reader Family tree flourishing!*



Pictured on the right: At the Garden 91 years later, *Steven Nuttgens & Tish Harrington*, wedding photos, summer 2022.



Old family photo albums bring the past back to life.

May you look back fondly on this day... the beautiful beginning of your shared story ...
Congratulations !!
Tish & Steven





Best of The Season
Meilleurs Voeux!



W I N T E R

Did you know ...

Reader Rock Garden is featured in the book entitled: **"111 Places in Calgary That You Must Not Miss"** by Jennifer Bain.

Even though Reader Rock Garden is also known as *Calgary's Best Kept Secret*, it's still great to see that the Garden is finally starting to get on the public radar again and is being recognized for the awesome place it is!



Thank-you Volunteers!

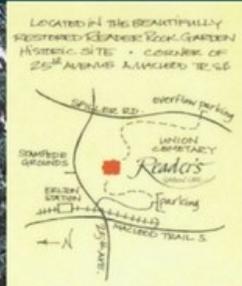
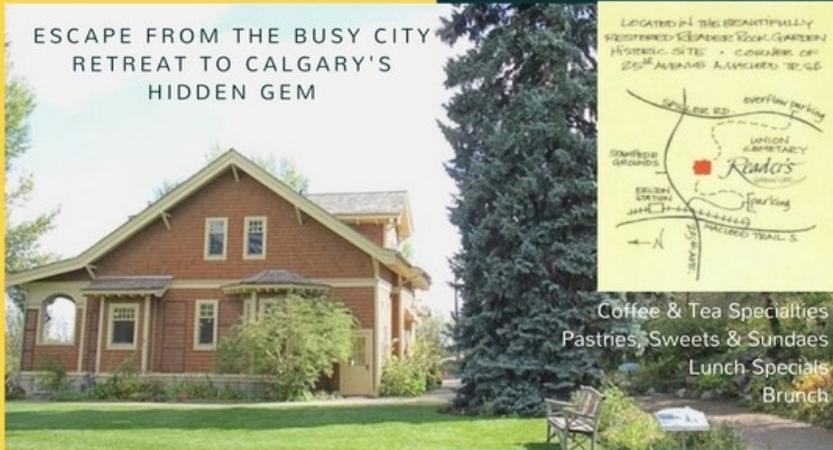
- ◆ For **Bruce's** hands-on gardening team
- ◆ For **Colleen's** friendly & savvy Tour Guides
- ◆ For the continuous dedication from the **Board**

AND

- ◆ For **Daniel**, the **City gardeners & Parks staff** that go above and beyond their regular duties!



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



Coffee & Tea Specialties
Pastries, Sweets & Sundaes
Lunch Specials
Brunch

Reader's Garden Café is closed for the Winter Season
Re-opening next **Spring 2023**.

See www.readersgardencafe.ca or call 403-234-0065

The Calgary Rock and Alpine Garden Society (CRAGS)

2nd Thursday of each month
Hybrid Monthly Meetings
In-Person

Lakeview Community Association Hall
6110 34th Street SW

Or,

Online, via Zoom video conferencing.

Jan 15, 2023 at 10:00 AM, Ian Young
on **"Ericaceous Plants for the Garden"**

Zoom meeting.

More events listed, See:
www.crag.ca/events

